"Ok er þetta upphaf" — First-Stanza Quotation in Old Norse Prosimetrum*

Scandinavian prosimetrum almost invariably does¹ — the narrator's voice is at once in competition with another voice, which through its poetic form is graced with significance and authority. Verse quotations in sagas are conventionally very short, most typically of only one stanza, but occasionally of two, three, or more stanzas. As the evidence of other records demonstrates, however, a verse presented by a saga-narrator as a *lausavísa*, or singlestanza composition, may well be an excerpt from a longer poem.² Sometimes acknowledgement is made of the loosening of the stanza from the whole poem through the narrator's mention of the poem's name, particularly in kings' sagas where praise and memorial poems are frequently cited to verify aspects of an account,³ but even in this genre — avowedly indebted to the existence of whole

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^{1.} One important exception to this is Snorri Sturluson's pedagogic prosimetrum composition, *Háttatal*, in which Snorri follows the learned Latin practice of crafting prosimetrum from his own verse and prose. Otherwise Old Norse prosimetrum seems to have conventionally been composed of prose and quoted poetry — either as evidence of events narrated or as the declamations of the participants in the narrative (see Einarsson 1974 and Friis-Jensen 1987 for a survey of these types).

^{2.} On the roles of *lausavisur* and excerpted verses in saga narrative, see Poole 1991, 3–23.

^{3.} There are numerous examples in *Heimskringla* following the pattern "Þess getr Hornklofi skáld í Glymdrápu" [The skald (Þorbjǫrn) hornklofi mentions this in *Glymdrápa*] (*Haralds saga ins hárfagra* chap. 9; Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 1:101) or "Svá segir Eyvindr skáldaspillir í Hákonarmálum" [Thus Eyvindr skáldaspillir says in *Hákonarmál*] (*Hákonar saga góða* chap. 30; Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 1:186). Examples of this style of citation are also found in the *Íslendinga sögur*, for example in *Eyrbyggja saga* chap. 17, "Svá kvað Oddr skáld í Illugadrápu" [And this is what Oddr skald recited in *Illugadrápa*], and chap. 44, "Svá segir Þormóðr Trefilsson í Hrafnsmálum" [Thus says Þormóðr Trefilsson in Hrafnsmál] (Sveinsson and Þórðarson 1935, 31, 124); in *Grettis saga* chap. 27, "Svá segir Þormóðr í Þorgeirsdrápu" [Thus Þormóðr says in *Þorgeirsdrápa*] (Jónsson 1936, 92); and in *Fóstbræðra saga* chap. 5, "Þessa getr Þormóðr í erfidrápu Þorgeirs" [Þormóðr mentions this in the funeral-*drápa* for Þorgeirr], and in chapter 8, "Þessa víga getr Þormóðr í Þorgeirsdrápu" [Þormóðr mentions these killings in *Þorgeirsdrápa*] (Þórólfsson and Jónsson 1943, 139, 156).

praise poems — it is the name of the eye-witness poet which lends weight to the utterance as much as the testimony of the poem as documentary entity. Even so, poetic evidence can be orchestrated in such a way as to draw attention to the saga-narrator's presence and to play down the presence of the reciting poet. Hence successive quotations from what is, or seems likely to be, the same poem may be repeatedly interrupted by "ok enn kvað hann" [and he said futher] as the saga-narrator reinscribes his⁴ presence and circumscribes the poet's performance.⁵ The poet's name may even be elided by the saga-narrator in a narrative aesthetic which seems to have favoured the use of poets' voices to chime in during the narrative, but not to vie with the narrator's voice for long.⁶

There are significant exceptions to the short piecemeal quotations of stanzas, where whole poems make their way into saga texts, and these instances are of interest not only to the extent that they define the reaches of prosimetric form in medieval Scandinavian writing, but also because variations between manuscripts of the same saga indicate that compilers reacted in different ways to balancing the generic conventions of prosimetrum with the antiquarian and literary impulse to preserve as complete a record as possible of ancient poetry. How whole poems were transmitted during the centuries between their supposed composition and their recording is not known, but it was presumably in a performance context similar to that in which the oral precursors to literary prosimetra were developed. The form and balance of oral saga prosimetrum is unknown, but it may be supposed to have varied according to the nature of the tale as well as the nature of the voices of the quoted poetry. The broad brush-strokes of preserved anecdote suggest a picture of a prosimetric skald's saga told by a performer who recited a whole poem of his own composition at the performance's end⁷ and of a saga of ancient times told by a performer who quoted liberally from the verses attributed to supernatural figures and those who mixed with them, on one occasion quoting what appears to be a whole poem.⁸

^{4.} The gendering of narrators as masculine in my discussion is in line with the extant historical representations I am examining.

^{5.} See, for example, the style of quotation in *Nóregs konunga tal* chap. 29, where six consecutive single- (or half-) stanza quotations are introduced as follows: "Sighvatr hefr svá Nesjavísur" [Sighvatr begins the *Nesjavísur* in this manner], "ok í sama kvæði segir hann enn svá" [and in the same poem he says further], "Ok enn kvað hann þetta" [And further he recited this], "ok enn kvað hann þetta," "Ok enn kvað hann þetta," and "ok enn kvað hann þetta" (Einarsson 1985, 174–77). Two stanzas of Einarr Helgason's *Vellekla* are also quoted in this way in *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* chap. 78: "Þá kvað Einarr" [Then Einarr recited], "Ok enn kvað hann" [And he recited further] (Nordal 1933, 270–71).

^{6.} See Helgason (1969, 174), who notes that it was not necessarily conventional to name both poem and poet in citations.

^{7. &}quot;Ingimundr prestr sagði sogu Orms [B]arreyjarskálds ok vísur margar ok flokk góðan við enda sogunnar, er Ingimundr hafði ortan" [Ingimundr the Priest told the saga of Ormr, Skald of Barrey, including many verses and with a good *flokkr* at the end of the saga which Ingimundr had composed] (*Porgils saga ok Hafliða* chap. 10; Brown 1952, 18).

^{8.} See *Norna-Gests þáttr* within *Óláfs Saga Tryggvasonar*, which includes the eddic poem *Helreið Brynhildar*, as well as stanzas of *Reginsmál* (Flateyjarbók; Vigfússon and Unger 1860–68, 1:346–59).

The represention of the voices of prosimetrum as contestatory brings to the fore the idea of the narrator as under constant pressure to keep the audience's interest, or — in terms of Chambers' theory of the situational context of storytelling9—the idea of narrative as seduction in which the narrator must assume and maintain an authority that is highly vulnerable to audience reaction (1984, 213). In the context of oral performance, maintenance of audience interest would not simply have been a matter of literary effect, but of a performer's survival. To captivate — even enthrall — the audience would have been the task of the saga-performer, and this must have required telling an engaging story as well as flourishing quotations in an impressive manner, warding off both audience boredom and competition from fellow reciters keen to take their turn on the floor. Within the company of those attending such performances, the cultural heritage of traditional skaldic poetry must have been common property to a certain extent, its purchase dependent on wit and the perseverance to comprehend and memorize it. Judging by the description of the performance of the skald's saga mentioned above, the reciter was demonstrating his own skill as a poet in the skaldic tradition as much as his skill as a narrator and his knowledge of older poetry. The live reciter of saga prosimetrum would have been in a position to monitor the success of each of these aspects of his performance and to adapt his repertoire to maximize theatrical effect — to digress, elaborate, or quote more extensively according to audience reaction.

