

HOW WAS HÁVAMÁL PERFORMED?

Richard North
English Department, University College London

The Hávamál, a long gnomic poem in 164 stanzas, is written in pages 5 to 14 of Codex Regius (AM 2365) and also in paper manuscripts of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Gustaf Lindblad says in his Studier that the text was written in the Codex by one hand. He agrees with earlier judgements that the MS date is probably the later thirteenth century, particularly with Ludvig Wimmer and Finnur Jónsson who date this manuscript to about 1270. [1] The structure and development of Hávamál have been treated by Klaus von See, who supposes that a thirteenth-century 'redactor' ordered Hávamál on the basis of the Old Icelandic Hugsvinnsmál (a paraphrase translation of Disticha Catonis); and more recently by David Evans, the latest editor. [2]

This considered, questions that spring to mind on Hávamál are how and at what times before 1270 a poem of such untypical structure and length could have been appreciated. How was Hávamál performed? In my enquiry into this poem, I have focussed on as many divisions and disparities as possible.

The poem's content can be divided up as follows: (i) cleverly pointed gnomic stanzas from 1 to 79, on themes of trust, moderation and abstinence; (ii) stanza 80 on runes, then generation of a sexual theme in málaháttir; (iii) Óðinn's adventures with Billinga mer (96-102) and Gunnloð (104-110); (iv) an Introduction to an audience (111), then Loddfáfnismál, advice on magic and the everyday to a certain Loddfáfnir (112-137); (v) Rúnatal(-spáttir), Óðinn's self-sacrifice and instruction in runes and ritual (138-145); (vi) Ljóðatal, names and effects of spells (146-163); (vii) a Farewell (164).

This division is arbitrary, and yet there is evidence from both within the manuscript and outside it that some textual sections in Hávamál had an earlier life of their own.

Scribal divisions in Hávamál

A scribe shows some evidence of an exemplar by indicating that stanza 62 was wrongly written after 63, and that Dáinn at 143/2 wrongly followed Dvalinn at 143/3.

'Hava mal' is written in red ink, in a space which was left for a title, as with other poems in Codex Regius. This space it does not completely fill. The scribe's aim was apparently to capitalise the first letter of each stanza; this he has done with all, excepting 12, 74, 88, 114 and 123, and mistakenly including letters from 103 and 130. Each letter when capitalised is placed completely into the margin if the preceding stanza finishes at the end of a line. There are three other types of initial capital: 'G' in Gáttir allar (1/1) starts a new line within the main text and is written three lines deep; 'U' in Veit ek, at ek hekk (138/1) starts a new line within the main text and is written two lines deep; 'M' in Mál er at pylja (111/1) is conventional capital size, placed almost completely into the margin, but unlike other initial capitals placed into the margin, is spaced apart from its following letters by as much as the width of one letter. The scribe's exemplar has therefore placed Háv

138, Veit ek at ek hekk, second in order of importance to the opening stanza, and stanza 111 third.

Interpretations of date

Three areas of Hávamál can be hypothetically dated. Snorri Sturluson in the 1230s seems to quote an abridged version of Háv 1 as the words of Gylfi in chapter 2 of his Gylfaginning. In chapter 53 Snorri seems to borrow the closing words of Hávamál: Njóti, sé er nam. 'May he profit, who has learnt from this' (Háv 164/7) for the words at the end of Gylfi's interview (Gylf, p. 54). There also seem to be borrowings from Hav 152, 154 and 157 in skills which Snorri attributed to Óðinn in Ynglinga Saga, chapter 7. [3] Thus the beginning and perhaps the end of a version of Hávamál existed 40-50 years before the earliest written text of the whole poem (Evans (1986), p. 36-8).

In addition, the first lines of stanzas 76 and 77, deyr fé, deyrja frændr, 'cattle die, kinsmen die', may have been borrowed by Eyvindr Skáldaspillir for the first line of the last stanza of his Hákonarmál, which Eyvindr probably composed after the death of Hákon inn góði. If this is true, then a traditional wisdom poem close or identical to Háv 1-79 would have been in circulation before ca. 960.

