Týr and Viðarr

Equinox, Wolves and Old Norse Celestial Traditions

Eldar Heide

Abstract

In this article I re-examine the information that we have about the Old Norse and Germanic god Týr. The latest research concludes that, even if the name Týr indicates that he had a connection with the sun and the firmament, this must reflect a period much earlier than our sources. I go against this view and argue that the connection was there in Scandinavia until the Late Iron Age, at least in Denmark. Týr has a clear connection with the sun through the myth where he secures the gods' binding of the Fenrir wolf, because this motif is linked to the myth about the wolves that chase the sun across the sky. Týr prevents the wolf from swallowing the sun before Ragnarǫk. I take a closer look at this myth in the Old Norse texts and the atmospheric phenomenon that we believe it derives from, namely parhelion. I also consider the sun phenomenon at Tysnes in Western Norway, which is the only certain Týr place name in Norway, and I moreover consider the link to Mars that is indicated by the overlapping weekday names týsdagr – Martis dies, the association between Mars and spring equinox, and the names of the constellations Ulfskjǫptr, 'Wolf's Jaws', and Ásar bardagi, 'the God's Battle'. I conclude that Týr's function is to defend the sun and the division of the year. As part of the interpretation, I launch a new suggestion regarding the god Viðarr's origin and function. I argue that he derives from the idea that the sun reaches safety from the wolves when it sets til varna viðar, 'into the safety of the forest, viðr'. The discussion provides arguments that lend some strength to Gísli Sigurðsson's suggestion that we should see the Old Norse gods as directly associated with the firmament.

Keywords: Old Norse mythology, Týr, Viðarr, Zeús, the firmament, parhelia, Hyades, Týsnes

1. Týr and the Myth of the Sun Wolf/Wolves

1.1. Introduction

The Old Norse god *Týr* has traditionally been understood as a god of the sky and of daylight (e.g. Olsen 1905:26, Olrik & Ellekilde 1926–51 I:334; overview in af Edholm 2014:7–33). This is because the name – which also exists in the plural in Old Norse, *tívar*,[1] then meaning 'the gods'[2] – is closely related to Ancient Greek *Zeús*, 'the god of sky and thunder', Sanskrit *Dyáuṣ Pitā* 'the god (father) of the sky', Latin *Dies-piter* (*Jupiter*), 'the god of sky and thunder', Latvian *Dievs* and Lithuanian *Dievas*, 'God', Finnish *taivas*, 'sky, god', borrowed from Baltic languages (e.g. Balode 2006:14), and Latin *diēs* and Sanskrit *divasa*, 'day' (Hopkins 1932; de Vries 1956 II:25;

de Vries 1962:603, 1956 II:25–26; Mallory & Adams 2006:408ff; Wodtko et al. 2008:70–71; Kroonen 2013:519; af Edholm 2014:47–48).

In recent works Wikström af Edholm opposes this understanding of Týr, arguing that the basis for it in Old Norse sources is weak (af Edholm 2014, 2016). He does not reject Týr's "function as sky god" but argues that it is "archaic" and no longer present in the Scandinavian Viking Age material (af Edholm 2016:65). What emerges from the Old Norse sources, Wikström af Edholm says, is a war god. This is not an entirely new view; for example de Vries says something similar (1956 II:21). But Wikström af Edholm stresses this point ("the majority of Germanic sources point in the direction of interpreting Tyr only as a war god", af Edholm 2014:9),[3] which de Vries does not, and many scholars are vague about what primary function Týr had in Old Norse culture (e.g. Turville-Petre 1964:180–82; Steinsland 2005:243–44). Wikström af Edholm bases his view especially upon the following points:

- The weekday name *týsdagr*, Old English *tīwesdæg*, Old Frisian *tiesdei*, Old High German *ziestag*, which is based upon Latin *dies Martis*, 'the day of Mars'. The weekday name indicates that the Germanic peoples along the Roman border understood **Teiwaz* (>*Tīu*, *Týr* etc.) as their counterpart to the Roman war god Mars (af Edholm 2014:48, 53, 75, 82).
- The Eddic poem *Sígrdrífumál* 5–6, where the hero Sigurðr is advised to inscribe *sigrúnar*, 'runes of victory', on his sword and then mention Týr twice (af Edholm 2014:43).
- The Týr kenning *vígaguð*, 'god of battles' (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99; af Edholm 2014:39, 57, 80).
- Snorri's information that Týr often decides victory in battles (*ræðr mjǫk sigr í orrostum*.[4] *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:32; af Edholm 2016:72).
- The large amount of weapons sacrificed during the Iron Age in the lake of *Tissø*, 'Týr's lake', in Zealand (af Edholm 2014:54–57, 2016).
- Týr's volunteering to put his right hand into the maw of the young Fenrir as a pawn – to make the wolf test the magical tether Gleipnir around its neck (af Edholm 2016:36). Týr loses his hand[5] but the gods succeed in binding the wolf, which would otherwise have overpowered them when it grew up (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:35–36).

I do not agree that the binding myth points in the direction of Týr being a war god. But I do agree that this follows from Wikström af Edholm's other arguments[6] and I agree with Schneider that the probably thirteenth-century Norwegian runic poem fits with this understanding of Týr:

Týr er einhendr ása,	'Týr is a one-handed god,
opt verdr smiðr at blása.	the smith often has to blow.'
(Liestøl 1948:66)	

The blowing clearly refers to the bellows during the smith's work. When this is mentioned in connection with Týr, weapons easily come to mind (Schneider 1956:361).

I will nevertheless argue that a connection with the sky was still essential in the Scandinavian Týr tradition in the Viking Age. I will further argue that Týr's war-god aspect follows from this celestial essence.

1.2. The Sun Phenomenon at Týsnes, the Sun Wolves and Parhelia

My starting point will be the sun phenomenon noticed at the headland formerly known as *Týsnes*, 'Týr's headland', in western Norway, 30 km south of Bergen. Today, the name – in the form *Tysnes* – usually refers to the whole island on which it is located, whereas the headland is now known as *Todneset*.[7] I will refer to the headland as *Týsnes*. The place is the centre of western Norway's largest concentration of sacral place names (Olsen 1905). When sunset is observed from Týsnes through the year, an odd occurrence appears around all the four solar turning points, winter solstice, spring equinox, summer solstice and autumn equinox: the sun sets behind a mountain and then reappears for an "encore" of a few minutes before setting for the night. At the winter solstice, the gorge in which the sun reappears is so close that the sun shines with a concentrated beam on to a 20-metre-wide prehistoric cairn at the top of the headland. Around the solstices, this happens for several days, while on the equinoxes, it occurs only on that exact day (Heide 2013[8] Olsen & Dahl 2015).[9]

The sum of landscape traits that produce this sun phenomenon may be unparalleled in the entire world, and Týsnes is the only place in Norway known with certainty to have borne a Týr name (Olsen 1905, 1942:65). All other secure Scandinavian Týr place names are found in Denmark. Why would exactly this place be linked to Týr, and why would exactly Týr be linked to this place? The case seems to indicate some kind of connection between Týr and the sun. Wikström af Edholm considers this connection but rejects it because it "lacks confirmation in any other source" (af Edholm 2014:52).

There are, however, several links between Týr and the sun or the sky in our texts. The strongest one is the myth of the binding of Fenrir, which is the main myth about Týr. Why was it so important to have the wolf bound? Because, it seems, he would otherwise swallow the sun (as suggested by Andrén 2014:215 and Lindow 2020:1352–53). This emerges from *Grímnismál* 39 and *Vafþrúðnismál* 46–47 combined. *Grímnismál* 39 says (cited by Snorri, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:18):

39. Skǫll heitir ulfr	'Skǫll is the wolf
er fylgir inu skírleita goði	that unto the protection of the woods
til varna viðar;	pursues the bright god;
en annarr Hati,	another is Hati,
hann er hróðvitnis sonr,	he is hróðvitnir's son,
sá skal fyr heiða brúði himins.[10]	who must run before heaven's bright bride.'

The line *til varna viðar* probably is a parallel to phrases like *solen går i skog*, *sól gengur til viðar*, 'the sun goes into the woods', which, until

modern times, have been a reference to the setting sun in several places in the Nordic countries (Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68 I:286; Olrik 1902:190; von See et al. 2019b:1400).[11]

In *Vǫluspá* (57), the sun vanishes by itself at Ragnarǫk, without hostilities from a wolf. But according to *Vafþrúðnismál* (46–47), which is an equally good or better source, the sun vanishes in Ragnarǫk because *Fenrir* destroys it (as pointed out by Olrik 1902:189, Tegnér 1922:32, and others).

This alternative is supported by the word *hróðrsvitnir*, 'the famous wolf', in *Lokasenna* (39). To be sure, this word is usually understood as a proper name and printed with a capital initial letter in text editions. If this is correct, *Hróðvitnir/Hróðrsvitnir*[12] (*-vitnis*, genitive) refers to a different wolf than *Fenrir* because it is a different name. There is, however, no need to understand *hróðrsvitnir* as a proper name. The manuscripts do not follow the modern convention regarding capitalization (they mostly use lower case), and we tend to interpret too many nouns as names (Heide 2018). In this case, we may read *hróðrvitnir*, 'the famous wolf', as a *kenning* referring to Fenrir. In *Lokasenna,* this is what we must do. In stanza 38, Loki insults Týr by reminding him that *Fenrir* tore off his right hand. When Týr parries in the following stanza, he says: Yes, being without his hand is bitter for Týr but being without *hróðrsvitnir* must be equally bitter for Loki. This statement only makes sense if *hróðrsvitnir* refers to Fenrir. Loki is Fenrir's father, according to *Lokasenna* 10 and other sources, and Loki is without him because he was bound by Týr and the other gods.

Against this background, *hróð*(*rs*)*vitnir* should in general be understood as Fenrir (and this is the most common understanding, e.g. Simek 2006:204; af Edholm 2014:77). In a stanza in *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, *sókitík sólar*, 'sun-chasing bitch', is used as a kenning for wolves in general (McTurk 2017:689).