Clearly, this situation would have changed with the textualization of saga prosimetrum, though perhaps it would have done so gradually. We have neither evidence of "first textualization" nor necessarily of datable gradations, only the variegated form of saga prosimetrum across manuscripts of the same saga and across saga genres from which to speculate. Early texts of sagas may have been used as the basis for live readings, and it is possible in this situation that the reciter supplemented the text using his own repertoire of verses. Unlike the saganarrator of oral prosimetrum, once the saga-author quoted another's voice continuously, his presence as narrator receded: in the written medium, that is, the act of quoting has the potential to negate the act of authoring, especially in a literary tradition where the saga-author is anonymous and the quoted poet is named. As Chambers argues (1984, 215), laying claim to derived authority is a defensive procedure for a literary narrator, and one in which, I have suggested, stylistic defences were conventionally raised in written saga narration. The predilection for narratorial interruption ("ok enn kvað hann") may have had its origin in oral prosimetrum, but it nonetheless underlines an important effect of textualization the greater vulnerability of the narrator to effacement during quotation, compared with the palpable presence of the oral narrator even when he is speaking someone else's words.

^{9.} Ross Chambers' theory of narrative as seduction is developed in relation to nineteenth-century literary short stories, but many of his observations are pertinent to the analysis of other kinds of narratives.

Although in an abstract way we may posit a saga-author for the first instance of a narrative's textualization, the state of extant texts and the active nature of saga-compilation sometimes render the term vague or illusory. Each extant version of a saga can nonetheless be said to produce its own narrator, in the sense that the narrative is organized and presented from a certain point of view (Sørensen 1993, 63–64), and for the text to be meaningful we have to try to make sense of that narrative voice. *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* is an interesting case in this regard. As it appears in modern editions — as a totalizing documentation of extant records — *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* makes mention of six poems that Egill composed (*Aðalsteinsdrápa*, *Hofuðlausn*, *Sonatorrek*, *Arinbjarnarkviða*, and two shield-poems, one named *Berudrápa*) as well as making use of dozens of single stanzas presented as *lausavísur*, though not all the poems or *lausavísur* are recorded in every manuscript. Indeed, it is arguable from the evidence of extant manuscripts of the saga that none of the whole poems were included in the earliest written version of the saga (Jónsson 1886–88, xxxIII; Nordal 1933, xVI).

The Möðruvallabók manuscript, written in the mid-fourteenth century, is the chief medieval source for the part of the saga that refers to Egill's poems. ¹¹ The manuscript is now missing leaves in several places, but it appears to have originally contained eleven sagas which, with the exception of *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, are written one after another without a break, each new saga typically beginning mid-column on the large, two-columned leaves of the manuscript. *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, however, is written out on a set of five quires, beginning at the top of the verso side of the first leaf, and ending on the recto side of the last leaf, leaving a blank page at the beginning and end of the text (62r and 99v). ¹² The saga is written in the same hand as the rest of the manuscript. ¹³

In seventeen places in the saga, however, the main scribe has left a blank space for verse to be written in.¹⁴ Why verse fails the scribe on so many occasions

^{10.} See Poole 1993 for a discussion of how the editing of just one of the poems preserved in manuscripts of *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* raises important questions of conflation and concealment.

^{11.} The saga is preserved in another mid-fourteenth-century manuscript, Wolfenbüttel MS 9.10. Aug. 4°, some earlier fragments, and a seventeenth-century paper copy of a lost medieval version (Degnbol et al. 1989, 234; Nordal 1933, xcv–xcvII). There is a lacuna in the Wolfenbüttel manuscript which covers the chapters in which four of the poems are mentioned.

^{12.} The previous text in the manuscript, *Njáls saga*, ends at the top of the right-hand column of 61r. The rest of the column has been left blank, and the verso side of the leaf is taken up by a sketch of a man with a sword(?), a bird, and other now faint sketches and notes. *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* does not begin on the recto side of the next leaf — which contains more sketches and some faded or erased lettering — but on the verso.

^{13.} At least, the same hand that wrote 189 of the 200 leaves of the manuscript (Weenen 1987, 1:xII).

^{14.} See Sveinsson 1933 and volume 2 of Weenen 1987: 77vb23–26, 77vb36–40, 82va28–32, 82vb4–8, 83ra31–35, 85va5–6, 86va16–19, 86va25–29, 86va35–39, 87va5–7, 87va14–18, 88va5–9, 88vb30–34, 89vb 19–22, 92vb21–25, 95rb2–4, 95rb34–36. The stanzas, lines, and words that these spaces correspond to in the numbering of *lausavísur* in Nordal 1933 and Jónsson 1912, A1:48–59, are as follows (the latter reference in parentheses): 8 (2), 9 (3), 19 (12), 20 (13), 24 (15), 32.7–8 (23.7–8), all but the first two words of

is not clear: at one point, he writes just two words of the stanza, and at another, he writes all but the last two lines, suggesting perhaps that the text he was copying from was illegible, or that he was not confident of his own readings of Egill's compositions. The scribe nonetheless felt confident that there were verses to fill these gaps, and the bundle of quires containing *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* appears to have been passed on to another scribe for completion. Whether recourse was had to someone else because of the existence of a better text elsewhere, or because of greater expertise in the range and detail of Egill's poetry, is not known. Whoever commissioned the Möðruvallabók compilation clearly had an interest in skalds' sagas, but the other three in the collection, *Kormáks saga*, *Hallfreðar saga*, and *Fóstbræðra saga*, have stronger connections with the northwesterly region of Iceland where the manuscript is thought to have been written, ¹⁵ and perhaps the compiler had a smaller repertoire of Egill's verses to draw on from memory in cases where the quotations in his source text were illegible or insufficient.

A second scribe with the desired expertise was found, ¹⁶ and like the first, he was a professional scribe, both hands recognizable from other manuscripts (Karlsson 1967, 186–87). Using coal-black ink, he filled in all but three of the gaps. On two occasions in the extant text, when the narrator announces "Pá kvað Egill" [Then Egill said], Egill is uncharacteristically lost for words. The first time is during a dialogue between Egill, King Eiríkr, and Queen Gunnhildr (Nordal 1933, 180) when a poetic rejoinder from Egill is signalled following a stern speech from the king. When no verse is forthcoming in the narrative, Gunnhildr proceeds immediately with her denunciation of her husband's conduct. In a later encounter, the saga describes Egill tying a stone slab to the front of his body in anticipation of an ambush in Eiðaskógr. As he and his party set off — "Eptir þat fara þeir leið sína" (Nordal 1933, 235) — the Möðruvallabók-narrator offers Egill the opportunity to comment on his memorable armour, but the chance is passed up.

There is no sign of either of these two declamations by Egill in other manuscripts. According to Sigurður Nordal (1933, xIV), there are two possible explanations for this: either the gaps originated in the first saga-author's version and compilers other than the Möðruvallabók-compiler deleted the misleading words, or the phrase was introduced — either by the Möðruvallabók-compiler or the writer of an earlier version — with the expectation that a verse could be composed to fill the gap. In either case, the implication is that the missing verses signal intentional (though unaccomplished) literary fraud — planned either by the saga-author himself or by a later compiler to compose poetry "í nafni Egils" [in Egill's name]

^{33 (24), 34 (25), 35 (26), 36 (27), 38 (29), 42 (33), 49 (39).} A space was also left for the first stanza of *Sonatorrek* (Nordal 1933, 246; Jónsson 1912, A1:40).

