

Icelandic Magic Symbols and Spell Books

By Ólafur Davíðsson

A new translation by Justin Foster

Foreword

In 1976 George W. Rich wrote in his book review: “Icelandic folklore has been more intensively collected and studied for its historical and literary value by native scholars than perhaps that of any other society. Jón Árnason’s *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri* [Icelandic Folktales and Wonder tales] was, in its original appearance, the climax of the burst of scholarly approaches to Icelandic folklore stimulated during the mid-19th century by the rise of Icelandic nationalism. To this day, it is a collection that has nowhere been surpassed. It is *the* master collection of Icelandic folklore, comparable in its scope and significance to the work of Jakob Grimm, to whom the first volume is dedicated.”¹

Within the first volume is a small section² which discusses Galdrastafir (magical symbols) that went largely ignored until when in 1903 an essay by Ólafur Davíðsson was translated from Icelandic to German and published within the annual *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*³ titled “Isländische Zauberszeichen und Zauberbücher” – Icelandic Magic Symbols and Spell Books. Throughout Ólafur’s paper are many citations given to Jón’s *Þjóðsögur*, not only for what is written about Galdrastafir, but also for what is written about Icelandic magicians and magic books. Amongst the more important of these are Bishop Gottskálk Nikolásson, Loftur Þorsteinsson and Reverend Eiríkur Magnússon and their involvement in the grimoires *Rauðskinna* and *Gráskinna*.

Ólafur’s essay goes on to list many symbols and associated spells, using as primary sources the letters of Reverend Guðmundur Einarsson regarding the magic books of Jón Guðmundsson lærði and Bishop Brynjúlfur Sveinsson about the Spell-book of Students to Skálholt in 1664. Details are then listed about the Galdrastafir from the Kreddur manuscript from Eyjafjörður, the Huld Manuscript ÍB 383 4to by Geir Vigfússon and DFS 1883/67 by Svend Grundtvig in Copenhagen. Finally 59 of these symbols are presented in their full form.

This work sat idle until the revival of pagan religion and witchcraft in Western society in the late 20th century under the banners of Ásatrú, Troth and Odinism etc. It was a major source referenced in *The Galdrabók: an Icelandic Grimoire* by Steven Flowers 1989, and its subsequent second edition in 2005. Since then it has been frequently cited in the bibliographies of books on subjects as diverse as Norse mythology to esoteric runology. However of all references tracing back to this essay the symbol called “Vegvísir” has received the most attention – it is found referenced thousands of times across the Internet and has become a popular tattoo for those seeking a meaningful symbol to ink themselves with.

The essay translation by Margaret Lehmann-Filhés suffers at times as being difficult to understand. My translation to English therefore also suffers the same. Despite my efforts so far to locate it, no original Icelandic version has been found. However this search has been far from exhaustive and it is hoped that one day someone can bring this to my attention. What has been successful is the tracking of Ólafur’s primary sources in Icelandic. Four sources have

been given specific attention and where differences to the German translation exist they have been edited by me in favour of that given in primary sources. These are: 1. *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri*, 2. the letters of Bishop Brynjúlfur Sveinsson, 3. the DFS 1883/67 manuscript, and 4. the Huld manuscript. In addition, where a symbol in any manuscript differs significantly from the primary source I have edited the symbol to appear as it does in the original. The remaining main source, the Kreddur manuscript from Eyjafjörður, remains a mystery to me and it is hoped that this too can be found some day. Where I have found inconsistencies or errors in the original essay, or else items that would benefit greatly by further information, I have added these in further dagger symbol footnotes or inline comments using distinct squared parenthesis.

I must thank both family and friends for their review of my German to English translation, and thank especially the learned colleagues Kevin French, Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, Christopher Smith and Ólína Þorvarðardóttir for their assistance with Icelandic translations and particularly Kevin for his valuable editing and comments along the way.

I apologise in advance for what appears to be clumsy English throughout the essay, however this is a result of a more literal translation. I have also kept the literal contents, page numbers and footnotes formatted as they appear in the original publication. I have found this work both interesting and enjoyable, and may again address it with subsequent revisions after either the discovery of more primary sources or else as the subject of a greater literary work.

~ Justin Foster, © July, 2015

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- 1) George W. Rich, *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 89, No. 354 (Oct.–Dec., 1976), pp. 497–500.
 - 2) Jon Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri*, Volume 1 (1862), pp. 445–453, et passim.
 - 3) *Journal of the Society of Folklore*, Volume 13, pp. 150–167, 267–279, pls. III–VIII.

Icelandic Magic Symbols and Spell Books

By Ólafur Davíðsson ^[1]
(including Plates III–VIII)

I. Introduction

The tide of belief in magic in the 16th and 17th century that went throughout Europe came to Iceland soon after the Reformation; since then it spread over the whole country, especially in the latter parts of the 17th century. The first documented witch trial in Iceland

1) From the Icelandic manuscript translated by Margaret Lehmann-Filhés.

was heard in 1554, the last time was prior to the Althing in 1720. In this period covering 167 years there was on average one witch trial per year, and while so many witch trials is hardly news, one can assume that some of them have been lost to history.

The witch trials taking place in Iceland were not the same as anywhere else. In other countries it was mostly women who were accused of witchcraft but in Iceland it was mostly men; of 125 witch trials that are known to me, only 9 relate to women. Also unique to Iceland, it was comparatively rare for people to be executed for witchcraft; with only 26 Icelanders reported as executed for this reason, and of these, as everywhere else, most were burned. Only one woman was executed for witchcraft. The first witch burning happened in Iceland in 1625, and the last time a man was burned at the Althing of 1685. At the 1690 Althing a man was sentenced to death for witchcraft but the penalty was reduced to ostracism. Here it is not intended to detail how Icelandic witch trials were generally handled, however instructive that would be. Instead, I intend to only write of one characteristic: the use of magic symbols † and magic books. Most or all of the magic was practised with symbols † (letters), which included all sorts of spells, and could be of different types. Sometimes ordinary Latin letters were used for witchcraft, but more often they were put together in an unusual order or in unusual words, like: ‘max, piax, riax’ that you had to write with dogs-blood on the wrist in order to fulfil a request. ^[1] Of the same type is ‘Sator-arepo’ ^[1], which will be discussed together with several examples of these types of magic symbols later. Fairly rare but on occasion Latin letters were used for spells but only for protection spells (Icelandic: varnargaldur); these spells were applied at the end to protect the magician against the mischief of other magicians.

However, if they wanted to harm other people, they used runes or real magic symbols (galdrastafir) in the spell. These runes were reserved for stronger and more effective magic because they were pagan. Often individual runes (rúnastafir) were used, as will be shown later in the runic symbols from the Bóse Saga, but sometimes entire words and

1) Jón Árnason, *Þjóðsögur* 1, 448 (1862). This work will be called henceforth only *Þjóðsögur* (Folklore).

† Full title is *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri* – Part 1 published 1862, Part 2 1864.

† The German word ‘zeichen’, used frequently throughout the original text, would ordinarily translate to ‘characters’, however the Old High German definition ‘symbols, signs’ is often a much better fit.

sayings were written in runes, as in Part II No. 14 onwards. Jón Árnason cites various examples of runic magic in his folktales ^[1], and I make do with referencing him.

Sometimes runes and Latin letters were blended to perform magic, for example, at the end of *Buslubæn* ^[2] (*bæn* = prayer) you will see first three Latin letters and thereafter runic letters, both individually and in unbroken groups. In addition, different types of letters were used for spells called “false letters” (*villuletur*), of which there are an enormous number. No. 19 and 20 in the second chapter are examples of spells that used false letters ^[3], however such magical devices were rare and these alphabets alone did not appear more frequently together with spell-casting than did ordinary Latin.

Sometimes many rune symbols were combined into one symbol or a figure; such symbols are called “bindrunes” ^[4]. They did not need to have anything to do with magic, there are bindrunes which referred to ordinary people’s names; then again, it was easy to make all sorts of magic using bindrunes, for example, they often occurred in various spells or were used to bring people into contact with the names of the Æsir gods. In this way, a whole word or a whole sentence could be hidden in a symbol. Later are shown bindrunes from the manuscript of *Bósasaga*, each of which refers to one of the names of Óðinn, and Jón Árnason mentions bindrunes that are capable of getting a thief to hand over stolen money. There were eight and referred to the names of eight Æsir: Týr, Þórr, Óðinn, Loki, Hæmir, Frigg and Freyja. ^[5] The bindrunes bore different names and these were sometimes taken from the words which were linked to the figures – as it was with the bindrunes which referred to the names of the Æsir – but sometimes by the purpose for which the bindrunes were used. For example, one bindrune was named ‘*Veðurgapi*’ because it was used to excite a violent storm ^[6], so that ships on the seas failed. ^[6]

Bindrunes are difficult and often impossible to read. Plus it is likely they were often drawn incorrectly. However there are people very knowledgeable in runes that gained some guidance using bindrunes. Jón Árnason mentioned the bindrune ‘*Ángurgapi*’ that one

1) *Þjóðsögur* 1, 448–449.

2) *Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* 3, 252 (Reykjavík 1889). [† *Legendary Sagas of the Northland*.]

3) Another example: *Þjóðsögur* 1, 464.

4) Icelandic: *bandrúnir*.

5) *Þjóðsögur* 1, 451. [† the missing name above, but given on p. 450 of *Þjóðsögur* is “Balder”.]

6) *Veður* = Weather, Wind. *Gapi* = daredevil? [† *Gapi* = gape/gaper.]

used to kill another's livestock. In it four runes were interconnected and each character was repeated several times. ^[1]

After a time magic symbols were formed out of bindrunes, and when you see one of these figures before you, it is often difficult or impossible to decide whether it is a bindrune or a magic symbol (galdrastafir). The magic symbols are very diverse, and it can be said with certainty that people have formed them in different ways or that the figures used have been different even though they have been designated with the same name; you can recognize this clearly, if you compare those magic symbols that are printed here with those printed in the *Þjóðsögur* by Jón Árnason 1, pages 445–46. Also printed in my *Rhyme Poems and Folk Songs* are a few magic symbols ^[2] and there is one in my *Icelandic Amusements* ^[3]; that is all that is available that has been published by me on Icelandic magical symbols.

The magic symbols or magical figures (galdramyndir) can be broken down into two types: real magic symbols on the one hand and insignia (innsigli) ^[4] and emblems (varnarstafir) on the other. The real magic symbols were especially used in order to inflict harm on others, but in addition were also used for healing, etc.; however, the insignia and like symbols were carried by people to protect themselves, which will be detailed in the explanation of such symbols later appended hereto. Furthermore the insignia and emblems usually went hand in hand with good words for God, while for the other symbols Þórr and Óðinn, or even the devil were called, and God's word was not used in connection with them, except when incantations or other misuse of the word of God were part of the equation. Also, these two groups of magical figures differ, in that the magic symbols and the sayings that belong to many of them are of domestic origin, as can be seen by the fact that Þórr and Óðinn are often mentioned; the insignia and protection symbols, however, are of foreign origin, as is clearly highlighted in no. 68, although the figures themselves are undoubtedly mostly Icelandic, and of course it doesn't matter if Sæmundur fróði †, Ari fróði, Ólafur Tryggvason, Snorri Sturluson, or other men of antiquity are brought into the picture.

It is very true what Eggert Ólafsson says in his travel book (Ferðabók ^[5]), namely that much of the superstition and magic

1) *Þjóðsögur* 1, 451.

2) *Þulur og þjókvæði* (Copenhagen 1898), pp. 95–110.

3) *Islenskar skemtanir* (Copenhagen 1888–92), p. 279.

4) Probably a seal or signet.

5) *Reise igjennem Island* (Sorö 1772), pp. 473–74.

† fróði = the wise.

which flourished in the 17th century and later in Iceland, was due to the Latin writings of various foreign writers which had penetrated into Iceland. Also, almost everything that has spread in chiromancy, astromancy, etc. in countless manuscripts over the country and is still believed in part today is derived from foreign journals. Some of these have been translated very early, most likely in the 13th or 14th century, and monks and priests were without a doubt the driving force behind this.

There are a tremendous amount of protection symbols but in print there is just one, or rather, a group of emblems: the Helper-Rings of Charles the Great (Hjálparhringar Karlamagnúsar) in the *Þjóðsögur* by Jón Árnason 1, 446. However, he has, as he says, seen about 20 insignia/seals in a book ^[1]. In addition, there are a myriad of magic symbols which can be seen in both Jón Árnason's *Þjóðsögur* and the following symbols here, as well as in various spell-books (galdraskræður) which I could not procure myself; of which will be discussed a little later.

Each magic symbol acquired a special name, just as the bindrunes did; these names were often derived from the definition of the symbol. In addition to the names which appear in the *Þjóðsögur* by Jón Árnason and in this document, reports can be found on Icelandic witch trials with the following designations to magic symbols: Golnisþeyr, Urnir, Hagallinn blá and Augnaþurs. The insignia/seals and protection symbols again are usually named after different people from the Bible or other famous people such as: King Ólafur Tryggvason, Charles the Great, King Solomon, Joshua, the prophet Jonah, and even Jesus Christ.

The magic symbols were mostly written on paper, and sometimes it was emphasized that you should write them on gray paper or 'shaggy paper' (loðpappír); sometimes they had to be written on calfskin or parchment. Sometimes they were scratched † on various types of wood: mostly on oak, but also on fir, spruce, beech and maple (valbjörk); or on different implements: wooden plates, basins, spoons, hinged lids; or on ships, to hinder people's industrial or whalebone fishing. There are occurrences where magic symbols were to be scratched on bones and in one particular spot it is stressed that one should scratch it on a human bone or a mannsleggur ^[2]. Also magic symbols were scratched on various ores or rocks (silver, lead, brass, whetstone) and food (bread, cheese). Finally magic symbols were scratched

1) *Þjóðsögur* 1, 453.