The myth about Fenrir or some other wolf chasing the sun is believed to be reflected in the fact that, throughout northern Europe, a parhelion is referred to as "wolf" and the like (e.g. Jón Árnason 1958–61 [1862–64] I:655; Olrik 1902:189–95; Sigfús Blöndal 1920:251; Ólafur Briem 1985 I:174; Sørensen 1999:48; von See, et al., 2019b:1398; Bek-Pedersen 2021:459). Parhelia are formed when sunshine is refracted by ice crystals high up in the atmosphere when a low-pressure system is approaching (Wedøe 2007:75–76). They typically appear as a pair of bright patches to the left and right of the sun, sometimes above as well (Sørensen 1999). See Figure 1.

Parhelia forebode storms and were according to traditional belief often seen as bad omens. In *Njáls saga* a light phenomenon in the sky forebodes the terminal fight between Flosi Þórðarson and Njáll Þorgeirsson, in which the latter and his sons are burned to death in their house. This light phenomenon comes with a crash in the air (*vábrestr*) and is described as a fire-coloured ring with a rider inside it (*hring ok eldslit á*). It is referred

to as a *gandreið*, 'witch-ride', literally '*gandr* ride' (*Njáls saga* 1954:320–21). This information combined makes it analogous to Shetland and Orkney Norn *ganfer*, probably from **gandferð*, '*gandr* journey', which is a weather phenomenon with the same characteristics, explicitly identified as a parhelion in the traditions, and which forebodes bad weather or disasters (Jakobsen 1921:200–1; Marwick 1929:51, 22, 50; Heide 2006:30, 206–11).[13] Throughout northern Europe parhelia have this foreboding function in later traditions as well (Storaker 1923 [before 1872], Norway; Rietz 1862–67:652, Sweden; Stegemann 1936–37:48–49, Germany).

In Norwegian dialects a parhelion can be called a *solulv*, 'sun wolf' (Aasen 1873:727–28, Berge 1920:84), which it can in Danish as well, alongside with *vejrulv*, 'weather wolf', and also just *ulv*, 'wolf' (Sørensen 1999:47). In Swedish we find *solvarg* as well as *solulv*, both meaning 'sun wolf', and in English a parhelion can be called a *sun dog* (Rietz 1862–67:652; Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68 I:286; Olrik 1902:191; Tegnér 1922:32). The English-language Wikipedia article about parhelia has the title *Sun dog* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_dog, 13 August 2024). In Icelandic the light patch to the left (east) of the sun can be called an úlfur, 'wolf', and

1. Bright sun dogs in Saskatoon, Canada.
From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_dog 13 August 2024.

the one to the right (west) a *gíll*. If both appear, the two of them together can be called úlfar, 'wolves', and it is then said that the sun is í úlfakreppu, 'in wolf-straits', i.e. 'attacked by wolves from both sides' (Jón Árnason 1958–61 [1862–64] I:655; Cleasby & Vigfusson 1874:668; Sigfús Blöndal 1920:251, 878). Icelandic *gíll* is the same word as Norwegian (*sol*)*gil*, which has variants like *-gitl*, *-gissel*, *-giksel*, *-gidder* (pronounced /ji/-), and mean 'parhelion'/'a stump of a rainbow' (Aasen 1873:215, 727, Storaker 1923 [before 1872]:42), which parhelia sometimes look like (Sørensen 1999:47, 50–54). *Gíll/gil* probably belongs to the same root as Old Norse *geisli*, 'light beam', and *geisl*, 'staff' (cf. Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:245). The 'wolf' and 'dog' terms for parhelia clearly are fossilized remains of the myth of the sun and the wolves known from Old Norse sources. At the same time, parhelia are probably the main basis for the idea of the sun-chasing wolves.

1.3. Týr Stopping the Wolf from Swallowing the Sun before Ragnarǫk

In my judgement, Týr is clearly linked to the sun through the myth about the binding of Fenrir and the myth(s) about the wolf/wolves chasing the sun. This is especially clear in *Vafþrúðnismál* 46–47, which says that Fenrir succeeds in destroying the sun at Ragnarǫk.

An objection to this view may be that Týr is not the one that fights Fenrir in Ragnarǫk. According to *Vǫluspá* 61–62, Óðinn rather than Týr fights the wolf but is killed and then avenged when Víðarr/Viðarr kills the wolf. *Vǫluspá* does not mention Týr at all. Then, in Snorri's account of Ragnarǫk, there is an alternative enemy for Týr. He fights against Garmr, and they kill each other, before Þórr and the Miðgarðsormr kill each other, and then the wolf swallows Óðinn (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:72). *Garmr* is a common dog's name (Fritzner 1883–96 I:563) and *Vǫluspá* speaks of a being called Garmr that barks ominously several times in the prelude to Ragnarǫk (stanza 44, 49, 54, 58).

However, these aspects of the complex surrounding the wolf seem to be late developments. Most scholars believe that Víðarr/Viðarr is a late addition to the Old Norse pantheon (e.g. de Vries 1956 II:276; Simek 2006:467; af Edholm 2014:15, footnote, 60). There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the name *Víðarr/Viðarr* never occurs in the skaldic poetry (Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:621). In contrast, because of the etymology of his name, Týr must be an ancient god, and the sources portray Fenrir/the wolf as Týr's arch-enemy. The wolf bites off his hand in the only myth in which Týr plays the main role (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:35–36). Týr is moreover referred to as *ulfs fóstri*, 'the wolf's foster-father', in a skaldic kenning (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99). Thus, the link between Týr and the wolf seems essential, and Týr certainly is no late god.

An additional argument, hitherto overlooked, may be the Jutish parish name *Tïlst*, from Old Danish *Tīslæst* (Holmberg 1986:113–14). *Tīs* is the singular genitive of *Tīr*, which is the Old Danish form of *Týr*. And, as

Holmberg points out, *-læst* can hardly be other than Old Danish *læst*, 'cobbler's last' (ibid.:113), cognate with Old Norse *leistr*, "the foot of a sock" (Fritzner 1883–96 II:476). As far as I know, the meaning of the name is unexplained. Holmberg mentions that the element *-læst* could refer to a road because the etymological meaning of *læst* is 'footsteps' (*spor*. ibid.:113–14). But this would be unparalleled.

I suggest that the *læst* reflects the main characteristic of Fenrir's killer, namely his thick shoe or iron shoe. According to Snorri, Fenrir's killer "has a thick shoe" (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:33), made from all the cut-off pieces of leather that people have thrown away when making shoes since the dawn of time, and in kennings he can be referred to as "the owner of the iron shoe" (*eiganda jarnskós*, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99. I am not able to find this kenning in any of the extant poetry.). He needs this strong shoe for the fight against Fenrir, in which he steps into the wolf's lower jaw to be able to tear the jaws asunder[14] (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:72. According to *Vǫluspá* 52, Fenrir is killed by being stabbed in the heart with a sword).[15] But Snorri says this about Víðarr/Viðarr, so if we are to explain the name *Tīslæst* in this way, Víðarr/Viðarr must be a younger variant of Týr. *Tīslæst* is not a strong argument, however, because the outlined explanation of the name clearly is uncertain, although it is difficult to find a better alternative.

Regarding Týr's encounter with Garmr at Ragnarǫk, most scholars believe that Fenrir and Garmr are the same (e.g. Olrik 1913:157–59; Sigurður Nordal 1927:86, referring to several other scholars sharing his view; Ellis Davidson 1964:58; Simek 2006:127; af Edholm 2016:35–36, 57, 71; Bek-Pedersen 2021:458–59). There are several arguments for this, as Sigurður Nordal points out (1927:86). In the *Vǫluspá* stanzas, Garmr is mentioned in a repeated phrase that is identical in all four cases: *Geyr nú Garmr mjǫk* / *fyr Gnipahelli,* / *festr man slitna* / *en freki renna*, 'Garmr bays furiously / in front of Gnipahellir, / the chain will snap / and the wolf run free'. The word *freki* here seems to refer to *Garmr*, and *freki* is a *heiti* (poetical synonym) for 'wolf' (Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:151). The phrase *festr man slitna*, 'the chain will snap', seems to refer to the fear of the wolf breaking his tether. According to *Hákonarmál* 20 (Fulk 2012:192–93) and Snorri (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:71), Ragnarǫk comes when Fenrir is no longer bound. There is generally a blurred line between dog and wolf in the mythological sources. For example, Óðinn's has two wolves that function as dogs, Geri and Freki (*Grímnismál* 19). These considerations taken together point in the direction of Garmr being the same character as Fenrir.

If this is the case, Snorri's account becomes a bit strange. The problem is not that Óðinn and then Víðarr/Viðarr meet Fenrir instead of Týr. This is compatible with the impression we get from the combined corpus, that in the tenth century Týr was no longer in the foreground of the Old Norse

pantheon. Because our sources reflect the latest phase of Old Norse religion, and Óðinn is the main god in these sources, it is understandable that Óðinn in Ragnarǫk fights one of the gods' two main enemies, namely the wolf (the other being the Midgard Serpent, Þórr's old enemy).

However, Garmr as an alternative canine enemy for Týr is a bit odd, especially when we find this only in *Gylfaginning*. Then it comes to look like a solution introduced by Snorri or a later scribe because they felt that Týr, as the old enemy of Fenrir, should fight something wolf-like in Ragnarǫk. Thus, the fact that Týr does not fight the sun's enemy Fenrir in Ragnarǫk should not count against the link between Týr and the sun that emerges from other sources and which may reflect an older layer in the mythology. Below, I return to how we can explain Víðarr/Viðarr.

