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In my paper, 'Memories of the Afterworld in Old Norse Literature', I will focus on the way traditional conceptualisations of life after death are carried forward into literature composed in the Christian era through the reporting of dreams, and within dreams, the speaking of poetry to the dreamer. Such a double mediation of experience appears to uncouple imagination from orthodox theology, allowing saga narrators to confront the paradox of heroic death – at once terrifying and yet in its capacity to enhance the hero's fame, glorious – from a safe textual distance. I will take as my starting point the dream verses in *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, in which complex attitudes to death are explored in quoted verses which are contextualised within significantly less complex prose narration. Similar patterns can be seen in the sequences of dream verses quoted in the *Sturlunga saga* compilation, where powerful encounters with figures of the heathen past are presented in verse while their cultural meaning is modified in the surrounding prose. The cultural memory of a traditional afterworld is expressed in saga literature through dreams and quoted verses in particular, but it is also present in skaldic poetry preserved in a wide range of prose genres. The persistence of the heathen afterworld in the post-heathen period is most apparent in kennings invoking the myth of warriors chosen for death and an afterlife in Valhöll by the god Óðinn and valkyries. Such mythological kennings might be viewed as themselves an instrument of mediality, conveying as they do into the audience's interpreting mind ancient beliefs about death and the afterlife.