2) Leggur = thigh bone, tubular bone.

† The German word 'ritzen/eingeritzt' has been translated as "to scratch/scratched in/on" throughout, rather than more common translation of 'carved', however it may be that the symbols should be carved, especially where wood is used.

on ‘surtarbrandur’ ^[1], the shell of a chicken egg, the skin of the Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) and many more items like this have been used. It also happened that people drew magic symbols with their saliva on certain body parts, such as the forehead, and these or other symbols could only be drawn with certain fingers. Sometimes the magic symbols were also formed out of metal and pressed on different body parts, and even some magic symbols were applied only on certain days or at certain times of day.

The magic symbols would have usually been well written with ordinary ink, but there are examples where you had to write them with human blood.

They were usually scratched with a knife or other sharp iron tool, but in other instances you had to scratch the magic symbols with a basalt chip, magnetic iron, steel or flounder intestine.

If you wanted to use the magic symbols, you usually had to hold them in your hand or on various other parts of the body and various superstitious customs had to be observed here, as can be best seen from the following.

With the arrival of all magic, because so much arrived in the form of magic symbols it is not surprising that those who wrote about magic at that time spoke very ill of it. So wrote Reverend Guðmundur Einarsson to Staðastaður (died 1648) in the document which he wrote in 1627 against witchcraft and as Þorvaldur Thoroddsen did in his *Landfræðissaga* Vol. 2, P. 43: “The Devil puts magic symbols and tricks into the hands of his Apostles, to create with these selfsame symbols miracles and marvels in hidden corners and holes, to fool the simple-minded, easily duped people of your nation, so that his servants can outwit the people and pull them in”, and; “The Devil puts spells and magic symbols into the hands of his servants.” Further says Reverend Guðmundur: “In the magic symbols is hidden and concealed a deeper wealth both of the wisdom and the power of all diabolical arts.” ^[2] Reverend Sigurður Torfason to Mel † in Miðfjörður (died 1670) had a similar view in his book: *Tractatus de magia, eamque comitantibus erroribus, which is a short excerpt of witchcraft or magic arts and their accompanying faults and effects*, but he is clear how useless the magic symbols were in reality. Reverend Sigurður says: “The symbols themselves are nothing more than pathetic, silly doodles and scribbles mostly from these ‘children of Belial’, especially here in Iceland, and it is strange how the Devil blinded these people,

1) The Icelandic brown coal (lignite).

2) I am speaking here of the manuscript collection of the literary society in Copenhagen 93, 4to.

† Mel = Melakirkja.

so that they believe such scribble and useless scrawl and trust him; and wise and understanding children of God cannot but wonder about by what imagination any man can believe in such foolish scrawl, also, either only those silly sheep who can believe anything, today this and tomorrow that, and are just as a reed blown by the wind, or those who are possessed by the devil entirely, whose entire senses He has chosen for apartment and home, need it, because the people who have sense, cannot, if they even wanted so much to believe that such raven scratchings could accomplish anything or bring any progress.”^[1] Likewise Reverend Páll Björnsson in Selárdalur (1620–1706) says: “It is a great folly and delusion when the world believes and trusts that runes work and other similar things have any influence and cast out the Devil which is so firmly embedded in the hearts of men, it will hardly be possible to sweep it away. This superstition lured the Devil himself.”^[2] Reverend Sigurður and Reverend Páll have in truth got it right, because it is incredible that anyone should be so superstitious and ignorant, to derive the origin of the runes and magic symbols from the devil, but this could not be allowed and Jón Espólín quite rightly says: “People asked him who was found with written rune symbols, and similarly, who was convicted of a wickedness, and they felt it was an equally sinful idolatry to possess rune pages as it was to worship the Devil.”^[3]

It may be said with certainty that faith in magic symbols is now extinct almost everywhere in Iceland, but there may be still a little left of it in some remote areas, particularly in West Iceland.

The magic pages and magic booklets (*galdrakver*), which are so often talked about in the history of Icelandic witch trials, were pages and booklets in which many magic symbols were written and a variety of spells collected. Moreover, in the *Þjóðsögur* by Jón Arnason both under *Töfrabrögð* (witchcraft) and *Einstakir galdramenn* (Individual magicians) many magic books are mentioned. It was thought that among others, the magic books *Gráskinna* (gray leather) and the second, *Rauðskinna* (red leather) were regarded above all other magic books.

It was said about *Rauðskinna* that it was associated with Gottskálf Nikolásson, Bishop of Hólar (1498–1520), who

1) The document by Reverend Sigurður was written in 1655. I have focused myself on the manuscript collection of the Árni Magnússon in Copenhagen AM 698, 4vo.

2) *Rask's Manuscript Collection* at the University Library in Copenhagen no. 107.

3) *Árbækur* 6, 138.

was called “hinn Grimmi” (the Grim). He was the greatest wizard of his time. He took up black magic (svartigaldur) again which had not been exercised since pagan times, and wrote the magic book which was called “*Rauðskinna*”; it was very grand with gold lettering and, like with all witchcraft, written in runic characters. Noone begrudged the bishop these books after his death and therefore they let him be buried with them, and he taught no one all of his magic. Later Galdra-Loftur † wanted to resurrect Bishop Gottskálk and force him to hand over the *Rauðskinna* by using incantations, but this failed, and no-one had the benefit of it after Bishop Gottskálk was dead. ^[1]

Dr. Jón Þorkelsson the Younger assumes the original of the document of the Bishop Ólafur Rögnvaldsson (1458–94), that is now in the manuscript collection of Árni Magnússon AM 274 4to, was called “*Rauðskinna*” and regarded to be a spell book ^[2], about which two things can be said. Firstly the documents are written in different hands on poor leather and are very hard to read, and secondly, the manuscript has been tied up in red-coloured harbour-seal skin or cow hide and the rear panel of the binding cover, albeit very poorly, scraped, yet the front panel is not scraped, so that you can clearly see the colour of the hair. ^[3] Nothing is therefore more natural than that they called this manuscript “*Rauðskinna*”, but otherwise it seems to me likely that it has generally been regarded as the poorest of spell books and that if the magic book *Rauðskinna* ever existed, it certainly was not written in gilt and unlikely to have been written in runic script. At least none of the now existing spell books are written in runes, though runes do occur in certain places.

There were two *Gráskinnur* (*Gráskinna* = gray leather). One was in the Latin school of bishopric Hólar, the other in the other bishopric of Skálholt. Þorkell, the son Reverend Guðbjartur ^[4], wrote first the rune-book *Gráskinna*, from which was taken much of the witchcraft used in later centuries. This book lay a long time in the school in Hólar and some young men learned from it, especially the first part, which was written in speech runes; it did not show magic and incantations but rather harmless arts, such as wrestling magic (glímugaldur), palm reading (lófalist) ^[5] and such, and it was the souls of those who

1) *Isländische Volkssagen, aus der Sammlung von Jón Árnason ausgewählt und übersetzt von M. Lehmann-Filhés* 1, 252 (Berlin, 1889). [† Icelandic Folktales...]

2) *Om Digtingen paa Island í det 15. og 16. Aarhundrede* (Copenhagen 1888) p. 111.

3) This volume is now lost according to what Jón Þorkelsson says in *Diplomatarium Islandicum* 5, 249, which is a shame.

4) In Laufás [† in Iceland] he was called “Flóki” (the felt?) (1400). [† Old Norse = tuft of hair / matted hair, or outspoken/enterprising man.]

5) Reading the art in the palm of the hand (lofi) = Chiromantia.

† ‘Galdra-Loftur’ refers to Loftur Þorsteinsson, a Galdmaster and subject of the folk-tale *Galdra-Loftur*.

learned this part, which could still be saved. The second and longer part however, was written with ‘false runes’ (villurúnir), which few could learn, as they were forbidden by their master. ^[1] In it was all the dark magic, and all who associated with it were hated and unfortunate. Galdra-Loptur learned everything that was in *Gráskinna*, and knew it word for word, and people knew in those days to tell no one they had been using sorcery like him, even if it came to a bad end. ^[2]

The *Gráskinna* which was in the school in Hólar, owed its origin to some sheets that the Reverend Eiríkur Magnússon to Vogsósar (1677–1716) and his companions seized from an old man they resurrected from the churchyard of Skálholt, because after this they wrote the book. ^[3] Other than this nothing is known about the book, but *Gráskinna* is mentioned again in *Þjóðsögur* 1, 327, and the presentation here is portrayed differently to that by Reverend Skúli.

The books of which we have already spoken have probably never existed in the sense that magic was written in them, or if this was the case, they have been entirely lost. Likewise, most magic booklets that we know for certain existed were lost, because if magicians were discovered and they acquired their spell books, they were burned in front of their noses, and they sought to make the smoke rise straight into their nose, and no doubt such smoke was not very healthy for them. Also, spell books were burned when they found them as part of a dead magician’s estate, for example in Barðastrandarsýsla around the year 1740. ^[4] Those that were suspected of witchcraft have certainly burned a lot of magic booklets too; because sometimes their death was certain if they were found with such possessions. Many magic booklets were also ruined in the damp Icelandic living quarters (baðstofur), and most of the remaining are very badly mauled, rotted and torn.

One would think that nothing of Icelandic grimoires would have survived to our day, when things sought to destroy them on the one hand by fire, on the other, by moisture; however, there are still some available, albeit negligibly few. There would have been made many copies of any spell book, so that they became very spread out, so long as the time of superstition was at its height, though

1) Probably from the one who had written the book.

2) Per Reverend Skuli Gíslason: *Þjóðsögur* 1, 509 583 cf. 1, 447.

3) *Þjóðsögur* 1, 555 cf. 1, 447.

4) *Þjóðsögur* 1, 546.

people have stored them well and must have treasured them, because otherwise to them danger threatened.

I know of only two books which can be called actual magic books, and they are both utilized here. They are both written on parchment (skin). According to Jón Árnason's data ^[1] one is available in the National Library in Reykjavík. The other is in the manuscript collection of Árni Magnusson in Copenhagen (shelf mark AM 434d 12mo) and consists of eight leaves in small sextodecimo (sixteenmo) format; it comes from the 17th century. This booklet gives great difficulties, because it is written with such abbreviations that it cannot be deciphered. ^[2] In addition, there are precise reports of two spell books from the 17th century, which I have included in this text.

There are several other books of magic, but you can not call them real spell books because apart from sorcery they contain diverse 'kreddur' ^[3], particularly those associated with the so called healing arts. A large number of healing books (lækningabækur) exist in all Icelandic manuscript collections and almost all have written in between the remedies of witchcraft. I imagine that the magic symbols in the Huld ^[4] by Geir Vigfússon arose as he had collected them from various healing books, and that they are therefore not taken from a book, for then the manuscript which he had used would in truth be called a spell-book. I have especially used the healing books that are in the manuscript collection of the Literary Society in Copenhagen, as opposed to my being quite ignorant of the healing books located in the National Library in Reykjavík. Although some of the writings used by me are not old, you can certainly accept nevertheless that the magic symbols that are therein and the related texts are quite old, at least from the 17th century and some undoubtedly much older. I want to emphasize in conclusion that I have no where near exhausted the healing books which relate to sorcery and witchcraft in the Literary Society, but have only included those that I had written down for me.

I will now put together here those Icelandic magic symbols that I have at hand and which have not yet been printed. ^[5]

1) *Þjóðsögur* 1, 453.

2) Sheets 1–3 are reprinted in *Íslenzkar þulur og þjóðkvæði*, pp. 96–97, therein two magic symbols.

3) Superstitious dogma. *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* Vol. 8, p. 154.

4) From hylja = hide.

5) My source documents I list here:

Figures I–III, VIII, IX, XIII, XV–XVIII, XXV–XXXI, XXXIII, XXXIV, XLI, XLIII–LI, LVI are taken from the manuscript collection of the Literary Society (Literarischen Gesellschaft) in Copenhagen, shelfmark ÍB 383 4to [† and has since been transferred to the National and University Library of Iceland]. This manuscript is by Geir Vigfússon of Akureyri...

There is nothing more to say about my treatment of the magic symbols other than that I have given myself the greatest care to draw them as close as possible to the originals. However, I have enlarged most of them so that they would be quite clear, and improved the loops and hooks where they clearly resulted from the fact that those who had drawn them, did not know how to draw; Jón Árnason may also have followed the same rule in his *Þjóðsögur*.

II. The magic book of Jón lærði

Jón Guðmundsson lærði (the scholar, b. 1574, d. circa 1650) was one of the most learned yet uneducated people of the 17th century in Iceland, but he was also very superstitious. He concerned himself a lot with magic and ended up in witch trials, as is told in the *Landfræðissaga* [† geographical history] by Þorvaldur Thoroddsen 2, 73 et seq. Jón travelled far and wide through the country and contributed to the spread of all kinds of ‘kreddur’ [† dogma] and superstition, of which much is still left even today. In the year 1625 two identical spell books fell into the hands of the Reverend ^[1] Guðmundur Einarsson to Staðarstaður in Snæfellsnes, the same man had wrote them, and the priest said in the aforementioned manuscript: “Satan let his same Amanuensem [† from Latin: secretary/clerk] write these two books to lure away weak souls from God, to the edification of his kingdom in this country.” Two years later Reverend Guðmundur wrote his treatise on magic, and therein the books are very accurately described. However nowhere does Reverend Guðmundur clearly highlight that the spell books

(died around 1880) and called “Huld” by him. In it there are 329 runic alphabets and ‘false letters’ (villuletur) and then these 30 magic symbols. In some places the text with the symbols is written in reversed Latin script, but most are in ordinary script, except the main words or the words which have the greatest importance, because they are often written with runes or Irrschrift.