1.4. The Constellation *Ulfskjǫptr*/Hyades and the Gaping Sun-Wolf

The next point in my reasoning is the indigenous constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr/Ulfskeptr*, 'Wolf's Jaws', attested in a list of astronomical glosses in an Icelandic manuscript from around 1200 (Gks 1812 4to. *Alfræði íslenzk. II. Rímtǫl* 1914–16:72, 74). I believe this constellation name is a further indication that the wolf-binding myth, and thus Týr, did have a celestial element in Old Norse tradition.

Etheridge (2013:129) and Gísli Sigurðsson link this constellation to the myth(s) about the sun-chasing wolves (but they say nothing about Týr): "This 'maw' is identified [in the manuscript] as the Hyades, which form a prominent V-shape lying flat along the Sun's path […] People who saw the Hyades as the jaws of a wolf are likely to have thought that the Sun emerged from this mouth once a year, and would continue to do so until the day the jaws finally snapped shut and swallowed the Sun" (Gísli Sigurðsson 2022:241).

The linking of the Ulfskjǫptr and the sun-wolf myths seems plausible against the background of the gaping stressed in the sun-wolf traditions, of which I will now give an overview. Snorri says about Fenrir in Ragnarǫk: *En Fenrisulfr ferr með gapanda munn ok er hinn neðri kjǫptr við jǫrðu en hinn efri við himin. Gapa myndi hann meira ef rúm væri til* (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:71) 'But the Fenrir wolf runs with gaping maw, and the lower jaw reaches the ground, but the upper one the heavens. He would gape even more if there were room for it.' The enormous, gaping jaws of the wolf are also highlighted in Snorri's account of Ragnarǫk:

> Ulfrinn gleypir Óðin. Verðr þat hans bani. En þegar eptir snýsk fram Víðarr/Viðarr ok stígr ǫðrum fǿti í neðri kjǫpt ulfsins. […] Annarri hendi tekr hann inn efri kjǫpt ulfsins ok rífr sundr gin hans, ok verðr þat ulfsins bani. (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:72)
>
> 'The wolf swallows Óðinn and that is how he is killed. Then right away Víðarr/Viðarr comes up and places one foot in the lower jaw of the wolf and grasps with one hand in the upper jaw and tears asunder his maw. This is how the wolf dies.'

As we can see, Fenrir does not just kill Óðinn but swallows him, and the way to kill the wolf is by tearing his jaws asunder. Snorri also focuses on Fenrir's maw when the gods bind him:

> Ulfrinn gapði ákafliga ok fekksk um mjǫk ok vildi bíta þá. Þeir skutu í munn honum sverði nǫkkuru. Nema hjǫltin við neðri gómi, en efra gómi blóðrefillinn. Þat er gómsparri hans. Hann grenjar illiliga, ok slefa renn ór munni hans. Þat er á sú, er Ván heitir. Þar liggr hann til ragnarǫkrs. (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:37)
>
> 'The wolf gaped enormously and fought vigorously and tried to bite them. They put a sword in his mouth. The hilt stood against the lower gums and the point against the upper. This is his gag. He howls terribly and saliva flows from his mouth. That is the river Ván ('Waiting'). He lies there until Ragnarǫk.'

The maw is also the part of Fenrir that howls and barks[16] and that Víðarr/Viðarr tears asunder to kill him and that Týr encounters in the binding myth. Accordingly, the maw is the essential part of Fenrir in the myths.

The idea of the gaping sun-wolf also seems to be reflected in *Vǫluspá* 40. This stanza says that some hag in a certain forest bears "Fenrir's children" and that one of them will become *tungls tjúgari*. *Tungl* means 'luminary' (Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:573 – although later only 'moon', especially in Icelandic) and is in this case usually understood as 'the sun' (e.g. Sigurður Nordal 1927:81–82).[17] *Tjúgari* is not attested elsewhere but is an agent noun (like English *bak**er***, *teach**er***), apparently derived from the feminine noun *tjúga*, 'a pitchfork' – Figure 2 – or the verb **tjúga*. The infinitive of this verb seems obsolete in Old Norse but the participle, *toginn*, is attested many times. The verb is cognate with Old High German *ziuhan*, Modern High German *ziehen*, 'to pull'. Thus, *tjúgari* is understood as 'a robber, thief', either via the idea that a thief pulls away the stolen gods (e.g. Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:569, Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1048, von See et al. 2019a:320), or the idea that he "forks" them away (e.g. Cleasby and Vigfusson 1874:636, Sigurður Nordal 1927:82).[18] Both strands of reasoning result in *tungls tjúgari* referring to the wolf that makes the sun disappear (e.g. Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:569, Sigurður Nordal 1927:81–82, von See, et al., 2019a:319–30).

In my judgement, the pitchfork interpretation is the more plausible one. Because the infinitive went out of use early, and formations with *-ari* are late (*Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989*:1048), it seems best to understand *tjúgari* as formed from the feminine noun *tjúga*. If this is correct, it implies, at first glance, an image of someone using a pitchfork to remove the sun. But it would be odd to envisage a wolf using such a tool. Therefore, I suggest that the point is to compare the maw of the wolf to the "maw" of a *tjúga*, see Figure 2. The noun *tjúga* may not derive from the same root as the verb **tjúga* but from a root meaning 'split, two-part' (Hellquist 1948:980, de Vries 1962:592–93, *Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989*:1048). The byname

tjúguskegg, 'fork-beard' (e.g. *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* 1941:272), of the Viking Age Danish king Sweyn (and others), implies that the forked or split end was seen as the most characteristic part of this tool. Thus, *tungls tjúgari* should probably be understood as 'the sun's gaper', i.e. 'the one gaping over the sun'.

1.5. The Constellation *Ásar bardagi*/Auriga

A further reason to link Týr to the sun-chasing wolf/wolves is found next to Ulfskjǫptr in the firmament. The closest neighbour to Ulfskjǫptr/Hyades to the upper left is Auriga/the Charioteer, which is attested with the name *Ásar bardagi* in the same Old Icelandic manuscript as *Ulfskjǫptr* (*Alfræði íslenzk. II. Rímtǫl* 1914–16:72 – although in unclear writing). *Ásar* is the singular genitive of *áss*, the term for the largest group of Old Norse gods, and *bardagi* means 'battle'. *Ásar bardagi* thus means 'the god's battle'. This is usually understood as referring to Þórr driving his cart across the sky, because, in this way, *Ásar bardagi* links up with the name *Auriga*, which means 'the charioteer' (Beckman & Kålund 1914–16: CXLIII–CXLIV, 73; Kiil 1959:87; Holtsmark 1972:193).[19] This view is problematic, however. I know of no myth where Þórr fights from his cart in a battle. In fact, Þórr is not at all connected to battles in the myths. Dumézil argues that Þórr is a war god (Dumézil 1973 [1959]), and this view is supported by some scholars (e.g. Näsström 2001:72–83). But the basis for it is weak, although Þórr certainly does fight. Kroesen puts it this way when considering Dumézil's theory:

> Þórr is not a war god, at least not in the mythological stories of Iceland, as they have come down to us. A war god is a leader and propagator of battles, or at the least he takes part in them, and Þórr always fights alone against single adversaries. A single combat is never called a battle. […] Neither can the fight between Þórr, on the one hand, and Geirrøðr, on the other, be called a battle. There is no kenning that relates Þórr to battle, nor does any saga tell us that Þórr is a patron of warriors. (Kroesen 2001:97, similar in Steinsland 2005:197 and Storesund 2013:22, 112–18)[20]

Þórr seems to be a bad candidate for the *áss* in *Ásar bardagi*, 'the god's battle'. At the same time, Týr does seem to be a war-god, as we saw above. In addition, it appears unreasonable (as Reuter points out, 1934:279) to

2. Tjuga, 'pitchfork, eighteenth or nineteenth century, from Småland, southern Sweden. 146 cm long. https://digitaltmuseum.se/021028601336/tjuga.

disregard the immediate proximity between the constellations Ásar bardagi (Auriga) and Ulfskjǫptr (Hyades) when interpreting the name *Ásar bardagi*. If so, we should note that no known myth links Þórr to the jaws of a wolf whereas Týr has an essential connection with this feature, in the only myth where he plays a major role.

You could object that a one-man fight against a wolf monster is not a battle either, according to Kroesen's argument. Regardless of this, it is said of Týr that he is a *vígaguð*, 'god of battles' (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99) and that he often decides victory in battles (*ræðr mjǫk sigr í orrostum*, ibid.:32). It should also be pointed out that the wolf is closely associated with the battlefield in Old Norse thinking because it is a scavenger (Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:593–94), and *Fenrir* is often used referring to wolves in general (ibid.:128). Thus, it is less problematic to understand *Ásar bardagi* as Týr's fight with Fenrir than Þórr's fight with a troll. I conclude that the most plausible interpretation of the constellation name *Ásar bardagi* links Týr to the sun-chasing wolf/wolves and also to the firmament. This argument is, however, weaker than the one presented for the constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr*.

Even so, the constellation names *Ulfskjǫptr* and *Ásar bardagi* do seem to indicate that Týr opposes the sun wolf (cf. *Vafþrúðnismál* (46–47) not only in the binding myth but also in the sky.

To this one could object that the stars (in Ulfskjǫptr and Ásar bardagi) and the sun are (usually) not visible in the sky at the same time. But it is a question how much logic we may demand. As an analogy, we may consider the fact that in Roman mythology, Mars, Jupiter and Mercury were on one level identical to the planets bearing the same names. These planets are only visible when the sky is dark, but this does not imply that these gods were associated with night and darkness in particular. Jupiter was, on the contrary, associated with the sky in daylight, cf. the etymology of his name.

