

Supplementary Observations

Below I record observations supplementary to those contained within *The Waning Sword*. These comments have not been peer-reviewed. Any mistakes are solely my responsibility.

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Update 1 (2 March 2020)

The ‘Sheared’ Moon in *Vǫlundarkviða*

The Old Norse Eddic poem *Vǫlundarkviða* ‘The Lay of Vǫlundr’ describes the kidnapping of an elven smith called Vǫlundr (equivalent to Weland, maker of Beowulf’s mailcoat in *Beowulf* 455) by a Swedish king called Níðuðr. Stanza 6 reads:

Þat spyrr Níðuðr, Njára dróttinn,
at einn Vǫlundr sat í Úlfdølum;
nóttum fóru seggir, negldar váru brynjur,
skildir bliku þeira við inn skarða mána.

Níðuðr, lord of the Njárar [a Swedish tribe], learned this, that Vǫlundr stayed alone in Úlfdalir ‘Wolf-Dales’; men set out by night, their mail-coats were nailed, their shields shone with [the light of] the sheared moon.

This stanza is of interest for three reasons:

1. The adjective *skarða*, literally ‘sheared’, reflects the idea that the waning moon was ‘cut away’, implicitly by an edged weapon; the word is related to ON *skerða* ‘to cut away’, also *skerja* ‘to scratch, cut’ and *skera* ‘to shear’.
2. It was under a waning moon that Níðuðr’s men set out to capture Vǫlundr, whom they stole from, shackled as he slept, and abducted from his hall. Similarly, Grendel and his mother were, in my view, thieves of the waning or dark moon who took sleeping men from Heorot.
3. Although the noun *nið* ‘waning/dark moon’ never appears in *Vǫlundarkviða*, given the likely word-play on *níð* ‘hostile/hostility’ and *nið* ‘waning/dark moon’ in other texts examined in *The Waning Sword*, it may be worth noting that *Níðuðr* (possibly < **níð-høðr* ‘hostile warrior’) is introduced in a stanza in which his men advance under a waning moon.