Figure LVII is from the manuscript collection of the Árni Magnússon 158, 4to, 59 pp. This manuscript is a manuscript of the Jónsbók on parchment dating from around the year 1400; the symbols are undoubtedly somewhat younger than the book itself.

Figures XII, LVIII and LIX are from the manuscript collection of the Árni Magnússon 960, 4to. Figure LVIII is from a manuscript from the later part of the 18th century, Figure XII from a manuscript from 1849. [† An error here – XII is described twice. One of these most probably refers to figure XI.]

Figures IV, V, VI, VII, X, XIX, XXIII, XXXII, XXXV, XXXVII, XXXVIII, XXXIX, XLII, LII, LIII, and LIV come from a ‘Kreddur’ manuscript, which was recently written in Eyjafjörður; but from the arrangement of sentences, etc. it can be clearly seen that an ancient manuscript underlies it, from at least the 17th century.

Figures XX, XXI, XXII and XXXVI are from a manuscript from the middle of the century in the manuscript collection of the Svend Grundtvig in the Royal Collection in Copenhagen 67, Arch N. See list of antiquities collection Iceland 1 (1868), p. 57. [† Figure XV is also from this collection, now held by the Danish Folklore Archives in Copenhagen, shelf mark DFS 1883 - 67].

Figure XXIV is from the fragment of a healing book in quarto in the manuscript collection of the Literary Society in Copenhagen. This book was not numbered when I used it. It was excellently written, but the back and front were very decayed.

1) Reverend: honorary title of the clergy.

are by Jón lærði, but you can accept this as a certainty; firstly because he was one of the most magic-knowledgeable men in West Iceland at that time and was the most enthusiastic writer, in addition there is a large chapter in the manuscript by the Reverend Guðmundur just on Jón lærði. Reverend Guðmundur quotes the main aspects of what was written in the books and I want it set out here again, because it is very interesting in respect to cultural history. ^[1]

“In these two books,” says Reverend Guðmundur, “are various precepts and magical charms, which are intended to protect firstly against all dangers of soul: against insanity, against temptation of the devil, against pride, lust, fear, troll haunting ^[2], condemnation, then against all risks of the body, against death, fire, water, theft; some embellished, as it seems to them ^[3], with verses from the Psalms of David, some with the names of the ten servants of Christ, as they are spoken in Hebrew language; some with various hard-to-understand words.” However, the word of God was not sufficient to correct these injuries, but they also had to read ‘Satorarepo’, only then did everything go as desired. ‘Sator arepo tenet opera rotas’ is an ancient magic verse, to which was attributed great power in olden times. This belief had arisen no doubt by the fact that the letters in these five words relate to each other so bizarrely when they are written one beneath the other; since you can read them from left to right, from top to bottom, when you begin with the s in ‘sator’, then from right to left and from bottom to top when you begin with the s in ‘rotas’, and yet it will always come out with the same words. ^[4] Reverend Guðmundur however cannot satisfy himself with just ‘Satorarepo’ displaying these characteristics. He wants to bring the devil into it entirely. He has, as he says, distributed the letters in all the words differently until it comes out as: ‘Satan operor te, te operor Satan’, which means ... ^[5]: “O Satan, Satan! I am in your labour, I am in your travail”, or “Help me, Satan!” However the drawback you find in this arrangement of the letters is that in ‘Satorarepo’ etc. there is only one ‘n’, in contrast, there are two in the Reverend Guðmundur’s phrases, so it would be safer to settle for the strength which should be inherent in the words of the other interpretation.

The Bible passage that connected the wizard with ‘Satorarepo’ or other magical passages or symbols was usually the Psalms ...

1) I want to mention here that I’m speaking about ÍB 93 4to from the manuscript collection of the Literary Society in Copenhagen.

2) Troll haunting = ghost haunting.

3) That is, the wizards.

4) See *Þjóðsögur* 1, 448 [About the Sator Formula R. Köhler, *Minor Works* 3, 564.]

5) “Ó Satan, Satan! Eg er í þinni vinnu, eg er í þínu erfidi”, or “hjálpa mér til Satan!”

of David, especially taken from Psalm 119 or the golden alphabet (gyllinistafróf), and so it was in the spell books which are discussed here. The biblical sentences were in Latin; because it was attributed as having more strength than the Icelandic, since fewer people understood it. I'll follow on here with some witchcraft from the books which Reverend Guðmundur cites as examples, like how 'Satorarepo' was connected with Bible passages. The Latin is often incorrect; what's more Reverend Guðmundur says that he had copied it verbatim from the books of magic; however I have improved it, where it was necessary, to follow the Latin psalms. The corrections are given in brackets after the incorrect words and the reference to the Icelandic London Bible (Lundúnabiblia) given behind each set.

“You want to know who has stolen anything from you: Read first Satorarepo, then cross yourself, with this verse in Latin: Manus tuae Domine, fecerunt me et plasmaverunt me; da mihi intellectum, ut discam mandata tua.” (Ps. 119, V. 73.) †

“Want to preserve your vessel completely: Read first Satorarepo, then go around in circles in the wrong direction three times (rangsælis = against the sun) and cross yourself with this verse from David's Psalms: Cognovi Domine, quia aequitas judicium tua; in veritate tua humiliasti me.” (119, 75.)

“Are you going to the sharing ^[1]: Read Satorarepo and this verse from the Psalms: Convertimini (convertantur) mihi timentis (timentes) te, et qui noverunt testimonia tua” (119, 79). Reverend Guðmundur calls this verse “part verse” (hlutarvers).

“If you want that no harm is done from your fire: Read Satorarepo and cross yourself with this verse: Fiat misericordia tua ut consolet (consoletur) me secundum elogium (eloquium) tuum, servo tuo.” (119, 76.)

“So you do not fall over stick or stone: Read first Satorarepo and this verse from the Psalms: Qui timentis (timent) te, videbunt me [et laetabuntur] ^[2], qui (quia) in verbo (verba) tuo (tua) supersperavi. (119, 74.) Then these words: Sacius ora tima et venena panga. ^[3] Affa O. In nomine P. F. et S. S.” Here Reverend Guðmundur is alarmed about how wrong the Latin is and says that the devil must have allowed the wizards to twist it that way, “as he sat down like a new Pope to Rome upon the seat of Pope Alexander, the sixth of that name, and there in all papal grandeur sat, while Pope Alexander was on his deathbed, and then he said to the small servant of the dying Pope: Ego nunc sum papa.” †

1) “Til hlutar ganga” = to get the best part of the catch on the beach every night.

2) Missing in the manuscript.

3) Incomprehensible.

† In the Latin Vulgate Bible this is confusingly referred to as Psalm 118 instead of 119. In any case the verses all relate to “the Law of the Lord” and can be read in English from any standard bible.

† “Ego nunc sum papa” = I now am Pope.

“So that the waters do not harm you: Read Satorarepo and then this verse: Ne (Non) me demergat tempestas aquae neque absorbeat me profundum, neque urgeat super me patens (puteus) os suum.” (69, 15.)

Reverend Guðmundur says there have been many more such spells in these books and in some places ‘Satorarepo’ has been associated with the name of Christ in Greek or the names of Christ’s servants in Hebrew.

Then were runes in these books: þursrúnir (Giant runes), enskrúnir (English runes), einhverfingar hægri, einhverfingar vinstri (hægri = right, vinstri = left, hverfingur = ring finger), hjálmrúnir (helm runes), kvistrúnir (branch runes), hnakkrúnir (saddle runes?) nauðarætt öfug (öfug = inverted/reversed; ‘n’ is called in the speech runes “Naud” = Need/necessity; ætt = gender/tribe/direction/Sky area) Isat Rett fram (Rett fram = straight; ‘í’ is called in the speech runes “ís” = ice), málrúnir (speech runes), hálfdeilur (Half = half, deila = quarrel), hemlur (?), mið-hemlur (?), stafkarlaletur (beggar writing) and Karla Magnúsarletur (script of Charlemagne).^[1]

The fact that they associated the word of God with these runes, the wizards could, as they themselves believed, cause hallucinations, to walk again (go around as a ghost), get the best portion, change the disposition of women, prevent marriage alliances, lull the wrath of the aristocracy, avoid travelling on water and on land, to know what was going on in the distance, to find their way in fog and storms, free up fishing line from rocks on the ocean floor, make blades blunt, heal jaundice, dysentery, rheumatism (boils), loss of appetite, constipation plus many others.

Then Reverend Guðmundur speaks of the haemostasis book and childbirth book (lausnarbók) “with all its symbols, rules, measures and exceptions.” I never heard of the haemostasis book being referred to, but on the other hand, many things have been contrived to inhibit bleeding. One procedure is this: “Write on the forehead of him (the bleeder) with his own blood this: pais, mais, tais. Say this doing a Pater noster. The staunching”. This instruction is in the same handwriting as the extracted magic symbols no. 47–66 and there named “Blóðstemma Sr. M. Ó. S.”. In any case this meant Reverend Magnús Ólafsson of Laufáss (died 1636).

Also I have not heard mention of a childbirth book, but childbirth (-painrelief) stones (lausnarsteinar) I have seen, and it is very possible that some people still believe in them now.^[2] Reverend Guðmundur recounted from the childbirth book, you should tie these words to the loins of the women who are in labor: “Anna peperit Mariam, Maria Christum, Elisabeth Johannem, Cilicium, Remigium. Eorum dat

1) Additionally, the Helper-Rings of Charles the Great, aka. Charlemagne, were powerful magic symbols in earlier times. See *Þjóðsögur* 1, 446, and 453.

2) See *Þjóðsögur* 1, 649.

salutario et redemptio, quand oparias filium tuum, haec faemina”, and then read the Margrétar saga (story of the martyr Margareta) “in nomine patris, filii et spiritus sancti” †. The Latin in the middle part of this sentence is so twisted that it is incomprehensible, but apparently it speaks about a light confinement. Incidentally, these ‘books’ that Reverend Guðmundur mentions, the haemostasis book and the childbirth book, were certainly only sections within the magic books; he himself seems to suggest that.

In the books were more, as has been listed here. There was a knot of King Olaf the Saint, to fight all enchantments that he constantly kept on himself. There was taught to understand the Eingla-Brynja (angels armour), which was composed of names of the angels. ^[1] There was taught, “the 9 Hifsringe (hjálparhringar = help rings) of the old teaching fathers (lærifeður = Church Fathers?) to read and understand with all their runes, of which the first ring is against severe attacks, the second against volcanic eruptions, the third against physical desire, the fourth against mental disorder, the fifth against temptation of the devil, the sixth against bleeding, the seventh against elves haunting, the eighth against false judgement and the ninth against weapon damage.” There was a copy of the letter that an angel of God brought down from heaven and which was given with instructions to the Pope Leo, to give it to the Emperor Charles the Great before he rode into the Battle of Roncesvalles. The letter had the property to protect the person whoever carried it with him, against evil foes, thieves, fire, water and sword. ^[2] There was the seal of Solomon, with

1) This ‘Einglabrynja’ was undoubtedly one such prayer like the armour prayers (Brynjubænir) that are in the *Þjóðsögur* 1, 554–59. [† eingla should be spelt ‘englar’ = angels.]

2) It is also told that God had sent an angel with the aforementioned ‘helper-rings’ to Pope Leo and asked him to hand them over to Charles the Great. The heavens-letter that is printed in the *Þjóðsögur* 2, 53–55, is also said to have come down from heaven on a straight path, but not before the middle of the 17th century. With this letter is perhaps meant a certain prayer that exists and I came to see in a manuscript from the mid-19th century. It is called: “A good prayer, which an angel of God brought Leo, brother of Charles the Great” and reads as follows:

Jesus Christ is a mighty fortress.

Jesus Christ exceeds any place.

Jesus Christ watches over all waters.

Jesus Christ harboured me today.

Jesus Christ is with me, before me and behind me, and where the troublesome devil and evil enemy sees me, he flees from me in Jesus name.

Jesus Christ scares away all the misfortunes from me.

Jesus Christ blesses me today.

Jesus Christ protects my sign of the cross.

Cross of Jesus Christ protects my sign of the cross.

Cross of Jesus Christ makes all crosses just as ordained for me.

Jesus Christ went weeping between those who crucified him.

Jesus Christ, the crucified and blessed, God’s dearly loved Son, who died on the cross; he delivers me from every evil in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

† From the Latin: in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

which he sealed a jar, “in which he had locked all the demons before he died, so that God himself, say the Masters in this art, gave him power with this lock to tame the arrogance of the devil. Therefore every man who still today carries this seal with him will be free from all sinister occurrences and damage and will never be deceived by the devil.” It now looks indeed like this, as if people no longer needed to carry with them the seal of Solomon to protect against the devil because all the demons were firmly locked into a jar; but Solomon deserted the Archer (bogalist ^[1]), because when he died, “stupid people came from Babylon, say the masters of witchcraft, and broke the jar. Then the spirits flew like mosquitoes out over all the village grounds” and therefore it was the best advice to carry the seal with you. On Plate V one finds an illustration of the Seal of Solomon (Figure XXVI).