1.6. Týr in the Sky in the Old English Rune Poem

Týr is also placed in the sky in the Old English poem (probably eighth or ninth century), which explains the names of the runes. The rune ᛏ was called *Týr/Tīr* etc. The stanza reads:

ᛏ biþ tacna sum,	Tir is a token,
healdeð trȳwa wel	it keeps/holds faith/troth well
wiþ æþelingas;	with athelings;
ā biþ on færylde	it is always on its course
ofer nihta genipu,	over the mists/clouds of night,
nǣfre swīceþ.	it never fails/betrays.
(Jones 1967:76)	(translation by Dickins 1915/af Edholm 2014:42)

The problem in the stanza is the word *tācn* (*tacn*, *tácn*). It is cognate with modern English *token* and Old Norse *teikn* and means "A token, sign", "a

sign, significant form", "an ensign", "a token, a credential", "a sign, monument", "a sign of the Zodiac", "a sign, distinguishing mark (lit. or fig.)", "a sign to attract attention, a signal", "a sign of anything future, a prognostic", "a sign, an action that conveys a meaning", "a sign, indication, mark which shews condition or state", "as a medical term, a symptom", "a sign, symbol, emblem", "a sign which shews the truth or reality of anything, proof, demonstration, evidence", "a supernatural sign, miracle, prodigy", and "a signal event, remarkable circumstance" (Bosworth and Toller 1898:966–67).

Tācn in this stanza is often understood as 'star', referring to Polaris functioning as a guiding star (e.g. Reuter 1934:199–200; Winfried 2011:49). However, we have no information that Týr was in any way related to Polaris.[21] Furthermore, *tācn* can equally well mean 'a sign of the Zodiac' (Jones 1967:102), as in modern Scandinavian languages, where *stjerneteikn/-tecken/-tegn,* literally 'star *tācn*', is the term for this. Several scholars understand *tācn* as 'a constellation' or 'a sign of the Zodiac' in the runic poem (e.g. Jones 1967:62, 102; Page 1999:18).

Because Týr is the most plausible *áss* in the constellation name *Ásar bardagi*, the *tācn* associated with Týr in the rune poem may well be Ásar bardagi/Auriga. If so, it is possible to understand ↑ and "it never fails/betrays" and "over the mists/clouds of night" in the runic poem as referring to another navigational star than Polaris. Auriga's brightest star is Capella, which is one of the northern hemisphere's brightest stars. In former times it, too, played an important role in navigation (Stenersen 1930:80–85; Ditlefsen 1994:165, 182, 185, 216).

I find this understanding of the Old English rune poem more probable than the alternatives. Even so, we cannot know that the *tācn* Týr (Tīr) in the poem really does refer to Ásar bardagi/Auriga or Capella. Still, there can be no doubt that "over the mists/clouds of night" (*ofer nihta genipu*) places ↑ in the sky. Thus, the rune poem provides additional support for Týr's celestial aspect.

1.7. The Týr Derivate Viðarr and the Sun's Forest Asylum

How can we explain Víðarr/Viðarr, who seems to replace Týr as the enemy of the wolf, alongside Óðinn? Why did Víðarr/Viðarr turn up in the mythology? I suggest that he derived from the complex of the sun-chasing wolf/wolves. In our combined sources, the sun is saved from being swallowed by the wolf/wolves in two ways: Firstly, the wolf/wolves are kept in check when the sun is out in the open, i.e. on its way across the sky. Of this there seem to be two versions: Fenrir is bound by the magical tether Gleipnir (until he breaks it at Ragnarǫk), and Týr probably fights the *Ulfskjǫptr* (which represents the wolf) in the *Ásar bardagi* in the sky. (Andrén 2014:157 arrives at a view that resembles this, based on the sun-wolf myths and Týr's defence of the sun that these myths imply.)

Secondly, the sun is saved by the forest which it enters when its way across the sky is finished in the evening. In the words of *Grímnismál* 39, the wolves follow the sun across the sky *til varna viðar*, 'to the safety of the forest, *viðr*'.

This *til varna viðar* probably was a fixed expression, paralleled in modern times by "solen går i skog", 'the sun goes into the woods', and the like (Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68 I:286; Olrik 1902:190; von See et al. 2019b:1400). The name *Viðarr* may derive from *viðr*, 'woods, forest' (Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1130), and if so, it means approximately 'forest-man'. Formally, the name comes very close to *viðar* (genitive of *viðr*) in the phrase *til varna viðar*, and it can be seen as alluding to this phrase. I suggest that the idea of the god *Viðarr* who protects the sun and stops the wolf emerged from the idea that the forest functions as an asylum for the sun at the end of its journey across the sky.

The association between forests and the sun chased by a wolf or wolves may derive from the fact that parhelia are most often and most clearly seen (in cold weather) when the sun is near the horizon (although they can also be clear high in the sky when a bank of clouds functions like the horizon, see Sørensen 1999:44; Wedøe 2007:76). In Figure 1 the sun is about to reach the trees and be safe.

To be sure, many use the spelling *Víðarr*, with a long vowel (í), not *Viðarr*. If this spelling is correct, the name can have nothing to do with *viðr*, 'woods, forest'. But we do not know whether the actual form was *Víðarr* or *Viðarr* (Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1130), and some scholars spell it with a short *i* (e.g. Cleasby & Vigfusson 1874:703). In the common personal name *Viðarr*, the *i* was short (ibid.; Dictionary of Old Norse Prose, https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?o107405). If *Viðarr* is the correct form of the god's name as well, it must be associated with the masculine *viðr*, 'woods, forest' (ibid). The alternative to this understanding is not good. *Víðarr* is generally seen as deriving from the adjective *víðr*, cognate with English *wide*, and understood as "the wide-ruling one" (de Vries 1962:659; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1130; Simek 2006:467). But this does not fit well with the myths about the god in question. There is no hint in the sources that he was seen as a ruler or that he possessed a wide realm.

On the other hand, Viðarr does seem to be a god of the forest. *Grímnismál* 4–17 describes the residences of Þórr, Ullr, Freyr, Sága, Óðinn, Skaði, Baldr, Heimdallr, Freyja, Forseti, Njǫrðr, and Viðarr (in this order). Viðarr's residence is presented very differently from the others. In Løkka's words: "When Viðarr's abode is presented as the last one in stanza 17, it presents a clear break with the preceding ones – where the other divine dwellings represent a cultivated landscape, Viðarr's place appears to be a natural landscape" (Løkka 2010:223; similar in Steinsland 1991 [1989]:263). It is only the first half of *Grímnismál* 17 that describes Viðarr's residence, and it goes like this:

Hrísi vex ok há grasi
Viðars land Viði/viði[22]

These lines can be understood in two ways:

(a) 'Viðarr's land is overgrown with brushwood, high grass and forest', or
(b) 'Viðarr's land, [called] Viði, is overgrown with brushwood and high grass'.

Translation (a) implies that *viði* in line 2 is the masculine *viðr*, 'wood(s)', in the dative as part of the instrumental dative construction in line 1. Translation (b) implies that this word is a proper name, *Viði*, in which case it should not be translated. Alternative (a) would be odd, for two reasons. Firstly, it is unusual in Eddic poetry to shuffle the different parts of a clause in this way. Secondly, if we do suppose that this is a shuffled clause, we should still expect the cumulative conjunction *ok*, 'and', to be placed before *viði* rather than *há grasi*.

Accordingly, it is most natural to read *Viði* and understand the word as the name of Viðarr's residence. This understanding is favoured by two more factors. One is that, in the preceding list of gods (st. 4–16), the name of each god's residence is always mentioned. The other is that we know no other name of Viðarr's residence.

Thus, there are several and independent reasons to see a name of Viðarr's residence in *Grímnismál* 17. Quite a number of scholars have read the stanza in this way, even if they have not found the name *Viði* meaningful (Bugge 1867:79 with further references; Hultgård 2022:119). However, some understand the word as an appellative with the meaning 'forested land' (e.g. Ødegård 2014:400), and this must also be the meaning if the word is a proper name. In that case, the name is a very common type of derivation from the masculine *viðr*, 'woods', and it means 'wood(land)', which fits the context well. *Hríss* in line 1 usually means 'brushwood' but can sometimes mean 'forest', as in *Atlakviða* 5, where *hríss* refers to *Myrkviðr*, 'darkwood', which is a legendary forest mentioned in several Old Norse sources.

Grímnismál 17 fits very well with the suggestion that the god Viðarr, as enemy of the sun-chasing wolf, derived from the setting sun's refuge in the forest of the horizon. Viðarr's role in *Lokasenna* also fits well with this suggestion. This poem tells of a gathering where all the gods are present, but from which Loki is banished in the beginning because he kills a servant. He later returns and reminds Óðinn that the two of them mixed their blood in primordial times and promised not to drink unless they were both offered (stanza 9). Then, in the following stanza (10), Óðinn urges Viðarr to rise up and accept "the wolf's father' (*ulfs fǫður*) into the party. Viðarr does so by standing up, offering Loki a drink. This is all Viðarr does in the poem. The event may indicate that Viðarr was not only destined to avenge Óðinn and kill the wolf in Ragnarǫk but also had the task of blocking the wolf's

passage on a daily basis up until that point in time – though he was urged to make an exception in this situation. This fits with the way in which the forest (*viðr*) rescues the sun on bright-sky evenings.

I expect that some readers will find farfetched or naïve the derivation of Viðarr from the idea that the forest functions as an asylum for the sun at the end of its journey across the sky. But most of the mythology may appear naïve seen from a modern perspective (e.g. the idea that thunder and lightning come from a hulk's hammer blows), and we should not ask whether an explanation is plausible or unsurprising in an absolute sense. We should ask whether it makes more sense than alternative explanations. The previous explanation of the god Viðarr and his name is clearly unsatisfactory. The connection with the adjective "wide", upon which the spelling *Víðarr* is based, has no foundation in the sources. And nobody has been able to say anything about what led to the addition of Viðarr to the Old Norse pantheon. We believe that this happened at a late stage. But why? Such changes do not happen by mutation. The explanation based upon *til varna viðar* explains this, as well as the name, as a natural offshoot from the complex around the sun and wolf/wolves chasing it which already existed. In addition, it can explain the name and nature of Viðarr's residence and other information related to him or Týr, as I will now outline.

