

Aslaug, Aslög, Kraka or Kráka, was a queen of Scandinavian mythology who appears in Snorri's Edda, the Völsunga saga and the saga of Ragnar Lodbrok.



Aslaug was the daughter of king Sigurd and the shieldmaiden Brynhild, but was raised by Brynhild's fosterfather Heimer. At the death of Sigurd and Brynhild, Heimer was concerned about Aslaug's security, so he made a harp large enough to hide the girl. He then travelled as a poor harpplayer carrying the harp containing the girl.

Once they arrived at a village in Norway, where they could stay for the night in the house of Åke and Grima. Åke believed that he saw precious items stick out from the harp, which he told his wife who then convinced him of murdering Heimer when he was sleeping.

When they broke the harp, however, they discovered a little girl, who they raised as their own, calling her Kraka (Crow). In order to hide her noble origins, they forced the girl always to be dirty and to wear dirty clothes.

However, once as she was bathing, she was discovered by some of Ragnar Lodbrok's men, who had been sent ashore to bake bread. Confused by Kraka's beauty, they allowed the bread to be burnt, and when Ragnar enquired about this mishap, they told him about the girl.

Ragnar then sent for her, but in order to test her wits, he commanded her neither to arrive dressed nor undressed, neither hungry nor full and neither alone nor in company. Kraka arrived dressed in a fishing net, biting an onion and with only the dog as a companion.

Impressed, Ragnar married her and she gave him four sons.

When Ragnar was about to undertake his fated expedition to England, his failure was due to his not heeding Kraka's warnings about the bad condition of the fleet. When Ragnar had been thrown into the snake pit by king Ella, he was protected by an enchanted shirt that Kraka had made. It was only when this shirt had been removed that the snakes could bite Ragnar and kill him.