In his writing Reverend Guðmundur mentioned later several of the magic arts, which have been already named, and still one more, to love the accomplices (að Elska tilbera) ^[2]. Still much more is in the magic books “foolish (nugacius) and delusional (delirantius) than all these things,” says Reverend Guðmundur. 1631 saw Jón lærði end up in a witch trial; his case was dealt with on 1 August at the Althing. At first, six priests and

Charlemagne carried this prayer with him, and everyone should carry this page with them. Anyone who carries this prayer with them shall be free from all their enemies, visible and invisible, from fire and water, heavenly fire, from thieves and robbers, from ghosts, evil spirits and horrible dreams. They shall never die without rights of confession and receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ. They should never get a fever and never be falsely accused by any man, and never be unjustly condemned by any court. No man shall harbor evil feelings towards them. They shall never die in any danger if they believe and trust in God’s mercy. Every woman, who is on the floor in her time of childbirth and carries this page with her, will deliver quickly and bare child into the world in good shape shape, still the mother gets thereby an easy end, and that with the Power of His Name is written here below:

Our Lord, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
 Crucified Jesus, you come here,
 I call you to my aid,
 That the devil with a sorry injury
 Pulls away before this paper.
 God be with us. Amen,
 The wounds of Jesus enlighten my heart,
 But Satan falls away in Jesus’ name. Amen.

In the same handwriting is also another prayer that is called “the prayer of the Emperor Charles the Great”, but it is mostly the same as the prayer quoted here, so it does not seem necessary to put it totally here; however it has been used in two places.

1) Bogalist = arch art, bow art, bending art.

2) About the tilberi † see: *Isländischer Brauch und Volksglaube in Bezug auf die Nachkommenschaft*, edited by Max Bartels. *Zeitschr. f. Ethnologie* 1900, S. 74 u. 76. — Also *Þjóðsögur* 1, 430–35.

† Tilberi: a snakelike creature created from bone by witchcraft, used to rob milk from neighbour’s livestock.

six Sysselmänner (Sýslumaður = sheriff) were appointed to the court and the court presented a book and some pages that Jón admitted he had written. The content of these spell books is included in the judgment, and it seems most appropriate to cite it here; for it is mentioned therein a lot of things about which Reverend Guðmundur does not tell. In these books, certain points and detail were “remedies or protection from nasty attacks: 1. Volcanic eruptions, 2. Haemorrhages, 3. Weapons, 4. Physical desires, 5. Mental disturbance, 6. Elves haunting, 7. Unjust verdict, 8. Temptation of the devil, 9. Protection against enemies and hatred of others, 11. To make the enemy afraid, 12. For the relief of women in labour, 13. Verse for a legal case, 14. To prevent shipwreck, 15. Verse to ward off the risk of fire, 16. Against theft, 17. Against water damage, 18. For constipation of humans and animals, 19. Against terrible visions, 20. Against rage, 21. Victory verse in battle, 22. To make a weapon blunt, 23. Names of the servants of Christ, 24. To chase away foxes ^[1], 25. Remedy against water, fire and weapon damage, if faith is there, 26. Victory blessing (sigursigning) of the morning, 27. Against sea storm, 28. Against sea ghost-haunting, 29. Carvings for jaundice, dysentery, aversion to foods, cough, rash and headache, 30. Different bleeding lungs, and such like more”. To each point though were attached special characters, figures, and paintings or alphabets with various misused divine words that one should deem under no circumstances are suitable for Christians to need them. The book described here is undoubtedly either the same that Rev. Guðmundur described, or at least one of the very same kind. Jón lærði admitted he had written these spell books and put them into the hands of others, but said he had not used them to harm anyone, neither people nor animals; the clergy then declared, it seemed “the above written incantations and points a complete misuse of the holy name of God, and under no circumstances should anyone use in such things God’s holy word in such a way” , and adjudicated, after the grace of the Holy Spirit had been called, that these and similar activities were especially contrary to God’s holy words and that there could be no case tolerated that someone practiced these at will, or that they went unpunished.

The clergy then left the court and in their place six laymen were appointed, and they declared Jón Guðmundsson outlawed ^[2], so that henceforth no man of such overindulgent causes can grow-up to such misdeeds, because you can expect a great danger and blaze of God’s wrath, when the like will not be punished.

1) *Alþingisbók* 1637 No. 5.

2) They declared him “útlægur”.

At this time in Iceland, the burning of witches was just beginning and magic journals were not so strictly prosecuted as later, Jón was therefore not burned, but he lived the rest of his life in very difficult circumstances, such as is partly reported in Þorvaldurs (Þ Thoroddsens) History of Icelandic Geography [† Landfræðissaga Íslands].

(Conclusion follows.)

Icelandic Magic Symbols and Spell Books
By Ólafur Davíðsson
(Closing for pages 150 – 167)

III. The Spell-book of Students to Skálholt 1664

On April 6, the schoolmaster Oddur Eyjólfsson of Skálholt handed over to the bishop Brynjúlfur Sveinsson a small book that was all torn and spoiled. This book was found in the bed of two students,

and there were therein various nasty and unusual symbols. The book was damaged on the back, and had a lot of pages in pieces, so that you could not see immediately what belonged together; although once they had it organized, a directory of its contents was made, and there is still a certified statement testifying that it is right. The directory is as follows:

1. Ad optandam fidem amicorum [† from Latin: “To gain the loyalty/trust of friends”], with half a seal’s heart and a redbelly’s ^[1] shield. [† The ‘shield’ may refer to its shield-like top fin.]
2. To procure an herb to open up all the locks with. ^[2]
3. So that a woman never gets a child.
4. So that a woman will never have a fetus [† get pregnant].
5. To make women promiscuous.
6. To avoid big fish † that make evil-harm on the ocean.
7. To turn away fear of the dark.
8. To procure a wish-stone. ^[3]
9. To know who steals from you.
10. To find out whether a female descendant is a virgin.
11. For working quicksilver [† aka mercury].
12. To wrestle well, with a verse and three symbols.
13. To appease anger, with three symbols.
14. To wrestle another way, with carvings and blood letting. For that there are three ^[4] symbols: Igultanne [† sea urchin teeth?], Ginfaxi, Hagall and Satrix.
15. To know whether fish are in the sea, with two figures.
16. To fish well, with one figure.
17. To avoid big fish †, with one figure.
18. To calm your horse, with one figure.
19. To have victory in all court cases.
20. Ægishjálmur ^[5] (helm of awe). [† “helm” old Eng. def: helmet or covering for protection.]
21. Solomon’s seal.
22. The Lord’s seal, large figure.
23. Victory helm.
24. Fox summoning. Here invoking Þórr and Óðinn, with 23 figures.
25. To summon the Devil, Þórr and Óðinn, and all mystical beings to bring luck to oneself.
26. Summoning mice with human ribs; invoking the devil within full protection of Þórr and Óðinn, with the verses: Sator arepo. [† tales tell of wizards that summon mice to get money.]
27. To prick a man with a ‘Sleeping Thorn’, with blood-letting and two figures.
28. To transform a man into the form of a dog. For this is used the Gospel of John and “Sic deus dilexit” etc. and one figure.
29. To cause insomnia in someone, with a cursing verse and a figure. Additionally the Devil and twelve main demons are called by the power of Lucifer.
30. Killing someone involving fat ^[6] of a dead man and a terrible misuse of the Blessed Sacrament.
31. To get a girl, with blood-letting and two figures.
32. To not allow stealing from you, with blood-letting and a nasty figure, called “Angaldös”.

1) Rauðmagi = a lumpfish: *Cyclopterus lumpus*.

2) *Þjóðsögur* 1, 645–46.

3) *Ibid.* 1, 651–53.

4) Should certainly be called “four”.

5) *Þjóðsögur* 1, 452.

6) *Þjóðsögur* 1 441–43.

† stórfiskum: (literally) big fish, usually meaning whales and sometimes sharks or other large sea creatures.

33. To not allow any evil spirit to come close to you, involving a chicken egg, seal blood, whale ambergris etc. and the young that will come from it and which should be given to Satan; also a knuckle from the little finger for further support.
34. To appease anger, with two figures.
35. To not allow oneself to be attacked by the dead, involving the bones of men, blessings and signs of the cross.
36. Inflict somebody with a ‘flugusótt’ (flying sickness?). ^[1]
37. To know who steals, with blood-letting and a figure.
38. To get rightful reward [† alternatively: fair pay. i.e. when trading].
39. To learn who is stealing, with two figures: hagall hinn minni (= the lesser).
40. Helper ring when in trouble from sword wound and elven disorientation †, involving four nasty figures.
41. To get no storms at sea, with a figure.
42. To get a girl, with a figure.
43. To find out which person is riding your horse, with a figure.
44. To not let someone come off his horse, with two figures.
45. So that a whale will do no harm, with two figures.
46. To fish successfully, with a figure.
47. So that someone has no shame from his mistake, with a figure.
48. So that a woman gets no child.
49. If you want the people to have peace in the house where you are.
50. So that stealing will never be exposed, with blood-letting and a figure.
51. So that someone has misfortune on land and at sea, with a large figure.
52. A further 30 symbols with no details, which you should have on hand.
53. Enemy-scarecrow (óvinagiægur) [† enemy-discipline-frightener?], the smaller, with two figures.
54. When fish dividing, to get every share that you want, with a figure called “Raven Claw” (hrafnaklær).
55. Ball of luck (heillahnöttur), a figure.
56. So that the scythe stays sharp, with Sator arepo and two figures.
57. To find that which another has lost, with two figures.
58. So that a girl repeats nothing [† or “says nothing about it”], with a figure.
59. To get a girl to the game († into a dalliance), featuring two symbols.
60. So that nothing is stolen from you, with eleven symbols.
61. So that thieves cannot apologize, with eight characters.
62. If someone is insulted undeservedly, to let someone's livestock die, with two figures.
63. So that a man will be caught stealing, with a few words.
64. So that someone regrets his words, with twenty characters.
65. Against livestock deaths: four characters.
66. Against internal injuries: Sator arepo.
67. So that someone sleeps six nights, with seven figures.
68. Against colic: two symbols to be carved on cheese.
69. If a horse becomes sick, with four characters.
70. To know a thief: three symbols to scratch on a human bone (leggur = thigh bone).
71. To stop a raging person: a symbol on a human bone (leg).
72. So that a girl will not be spoiled by a man, with five characters.
73. Against insomnia: six symbols.
74. So that a troll or an útburður ^[2] does not make a person insane: four symbols.

1) Probably means “magical flies”, *Þjóðsögur* 1, 626, et seq. [† Or refer item 75 in this list.]

2) Ghost of an abandoned or an unbaptized dead child. See *Journal of Anthropology* 1900, 72 et seq. and *Þjóðsögur* 1, 224–26.

† elvin will (Álfavilla): confusion or becoming lost caused by the magic by elves.

75. To cause fly disease (flugsótt): five symbols on human bones. †
76. To make someone unpopular, with seven symbols.
77. To scratch someone a sleep thorn.
78. If a woman wants to refuse a man, with six symbols.
79. Something about sheep, with three figures.
80. Against Theft: Summoned hrímpurs (frost giant) and grímpurs (cruel giant) and father of all trolls (Óðinn) with 29 symbols. ^[1]

In this spell book should therefore have been in total 237 symbols and figures, and probably is here the distinction has been made between symbols and figures, in that with symbols (stafir) individual symbols (stafir) are being referred to, however with figures (figúrur) entire images (myndir) and joined single symbols (stafir) are being referred to. Without a doubt, the book has been burned, which is a great pity; for we have no knowledge of a second so rich an Icelandic magic book.

There were in total 13 students involved in this case, two of which † were known to have written the book; it had its origins in the Westfjords ^[2], because magical belief dominated there the most and still to this day many traces have been left behind. The bishop Brynjúlfur did not want to bring the matter before the court, and it was feared that the students would all be burned if he had done so; but he ended up with giving them severe school punishments and then directing them out of the school. At the same time he asked the Council of Denmark what to do with the young men, and he was allowed to take them back into the school except for those two who had written the book.

They were chased away completely from the school of Skálholt; one of them was 19, the other 20 years old. After that they both travelled to England, where one of them died; but the other came back to Iceland a few years later, and it is nowhere said that people continued to harass him. ^[3]

IV. Various Enchantments and Superstition
listed from page 160 Kreddur manuscript, from which the
magic symbols no. IV, V, VI, VII, XIX, XXIII, XXXII, XXXV, XXXVII,
XXXVIII, XXXIX, XLII, LII, LIII, LIV are taken

1. That someone's enemy can not target him with magic, he should steal so much hair from them that anyone could make a band from it that could be tied into three knots and keep it well preserved. Thus their enchantments will cause no harm.

1) This list is extracted from the document book (bréfabók) of Bishop Brynjúlfur Sveinsson in the manuscript collection of Árni Magnússon in Copenhagen no. 275f. It is already printed in the annals of Jón Espólín [† *Árbækr*] Part 8, 124–27, but inaccurate.

2) The north-western Iceland peninsula.

3) According to the annals of Jón Espólín Part 6, 137–38 and *Djóðsögur* 1, 339–40. [† is actually on 539–40.]

† Spells 35, 70, 71 and 75 above refer to 'mannsleggur' or 'mannsbein'. Neither terms are necessarily specific in their definition of which bone is being referred to – they may be any human bone.

† Bjarni Bjarnason and Einar Gudmundsson. Bjarni returned to Iceland in 1667 and lived to age 84.