^{15.} Karlsson 1993, 426; Ross 1997, draft chapter "Myth, Region, and Family: The Nexus between Sub-Classes of the Icelandic Saga."

^{16.} Bjarni Einarsson (1993, 155) refers to this hand as the "assistant scribe," noting "that the writing of the stanzas in this text appears to be exceptionally conscientious."

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(Nordal 1933, XIII–XIV).¹⁷ Another possibility is that the first saga-author's favoured prosimetric style of narration did not necessarily entail the complete documentation of orally transmitted verses attributed to the tenth-century poet. He may indeed have known whole poems and *lausavisur* that were believed to have been composed by Egill on occasions that are described in the saga narrative, but have chosen instead to narrate incidents or encounters in his own voice rather than withdrawing to allow Egill to recite his poetry to the audience. It is also possible that more poetry attributed to Egill Skallagrímsson was in oral circulation than was known by the first saga-author and that during the process of copying and disseminating the saga, other verses came to be transmitted to compilers who added them to their reworked texts, not so much to improve the saga narrative as to improve their own written archive on the celebrated poet.

The four *lausavísur* that appear to be unique to the Möðruvallabók version might lend some weight to this conjecture. 18 All are written in the main hand of the manuscript, indicating that they were either legible in the compiler's source text, or that the compiler added some verses himself as well as leaving spaces for others to be written in by another hand. The first lausavísa is a dróttkvætt stanza in praise of Arinbjorn's generosity, presented as an extemporaneous composition after his host's generous Yule feast — "Pá orti Egill vísu" [Then Egill composed a verse] (Nordal 1933, 213) — though it confirms information already provided in the prose narrative. Egill celebrates his patron's gift of a "slœður silki...gollknappaðar" [silk gown with gold buttons], while the prose describes Arinbjorn's Yule-gift of a "slæður, gorvar af silki ok gullsaumaðar mjok, settar fyrir allt gullknoppum í gengum niðr" [a gown, made of silk and elaborately embroidered with gold-thread, set with gold buttons down the front]. The use of quotation to verify a saga-narrator's account is well known from the saga corpus, and it is not unlikely here, as elsewhere, that the prose-writer had the words of the stanza in mind as he wrote. The narrator of the Wolfenbüttel manuscript version of the saga is content to describe the gift in his own words and not to quote Egill's verse (Helgason 1956, 52v31–36), and this may have been the style of the original. 19

The other three verses unique to Möðruvallabók relate to very different narrative moments: Egill's extravagant vomiting over Ármóðr (chap. 71) — in which there is a certain confluence between the prose and verse, though not the lexical repetition noted above; Egill's response to the news of Arinbjorn's death (chap. 78); and one of three verses Egill is credited with in old age (chap. 85). The last quotation is interesting because it adds a complete *dróttkvætt* stanza to the *forn-yrðislag* stanza and *dróttkvætt* half-stanza recorded in other versions of the saga

^{17.} Nordal (1933, VII–VIII) also lists other *vísur* that scholars have suspected to be "falsaðar."

^{18.} Nordal 1933, verses 43, 45, 51, 59; Jónsson 1912, A1:57–59, verses 34, 35, 41, 45.

^{19.} Speculation about the style and form of the original is of course contentious, and there is no unanimity on the subject of whether shorter or elaborated versions are likely to be closer to the original: see Jónsson 1886–88, xxix–xxxiii; Helgason 1956, vii–viii; Einarsson 1993.

(Nordal 1933, verses 60 and 58). To some extent, the *dróttkvætt* verse 59 duplicates the sentiments of the *fornyrðislag* verse 60 — a lonely old man bemoaning his dependence on women and harking back to the times when he was valued by kings — but the former concentrates on Egill's poetic accomplishments through the explicit mention of his patrons' reciprocation with gold and joy and the demonstration of his undiminished skill implied by the choice of poetic form. Perhaps the saga-narrator of Möðruvallabók (or his predecessor) thought it desirable that Egill's last words include a fitting memorial to his poetic achievement, in much the same way as Haraldr Sigurðarson is served by Snorri's narration of his saga, being allowed to supplement a *fornyrðislag lausavísa* with a *dróttkvætt* stanza before he goes into battle at Stamford Bridge (Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 3:187–88). The *dróttkvætt* half-stanza (verse 58), though exemplifying the poet's comic skill, is hardly a monumental celebration of Egill's powers.

To return now to the final silence in the Möðruvallabók narrative of the saga, imposed by the third unfilled space in the text. It occurs after the narrator has mentioned a poem Egill composed for Arinbjǫrn, which is introduced by the phrase: "ok er þetta vpp har at" [and this is how it begins] (cf. Weenen 1987, 2:95rb 33–34). This is not the only time the narrator uses this phrase. Earlier in the same chapter, the composition of Egill's poem Sonatorrek is described, and, following the words "ok er þetta uphar kuæðis" [and this is the beginning of the poem], a space for a single stanza left by the main scribe has been filled in by the second scribe (95rb2–4). Later in the same chapter, and again in the following chapter, the narrator mentions shield-poems Egill has composed and in both cases provides the first stanza himself after the "ok er þetta upphaf" introduction (95vb23–26, 96ra25–29). The same formulation is also used later in the manuscript in Hallfreðar saga to introduce two lines of a drápa for Earl Eiríkr, 20 which, like Egill's two shield-poems, is not preserved elsewhere.

On all the occasions when "ok er betta upphaf" is used in Möðruvallabók, the quotation is, or was planned to be, of only one stanza. And in all these cases the content of the quoted stanza is of a very general nature, adding little to narrative development, but standing as testimony to the narrator's claim that the poem exists. If a poem is named and specific information quoted from it, the narrator in medieval Icelandic prosimetrum normally indicated this using the preposition i. An example of this style of citation is found in *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*

^{20. &}quot;Þá fœrði Hallfreðr kvæðit, ok er þetta upphaf á" [Then Hallfreðr delivered the poem, and this is how it begins] (*Hallfreðar saga* chap. 11; Sveinsson 1939, 195; Weenen 1987, 2:155vb24).