Holmberg has pointed out that strikingly many *Týr* place names in Denmark are compounds with Old Danish *-lund* and *-with* (Old Norse *-lundr* and *-viðr*), meaning 'grove' or 'forest' (Holmberg 1986:122; also Simek 2006:445; Lindow 2020:1356). Examples are *Tislund* on Zealand and *Tiset*, *Tiiswid* 1409, in southern Jutland (8 *-lund* and *-with* combined. Holmberg 1986:110, 111–12). This indicates that the Týr cult "was especially linked to the forest", Holmberg concludes (1986:122). This is entirely compatible with the idea that the forest saves the setting sun from the arch-enemy of both the sun and Týr, namely the wolf. But if this is a correct understanding of these place names, they must reflect the time before Viðarr was invented and took over some of Týr's functions. Possibly he never did in Denmark. Viðarr is only known from Icelandic sources, and, as we have seen, in Denmark the place name *Tīslæst* seems to link the main Icelandic myth about Viðarr to Týr.

The 'forest-man' understanding of Viðarr could also explain his being "the silent god" (*inn þǫgli áss*, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99). The wolf said to follow the sun in *Grímnismál* 39 is called *Skǫll*, which is easiest explained (see Hellquist 1948:726) as:

- the same word as Old Norse *skǫll* 'mockery, loud laughter' (Cleasby and Vigfusson 1874:565), from Proto-Scandinavian **skallu*, which must be closely related to:
- Swedish *skall*, 'a loud or penetrating and widely audible sound or shout' (*Ordbok över svenska språket* 1898–2023, *skall*),

- Norwegian *skoll*, 'noise, racket' (*Norsk Ordbok* 1966–2016 X:37–38. Old Norse *ǫ* regularly becomes <o> /o/ in Norwegian),
- Old Norse *skella*, 'to make to slam, clash' (Cleasby & Vigfusson 1874:543),
- Norwegian *skjelle*, '(about loud noise) din, slam, boom; shriek',
- Swedish *skälla*, 'sound loudly or strongly; resound, echo' (*Ordbok över svenska språket* 1898–2023, *skälla*).

Thus, the name *Skǫll* seems to express that the wolf which chases the sun "to the safety of the forest" (*Grímnismál* 39) is noisy. When the defence against this wolf is the calm forest, the personification of that forest will easily be described as silent.

Some readers may object that this wolf's name is often spelled *Skoll* and seen as related to *skollr*, 'a fox', and *skolla*, 'to hang over, dangle' (e.g. de Vries 1962:498; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:853–54; Simek 2006:385). However, the oldest manuscript reads *sca/ll* (Bugge 1867:84; von See, et al., 2019b:1399), and *a/* represents *ǫ* in normalized writing rather than *o*. Wikström af Edholm finds it obvious that the real form of this name is *Skǫll* and that it means "howling" (af Edholm 2014:77). In the *Hauksbók* version of *Heiðreks saga*, the name of this wolf is *Skalli* (von See, et al., 2019b:1398), which links up with *Skǫll* because *ǫ* most often derives from a *u*-mutated *a* (cf. *skǫll* from **skallu*).

1.8. Spring Equinox – the Main Link between Týr and Mars?

Gísli Sigurðsson does not explain what he means by saying that the sun "emerged from" the *Ulfskjǫptr*, 'wolf-jaws', "once a year" (Gísli Sigurðsson 2022:241, possibly inspired by Etheridge 2013:130). But he may have in mind the fact that Hyades/Ulfskjǫptr, which is a part of Taurus (the horizontal V in Hyades forms the horns of Taurus), was, in the mornings around spring equinox in ancient times, located low in the sky, due east – which is where the sun would rise at this time of the year (Ulansey 1989:131–33; Ulansey 1991:51; Banos 2006:27, 30). A link between Ulfskjǫptr/Hyades/Taurus and the sun escaping the jaws of the wolf at spring equinox would fit very well with the sun observations at Týsnes and the etymological connection between *Týr* and the bright sky or sun.[23] This understanding of *Ulfskjǫptr* would be partly analogous to a Siberian and Altaic myth in which the constellation Ursa Major, seen as an elk, steals the sun around the time of autumn equinox (Frank 2015:1681–82).

However, the firmament slowly changes (moving left), and in Greco-Roman times, sunrise on spring equinox had moved into Aries (González-García & Belmonte 2006:102, Ulansey 1989:131, 133). This shift happened around 2000 BC (Ulansey 1989:131, 133. Today it occurs in Pisces and will around 2200 enter Aquarius [ibid.]). This implies that, if the constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr* does reflect sunrise in Hyades at the spring equinox, it is a cultural fossil from around 2000 BC. To assume this would clearly be rather

daring, so I hesitate to suggest it. Still, the name makes more sense if this is, indeed, the case. And when we consider how the Scandinavian Bronze Age sun-disc wagons are believed to anchor the Scandinavian sun myths at this early time (below, § 2), a somewhat earlier date of the name *Ulfskjǫptr* should not be entirely out of the question. Interdisciplinary studies now indicate that the Germanic language (or its predecessor, North-Western Indo-European) came into Western Europe with the Corded-Ware Culture in the Late Stone Age (Kristiansen et al. 2017).

There was in any case a link between Týr and spring equinox, even after the changes in the sky that moved the sunrise at the spring equinox out of Taurus. This link was Mars, who was understood as corresponding to Týr by the early Germanic peoples, as attested by the weekday name, and Mars was strongly associated with the spring equinox by the Romans. The month of March (Latin *Martius*) was named after him – most festivals honouring Mars occurred in March (14, 17 and 19–23 March) – and March is the month of spring equinox. Mars was a god of war, and the season for warfare started with Quinquatrus, a festival in honour of Mars and Minerva, lasting from March 19 to 24 (Beard et al. 1998:47–48, 53; González-García & Belmonte 2006:98–99; Rüpke 2011:26, 28). The spring equinox occurs on March 20 or 21. Some Roman army camps and fortresses are oriented according to sunrise in March, "related to the 'war season'" (Espinosa et al. 2016:237 – and according to sunrise at the winter or summer solstice as well, Goethert 2002; Espinosa, et al., 2016). Mars was also a god of agriculture, and March was the main planting period for the Romans (e.g. Scullard 1981:85). These aspects of March were considered so important that March was the first month in the old Roman year (cf. the fact that *September* derives from *septem*, 'seven' and is followed by the 'eighth', 'ninth' and 'tenth' months of October, November and December).

Why was Týr understood by the early Germanic peoples as their counterpart to Mars? The usual answer is that Týr was a war-god, like Mars (e.g. Lindow 2020). But at least in the Old Norse sources, Óðinn was a more obvious war-god than Týr, and Freyja seems to have played a role similar to that of Óðinn. We do not have much information about this, but according to *Grímnismál* 14, Freyja received half of the fallen warriors in her abode, *Folkvangr*, 'army field', which must be understood as a counterpart to Óðinn's Valhǫll. In short, Týr was not the only Germanic war-god, so his being a war-god could hardly be enough to make him Mars' counterpart.

I suggest that a combined association with war and spring equinox and the division of the year is what Mars and Týr have in common. Mars' association with spring equinox and the division of the year is clear from the classical sources. Týr's association with these phenomena emerges from the sun observations at Týsnes. It could also be reflected in the immediate proximity of Ulfskjǫptr, which could reflect the sun-wolf myth and an

original association with the spring equinox, with Ásar bardagi, in which *Ásar* probably refers to Týr.

1.9. Conclusion of 1

I will now try to sum up the discussion hitherto. I find it undeniable that there is a link between Týr and the sun in Old Norse myths. But this does not mean that Týr *is* the sun or the daylight or the sky, as the evolutionists of the early twentieth century claimed (see af Edholm 2014:7–8, 16–20).

Instead – on the basis of the sun-and-wolf myth complex (including the place-name connection with forests), the constellation names *Ulfskjǫptr* and *Ásar bardagi*, the sun phenomena at Týsnes at the four solar turning points, and the week-day link to Mars – the Old Norse Týr (with his derivative Viðarr) seems to be essentially a *defender* of the sun. He appears to be the one who saves the sun from the wolves in the sky in the evening, secures the sun's return at winter solstice, helps the sun regain the upper hand at spring equinox, and postpones the sun's destruction at Ragnarǫk (by tethering the wolf) – cf. the "encores" before the final sunsets at Týsnes. In short, Týr is the god who gives us more sunshine (Týsnes has more sunshine than the settlements from which the place can be observed), or at least ensures that we do not get less.

The sun phenomena at Týsnes and Týr's link to Mars, who was celebrated around spring equinox, also seem to imply that Týr was a god of the year-dividing solar turning points. This aspect of Týr may have been decisive when the Germanic peoples understood him (*Teiwaz) as their counterpart to Mars, rather than Óðinn (*Wōdinaz/Wōdanaz). If the spring equinox moreover marked the start of the campaigning season among these peoples, this may constitute the roots of Týr's war-god aspect.

It has previously been argued, mostly on the basis of the inscription *Mars Thingsus* on a third-century votive stone from Hadrian's Wall, that Týr had a prominent position in the Germanic assembly institution (Old Norse *þing*. E.g. Herrmanowski 1891:6–7; Olsen 1915; Bing 1937:115–17; Dumézil 1940; Turville-Petre 1964:181; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1179; de Vries 1956 II:11–12; Aune 2009:86; Dumézil 1973 [1959]:1359–60). The support for this view of Týr is not very strong. But even if it does hold true, his association with the division of the year would fit with it – although the assemblies were not held at the solar turning points themselves, but as much as a month later. This was because the calendar combined the solar and lunar systems (Nordberg 2006), which is also the principle behind the way in which we still determine the date for Easter.