2. The teeth of a person and a bone from their left arm, placed under the head of a sleeping person, leaves him never to awaken until it is all taken away. Tested.
3. Never will be butter be formed in a butter churn, into which one has put a bit of sugar, provided that this is also small.
4. If you spit brandy into the ears of a tired horse, it will become willing.
5. If you want to gain a good and loyal friend, then forge two silver rings and let them lie nine nights in a wagtail's or sparrow's ^[1] nest. Then take one and carry it with you and give the other to your friend and say jokingly to him that this is your fidelity ring, and you want that he never separates it from him, but beware of letting him know these proceedings with the rings. One must go about it in the same way to win the love of good women.
6. Kill a three nights old foal, take therefrom the head and let the fat flow in the best way into a new earthen jar; let it be early in the morning, so that the one who is to see your mind's intent is not yet awake; go to where he sleeps, with a quill spread the contents of the jar on his eyes, and when he wakes up, all those present will appear to him to have foal heads. Wash the eyes with clean water, so the illusion disappears.
7. To discover a thief: Take Friggjargras (an orchid, *Habenaria hyperborea* †), leave it lying three nights in water and put it under your head; when you sleep, then you will see him.
8. For Hair Growth: knead together cat faeces and mustard and leave it to grow brushed on a sparse head of hair.
9. To shoot surely: Take heart and liver of a wren and mix it with the lead when you cast shot or bullets, so your shot will always be true.
10. If you want to know for certain who stole from you: scratch the following words on bread or cheese or any food, and give this to eat to those whom you suspect, then they can not swallow them and give themselves up or confess to it. The words are these: makk, rakk, fenakk. - But if you want to dream this, then take one unused headcomb and comb the head of a dead person with it and then keep to yourself the hair that is stuck in it for three nights in an unused canvas and then put it under your head. Then the dead will come and tell you this in your time of sleep, what you want to know.
11. To make an hulinshjálmur ^[2]. Get yourself a totally black dog that has no white hair, kill it and take its heart out, take spruce and split it at the end and put the heart into the gap and bury it there in the earth, where meadows and fertilized land meet and leave it there for nine nights before St. John's day occurs. Take it out again yourself on St. John's day, then a stone will be formed there. Carry it with you.

1) Titlingur; this in the original document explanation: *Anthus pratensis* or *Plectrophanes nivalis*.

2) Meant is the 'Tarnkappenstein' (invisibility cloak stone), which makes one invisible. Hylja [† and Huliðs] = conceal, hjálmur = helmet.

† Friggjargras is the Northern Green Orchid and has a scientific name "*Platanthera hyperborea*".

12. If anyone wants to let a girl get ruined by another then take, by himself or his wife, a lock of her hair without her knowing about it and burn it in front of her nose.
13. Pay the most attention to dreams when you wake up at midnight, throw water on yourself and then go to asleep again.
14. In order for a sheep to only bring ewe lambs into the world, one should either remove or bind the ram's right testes if it is going to be left with the sheep.
15. So that cattle do not get tired on the crossing to pastures, one should apply pitch or tar to their hooves.
16. If a horse is restless when it is shod, then one should put a pebble into its ear and hold it. Then the horse will be as meek as a lamb.
17. To kill mice, one should put burnt blood in their holes.
18. If one wishes that another gets diarrhoea, then one should put mercury in their food.
19. If anyone does not want to let the dogs bark at him, then he should carry a dog's heart with him, or he should take out a tooth from the middle of the skull of a dog that is either completely black or completely white, wrap it in the caul ^[1] of the first heifer calving ^[2], and wear it between the breasts. One can give a dog minced dog heart in milk, so that he no longer barks in the daytime.
20. In order to increase understanding, one should rub their eyes with snow chicken bile.
21. Should someone have steel in their shoes, then no one can deceive them.
22. To make yourself popular with the people: Take a pigeon heart, harden it and wear it on you, then everyone, both men and women, will love you.
23. To expel evil spirits: Take the lungs of a swan and wear them around your neck.
24. To win at board games (tafl): Take the heart out of a raven, it harden and grind it into powder and rub it on the dice. ^[3]
25. So that a woman loves a man very much: Give her a finely chopped pigeon heart in her food or in her drink, or have a wagtail's tongue under your tongue root, and the one you kiss first will love you before any others. Or take two gold or silver rings and put them in the nest of a wagtail or sparrow (titlingur) so that they are there nine days. Then take them back and give her the one, but keep the other yourself. Then she will love you.
26. To gain friendship: Carry on you a Rotbauchschild ^[4] † and half a seal-heart dried in the wind, but not in sunshine.
27. If someone wants to appease the wrath of their enemy, they should go to the water before a raven flies over it, hold their hands in the water and with the fourth finger of the right hand make the following runes on their forehead and not wash themselves afterwards:

ƚR † !!! 1 1 P P Φ K M K K I ^[5]

1) Here: hildarskæni, otherwise: liknabelgur or liknarbelgur (= amniotic membrane).

2) IE: That which brings any cows into the world.

3) See Ólafur Davíðsson, *Íslenzkar skemtanir* (Copenhagen 1888–92) p 279.

4) Rauðmagi = a fish, Cyclopterus lumpus.

† Rotbauchschild = red-bellied-shield. However the German name for Cyclopterus lumpus is Seehase or Lumpfisch. These two seem unrelated, except for the colour red.

5) The author is not familiar with what these runes mean.

28. Against insomnia: Take a goat horn and put it under someone's head without their knowing it. This transforms the insomnia to sleep.
29. If a horse gets tired in the evening, one should put warm manure under its hooves; then it is not tired in the morning.
30. Bearberry ^[1], in grey paper carried on you, protects from all ghosts, unless they were summoned.

V. Magic and Witchcraft from Various Manuscripts

31. Every Christian should first be blessed when he wakes up in the morning with these following names: "lä + obä + kooa + knenid + leitx + agla + ägon + voy + ze."

32. Against all kinds of diseases and hardship carry on you:

Ⱪ·R·Ṛ·O·Ṙ·Ṙ·Z·O·G·G·Z·Z·S·B·R·E·Y·Ḡ·

Per crucis [hoc] signum +	By this sign of the Cross
Fugiat procul [omne] malignum.	May all evil flee far away.
Et per idem signum +,	And by this very symbol,
Salvetur quodque benignum.	May whatever is good be saved.

(taken from the Ancrene Wisse – an untraced hymn).

33. Against the same: Tetragrammaton Adonai Emanuel.

34. JESVS: NASARENVS: JVDEORVM. This line was first measured in Constantinople up against the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and is 1/16th the height of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the height of himself, but anyone who carries this line on themselves or sees it, will on that day not suffer sudden death and get no cold fever (riðusótt) nor other ghastly harm and will not be wrongly convicted, and when you see them on your death day so your soul will not come into eternal torment, but gain eternal glory and bliss. Amen.

Omnipotenz dominus + christus + messias + soter + Emanuel + Sabaoth + adonij + onigenitus + oia + mänu + hamo + vsijon + sälutes + alpha + etoo + fonz + origo + spes + fides + charitas + osa + agnos + ouis + virgulus + serpenz + aries + leo + vermis + priymus + nonissimus + Rex + pater + filius + spunsetuns + ego sum + Jesum + creator + eternus + Redemptor + trinitas + vnitas + clemens + cäput + otheoticos + tetragrammaton +

Perhaps, however, this set has no connection with 34 [† item in this list], but rather is completely stand alone. It is quite incomprehensible, but many of the individual words are understandable.

After these sentences come the first 14 verses of John's Gospel and then the 'heavens letter' but in a slightly different reading than those in the *Djóðsögur 2*, 53–55. Jón Espólín says in his annals, the 'heavens letter' had been brought to Iceland in 1648, but this is not correct according to what Reverend Sigurður Torfason says in the manuscript collection of Árni Magnússon 698 4to, pp. 24–25, and it would be safer to believe him, because he was closer to the time of the incident. He says: "In the year 1653, if I remember correctly, therein came the rumor of a letter, which was called "Michilsborg's letter" (Michilsborgar bréf), of which it was said, as I recall, that it floated in the air nearby, and up again if someone wanted to grab it, because of its holiness I believe, but anyone who wanted was allowed to write about it. This letter is said to have been written by Jesus, from heaven on Earth, in his own hand. . . .

1) Bearberry [Icelandic: Sortulyng] = *Arctostaphylos*, *uva-ursi*.

In this letter were given in detail good works, brotherly love and sanctification of Sundays. In this he conformed to God's words, but in a final step he added the provision, that anyone who carries this letter with them, should not suffer loss by wind, fire or water." Reverend Sigurður says, "This 'misfortune sheet' ^[1] stirred up the devil, and this had spread, using it to ensnare the ignorant people; this would have probably succeeded, had not God awoken the spiritual authorities, to denounce these devil pages and have the distribution of it banned, because I, at that time a fairly large school boy, spoke with some people from among the community, who very insistently begged me to write it for them, because they would like to have it as well, just as others did, even the very illiterate. It was enough if they only had it with them, even though they could not read it, so it was close to here that he (i.e. the devil) had this, his debauchery, smuggled."

No. 31–34 is from the manuscript collection of Árni Magnússon 434c 12mo, it has a tiny format and in total 22 pages. Some leaves are parchment and some paper. The manuscript is from the mid-17th century, on the front page is written the year in 1650. Before the last page appears:

Guð miskunni mér ^[2]
TETRA
GRAM
ATONJHS †
christas
DRvtin. ^[3]

35. "Do you have someone on suspicion of stealing from you, write these words on cheese or bread and let him eat it: paxx magx vix x ax x. If he can not swallow it, he is guilty"

36. In order not to be frightened during sleep: Cross yourself first on the neck, below the uppermost cervical vertebra, in the name of the Father, then strike the hand up over the head and say: the Son, on both sides, and say: the Holy Spirit. Thus the person will wake up before they are startled.

37. Take a human tooth, burn it to ashes, and let the smoke rise. ^[4] Wise men say this smoke is good to expel ghosts and witchcraft.

38. Against fear of darkness (myrkfælni). Take water mixed with human blood and rub your face with it, thus you will be brave. ^[5]

39. Ghosts spots (draugablettir). If the ghost that was sent to a man † manages to touch him, so will its fingers leave black marks. They are used to cause ravenous sores and to kill people if nothing is done about it. The remedy should be explained here: You should wrap eðalstál (segulstál = magnetic steel?) around the marks and three times

1) Úlukku blað: Úlukku, genitive of úlukka [= ill-luck], is often used an adjective and then translated to "Devil's" sheet.

2) God be merciful to me.

3) Drutin, supposed to mean Drottinn = the Lord.

† The layout seems odd here, but the identifiable words are "tetragram(m)aton" and "JHS".

4) In the healing book of Governor Jón Þorláksson 1691, the body part, into which the smoke must ascend, is named.

5) Also from the healing book by Jón Þorláksson.

† This kind of 'sending' is common in Icelandic folklore.

sing the Lord's Prayer; ^[1] then they will not continue to spread. Then, you should go to lukewarm washing water, hold the marks in it, cut into them three, six or nine wounds and pour the lukewarm water over them. If everything is done correctly, then it will be enough.

40. Ghosts, monsters and all night hauntings are afraid of goat liver, as well as of ram horn, when they are burned.

41. Ghosts and monsters do not come towards the house, to which a thorn rod is attached.

42. Against nosebleeds: The selfsame (who has the nosebleeds) should put the little finger of a dead man into the nostril, the left into the left, the right into the right.

43. Against fear of darkness: Wash yourself with human blood and spring water before a bird flies overhead. Items to carry with you: human bones and human fat with consecrated ground. The white human fat is beneficial, but the other (the yellow) is detrimental.

44. To produce optical illusions and to know what is of use to you: Take eagle-claws ^[2], sparrow-claws ^[3], raven-claws ^[4], hawk-claws ^[5], dog paws, cats paws, mice paws, fox paws. Take the claws and paws of all these animals and boil them in the water that originates in the east. Then take the bladders and put them into an unused burlap bag and drink the decoction. Then hold the bag over your head and command what optical illusion you have intended for him.

45. Sleep thorn. Take the pericardium of a dog, pour brine broth into it. Then dry it for 13 days, where the sun does not shine on it, and if the person to whom you want to do that ^[6] to is asleep, then hang this up in the house above him, entirely without his knowledge.

46. If you put a wagtail's tongue under the head of a sleeping man, then he will wake up late or not at all.

47. Take the needle with which you have sewn a dead man, stab it from below into the table where people eat, and they will, if they know nothing about it, be unable to let the food slide down, also when you are at the best prepared, before the needle is taken away. ^[7]

48. Mischief ^[8] on sheep. Cut a mark into the ears of the sheep that are to be chased with the mischief, until blood comes. Then take lignite (Icelandic: *surtarbrandur*) and burn it under the animals until it scorches.

49. To get a haunting out of the houses: Bury there lignite. Then the haunting slackens. ^[9]

1) Singing the words seems to indicate that this superstition comes from Catholic times.

2) *Haliaeetus albicilla*.

3) *Anthus pratensis* or *Plectrophenax nivalis*.

4) *Corvus corax*.

5) *Falco aesalon*.

6) That is, the sleep-thorn prick.

7) No. 39–47 are taken from the manuscript collection of the Lit. Society in Copenhagen no. 165, 8vo.

8) If you want to cause harm to the sheep using magic.

9) No. 48–49 come from a healing book from about the year 1720.

VI. Explanations of the Drawings (Plates III–VIII)

Fig. I. bears the name “Galdrahöll” (Magic hall). “This ‘Magic-hall’ the ancients used for their sorcery, and scratched it on water rail † skin.” The runes most resemble lattice writing (grindaletur), however they can’t be read using these alphabets. Uppermost in the middle it says: “Araton”, opposite “Helga”. On the right it says “Adona”, left “O. ma” [† or “Olma”]. I cannot read the writing on the oblique lines.

Fig. II is a Galdratöluskip (Ship of magic numbers). “The ancients used this in order to destroy ships.” The names of the magic symbols are Ginnir and Gapi; there is a figure of Ginnir in the *Þjóðsögur* by Jón Árnason, Gapi however is reminiscent of the last part of the magic symbols named Angurgapi, which is also shown there.

III. Kaupaloki (Deal closer?). “Cut this symbol on a beechwood board and carry it in the centre of your chest, if you want to have success in buying and selling.” In *Þjóðsögur* is a very different picture of Kaupaloki. See also page 453.