^{21.} The basic style of this formulation simply uses *petta*: "Pá orti Sighvatr flokk um Magnús konung, ok er þetta þar í . . . Petta er ok þar í . . . Ok enn þetta" [Then Sighvatr composed a *flokkr* about King Magnús, and this is in there . . . This is also in there . . . And this too] (Fagrskinna, *Nóregs konunga tal* chap. 48; Einarsson 1985, 213, and other examples there); "Pá kvað hann Hallmundarkviðu, ok er þetta þar í" [Then he recited *Hallmundarkviða*, and this is in there] (*Grettis saga* chap. 62; Jónsson 1936, 203); "Gunnlaugr kvað þá drápuna . . . Ok þetta er þar" [Then Gunnlaugr recited the *drápa* . . . And this is there] (*Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu* chap. 8; Nordal and Jónsson 1938, 75).

chap. 55: "Pá orti Egill drápu um Aðalstein konung, ok er í því kvæði þetta" [Then Egill composed a *drápa* in honour of King Aðalsteinn, and this is in that poem] (Nordal 1933, 146), words which introduce a stanza about Aðalsteinn's fame as a conqueror of lands. This particular stanza is only in Möðruvallabók (82vb14–18), but it is followed by a quotation of the *drápa*'s *stef* 'refrain', which is also found in other manuscripts. ²²

In skaldic poetry, the *stef* typically names the royal subject of a *drápa*, and frequently makes mention of the lands he rules, making its quotation an economical and effective prosimetric device, frequently employed by the narrators of sagas of kings and poets.²³ It is usually cast in the present tense (Fidjestøl 1982, 185), allowing the saga-narrator to share the poet's presentation of immediate observation. According to *Óláfs saga helga*, King Knútr regarded the poet Þórarinn's composition of a *flokkr* without a *stef* an insult and demanded that he compose instead a *drápa*. The saga-narrator's description of the reworking represents the *stef* as the core of the new praise poem: "Þórarinn orti þá stef ok setti í kvæðit ok jók nǫkkurum ørendum eða vísum. Þetta er stefit" [Þórarinn then composed a refrain and set it in the poem, adding stanzas and verses to it. This is the *stef*] (*Óláfs saga helga* chap. 172; Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 2:307).

Even when only a few lines of verse are germaine to the narrative, the often very particular nature of some citations suggests that saga-narrators not only knew the whole text of a poem, but thought details of its form and the place of the quotation in the poetic whole relevant to the saga. So in addition to the placement of a *stef* within a $dr\acute{a}pa$, saga-narrators sometimes gave contextual details for a particular $v\acute{i}sa$, ²⁴ a sequence of $v\acute{i}sur$, ²⁵ a $v\acute{i}sa$ within a flokkr or other kind of poem, ²⁶ an prendi 'stanza' within a p

^{22.} The Möðruvallabók text reads "En þetta er stefit í drápunni" [And this is the *drápa*'s *stef*] (Nordal 1933, 147), whereas the Wolfenbüttel manuscript reads "þa oztı E dzapu u*m* A k*onung oc* er þ*et*ta [teṛɪt ɪ" [Then Egill composed a *drápa* for King Aðalsteinn and this is its *stef*] (see Helgason 1956, 43v33–34).

^{23.} For example, *Hallfreðar saga* chap. 11, "Hann [Hallfreðr] orti þá Óláfsdrápu, ok er þetta stef í" [Then he composed *Óláfsdrápa*, and this *stef* is in it] (Sveinsson 1939, 194); *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu* chap. 8, "Gunnlaugr kvað þá drápuna, ok er þetta stefit í" [Then Gunnlaugr recited the *drápa*, and this *stef* is in it], the quotation of a further two stanzas of the poem is introduced by "Ok þetta er þar" (Nordal and Jónsson 1938, 75), "Gunnlaugr flutti fram kvæðit vel... en þetta er stefit í" [Gunnlaugr delivered the poem well... and this is its *stef*] (Nordal and Jónsson 1938, 71); "sá er orti Hafgerðingadrápu. Þar er þetta stef í" [he who composed *Hafgerðingadrápa*. There is this *stef* in it] (quoted in this way in *Grænlendinga saga* chap. 1 [Sveinsson and Þórðarson 1935, 245] and in *Landnámabók* [Benediktsson 1986, 132, 133 n9]).

^{24. &}quot;Hann kvað flokk um Hallmund, ok er þetta þar í . . . Þessi vísa er þar í" [He recited a *flokkr* about Hallmundr, and this is in there . . . This stanza is in there] (*Grettis saga* chap. 57; Jónsson 1936, 184–85).

^{25. &}quot;Pórarinn loftunga orti um Svein Álfífuson kvæði þat, er Glælognskviða heitir, ok eru þessar vísur í" [Þórarinn loftunga composed the poem about Sveinn Álfífuson which is called *Glælognskviða*, and these stanzas are in it] (Óláfs saga helga chap. 245; Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 2:406).

^{26. &}quot;Sigvatr orti flokk um fall Erlings, ok er þessi vísa þar í" [Sigvatr composed a *flokkr* about Erlingr's fall, and this stanza is in it] (Óláfs saga helga chap. 176; Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 2:314); "Sigvatr orti flokk, er kallaðr er Bersoglisvísur... Hann kvað... Í því sama kvæði eru þessar vísur" [Sigvatr composed the *flokkr* which is called *Bersoglisvísur*... He recited... These stanzas are in the same poem]

vísa.²⁸ Even if the poem was not named, the saga-narrator often indicated what kind of poem the quotation came from, distinguishing the drápa, the flokkr 'poem', ²⁹ and the *flim* 'lampoon'. ³⁰ Details of length were also considered worthy of mention,³¹ probably because of the greater prestige a substantial, ornate drápa brought its subject. But there are also other kinds of detail, such as Haraldr Sigurðarson's composition of gamanvísur 'comic verses' while on a journey. which, the saga-narrator tells us, were sixteen in number, all with the same niðrlag 'ending'. 32 "Þessi er ein" [This is one], he says, before quoting a single stanza.³³ In Bósa saga ok Herrauðs the narrator quotes three excerpts from the poem Buslubæn — too shocking for a Christian audience to hear in full — but on each occasion he draws attention to his knowledge of the whole poem and documents the place of the quotation within it: "en bó er betta upphaf á henni" [but this is how it begins], "annan briðung bænarinnar...er betta bar upphaf á" [the second third of the poem . . . which begins like this], "Syrpuvers . . . ok er betta bar í nærri endanum" [Syrpuvers... which is near the end of the poem] (Jónsson 1954, 291, 294, 295). In disavowing the desire to transmit the poem to the saga audience the narrator reinforces his own authoritative knowledge of the orally transmitted corpus: "ok mun ek láta þat um líða at skrifa hann, því at þat er öllum

(Magnúss saga ins góða chap. 16; Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 3:26–27). Note also "orti Þormóðr Trefilsson í Hrafnsmálum vísu þessa" [Þormóðr Trefilsson composed this stanza in Hrafnsmál] (Eyrbyggja saga chap. 56; Sveinsson and Þórðarson 1935, 156).