The constellation names *Ulfskjǫptr* and *Ásar bardagi*, possibly also the Old English Týr rune poem, seem to indicate that Týr opposes the sun wolf not only in the binding myth but in the sky as well. The name *Ulfskjǫptr* could be a fossil from the time when the sun rose in this constellation at the spring equinox. If this is correct, the name *Ulfskjǫptr* anchors the sun-wolf myth of

the Eddas at a point in time three millennia before it was recorded in writing. This idea is so radical that I find it difficult to suggest. But it clearly would make better sense if the name were given when the sun emerged from the maw of the wolf at the spring equinox, which is when the sun escapes from being dominated by the long nights. This possibility should not be ruled out entirely, because the Old Norse myth of the sun wagon is believed to be anchored in the Bronze Age on the basis of archaeologically found sun-discs. Regarding the question of long-lasting tradition, we should also consider the fact that the essence of the sun-wolf myth has, in fact, survived in oral tradition until modern times, that is, for another near-millennium, in connection with parhelia.

One factor that contributed to Týr's being pushed into the background in late paganism could be that the Ulfskjǫptr constellation ceased to match the spring equinox. The link would not be lost right away. As a comparison, the Dog Days in modern-day northern Europe (Jansson 1962) derive from the heliacal rise of Sirius – i.e. the time of the year when Sirius, the Dog Star, rises just before sunrise. Today, the Dog Days occur in August, but much earlier originally. The tradition was borrowed from the Romans (*dies caniculares*, 'dog days'), who got it from the Egyptians, and the starting point was the celestial circumstances during the Middle Kingdom, *c*. 2040 to 1782 BC. During this period, the heliacal rising of Sirius was important because it coincided with the first indications of the flood in the Nile – and it happened at the beginning of June (Jong 2006, DeYoung 2000:481–83).

The early dating of the name *Ulfskjǫptr* is not at all required in order to explain the decline of Týr. This may well have happened for reasons we no longer have access to. However, another factor that may have contributed to the decreasing importance of Týr, may have been the sixth-century cold-climate crisis caused by enormous volcanic eruptions in the 530s and 540s (Gräslund 2007). During these years, Týr did not succeed in protecting the sun, and crop failure, famine and the abandonment of whole agricultural districts were the results of that failure. This could have led to a rejection of him. Virtually all surviving Týr place names are found in Jutland (Holmberg 1986:123), which is the part of Scandinavia that would be least affected by the lack of warmth from the sun. This region sports the combination of being located southernmost in Scandinavia, and having an Atlantic climate – the Gulf Stream would still be flowing. This scenario moreover fits with the fact that Norway's west coast does feature a Týr name, Týsnes, which is the centre of a cluster of sacral place names, whereas Sweden, a continental country, has no Týr names (Holmberg 1986:123).

People who rejected Týr may have turned to Óðinn instead. He is associated with winter, through the name *Jólnir*, 'Yule man', and generally with darkness and storms. In addition, he is treacherous and promises nothing. Therefore, he could not fail to deliver, in the way Týr failed during those harsh years.

At any rate, archaeologists see a large increase in the depositions of gold hoards and bracteates during the climate crisis, and some see this as a reaction to the crisis (Axboe 2001). If this it correct, the crisis did lead to religious changes.

If the understanding of Týr that I have outlined above is correct, it could throw light on aspects of the majority of Týr place names. I have already mentioned some such cases: *Týsnes* and its solar turning points, *Tilst/Tīslæst* and its possible connection with the fight against the wolf at Ragnarǫk, and how the many forest names linked to Týr fit together with the sun's woodland refuge at sunset and with the Týr derivate Viðarr. In addition, forests and groves could have been chosen for Týr sanctuaries because they can easily be trimmed to produce such sun phenomena as we see at Týsnes (which the landscape alone cannot produce in Denmark because it is flat). At present, this is speculation, but it could be confirmed by archaeology.

At Tissø, the location of the king's manor and the cultic area on the west bank of the lake could be significant because it implies that, at the spring (and autumn) equinox, sunrise will be seen across the near circular lake, reflected in its waters. Could the many swords sacrificed in the lake be understood as representations of the sword functioning as the *gómsparri*, 'gag', that prevents the jaws of the cosmic wolf from snapping shut over the sun? According to Snorri, the river *Ván*, 'hope', is formed by the saliva that flows from the gaping jaws of the bound Fenrir (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:37).[24] Or were the swords deposited at the spring equinox as part of the opening of the campaigning season? We cannot know.

I note that most of the Týr place names (Holmberg 1986) that I am able to localize are associated with landscape formations that are interesting with respect to the celestial position of sun at the equinoxes. The spring at *Tisvilde*, 'Týr's spring', northern Zealand (now called *Helene kilde*), is located near the beach where an east–west-running gorge runs down to the sea. Would the equinox morning sun perhaps reach the spring first when shining down the gorge? *Ti*(*r*)*svad*, 'Týr's ford' west of Horsens, central Jutland, may feature a similar situation, depending on exactly where the ford used to be located. The farm *Tislum*, 'Týr's grove', east of Sindal, northern Jutland, is located in a well-defined east–west-running valley. The farm of *Tiset*, 'Týr's forest', south-west of Aarhus, is located where the north face of a hill runs quite accurately east–west. *Tisbjerg*, 'Týr's hill', south-east of Aars, northern Jutland, is a long and high hill with steep slopes on both the northern and southern sides, running almost east–west.

Tisbjerg, 'Týr's hill', in Thy, northern Jutland, is found in a group of high hills facing east, falling steeply down towards the sound of Vilsund. *Tirsbjerg*, 'Týr's hill', north-east of Ølgod, central Jutland, is also a high hill facing east, falling steeply towards the Påbøl river. *Thise*, 'Týr's forest', north of Skive, northern Jutland, is located on a plateau facing east towards

the sound of Hvalpsund. These would all be good places from which to observe sunrise at the equinoxes.

Whether or not the landscape traits I point out here are overrepresented in connection with Týr place names, compared to other names, I cannot tell.

Many Týr place names are located on heights on the Jutish ridge (Holmberg 1986) or are compounds with *bjerg*, 'hill' (4 or 5 quite certain examples), or *høj*, 'hill, mound' (ibid:118–19). This could reflect a habit that I only know from modern times in Norway, but which could be ancient: To greet (*helse*) the sun "on the morning of Easter Day or the first day of summer (14 April)", to "see the sun dance and take omens from it". This should be done "high up on a mountain" (Lid 1934:123). Easter occurs around the time of spring equinox (which is probably reflected in the word *Easter*'s relation to *east*, Old English *easter*, Old Norse *austr*; de Vries 1962:21). Týr's Greek cognate Zeus is connected to high mountains in the Greek area (Fox 1964:159; but so are other Greek gods, e.g. Dionysus and Magna Mater). De Vries points out both the frequency of names like *Tīsbjerg* and the Zeus analogue (de Vries 1956 II:22). The places bearing Týr names compound with *bjerg* and *høj* are located on the Jutish ridge, which is Denmark's version of high mountains.

It may be worth noting that due east from the manor at Tissø, i.e. where the sun will rise at the spring (and autumn) equinox, we find hills reaching 100 m, the highest in the region. This area is largely wooded from the lake and up to the top of the hills, whereas the land has been cleared to both the north and the south of the area. But we do not know, of course, what the forest cover was like in this area in prehistoric times.

Týr may have been important in Viking Age Denmark even though he was no longer at the forefront of the mythology that Snorri knew in Iceland. That this was indeed the case is suggested by the name *Tissø*, by the significance of that place in the Viking Age, and by the fact that the deposition of weapons in the lake, especially swords, continued into the eleventh century (Edholm 2016:82). Furthermore, *Tīslæst* and names like *Tislund* and *Tisved* (*-vith*, *-viðr*) seem to indicate that the "Wood-Man" Viðarr never took over any of Týr's roles in Denmark. We should note that Viðarr's taking over the task of killing the wolf at Ragnarǫk does not necessarily contradict Týr's essential role. A distribution of roles could have developed, where Týr kept the wolf in check (with or without the tether Gleipnir) during its course across the sky and Viðarr (/the forest) stopped it in a more definitive way.

What I suggest about Týr, the sun and parhelia corroborate the ideas already put forward by Gísli Sigurðsson regarding his theory that the Norse gods had a very direct connection to the sky and the firmament, just like the gods of other ethnic religions (Gísli Sigurðsson 2014, 2018, 2022). In a similar way, Heimdallr should be linked to Polaris and the invisible pillar

that was widely believed to support it and the firmament (Heide manuscript 2024).

To me it seems that the Germanic Týr's role evolved at least partly from observations of parhelia. I am thus talking about an evolution of this god from a natural phenomenon. This, however, should be no more controversial than noting that the god Þórr evolved from observations of lightning and thunder. Noting this has little in common with the school of evolutionism that dominated religious studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which has rightly been severely criticized. I do not claim that the veneration of natural phenomena preceded the veneration or evolution of gods, nor that deities did not develop before the Roman Iron Age, or anything like that (see the summing up of evolutionism in connection with Týr studies in af Edholm 2014:7–33 and of sun studies in Nordberg 2013:199–38). When I point out that the constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr* could anchor the Týr/sun-wolf myth in the Late Stone Age or Early Bronze Age, this goes against evolutionist thinking.

We have no indication that Týr was associated with the planet Mars. In general, I find little about the planets in the indigenous traditions about the sky in this part of the world.[25] This could be because the planets move much faster and in orbits which are much more difficult to map than the case is with the stars. This fact is reflected in the concept of *fixed stars* (Latin: *stellae fixae*, Old Norse *festingarhiminn*, 'fixed sky'). Compared to planets and comets, the stars appear not to move. Thus, traditions will not so easily form around planets.[26]

2. The Sun Horse and Sun-Wagon Myth, and the Time Depth of the Myths

I have now done what I set out to do in this article, namely to argue that Týr was indeed linked to the sun in the Scandinavian Late Iron Age, at least in Denmark; that he essentially was a defender of the sun, and that Viðarr is a derivate of this sun-defender role.