IV. Have this symbol on gray paper under the left arm when you negotiate with someone.

V. In order to have victory in trade with all people: Draw this symbol on blotting paper and carry it under the left arm and don’t let it be known by anybody. Compare No. 2.

VI. If you carry this symbol with you, you will certainly defeat your enemies.

VII. Dünfaxi. “If you want to win a court case, carry this symbol with you, if you have faith. It is called Dün faxi . . . ^[1] before you go to where the case is handled. It should be on an oak-branch tablet.”

VIII. Kaupaloki. “This symbol should be carved on a beechwood board and carried in the centre of ones chest.” See Fig. III.

IX. Vatnahlífir (Water protection). “This symbol is to be worn under the right arm, when you need protection.” As the name of the symbol suggests, it is especially designed to protect people in dangerous flood waters. The writing on the symbol is Irrschrift and means. “May God give me luck and blessings in Jesus’ Name Amen”

X. So that you do not die in the water. Carry this symbol under the left arm.

XI and XII. Crucifix ^[2] (Róðukross) of King Olaf Tryggvason to fight evil spirits and so people do not get lost, an item for winning luck on sea and land. This Cross of Christ is for internal and external protection and defense against all magic, optical illusions, fear and palpitations and guilty conscience. It is good in all dangers at sea and on land, when carried among the clothes on the chest. Every person who loves it with fervor, learns about their death before it comes. It protects and destroys the evil thoughts of man and makes them patient in adversity, and above all it gives strength and the characteristic that the person is reassured in the love of God and fellow man. Such a crucifix was also used (for strengthening faith through many trials and dangers) by King Olaf Tryggvason, Sæmundur Fróði, the priest Ari hinn fróði and a lot more people who were enlightened by nature in the gifts of the Spirit, which many held under their seal ^[3] and called it “instrumentum” [† Icelandic/Latin: instrumental].

“Crucified Jesus, you come here,
If I call you to help.”

Then comes the image of the seal of Jesus Christ.

1) In the manuscript here the information on how to deal with the symbol is missing.

2) In the manuscript “róðukross” is written everywhere, but this is incorrect (Ol D.).

3) i.e. Whereupon the crucifix was engraved.

† Water rail = *Rallus aquaticus*, a wetlands bird now extinct in Iceland, but still seen widely across Europe.

“Such a crucifix and seal of Jesus Christ is found in the writings of the most distinguished men of antiquity in this country, namely Snorri Sturluson, the Lögmanns, and Sæmundurs the Wise (fróði,) and with yet other wise men who kept it on them in all sorts of adversity and they carried it on their chests inserted in parchment, so to bring them happiness, healing and well-being benefits by sea and land. One can also find in the writings of the priest Ari hinn fróði that this venerable seal was to all those who love it dearly and trust in it, a steadfast seal of the soul and the body. Amen.”

XIII. Brýnslustafir (Whet symbols). “Scratch the upper symbol on top of your whetstone, the other underneath, then place grass over it for a while, then whet away from the sun and do not look at the cutting edge.”

XIV. Brýnslustafir. “Scratch on a whetstone with steel.” See Fig. VI. I cannot find any sense in the symbol. Compare *Þjóðsögur* 1, 449.

XV. Draumstafir (Dream symbol). “Carve this symbol on a red spruce and sleep on it, then you will dream about what you want.”

XVI. Draumstafir. “Carve this symbol on so-called ‘man killing oak’ (manndræpseik) and put it under the head of the one that is to get dreams according to your will, without them knowing.”

XVII. Draumstafir “Scratch these symbols on silver or white leather, on St John’s Night [† Midsummer’s Eve] and they who sleep on them dream about what they want, when the sun is at its lowest.”

XVIII. Svefnþorn (Sleep thorn). “These symbols were carved on oak and laid under the head of whoever that was sleeping, then he could not wake up until it was taken away.” See *Þjóðsögur* 1, 449.

XIX. “Against insomnia and bad dreams. Scratch this symbol using magnetic iron onto lignite.” (Islandic: Braunkohle).

XX. Drottningar signet (Signet of the Queen). “It resists all the spirits that are below the upper winds.”

XXI. Himinsbarnahjálmur (heavens children helm). “It resists every unclean thing of air and earth. It is drawn correctly according to Snorri (Sturluson?).”

XXII. Gimsteinn Jónasar (Gemstone of Jonas). “It is against witchcraft, which is practised north of the Equator. Þorvaldur of Sakka ^[1] used this symbol, as he summoned down the Spirit from under the Sun, sitting himself in the churchyard gateway, but the spirit did not get any further down than 800 fathoms above the earth’s surface because of its size, and it was because of the symbol’s power that Þorvaldur did not come to any harm in the earthquake that happened when the spirit came down. It’s nowhere correct except in the Greek language according to works of Snorri ^[2].”

XXIII. “For a bite ^[3]: Scratch this symbol on an oak and put it over the front door.”

XXIV “Against inflammation: scratch with a knife on an oak tablet their names, which are these: heimakona and meinakoma ^[4]. Then make a wound there where the pain is, with this blood write the symbols and place them against it.”

XXV. Lukkustafir (Lucky symbols). “Whosoever bears these staves on him will not meet with mishaps on sea and land.”

XXVI. Innsigli Salómons (Solomon’s seal). “Carried on oneself for defence.”

XXVII. Davíðs innsigli (David’s seal). “Carried on oneself against evil spirits.” The Irrschrift mean ‘Jesus Christ’, the runes mean ‘Amen’. “LH” † are the initials of Jesus Christ.

1) An unknown magician. Sakka is a homestead in Svarfaðardalur in Eyjafjarðarsýsla.

2) Snorri Sturluson.

3) That is, animal bite by a fox [† the only Icelandic land predator].

4) Heimakona = home wife; koma = coming, mein = damage.

† These letters are difficult to read, but more likely read “IH”; compare XI and XXXII.

XXVIII and XXIX. Róðukross (Crucifixes). “Seal of King Olaf the Holy, which was carried on oneself for defence.”

XXX and XXXI. Vegvisir (Path guide). “Carry this sign with you and you won't get lost in storms or bad weather, even though in unfamiliar surrounds.”

XXXII. “This symbol, carried with you, resists all magic.” It is not understood what “ITT” † means.

XXXIII. Sáttgjafar (Reconciler). “If another hates you then write these symbols on parchment and put it under their head, without them knowing.”

XXXIV. Herzlustafir (Strengthening symbols). “Carry these symbols on your left chest, in order to strengthen up the mind.” [† is “Herðslustafir” in Huld, from Icel. “herða”: to harden]

XXXV. “Have this symbol in the right hand against fear of magic.”

XXXVI. Astros. “The protection symbol that is to come is called Astros. It resists all runes and scratchings of any kind that can happen. According to Snorri.”

XXXVII. “Have these symbols in calfskin in front of your chest when you want to ‘send’ back again to the one who has ‘sent’ to you.” Here the talk is no doubt about the ‘sending’ of ghosts or the resurrected.

XXXVIII. “So you do not get shame for what happens to you; Make this symbol with your right Goldfinger ^[1] with your saliva on the forehead.”

XXXIX. “Against forboding when you go in darkness: scratch this symbol on oak-brush (hríseik) ^[2] and wear it under your left arm.”

XL. Varnarstafur Valdimars (Waldemar’s protective symbol). “It increases popularity and luck of all those who keep it and can handle it well. It came here from Germany and is therefore the best of these ancient symbols. It must not be carved or written on anything, unless that man is tormented by something evil and then it should be written with flounder gut onto the skin of a chicken egg and put in the person’s headwear.”

XLI. Óttastafur (Fear symbols). “Scratch these symbols on an oak tablet and throw it at the feet of your enemy, to make him afraid.”

XLII. “To put someone into a bad mood: Scratch these symbols into lead and put it in that person’s clothes at the small of their back.”

XLIII. Dreprún (Killing rune). “If you want your enemy to lose their livestock (gripur) then put this symbol on the horse trail.” The only instruction given here is on how you could destroy horses using the dreprún, but gripur can also mean cows and cattle (nautgripur).

XLIV. Feingur † (capture catch?). “If you want a girl to get pregnant by you, then cut this symbol into a piece of cheese and give it to her to eat.” A very different picture of feingur is found in the *Djóðsögur*.

XLV. Lásabrjótur (Lock breaker). “Put this symbol onto a lock and blow into it.” The runes under the image mean: “All trolls like to grab the lock, reach the devil into it, that it breaks.” (Tröll öll taki í mellu, taki í djofu (djofull) so (svo) braki). There is a magic verse, called “Locks Verse of Thieves” ; it reads:

So I blow a storm in the lock,	The key has come to the lock,
I breath from human fat,	Makes the lock open now.
I take hold with this hand,	The devil with putrid breath
Then the mella ^[3] gets out of the joints.	Blows firmly into the lock. ^[4]

1) Gullfinger, baugfinger (ring finger), the fourth finger of the right hand.

2) Unsure which type of wood is meant. [† hrís = brushwood and “eik” = oak? or just any tree]

3) The mella is an iron part in the lock; one type of lock was called “melluláss” thereafter.

4) According to the dictionary of Jón Ólafsson from Grunnavík in the manuscript collection of Arni Magnússon under the word “lås”.

† It more likely was to be read as “IHS”; being the Greek “IHΣΟΥΣ” or Latin reference to Jesus Christ.

† in Huld it is spelt “Fengur” meaning “catch” . In *Djóðsögur*, Davíðsson may be referring to “Feingr”; however that symbol seems related more to another name for Óðinn of “Fengr” as found in *Reginismál*.

XLVI. Þórshamar (Þórr's hammer). "Wizards used this symbol to summon (expose) thieves and do other magic." In the *Þjóðsögur* of J. A. is a very different picture of Þórr's Hammer, whereas this image is that of a human face with the spike through the eye. *Þjóðsögur* 1, 445

XLVII. Þjófastafur (Thief symbol). "Put this symbol under the doorstep of your enemy and he will recoil when he steps over it if he is guilty of theft from you." See *Þjóðsögur* 1, 450, 463–64.

XLVIII. Þjófastafur. "Should you want someone to steal, then scratch this symbol on the bottom of the plate ^[1] he eats from."

XLIX. Þjófastafir. (Thief symbols, pl.). "To see a thief, scratch these symbols in so called 'man killing oak' and have it under your hand."

L. Þjófastafir. "Scratch these symbols in maple-wood ^[2] and put it beneath your head, then you will see the thief in your sleep."

LI. Þjófastafur. "If this symbol is scratched into the bottom of a wash bowl inside and outside at full moon and high tide ...". This obviously is missing the rest. See No. 16–20.

LII. "In order to recognize a thief: Engrave this sign on a brass plate, and have on its back the hair of a very black and uncut tomcat, and have it under your head for the three nights of an old moon, until they (the thief) appear to you in a dream."

LIII. "The same object: Draw your blood from above the nail on the left middle finger and use it to draw this symbol on paper. Have cat hair on the reverse side. Put it under your cap and sleep with it during an old moon until you dream of them. Tested." See No. 17–20.

LIV. "A person should apply these symbols just like in No. 53 and just put it on the cross."

LV. "So that a thief does not get pardoned. Have this sign in your hand."

LVI. Jósúa innsigli (Seal of Joshua). There is nothing said about what the seal of Joshua is. "J X" points undoubtedly to Jesus Christ, and the runes mean Salem, thus the meaning of the letters within the rings [† in the center] are probably "Jeru". The whole script then means "Jerusalem".

LVII. Nothing is said about this symbol except that it is undoubtedly the oldest Icelandic magic symbol there is.

LVIII. Jesus Kristi innsigli (Seal of Jesus Christ). Nothing is said in the manuscript about this seal.

LIX. The same is true of this picture. The names around the outside ring are the main or arch angels, although daael [† misread?] may not be a common angel name. Inside the rings is the beginning of John's Gospel in Latin, verses 1–14. In the outer ring are rounding three lines, but in the inner there are five. [† miscounted?]

[†Outer: John First Chapter, First Verse:

In the beginning was the Word, etc.

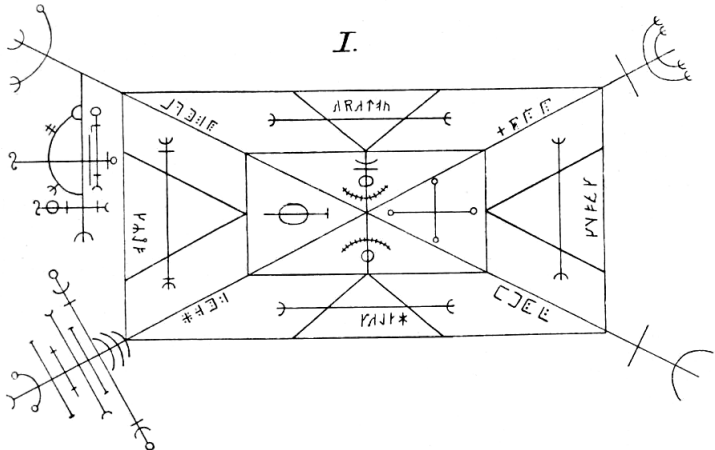
..... full of grace and truth.]

[†Inner: Jesus heals; Jesus elixir of life; Jesus overcomes; Jesus brings salvation

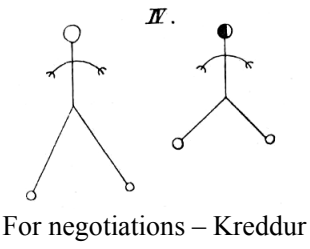
Jesus Savior; Jesus King; Jesus comforter; Jesus have mercy on me.]

1) Skerdiskur: a wooden vessel which people used to use, instead of the earthenware dish which is now common.