- 27. Fóstbræðra saga chap. 7, "Pormóðr víkr á nokkut í Porgeirsdrápu á misþokka þeira í þessu ørendi" [Pormóðr hints somewhat at their falling-out in *Porgeirsdrápa* in this stanza], and chap. 12, "Pessa atburðar getr Pormóðr í Porgeirsdrápu í þessu ørendi" [Pormóðr speaks of these events in *Porgeirsdrápa* in this stanza] (Þórólfsson and Jónsson 1943, 152, 181).
- 28. *Porgríms þáttr Hallasonar*: "ok váru þessi orð í einni vísu" [and these lines were in one stanza] (Kristjánsson 1956, 303).
- 29. *Hallfreðar saga* chap. 5 according to Möðruvallabók (151va26): "Hallfreðr kvað kvæðit ok var þat drápa, ok flutti vel og skoruliga" [Hallfreðr recited the poem, and it was a drápa, and he delivered it well and with authority] (Sveinsson 1939, 151), and also in the *Great Saga of Óláfr Tryggvason* (AM 61 fol.): "Hallf(reðr) flutti kuæþit skoruliga ok var þat drapa" (Halldórsson 1958, 346.16–17).
- 30. "En þetta er í flíminu" [and this is in the lampoon] (*Bjarnarsaga Hítdælakappa* chap. 20; Nordal and Jónsson 1938, 168).
- 31. "Síðan hóf hann [Gull-Ásu-Þórðr] kvæðit, ok var þat fimmtøg drápa, ok var þetta stefit" [Then he began to recite the poem, which was fifty stanzas long, and this was the *stef*] (*Gull-Ásu-Þórðar þáttr*; Jóhannesson 1950, 341); "Þorleifr kvað þá fertuga drápu, ok er þetta stef í" [Þorleifr then recited a fortystanza *drápa*, and this is its *stef*] (*Porleifs þáttr jarlsskálds* chap. 4; Kristjánsson 1956, 218).
- 32. The quotation of a *niðrlag* is also found in *Óláfs saga helga* chap. 62: "Brynjólfr orti vísu um gjafarnar, ok er þat niðrlag at" [Brynjólfr composed a stanza about the gifts, and this is its ending] (Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 2:82). The term is used in *Víglundar saga* in opposition to the *upphaf* of a stanza: "er þú nefnir hana bæði í niðurlagi ok upphafi vísu þinnar" [when you name her both at the end and beginning of your verse] (*Víglundar saga* chap. 21; Halldórsson 1959, 106).
- 33. "Í þessum ferðum orti Haraldr gamanvísur ok eru saman sextán ok eitt niðrlag at ǫllum. Þessi er ein" [On these journeys Haraldr composed comic verses, sixteen in all and each with the same ending] (Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar chap. 15; Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 3:89). The same verse quotation is found in Fagrskinna, Nóregs konunga tal chap. 51 (Einarsson 1985, 237), introduced with the same wording.

barfleysa at hafa hann eftir, en þó má svá sízt eftir hafa hann, at hann sé eigi skrifaðr" [but I will let the opportunity to write it down pass, because it is unnecessary for anyone to repeat it, and besides, it will be transmitted less if it is not written down] (Jónsson 1954, 294).

When a narrator adopted this manner of citation it must have signalled to his audience, whether listeners or readers, that his knowledge of poetry extended well beyond the words he chose to quote, thus reaffirming his authority. A more cynical interpretation is of course possible, namely that the narrator might only have been able to remember the first stanza (Poole 1991, 23), in the same way that decadent literate cultures such as our own sport many who can recite or sing the first verse of a work but few whose memory skills enable them to reproduce the whole work without a written text. But it seems reasonable to assume that the prosimetric form of saga narrative could not necessarily accommodate the full recording of all the poetry that its characters were known to have composed or had composed about them, yet this mode of detailed referencing works to establish a kind of bibliographic catalogue of the oral corpus of skaldic poetry, a corpus that, as far as we know, was never made into a body of recorded texts in the manner of the eddic anthologies.

To return once again to the still blank space in the Möðruvallabók text of *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* which was intended for the first stanza of Egill's poem for Arinbjorn: on the blank verso side of the last quire of the saga, another scribe appears to have written out the whole of Egill's poem. The end of the poem is now missing, but it was most probably completed on another leaf that has since been lost (Kristjánsson 1988, 101). The handwriting of *Arinbjarnarkviða* is regarded as somewhat later than the other two hands of the saga (Sveinsson 1933, 20–21), and it is interesting that this scribe did not go back five leaves in the manuscript to fill in the gap in the saga-text where first-stanza quotation was anticipated by the Möðruvallabók-narrator. He presumably did not see his role as completing the saga narrative in cooperation with the first two hands, but as supplementing the archive of texts with an addition, motivated by a desire to document, rather than to transmit the prosimetrum style of an earlier writer.

Later compilers' awareness that their manuscripts represented more detailed archives of earlier works is attested by the following explanation in Flateyjarbók. In the preface to what is termed "Viðbætir við Olafs sögu helga" the compiler explains:

Pessir smair articuli sem her eru samanlesnir standa i sialfri lifssaughu hins heilaga Olafs konungs Haralldzsunar þeirri saumu er Styrmir prestr hinn frodi hefir saman sett þott þeir se eigi sua fulliga skrifadir her fyrr i bokinni. Ma þat engi madr vndrazst þott mart liggi nidri vskrifat þat er til hefir borit vm hans daga sua sem þessi hinn gofugligi geisli kom vida fram a Nordlondum þar sem þa var heilagri cristni ok kirkiunnar rett meir til frelsis ok naadar helldr enn aadr. (Vigfússon and Unger 1860–68, 3:237)

[The small articles that are collected here belong in the same Saga of King Olaf Haraldsson the Holy that the priest Styrmir the Wise compiled, though they were not fully writ-

ten out earlier in this book. But no one should be astonished that much that happened in his day lies unwritten, just as the worshipful beam appeared in many places in the Northern lands once holy Christianity and church law were more privileged and protected than before.]

In its usual articulation, the prosimetrum style of poets' and kings' sagas seems to have been to quote single stanzas spoken by participants in the narrative to develop the narrative, and initial stanzas of long poems to verify their existence. The same picture is apparent in other texts as well. In *Óláfs saga helga*, a *flokkr* known as *Vestrfararvísur* is attested by the quotation of its first four lines: "Sigvatr orti flokk þann, er kallaðr var Vestrfararvísur, ok er þetta upphaf" [Sigvatr composed a poem called *Vestrfararvísur*, and this is its beginning] (Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 2:271). And in *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds*, a sequence of verses known as "Þokuvísur" in the middle of a poem called *Jarlsníð* is cited, with only the first four lines of verse quoted in the saga: "ok hóf þá upp vísur, ok heita Þokuvísur ok standa í miðju Jarlsníði, ok er þetta upphaf at" [and he began to recite verses which are called "Þokuvísur" and come in the middle of *Jarlsníð*, and this is how they begin] (Kristjánsson 1956, 222–23).

Perhaps when this "ok er þetta upphaf" phrasing was used in prosimetrum it also worked as an aide-mémoire to readers, who if reading alone may have called to mind the rest of the poem if they knew it, or if reading to an audience may have recited it from memory. Such may have been the case with the poem *Bjarkamál in forna*, which is introduced in this way in *Fóstbræðra saga* and *Óláfs saga helga*, with only the first two stanzas quoted.³⁴ In the latter saga, the "ok er þetta upphaf" phrasing is found in a number of early manuscripts, ³⁵ but interestingly there is no quotation in the earlier text, ³⁶ the *Legendary Saga of Saint Óláfr*, which simply narrates "oc quað siðan Biarkamal. Oc þa er hann hafðe queðet, þa mællte konongrenn" [and then he recited *Bjarkamál*. And when he had recited it, then the king said] (Heinrichs et al. 1982, 182.32–33). In another instance in this manuscript, there is no formal introduction to a verse quotation, and just one line of verse, ³⁷ suggesting that the written text indeed functioned as a kind of shorthand for readers or reciters.