In addition, however, I believe it is appropriate (and necessary) here to discuss some (possible) implications. The first of these concerns the relationship between the sun-wolf myth and the other Old Norse myth about the sun's journey across the sky. *Grímnismál* 37 tells of the horses *Árvakr*, 'early awake', and *Alsviðr*, very quick' or 'the one that burns', that pull the sun (*sól draga*) "up from here" (*upp heðan*). *Vafþrúðnismál* 11–14 tells of two horses with other names – *Skinfaxi*, 'shining mane', and *Hrímfaxi*, 'rime mane' – that every 24 hours pull, respectively, the day and the night across the skies above the humans. Snorri mentions all four horses but in addition chariots that the horses pull, and he says that they go around the earth (*umhverfis jǫrðina*) every 24 hours (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:17–18).

The two sun-horse myths seem to be variants of one myth. They could also be variants of the myth where the sun is chased by wolves. There is no contradiction between being pulled by horses and being attacked by wolves – wolves may attack even if the sun is pulled by horses.[27] Even so, I see these as different myths because, when horses are mentioned, the means of transport seems to be in focus, whereas when wolves are mentioned, the threat to the sun seems to be in focus.

Scholars often link the sun-horse myth to Bronze Age sculptures of horses pulling what is apparently a sun disc (e.g. Mortensson 1905:45; de Vries 1956 I:356–58; Steinsland 2005:18; Nordberg 2006:125–30; Andrén 2014:117; Etheridge 2013:123, 130), of which the best preserved is the Trundholm chariot from Denmark, dated to around 1400 BC; see Figure 3. This disc has one gilded side and one with no traces of gilding (Larsen 1955:46), which could correspond to the day half and the night half of the passage around the earth in Snorri's sun-horse account. The constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr* and its probable background in the sun-chasing myth complex could lend further support to the idea of interpreting Bronze Age objects in light of a myth known from Old Norse texts, more than two millennia later.

3. The gilded side of the Trundholm sun chariot.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trundholm_sun_chariot

Probable sun discs are also known from numerous other bronze objects, Bronze Age rock carvings and Early Iron Age pictorial stones from Gotland (Kaul 2004; Andrén 2014). Examples of the latter are given in Figures 5 and 6. A special example of the former is shown in Figure 4. It is believed to be a symbolic sun holder (for which a strong argument will soon be given; other exemplars are also known, Kaul 2004:357–61). Many believe that the scene in Figure 6, from the picture stone from Austers in Hangvar, Gotland, depicts the monster Fenrir biting off Týr's hand (e.g. Ney 2006:63; Andrén 2014:150; Lindow 2020:1352) – although it would then be a different kind of monster.

The type of probable sun disc that I have shown in Figures 4–6 have symmetrical crosses inside them, commonly referred to as wheel-crosses. The cross can be formed simply by crossing lines, as in Figures 4 and 6. The cross in Figure 4 only becomes visible when strong light (e.g. sunlight) shines through the red amber that the disc is made from (Kaul 2004:358).

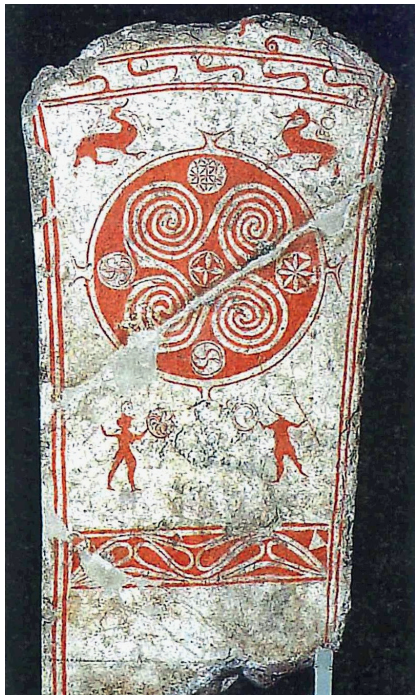
4. A 7 cm high Bronze Age sun holder from Denmark. Cover illustration of Kaul 2004.

To me, this is a strong argument that the object really is a sun disc. The cross in probable sun discs can also, as in Figure 5, be formed by smaller spheres inside the main one and/or by buds protruding from the main disc where the lines end, as in Figure 4 and Figure 6. More examples of this type of probable sun disc can be found in Kaul (2004), Andrén (2014), Lindqvist (1941–42:142, plate 4) and other works.

Why was the cross added to the sun disc in Figure 4 and the others? If the idea was simply to make an imitation of the sun, there would be no need for a cross. Kaul implicitly suggests, with the cover illustration of his book, shown in Figure 4 (Kaul 2004), that the horizontal line in the cross represents the horizon and the vertical line the reflection of the setting sun in the sea. But this does not match reality, because, during a sunset, the sun is not located in that cross until half of it has disappeared behind the horizon (as emerges from Figure 4).

The probable sun representations with crosses through them strikingly resemble the four-spoke wheel which is often seen around the sun in a parhelion; Figure 1. A parhelion is an unusual sight which we know formed the basis for a sun myth that was central in Germanic cosmology and prophecy (see above). This suggests that the phenomenon of the parhelion is the main background to wheel-crosses in sun-discs.

Alternatively, you could argue that the wheel-crosses reflect the cardinal directions. This, however, can hardly be the starting point

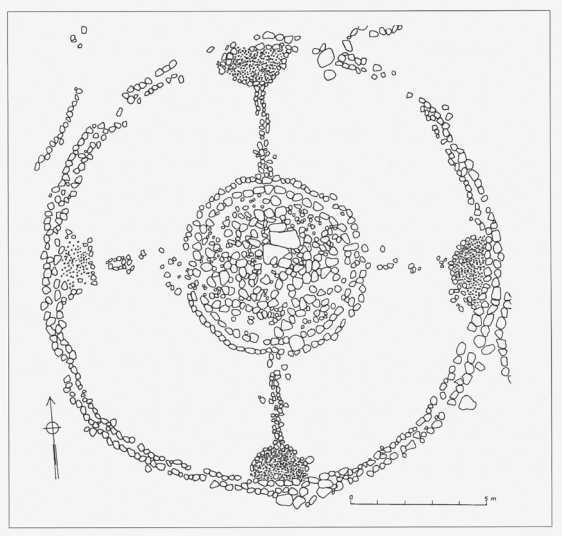


5. Fifth- or sixth-century pictorial stone from Vallstenarum in Vallstena, Gotland. Andrén 2014:125.

6. Fifth- or sixth-century pictorial stone from Austers in Hangvar, Gotland. Andrén 2014:156.

because the sun, as we see it, is never divided in this way – that is, unless it is located in the centre of a parhelion. Sun-dog circles are divided in this way, and the visual impression of a parhelion corresponds closely to the Germanic idea of four cardinal directions with south as up and north as down, which we see in the etymology of the terms (*norðr*/*north*, *suðr*/*south*. Falk & Torp 1903–6:553–54, 875; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:673, 985; de Vries 1962:411, 559). Parhelia may be seen as nature's 'map' of cardinal directions, then reproduced by humans in objects, depictions (Figures 4–6) and graves shaped as wheel-crosses, like the one at Sälle in Fröjel, Gotland, which is oriented according to the cardinal directions; see Figure 7.

More remotely, the parhelion/sun wolf/Týr complex could be part of the reason why the seven Viking Age ring fortresses found in what was then the Danish areas have the same essential shape and cardinal orientation (e.g. Olesen 2000). Because the Týr cult seems to have been strongest in Denmark and Týr was a war god linked to equinoxes and solstices (Týsnes and the association with Mars) whose essential role was to oppose the sun wolf, as seen in parhelia, it is conceivable that the ground plan of the ring fortresses was inspired by parhelia. This is just a suggestion, of course. One objection could be that army camps of the Romans, who did not know the sun-wolf myth, were also often oriented according to the four cardinal directions (e.g. Espinosa, et al., 2016; Andrén 2014:106–8). This is correct, but the Roman camps were quadratic. Why would the Danish Vikings make theirs circular? The ground plans of some Danish ring forts (Olsen 1962:96–97; Olesen 2000:102) resemble very closely the disc with decorative elements in Figure 5.



7. Roman Iron Age grave in the form of a wheel-cross from Sälle in Fröjel, Gotland. Andrén 2014:137.

It is also interesting how the wheels on the Trundholm chariot resemble a parhelion, as seen in Figure 1, and a grave with a wheel-cross in it, as shown in Figure 7. Four-spoke wheels are well known from battle chariots in the Mediterranean and Middle East, and from Scandinavian Bronze Age rock carvings (e.g. Kaul 2004:294–95; Bengtsson 2002; Askum Raä 67:1, 67:2). But such wheels are more difficult to make and are weaker than wheels with more spokes. A reason for still choosing the four-spoke alternative could be a wish to make the wheels of the sun chariot resemble a parhelion, because parhelia seem to have played an important role in sky and war mythology from ancient times. "Parhelion wheels" may also form part of the background of the idea that the sun is transported across the sky in a chariot.

If this understanding is correct, the design of wheels on the Trundholm and other sun chariots forms a bridge between the wolf and horse versions of the sun myths: The same type of wheel is there in both versions (Figure 1 and Figure 3).

The interpretations and considerations presented in this section (§ 2) are generally uncertain or very uncertain. This, however, should not be taken to invalidate what I suggest and argue in § 1, which forms the essential part of this article.

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Eldar Heide
Professor of Norwegian
Department of Language, Literature, Mathematics and Interpreting
Western Norway University of Applied Sciences
Inndalsveien 28, NO-5009 Bergen
Norway
eldar.heide@hvl.no

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[1] Marteinn H. Sigurðsson (2002) argues that no individual god *Týr* existed; this god was only constructed by Snorri as a result of misunderstanding the sources. However, as Wikström af Edholm points out (2014:29–32), this position requires much explaining away, and the name *týsdagr/Tuesday*, etc., analogous to *Óðinsdagr, Þórsdagr*, etc., clearly points to the existence of an individual god *Týr* at the time when the weekday names were borrowed from Latin.