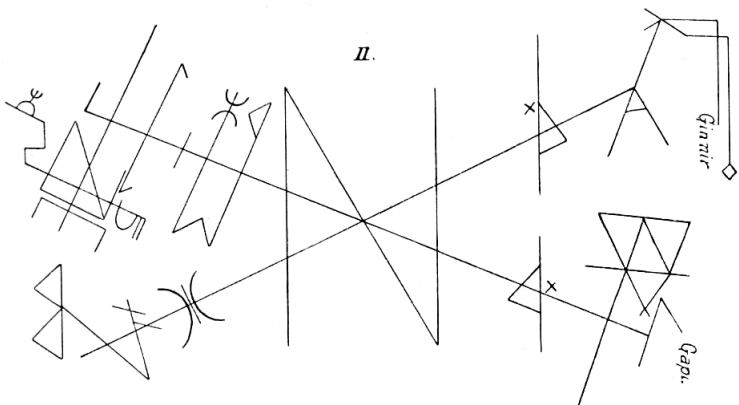
2) Valbjörk = *Acer pseudoplatanus*. The tree does not exist in Iceland. [† Valbjörk more likely means 'a foreign birch-wood'.]



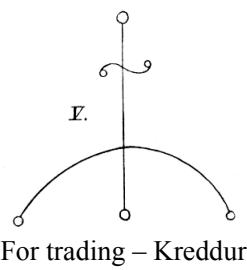
I.
For sorcery – Galdrahóllina – Huld



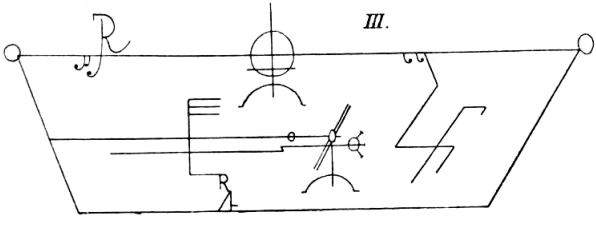
IV.
For negotiations – Kreddur



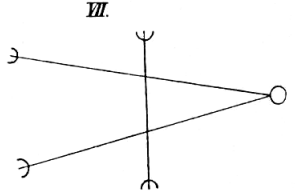
II.
Against ships – Galdra totu skípið – Huld



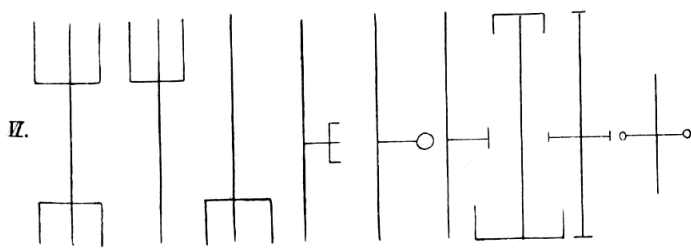
V.
For trading – Kreddur



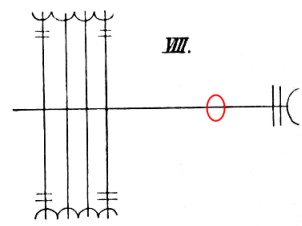
III.
For trading
–
Kaupaloki
–
Huld



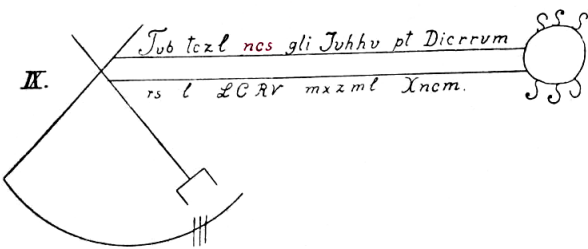
VII.
For court – Dúnfaxi – Kreddur



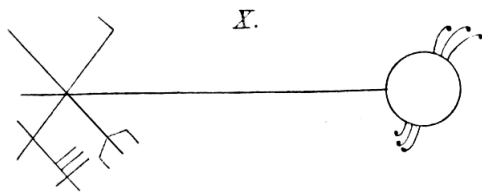
VI.
To defeat enemies – Kreddur



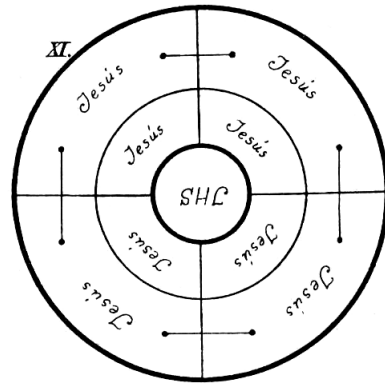
VIII.
For trading – Kaupaloki – Huld



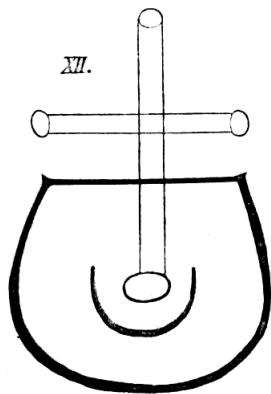
IX.
For protection in floods
Vatnahlifir –
Huld



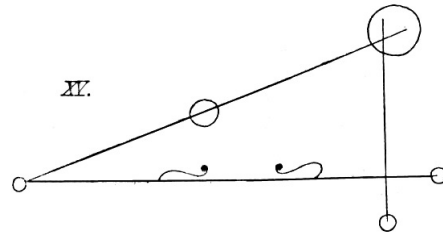
Against death in water – Kreddur



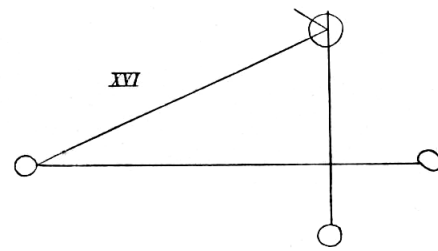
Same as Fig. XII – Other source



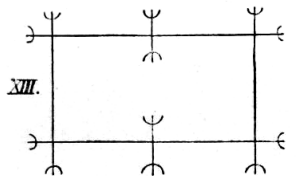
For all manner of protection and good luck – Róðukrossar of King Olaf Tryggvason – AM 960 XV 4to



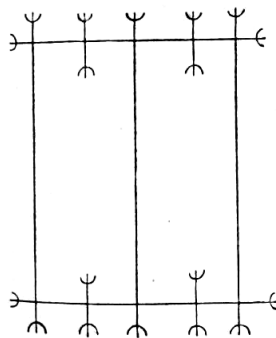
For dreaming – Draumstafur – Huld



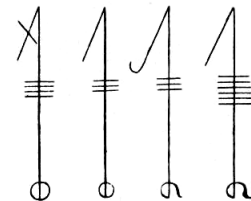
For dreaming – Draumstafur – Huld



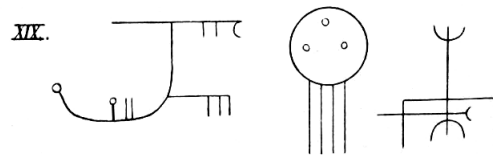
For whetstones – Brýnslustafir – Huld



XVIII.



For dreaming – Svefnþorn – Huld

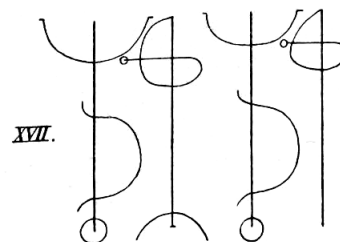


Against bad dreams – Kreddur

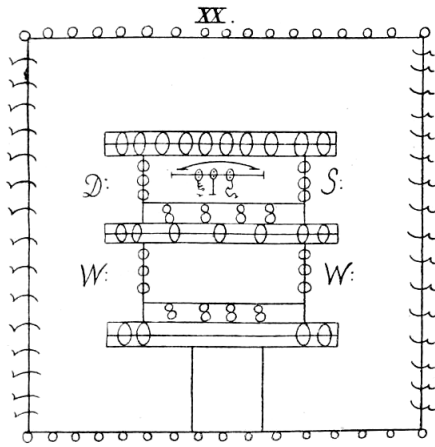
XIV.

n	k	g	p	s
k	s	c	l	p
g	c	m	c	s
p	l	c	s	k
k	p	s	k	n

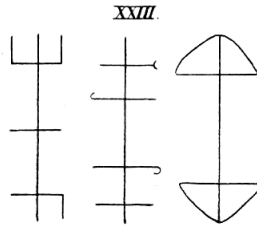
For whetstones – Brýnslustafir – unknown source



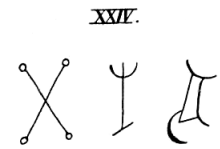
For dreaming – Draumstafir – Huld



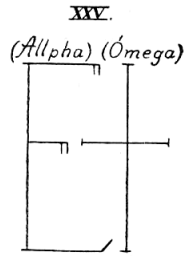
Against spirits
- Drotningarsignet -
DFS 1883/67



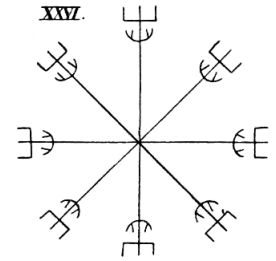
For (protection against) animal
bites - Kreddur



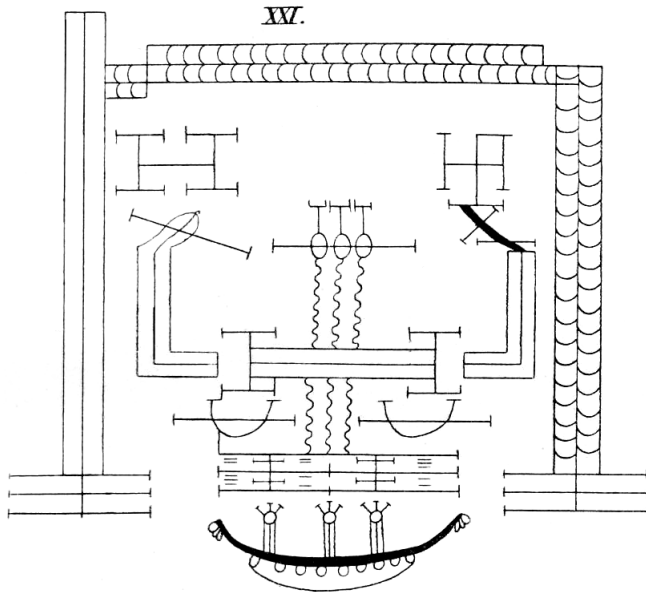
Against inflammation -
healing book, Literary
Society Copenhagen



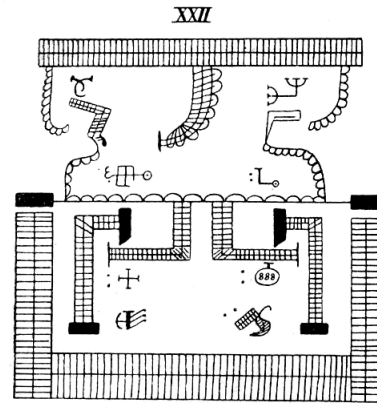
Against evil - Lukkustafir -
Huld



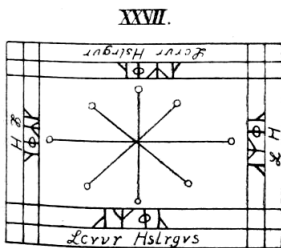
For protection - Salómons
Insigli - Huld



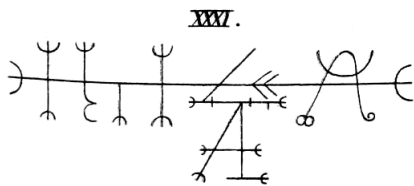
Against spirits - Himinsbarnahjalmur - DFS 1883/67



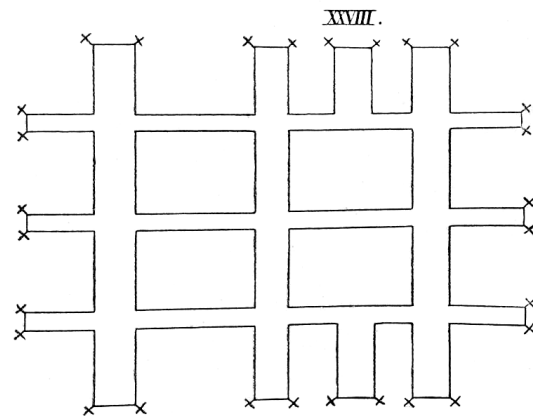
Against witchcraft
- Gimsteinn Jónasar -
DFS 1883/67



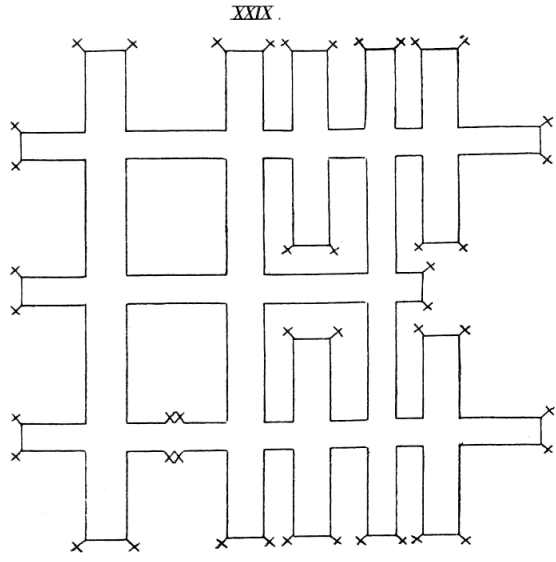
Against evil spirits
- Davíds Insigli -
Huld