^{34.} *Fóstbræðra saga* chap. 24 (Flateyjarbók version), "Petta er upphaf at kvæðinu" [This is the poem's beginning] (Þórólfsson and Jónsson 1943, 262); *Óláfs saga helga* chap. 207, "Hann kvað Bjarkamál in fornu, ok er þetta upphaf" [He recited *Bjarkamál in forna*, and this is the beginning] (Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 2:361); also with two stanzas in the *Separate Saga of Saint Óláfr*: "hann qvað Biarcamal en fornv. þat er þetta er vphaf" (Johnsen and Helgason 1941, 547.4).

^{35.} See Johnsen and Helgason 1941, 547: Stockh. perg. 4° no. 2, fol. 64v36-37 (Helgason 1942), dated to ca. 1250-1300; AM 325 VII 4° , ca. 1250-1300; AM 68 fol., ca. 1300-1350; AM 325 V 4° , ca. 1300-1320; Stockh. perg. 4° no. 4, ca. 1320-40; and AM 61 fol., ca. 1350-75. The datings given here are those provided by Degnbol et al. 1989, 433, 450, 474.

^{36.} The Uppsala manuscript Delagard. saml. no. 8 II, dated to ca. 1225-50 (Degnbol et al. 1989, 469).

^{37. &}quot;Ottar hæfr upp quæðet, oc þegar locet var, þa kveðr hann lofdrapona um konongenn. Lyð manngafugr minni" [Ottarr began the poem, and as soon as it was finished he recited the praise poem about the king. Lyð manngafugr minni] (Heinrichs et al. 1982, 132.19–21).

In cases when the narrative presents the poet reciting a poem within the dramatic present, the inclusion of the whole poem may well have enhanced the drama of the episode. According to his saga, Egill's poem Hofuðlausn is recited under such conditions, under the stern, potentially murderous, glare of King Eiríkr Blood-Axe. In a live performance of the saga, the narrator might well have turned the extended poetic recitation to advantage, drawing the audience in to the scene in the hall and exploiting the excitement of Egill's performance as his own. The Möðruvallabók version of the saga describes the scene of the recitation, but does not quote any verse at all, 38 in a narrative style similar to the Legendary Saga of Saint Óláfr's account of the recitation of Bjarkamál. Other manuscripts preserve the whole poem, but in two versions that suggest independent recordings from oral tradition (see Helgason 1969; Fidjestøl 1982, 47). The Wolfenbüttel manuscript of the saga quotes all twenty-two stanzas of the poem indicating the commencement of the poetic text to the reader with the rubric "hér hefr Hofuðlausn" and prefacing the quotation with the dramatic introduction "Egill hóf upp kvæðit ok fekk þegar hljóð" [Egill began to recite his poem and got immediate silence]. Interestingly, a fragmentary manuscript of the saga from the end of the fourteenth century (AM 162 A ε fol.) adds to this introduction the phrase "ok er betta upphaf kvæðis þessa" (3v12-13; Nordal 1933, 185n1) before quoting the whole poem.³⁹ Unless this phrasing is a remnant of an earlier version of the text in which only a single stanza was quoted, it suggests that the word *upphaf* could be used to designate the beginning of a poem's recitation as well as the details of its first stanza.

The word *upphaf* is once used in the opening stanza of a *drápa* to announce the beginning of a recitation.⁴⁰ It is also used in translations from the Latin to render the terms *initium* and *introitus*,⁴¹ which in ecclesiastical texts was a well-established means of referring to a whole text by its opening line, a practice that writers of vernacular texts would presumably have been familiar with. The word also occurs in rubrics to signal the beginning of a saga: "upphaf fostbræðra soghu" is found in Flateyjarbók, for instance. More common in rubrics, however, is the unnominalized form "hér hefr upp,"⁴² which marks the beginning of a text in red

^{38.} The chapter rubric reads "egill plutti kuædit" [Egill recited the poem] and the text "þa geck egill firir hann ok hop vpp kuæðit. ok kuað hátt ok peck þegar hlioð" [then Egill approached him and began to recite the poem and spoke loudly and got immediate silence] (87ra13–14, 87rb27–28).

^{39.} Where the fragment breaks off, the poem's transcription in fact ends at stanza 21.2 (see Jónsson 1886–88, 345–46; 1912, A1:35).

^{40.} See Óttarr svarti's Óláfsdrápa sænska (Jónsson 1912, A1:289, stanza 1.1; 1931, 182.13).

^{41.} It is found, for example, as a translation of *initium* in *Konungs skuggsjá* (Holm-Olsen 1945, 3.14) and *introitus* in *Maríu saga* (Unger 1871, 506.13, 747.23) and *Jóns saga postula* (Unger 1874, 844.8); see also *Maríuvísur* 3, stanza 21.7 (Kahle 1898, 47). I am grateful to the staff of Den arnamagnæanske kommissions ordbog in Copenhagen for allowing me access to their card files on the word *upphaf*.

^{42.} For example, "Hér hefr upp Hyndluljóð," again in Flateyjarbók (Gks 1005 fol.); "Hér hefr up qvæði frá Helga Hundingsbana þeira oc Hǫðbrodds" in the Codex regius of the Elder Edda (Gks 2365 4°, 39.20) and "Hér hefr Hǫfuðlausn" (Wolfenbüttel MS 9.10. Aug. 4°, 49v27). See also Nordal 1933, xv.

ink for the benefit of the perusing eye of the reader, and it is perhaps this kind of learned, literate audience who developed a taste for whole poems being incorporated into saga manuscripts. The placing of rubrics mid-line, following the beginning of a poem and followed by the end of the preceding prose was not an arrangement that would have facilitated the smooth recitation of narrative: the prosimetrum, in black ink, would have been read independently of the text in red ink, which was directed to a different audience (see, for example Helgason 1956, 49v). That audience might have used the rubrication in a manuscript to "look up" the texts of poems independently of their prosimetrum context, and it is within the same community of manuscript owners or users that intertextual references without quotation would perhaps have been useful, 43 though these references may also have been a tactic of authorization on the part of a narrator whose audience might have been expected to know, or be familiar with, a wide range of traditional poetry.

The tendency of some medieval compilers to make references within prosimetrum narrative more explicit by internalizing the full texts of cited poems suggests that they no longer felt they could, or should, assume an audience familiar with the large body of traditional oral poetry that their written sagas touched on. During the course of the thirteenth century a growing interest is apparent in recording texts of whole poems rather than limiting the use of traditional poetry to brief quotations within prose works. This interest manifests itself primarily in the collections of whole eddic poems, but as well, an (apparently) entire eddic poem, *Darraðarljóð* is preserved within *Njáls saga*, written around the same time as the Codex regius of the Elder Edda in the latter half of the thirteenth century (Ólason 1993, 435). It is also apparent in the activity of scribes working on recensions of earlier works who, in certain circumstances, appear to have incorporated whole texts of poems which were originally only mentioned by name or only quoted to the extent of one stanza.