[2] I use "double inverted commas" to mark quotations or figurative speech, and 'single inverted commas' to indicate linguistic meaning.

[3] Quotations in non-English languages, unless otherwise stated, are translated by me.

[4] For consistency and readability, all quotations in Old Norse are normalized according to the standard found in Heggstad et al. 2008.

[5] Many believe that this scene is depicted on a Migration Age bracteate from Trollhättan, western Sweden (e.g. Axboe & Källström 2013:154–56).

[6] …although it seems illogical that a war god loses the hand with which he should hold his weapons. The explanation may be the pattern that the gods have to sacrifice essential body parts or objects to achieve what they want: Óðinn his eye, Heimdallr his *hljóð* ('hearing'? 'horn'?), Freyr his sword – and Týr his right hand (see Meulengracht Sørensen 1977; Steinsland 1991 [1989]; Clunies Ross 1994; Mundal 2001).

[7] How the name *Todneset* is to be understood is uncertain. It cannot be very old because *Týsnes* was the name of the headland in medieval times. A plausible solution was suggested to me by Erling Garatun in late 2021. He comes from Eidfjord, Hardanger, not far from Tysnes. In his dialect, *todna* means 'to thaw, melt way', as in the name *Todnhaugen, 'Todn*-hill', which refers to a hill where the snow melts away early. I suggest that this verb *todna* is a hybrid of Old Norwegian *þíðna*, 'to thaw, melt away', and *þorna*, 'to become dry'. Todneset understood as describing a place with little snow would make sense because the headland is a windy place which has more sun than the settlements across the bay of Våge (Heide 2013:52–53). Even so, the verb (form) *todna* is not attested from Tysnes, as far as I know.

[8] The basis for Heide 2013 were the observations that I had from Svein Ove Agdestein. In August 2022 I became aware that the sun phenomenon was discovered independently by Øystein Martinsen and Anne Marie Tysnes, who have a summer house next to the cairn on the headland.

[9] The Earth's axis wobbles slightly (Ruggles 2015:479–80) but the described sun phenomenon at Týsnes seems not to be affected by this because it does not depend on too much precision regarding the sun's position.

[10] Eddic poetry is quoted from *Sæmundar Edda* 1867.

[11] In light of this, it should be considered whether the many phrases that seem to express that the sun is glad/pleased/happy when it sets could, in fact, mean this (as opposed to what the etymological dictionaries say: Falk and Torp 1903–6:233; Torp 1919:161; de Vries 1962:171; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:252). Examples are, with apparent meanings added: Old Norse *sólar-glaðan*, Modern Norwegian *soleglad*, *solarglad*, Swedish dialect *solagladning/solaglädning*, *solglæ*(*d*)*e*, all seeming to mean 'sun pleasing'; Swedish dialect *solen gladas*, 'the sun is pleased', cf. English dialect the *sun goes to glade* (Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68:I 286; *Norsk Ordbok* 1966–2016 X:852–53, 858). In popular tradition in modern times the understanding clearly was, at least in some places, that the sun was pleased when setting (Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68:I 286).

[12] The former version is found in *Grímnismál*, the latter in *Lokasenna*. Both forms are compounds with *hróðr*, 'fame'. The form without *-s* genitive marker may be a stem compound but the lack of *-r* suggests that it rather is an eroded form.

[13] In *Vǫluspá* 40, *Ketils saga hængs* (*Ketils saga hængs* 1954:172–73) and *Äldre Västgötalagen* 1919:62, Beckman 1933:45, cf. Heide 2006:74, 123, 127) there seems to be a connection between equinoxes and wolves in the shape of trolls (or vice versa) riding through the air. This topic I hope to address in a separate article.

[14] Some believe that this scene is depicted on the pictorial stone from Ledberg, eastern Sweden (see e.g. Hultgård 2022:157–63).

[15] Conceivably, the two Danish place names *Tiskær* (Holmberg 1986:117–18, 121) relate to this. *Skær* means 'cut', so *Tiskær* could mean 'Týr's cut'.

[16] In dialectal and standard Swedish, *grina som en solvarg*, 'gape/grin like a sun wolf', has become an idiom used to refer to someone screwing up their face (Rietz 1862–67:652; Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68 I:286; Tegnér 1922:32; *Ordbok över svenska språket* 1898–2023, *solvarg*, *solulv*).

[17] It seems that Snorri misunderstands *tungl* as 'moon' in *Vǫluspá* 40 and that, because of this, he constructs the name *Mánagarmr*, 'moon dog', and applies it to a being that he believes

swallows the moon in Ragnarǫk (Edda Snorra Sturlusonar 1931:18–19). This seems to be Snorri's own construction; several scholars understand it this way, e.g. Olrik (1902:189–91), Finnur Jónsson (1934:182).

[18] At first glance, this understanding is supported by the fact that a 'pitchfork' in modern Danish is called *høtyv*, which is a compound of *hø*, 'hay', and tyv, which is formally identical with tyv, 'thief'. But this *-tyv* derives from *tjúga* rather than from an older form of the word meaning 'thief'.

[19] An Old Norse translation of the Latin term *Auriga* is also attested, *kerrugætir*, 'wagoner' (Fritzner 1883–96 II:278).

[20] Näsström (2001:72) mentions war cries that allegedly contain the name Þórr. It is doubtful that this is correct, however (e.g. Edwardes & Spence 1952:173; Mohr 1980:597; Słupecki 2003:139; Bek-Pedersen 2021:89, 465).

[21] Instead, it seems that the god Heimdallr is linked to Polaris; Heide manuscript 2024.

[22] Some scholars, for example Holtsmark, read this word as an adjective in the definite form, meaning 'the wide' (*det vide*, Holtsmark 1970:170). But this understanding would require a final *-a* (*víða*) to make the adjective congruous with land, which is a neuter. Thus, this reading is difficult to accept. *Viði/viði* could also be read as *víði*, '(dative of) willow' but this would not make any better sense.

[23] There is, in fact, a link between Zeus, whose name is cognate with *Týr*, and Taurus. Zeus abducted the maiden Europa in the shape of a bull, which was commemorated in this constellation (Clarke & Bolton 2010:206; Banos 2006:28). If this myth is sufficiently ancient, it implies a link between Zeus and spring equinox because of Taurus'/Hyades' position in the sky at that time of the year in ancient times. But we have no indication that the myth of Zeus, Europa and Taurus existed as early as around 2000 BC. However, the myth of Zeus, Persephone and Hades could represent a link between Zeus and spring equinox. In this myth, Persephone is abducted to the underworld by Hades and forced to be his wife. As a reaction, her mother Demeter forbids the earth to produce, which leads to a famine. Because of this, Zeus forces Hades to return Persephone, but because of a trick from Hades, the result is that Persephone every year spends the winter in the underworld and then returns in spring, possibly around the spring equinox (Fox 1964:227–33; Gantz 1996:65). This is caused by Zeus's intervention. A link between Zeus and autumn equinox may be suggested by Zeus's role as thunder god, which implies that he is also a god of rains (Fox 1964:159–60; Banos 2006:31). The start of the winter rains in Greek lands is associated with Taurus's position in the autumn (Banos 2006:31).

[24] The background to this image may be the fact that parhelia usually forebode precipitation (Sørensen 1999:44; Heide 2006:207–8).

[25] Qvigstad (1921:9) only says that Venus has received some interest among the Sami. He does not mention other planets.

[26] The bush *Daphne mezereum* is in Norwegian called *tysbast*, in Swedish *tibast* and in German *Zeidelbast* (*Norsk Ordbok* 1966–2016 XI:1541–42; Noreen 1911:280; Grimm & Grimm 1854–1961 31:498). Grimm suggested (1882–83 [1876–78] III:1193) that the first part of these names is *Týr/Ziu*; the second element being the same word as English *bast*. I think this could be correct and I suggest the following aspects as a basis for the link to Týr: A. The most conspicuous feature of Daphne mezereum is its blossoming before the leaves come out in early spring. In southern Scandinavia, this often happens as early as March (Lindman 1977:374), in Germany in February, March and April (Esser 1910:119). The bark, which in former times was much used both in popular medicine (Høeg 1974:307–13) and in school medicine (under the name *Cortex Mezerei*), was collected early in spring (Lindman 1977:374). This fits with Týr's link to spring equinox. B. In popular medicine, Daphne mezereum was often used to repel the hidden people and trolls from people and livestock (Høeg 1974:310–11), reminiscent to how Týr's derivate Viðarr seems to have had the task of repelling monsters in *Lokasenna* 9–10 (discussed above). C. One name of Daphne mezereum in German is *Wolfsbast,* 'wolf's bast' (Grimm & Grimm 1854–1961 30:1260; Grimm 1882–83 [1876–78] III:1193). D. If eaten or just tasted,

the bark and the berries will cause a burning pain in the mouth and throat (Lindman 1977:374). This could relate to how the bound Fenrir is tortured in several ways, for instance with a sword standing in its mouth, causing the mouth to produce a river of saliva. Some scholars reject the connection between *tysbast* etc. and *Týr* because of the German name *Zeidelbast*, Middle High German *zidelbast* (Noreen 1911280–81; Hellquist 1948:965–66; de Vries 1956 II:22). But I agree with Grimm that the first part of *zidelbast* may well be a reinterpretation of Old High German **zīulinta*, where *linta* is 'bast', and which seems to be the original form of Austrian *Zillind/Zwilind/Zwilinde*, 'Daphne mezereum' (Grimm 1882–83 [1876–78] III:1193; Grimm & Grimm 1854–1961 31:498, 12:1034). Grimm also suggested that the Norwegian plant name *torhjelm/tyrihjelm* means 'Þórr's helmet' (Grimm 1882–83 [1876–78] III:1193). This must be rejected, as demonstrated by Nordhagen (1951).

[27] The Lithuanians used to believe that solar eclipses were caused by a troll attacking the sun's chariot (Olrik 1902:194).