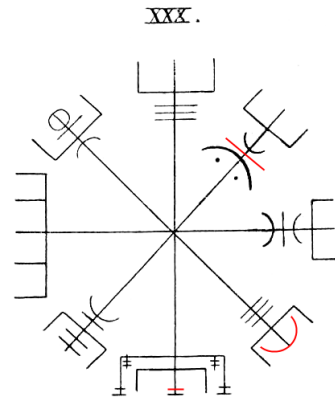
For finding the way - Vegvísir - Huld



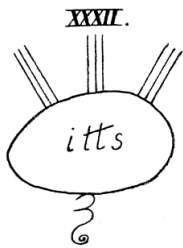
For protection - Róðukross - Huld



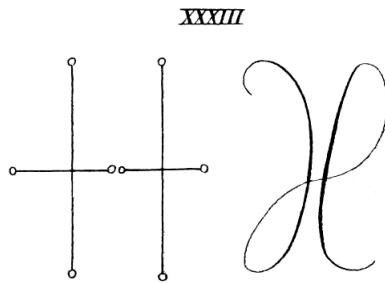
For protection – Róðukross – Huld



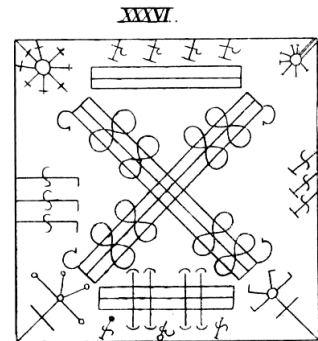
For finding the way
– Vegvísir –
Huld



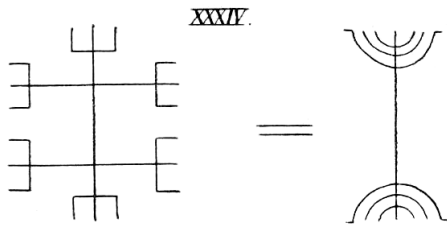
Against magic –
Kreddur



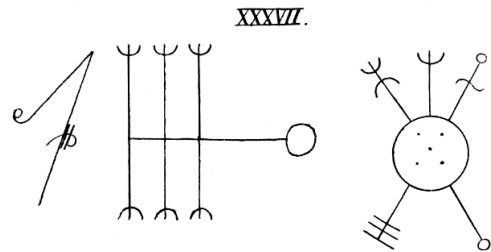
Against haters – Sáttgjafar – Huld



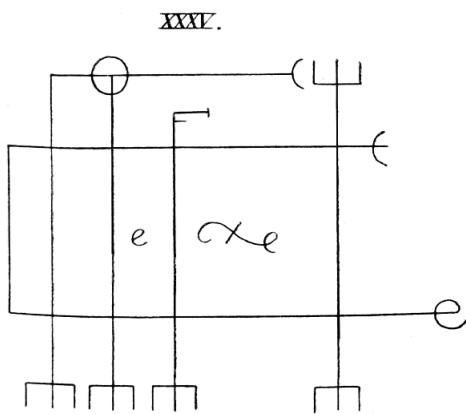
For (protection against) magic –
Astros – DFS 1883/67



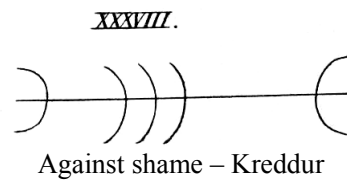
For courage – Herðslustafir – Huld



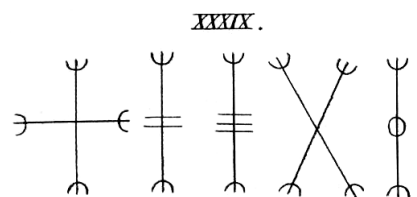
For and against 'sendings' – Kreddur



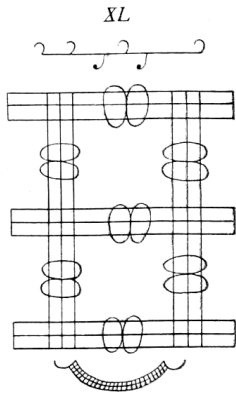
Against fear of magic – Kreddur



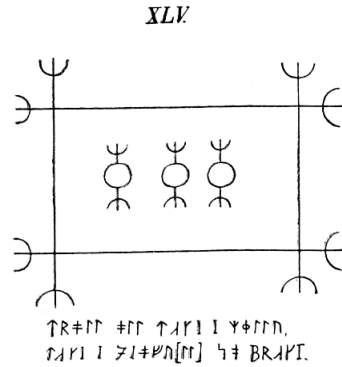
Against shame – Kreddur



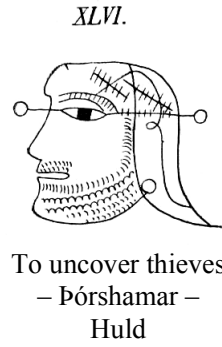
Against fear of the dark – Kreddur



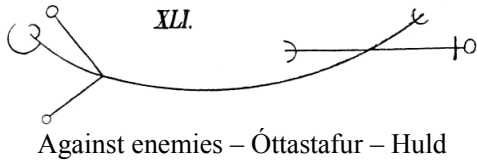
For popularity and luck
-
Varnastafur Vladimars - DFS 1883/67



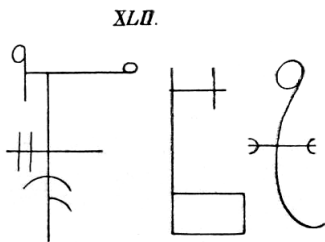
To open locks - Lásabryótur - Huld



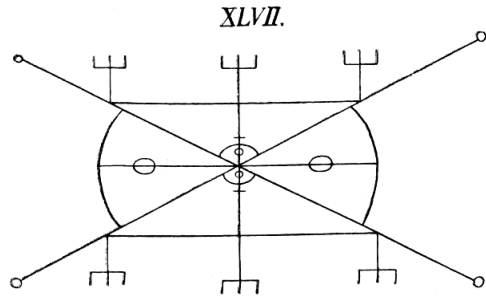
To uncover thieves - Þórshamar - Huld



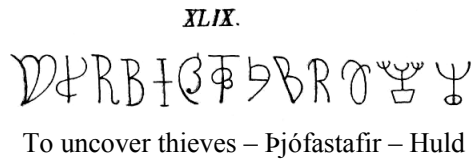
Against enemies - Óttastafur - Huld



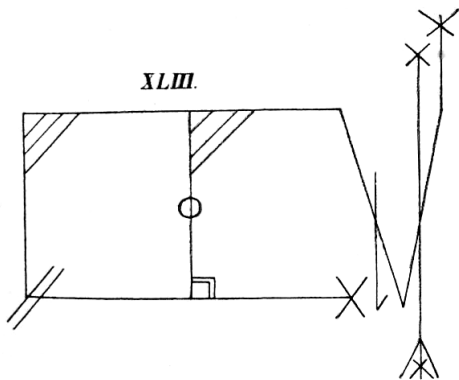
Put someone in a bad mood - Kreddur



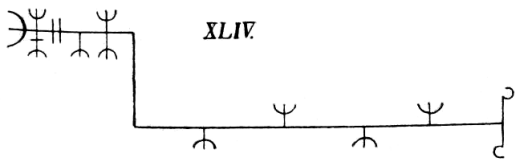
To uncover thieves - Þjófastafur - Huld



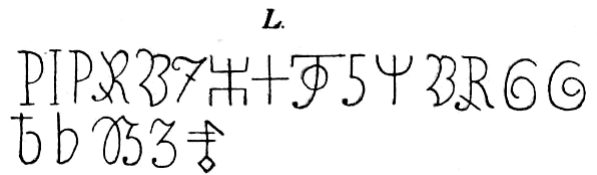
To uncover thieves - Þjófastafir - Huld



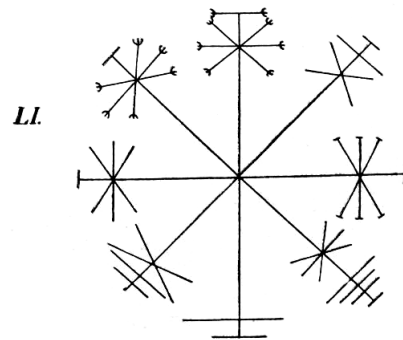
To harm enemy livestock - Dreprún - Huld



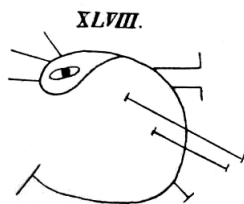
To make a pregnancy - Fengur - Huld



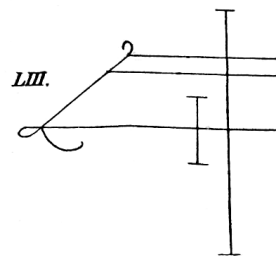
To uncover thieves - Þjófastafir - Huld



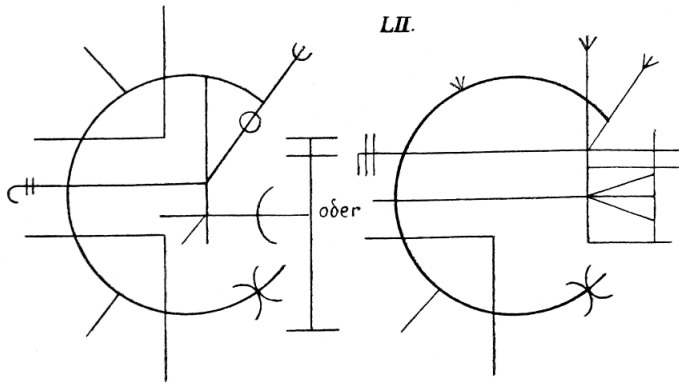
To uncover thieves - Þjófastafur - Huld



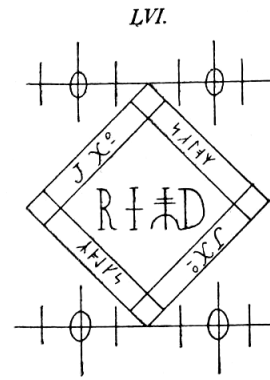
For stealing - Þjófastafur - Huld



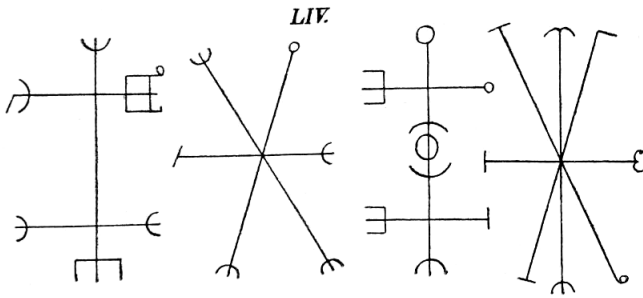
To uncover thieves - Kreddur



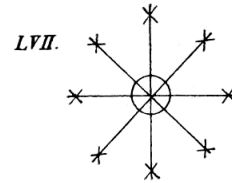
To uncover thieves – Kreddur



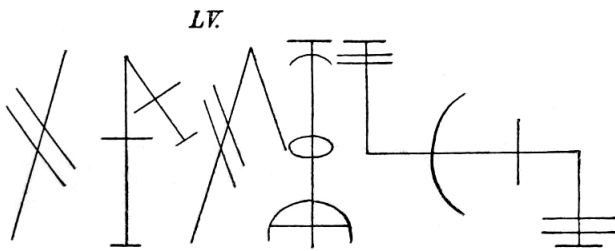
Jósúa Insigli – Huld



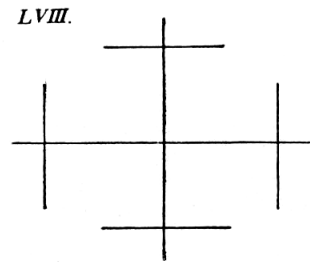
To uncover thieves – Kreddur



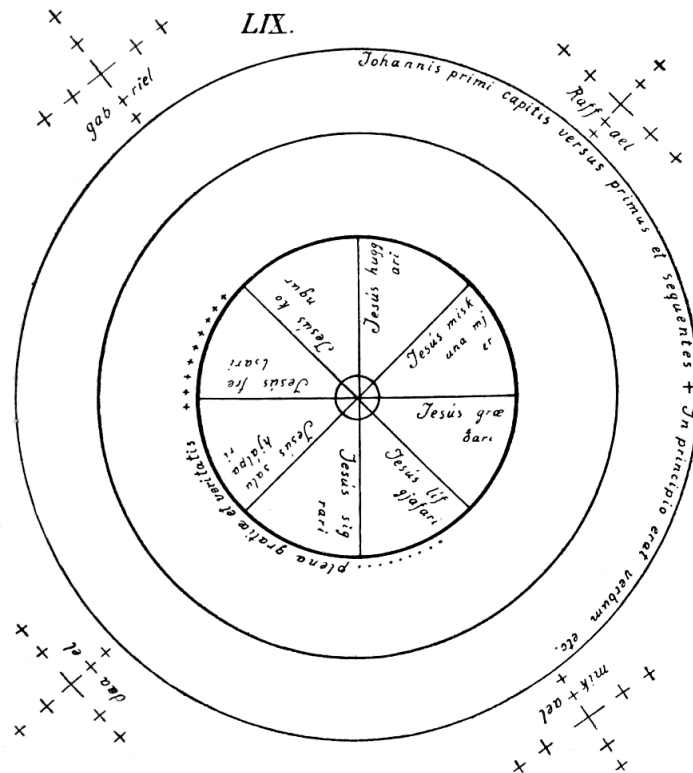
A very old symbol – AM 158 4to



Against theft – ???



Jésús Kristis Insigli – AM 960 XV 4to



Jésú Kristis Insigli – AM 960 XV 4to