An example from Snorri's *Edda* also bears this out. In *Skáldskaparmál* chap. 43, Snorri tells the mythological story which explains "Fróði's meal" as a kenning for gold. The earliest extant text of *Snorra Edda*, the Uppsala manuscript (Delagard. saml. no. 11; ca. 1300–1325), describes King Fróði's exploitation of two slave-girls milling gold for him: "Pa gaf hann þeim eigi meira svefn en kveþa matti lioð eitt. Siþan molo þær her a hendr honvm" [Then he allowed them no more sleep than while a song may be sung. After that they ground out an army against him] (Jónsson 1931, 136). The text of manuscript AM 748 II 4° (ca. 1400) narrates the episode in more detail: "Pat er sagt, at þær qvæþi lioð þav, er kallat er Grottasavngr. ok er þetta vpphaf at," after which the first stanza of the poem is quoted. The narrative account then resumes: "Ok aðr letti qvæþinv, molv þær her at

^{43.} See, for example, the naming of *Porgeirsdrápa* in *Fostbræðra saga* chap. 17 (Flateyjarbók version; Pórólfsson and Jónsson 1943, 209) or the naming of *Stúfsdrápa* in *Stúfs þáttr* (Sveinsson 1934, 290).

Froha" [it is said that they sang a song called Grottasöngr, and this is how it begins . . . And before they had finished the song, they had ground out an army against Fróði] (Jónsson 1931, 135.24–25). The Regius and Trajectinus manuscripts of *Snorra Edda* name *Grottasongr* in the prose narrative, but do not quote any of it. At the end of the story of the slave-girls' enforced labour, however, both manuscripts preserve a text of the whole poem. This is the only example of an entire poem quoted within Snorri's *Edda*, ⁴⁴ although whole poems are included in the compilation manuscripts that preserve his work. ⁴⁵ In this case, the relationship between manuscripts is too complex to posit a simple evolution from prose to single-stanza quotation to whole poem transcription, but clearly some compilers reacted to the mention of the title of a poem just as the hand that wrote *Arinbjarnarkviða* did.

I mentioned earlier the economy of certain kinds of quotation in written prosimetrum. Because of the expense of vellum, which may have inhibited excessively long quotations when a poem was well known among the text's intended audience, and because of the differing agendas of patrons commissioning compilations, such that texts often seem to have been condensed to sharpen their interest, it is difficult to extrapolate from extant written prosimetrum the form of oral saga prosimetrum, where length and focus would have been more negotiable and changeable. One written text where length and copious detail is of little concern is the D version of *Guðmundar saga Arasonar*, written towards the middle of the fourteenth century by Abbot Arngrímr Brandsson with a foreign audience favourable to the bishop's canonization in mind (Karlsson, 1985, 1002). Although the saga-author sometimes refers to himself in the prose narrative in the first person (Karlsson, 1985, 999), when quoting his own poetry he objectifies his voice as that of an authoritative skald according to the conventions of saga prosi-

^{44.} Substantial quotations are made in *Skáldskaparmál* from *Haustlong* by Þjóðólfr of Hvin (seven stanzas in chap. 17 [Jónsson 1931, 104.17–105.12] and thirteen stanzas in chap. 22 [Jónsson 1931, 111.1–113.8]; the former block is not in the Uppsala manuscript, although the latter block is), *Pórsdrápa* by Eilífr Goðrúnarson (nineteen stanzas quoted *en bloc* in chap. 18 [Jónsson 1931, 107.13–110.8]) and *Ragnarsdrápa* by Bragi Boddason (five stanzas in chap. 42 and five more in chap. 50 [Jónsson 1931, 134.12–29, 155.8–25]). Although the verse quoted by Snorri often represents most if not all of the stanzas now extant of these poems, his purpose in quoting them does not seem to have been to preserve a text of the whole poem. *Haustlong* and *Ragnarsdrápa* are broken into smaller segments for quotation, and in all three cases verses presumed to be from the poems are quoted singly at other points in the treatise. In some cases the verses are attributed to the skalds concerned, but are not said to come from *Haustlong* or *Ragnarsdrápa*. The verses are quoted to substantiate Snorri's account of a mythological narrative as well as to demonstrate the use of various kennings generated by the myth. See Lindow 1982, 99, for a discussion of the tendency to break up skaldic poems in scholarly works.

^{45.} The manuscripts of Snorri's *Edda* give ample evidence of the predilection for compilations in Iceland. Codex regius (Gks 2367 4°) preserves a complete text of the *Edda*, along with *pulur* which were accreted to Snorri's work, and the poems *Jómsvíkingadrápa* and *Málsháttakvæði*. Codex Wormianus (AM 242 fol.), produced around the middle of the fourteenth century, contains four grammatical treatises in addition to Snorri's work and includes the only text of the eddic poem *Rígspula*.

^{46.} Ross 1997, footnote 17 to draft chapter "Myth, Region, and Family: The Nexus between Sub-Classes of the Icelandic Saga."

metrum⁴⁷ — "Hér um kvað herra Arngrímr" [Master Arngrímr recited this] — even to the point of interrupting his own recitation with the prose narratorial link "Ok enn kvað hann" (Jónsson 1953, 444). When the narrator cites poems by other poets, he does so in the manner of an inventory, giving the total number of verses in a composition before quoting them in full, for example: "Um viðrtal þeirra Þóris erkibyskups ok herra Guðmundar byskups kvað Einarr Gilsson sjautján vísur, ok þetta upphaf á" [Einarr Gilsson composed seventeen verses about Bishop Guðmundr's conversation with Archbishop Þórir, and this is the beginning] (Jónsson 1953, 315), a citation which is followed by the quotation of all seventeen verses.⁴⁸ The saga itself is followed by a *drápa* composed for Bishop Guðmundr by Arngrímr, a third of whose verses have already been quoted in the prosimetrum of the saga, and, now mindful of space, the scribe shortens most of these to their first line.⁴⁹

A similar scribal practice is found in the full quotation of twenty-one stanzas of *Hákonarmál* at the end of *Hákonar saga góða*, where the five verses already quoted in the prosimetrum are shortened to their first lines. Although the poet and the poem are previously named in the citations ("Svá segir Eyvindr skáldaspillir í Hákonarmálum," Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 1:186, 188), the verses quoted in the prosimetrum focus on the scene of Hákon's last battle, and not on the frame narrative of the valkyries' mission to bring back a king from the battlefield for Óðinn. (The valkyries' presence in the narrative of the poem nonetheless surfaces in the "fundu þær" of the first line quoted from the poem, but their identity is left unexplained.) The saga ends with a more detailed account of Eyvindr skáldaspillir's composition of the poem about the death of King Hákon:

Mæltu þeir svá fyrir grepti hans sem heiðinna manna siðr var til, vísuðu honum til Valhallar. Eyvindr skáldaspillir orti kvæði eitt um fall Hákonar konungs ok svá þat, hversu honum var fagnat. Þat eru kǫlluð Hákonarmál, ok er þetta upphaf: (Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 1:193)

[They recited this beside his grave as was the custom of heathen people, and showed him to Valholl. Eyvindr skáldaspillir composed a poem about the death of King Hákon and how he was received. It is called *Hákonarmál* and this is how it begins:]

The first stanza, which had not been previously quoted, describes Óðinn sending Gondul and Skogul to choose a king, but it is only in later stanzas of the

^{47.} This procedure was also followed by Sturla Þórðarson when he quoted himself in *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*. See Einarsson 1974, 121.

^{48.} See also "kvað Einarr Gilsson tuttugu vísur ok eina, ok er þetta upphaf á" [Einarr Gilsson composed twenty-one verses, and this is the beginning] (Jónsson 1953, 284), followed by all twenty-one verses; and "Hér um kvað Einarr Gilsson þrjár vísur, ok er þetta upphaf" [Einarr Gilsson composed three verses about that, and this is the beginning] (Jónsson 1953, 379), followed by the three verses.

