

= Urðarbrunnr =

Urðarbrunnr (Old Norse " Well of Urðr " ; either referring to a Germanic concept of fate ? urðr ? or the norn named Urðr) is a well in Norse mythology . Urðarbrunnr is attested in the Poetic Edda , compiled in the 13th century from earlier traditional sources , and the Prose Edda , written in the 13th century by Snorri Sturluson . In both sources , the well lies beneath the world tree Yggdrasil , and is associated with a trio of norns (Urðr , Verðandi , and Skuld) . In the Prose Edda , Urðarbrunnr is cited as one of three wells existing beneath three roots of Yggdrasil that reach into three distant , different lands ; the other two wells being Hvergelmir , located beneath a root in Niflheim , and Mímisbrunnr , located beneath a root near the home of the frost jötnar . Scholarly theory and speculation surrounds the well .

= = Attestations = =

Urðarbrunnr is attested in the following works :

= = = Poetic Edda = = =

In the Poetic Edda , Urðarbrunnr is mentioned in stanzas 19 and 20 of the poem Völuspá , and stanza 111 of the poem Hávamál . In stanza 19 of Völuspá , Urðarbrunnr is described as being located beneath Yggdrasil , and that Yggdrasil , an ever @-@ green ash @-@ tree , is covered with white mud or loam . Stanza 20 describes that three norns (Urðr , Verðandi , and Skuld) " come from " the well , here described as a " lake " , and that this trio of norns then " set down laws , they chose lives , for the sons of men the fates of men . "

Stanza 111 of Hávamál has been the matter of much debate and is considered unclear , having been referred to as " mysterious " , " obscure and much @-@ debated " . Benjamin Thorpe translates the stanza as :

Time ' tis to discourse from the preacher 's chair .
By the well of Urd I silent sat ,
I saw and meditated , I listened to men 's words .

= = = Prose Edda = = =

In the Prose Edda , Urðarbrunnr is attested in Gylfaginning (chapters 15 , 16 , and the beginning of chapter 17) , and twice in Skáldskaparmál .

= = = Gylfaginning = = =

In chapter 15 of Gylfaginning , a book of the Prose Edda , the throned figure of Just @-@ As @-@ High tells Gangleri (described as King Gylfi in disguise) about Yggdrasil and its roots . Just @-@ As @-@ High describes three roots that support Yggdrasil that stretch a great distance . The third root is located " among the Æsir " , " extends to heaven " and , beneath it , is the " very holy " Urðarbrunnr . Just @-@ As @-@ High details that , every day , the gods ride over the bridge Bifröst to hold court at the well .

High provides more information regarding the well in chapter 16 . High says that there are many beautiful places in heaven , and " everywhere there is divine protection around it . " There , a beautiful hall stands under the ash (Yggdrasil) near the well (Urðarbrunnr) , and from this hall come " three maidens " whose names are Urðr , Verðandi , and Skuld . The maidens shape the lives of men , and " we call them norns " . High goes on to describe that there are other norns , and their nature .

Further into chapter 16 , High states that norns that dwell by Urðarbrunnr take water from the well and mud that lies around it , and pour it over the Yggdrasil so that its branches do not decay or rot . The water is described as so holy that anything that enters the well will become " as white as the

membrane called the skin that lies round the inside of the eggshell . " High then quotes stanza 19 of Völuspá , and states that two swans feed from the well , from which all other swans descend . Chapter 17 starts off with Gangleri asking what other " chief centres " exist outside of Urðarbrunnr .

= = = Skáldskaparmál = = =

Two sections of the book Skáldskaparmál reference Urðarbrunnr . The first reference is in section 49 , where a fragment of a work by the 10th century skald Kormákr Ögmundarson is recited in explaining how " Odin 's fire " is a kenning for a sword . The passage reads " A sword is Odin 's fire , as Kormak said : Battle raged when the feeder of Grid 's steed [wolf] , he who waged war , advanced with ringing Gaut [Odin 's] fire . " and that Urðr " rose from the well . "

Urðarbrunnr is mentioned a second time in section 52 of Skáldskaparmál , this time associated with Christ . The section states that early skalds once referred to Christ in relation to Urðarbrunnr and Rome , and quotes the late 10th century skald Eilífr Goðrúnarson , who states that " thus has the powerful king of Rome increased his realm with lands of heath @-@ land divinities [giants ; i.e. heathen lands] " and that Christ is said to have his throne south of Urðarbrunnr .

= = Theories = =

= = = Temple at Uppsala = = =

Parallels have been pointed out between the description of Urðarbrunnr at the base of the world tree Yggdrasil and Christian medieval chronicler Adam of Bremen 's account of a well at the base of a sacred tree at the Temple at Uppsala , Sweden , found in his 11th century work Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum .

= = = Eilífr Goðrúnarson = = =

Eilífr Goðrúnarson 's Christianity @-@ influenced account of Urðarbrunnr (section 52 of Skáldskaparmál) associates the well with the south and Rome . Theories have been proposed that this description may have some relation to notions of the Jordan River due to phonetic and typological similarities perceived by Eilífr , though there may be no other causative connection . Eilífr is otherwise known as a pagan skald , and this selection has been theorized as describing that , due to directly associating Christ with the well , Christ had taken over responsibility of providence or fate .