^{49.} In Stockh. perg. fol. no. 5, *Guŏmundar saga* (1v–46v) and *Guŏmundar drápa* appear to be in the same hand (Helgason 1950, 19). The *drápa* at the end of the saga has 60 stanzas, 22 of which have already been quoted in the saga. Only five of these are written out a second time, the rest abbreviated to their first lines. On the relationship of the *drápa* to the saga, see Lindow 1982, 117–18, and references there.

poem that Hákon's reception at Valhǫll is described. In the account of Hákon's life in Fagrskinna, verse sequences from *Hákonarmál* are quoted on several occasions within the narrative, but not the poem as a whole. Although the poem is not named, the citations name the poet and explicitly focus on the battle descriptions contained in the poem.⁵² As in *Hákonar saga góða*, the narrator here contextualizes the story of the poem within the framework of heathen beliefs — "fyrir því at sá var átrúnaðr heiðinna mann, at allir þeir er af sárum onduðusk skyldu fara til Valhallar" [because that was the belief of heathen people that all those who died of wounds would go to Valholl] (Einarsson 1985, 95) — though, curiously, not when quoting the first verses that establish that framework.

The quotation of the poem at the end of Hákonar saga góða is the only occurrence of a whole poem in Heimskringla, and whether a version of the text might have existed in which only the first stanza was quoted is difficult to ascertain because of the nature of extant medieval manuscripts of the work (Whaley 1993, 276). The earliest extant manuscript of Heimskringla that contains the whole poem, Codex Frisianus, has the wording "ok eru kǫlluð hákonarmál oc er betta upphaf" (AM 45 fol., 18va17), while one of the main manuscripts of the saga, AM 37 fol. (copied from Jöfraskinna), preserves the more ambiguous wording "bat er kallað hákonarmál oc er þetta i upphafi" (63v14-15), which perhaps bears the trace of an earlier, shorter quotation from the poem. The fact that Hákonarmál presents a straightforward narrative with quoted dialogue sets it apart from the skaldic praise poetry normally used in kings' sagas, and its quotation in Hákonar saga góða is in some ways more akin to the prosimetrum of sagagenres that use eddic poetry extensively, such as the fornaldarsögur. There, the anonymous nature of the eddic voice is easily woven into the narrator's text, and whole poems — often with internal prose links — are more commonly quoted. The autonomous status given to Hákonarmál is rare in the prosimetrum of Heimskringla, but then again so is an account of a king's afterlife; Eiríksmál, the poem the Fagrskinna-narrator presents as the model for Hákonarmál, is not quoted in Heimskringla, though Snorri clearly knew it as he quotes it in his Edda (Jónsson 1912, A1:174; 1931, 91.1-6).

Across the texts I have surveyed, the citation style "ok er þetta upphaf" has revealed differing perceptions on the part of manuscript compilers engaged in the literary transmission of narrative prosimetrum, making it difficult to ascertain how it was apprehended by saga-narrators — whether composing in writing or reciting

^{52.} Fagrskinna chaps. 12–13: "sem Eyvindr segir í kvæði því, er hann orti eptir fall Hákonar, ok setti hann þat eptir því sem Gunnhildr hafði látit yrkja um Eirík sem Óðinn byði hónum heim til Valhallar, ok segir hann marga atburði í kvæðinu frá orrostunni, ok hefr svá" [as Eyvindr says in the poem he composed after the death of Hákon, following the one Gunnhildr had had composed about Eiríkr with Óðinn inviting him back to Valholl, and he details many events of the battle in the poem, and it begins like this] (verses numbered 1–3 in *Heimskringla*); "eptir því sem Eyvindr segir" (verse 4); "sem hér segir" (verses 5–7); "sem segir Eyvindr skáldaspillir" (verses 19–20); "sem Eyvindr segir skáldaspillir ok kvað svá sem konungrinn kæmi til Valhallar" (verse 16.4–6 only in the A recension; Einarsson 1985, 86, 88–89, 94, 95).

orally. In some instances, it represents a statement of evidence, and perhaps a prompt to readers or listeners familiar with the poem to call it to mind; in others, compilers seem to have read it as a signal to record, in the nearest available space, the poem as a complete document. Perhaps the extant text of Hákonar saga góða bears the marks of both these approaches: in line with his usual prosimetric practice. Snorri may have cited the praise poem as evidence of the composition about Hákon's death and the belief that he was taken to Valholl and quoted only its first verse. At an early point in the transmission of the text (early enough to have a monopoly on subsequent recensions) a compiler may have responded as the scribes of Arinbjarnarkviða and Grottasongr did, transcribing the whole text of the poem at the earliest opportunity in the prosimetrum. Because Hákonar saga $g \acute{o} \eth a$ ends with this quotation, such an appendix would appear seamless in later copies. There is also the possibility that some prosimetrum stylists favoured ending a narrative with a complete poem (Harris 1997), though other examples of this formal arrangement attest compositions by the narrator himself rather than quotations: Ingimundr's *flokkr* at the end of his skald's saga and Arngrímr's *drápa* for Guðmundr. The evidence of an ævikviða at the end of Orvar-Odds saga in fact indicates a pattern of textual supplementation similar to that in the manuscript history of Egils saga Skallagrímssonar, although Oddr himself seems to have been intent on making his poem the last word on his life. The earliest extant manuscript of the saga, Stockh. perg. 4° no. 7 from the early fourteenth century, describes Oddr reciting a poem as he lay dying but quotes only its last stanza (Boer 1888, 195). The inclusion of the whole text of the poem within the narrative only occurs in manuscripts from the second half of the fifteenth century and later (AM 343a 4°, AM 471 4°, and AM 173 fol.); AM 344a 4°, which is dated between the earliest and later versions of the saga, presents a prose account of Oddr's final recitation without any poetic quotation (Boer 1888, 194).

In its extant form, perhaps the narration of *Hákonar saga góða* could be read as displaying the narrator's reluctance to incorporate the king's welcome in Valhǫll within his own history of Hákon's reign — the next words in prose are "Eiríkssynir tóku þá konungdóm yfir Nóregi, síðan er Hákon konungr var fallinn" [Eiríkr's sons then ruled over the kingdom of Norway, after King Hákon died] (*Haralds saga gráfeldar*; Aðalbjarnarson 1941–51, 1:198). By quoting the poem in full without incorporating individual stanzas about Valhǫll into his narrative, the narrator can both dissociate himself from the beliefs implicit in the poem and enjoy the artistic effect of the panegyric to Hákon sounding a celebratory note at the end of his history. In letting Eyvindr hold the floor, the narrator makes an unconventional exit from his narrative, but it is a clever move that enables him to present a detailed description of a heathen tribute to a king, in quotation. Such a strategy of narratorial duplicity is interestingly one that Chambers notes as basic to the situation of storytelling; in fact he equates duplicity with narratorial authority and the process of audience seduction (1984, 218). Whether or not medieval readers

and listeners were seduced by such tactics is not recoverable. The work of various saga-authors and compilers nonetheless ensures that we are kept in thrall by the interpretational possibilities extant prosimetrum texts produce.

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