The search for divisions

In keeping with these suggestions and in terms of its variegated parts, Hávamál is more likely to have been the product of generations than conceived ab initio from one mind. The number of poets is impossible to judge, and yet the varied qualities of some of them give a clue as to the structural development of Hávamál.

The most blatant tonal inconsistency comes in the pause between Háv 111 and 112. Here in 111 the speaker clears his throat to repeat words he heard thundered in the High One's hall; then in 112 seems to warn his one-man audience. Loddfáfnir, not to relieve himself at night unless a friend is watching his back. With grandeur in one stanza, and irreverent solicitude in the other, the combined effect could be ironic.

Though there is some rough humour in Hávamál, in the alternately self-pitying and exultant effects of Óðinn's 'love' narratives, and earlier rueful admissions, an effect of bathos in stanzas 111-112 must be self-contained, if no theory emerges to support an 'ironic' transition here as one part in a greater design affecting the whole poem. So far it seems there is no theory to outweigh the case that the join between introductory 111 and Loddfáfnismál is awkward and indicates different concerns, hence authors.

Different authorship in narrative sequences

Narrative sequences are particularly useful places to look for disparity in authorship. In Hávamál, these sequences are stanzas 13-14, 96-102, 104-110, and an island of incoherence in stanzas 138-45.

In Háv 13-14 it is apparently Óðinn who points a message on the evil effects of drink with a highly allusive reference to an adventure in the house of Gunnlǫð and Fjalarr in which he was fettered with the feathers of the 'heron of oblivion'. Stanzas 13 and 14 are probably a pair because of reverse symmetry in 13/3. hann steyr geði guma, 'he steals

the wits of a man': and recovery in 14/5-6. aptr uf heimtir hverr sitt geð gumi. 'each man gets back his wits again'.

Klaus von See believes that stanzas 13-14 and also the group in stanzas 96-102 and 104-110 were taken wholesale from elsewhere by a 'redactor' of Hávamál who composed gnomic stanzas to lead in and out of them (1972, p. 15). But as Hávamál is primarily a gnomic poem, not a narrative one, it is more plausible that narrative allusions were made later in order to illustrate inherited gnomic material.

After a sexual theme is generated in Háv 81-6, with general scepticism turning to mistrust of sexual partners, Óðinn tells us two more of his adventures. The first narrative is Háv 96-102, where Óðinn is deceived by an alluring woman, either the daughter or wife of an unknown Billinær. [4] Secondly in 104-110. Óðinn in turn seduces Gunnlǫð and steals her father Suttungr's Mead of Poetry. In stanza 110 Óðinn is described in the third person. Both narrative sequences appear to be connected by Óðinn's repetition of innar góðu konu, 'of the good woman', with radically different implications in 101/5 and 108/5. The outcomes of each adventure are also nicely antithetical, indicating a single conception.

The only story known about Gunnlǫð, who appears in Háv 13, concerns Óðinn and the Mead of Poetry. Óðrerir (Óð-[h]perir probably means 'Soul-rouser'). This legend is elsewhere told in Háv 104-110 and Skáld chapter 6, where a Fjalarr ('concealer', from fela) is a dwarf. Here it is natural that the Fjalarr of 14 is a variant name of Gunnlǫð's father Suttungr (Evans (1986), p. 81). (Fjalarr is also a dwarf at Voluspá 16, a cock at Voluspá 42.) As the giant in question is named Suttungr in stanzas 104 and 108 and not Fjalarr, we may have different poetic traditions, hence authors, for Háv 13-14 and 104-110.

Rúnatal: 138-45

In Háv 138-41 Óðinn tells a bizarre story of his self-sacrifice, recovery and wearying acquisition of youth, fertility and runic wisdom; in 142-5, again, he is mentioned in the third person.

There is no apparent context between 137 and the beginning of the Rúnatal. The end of this section at 145, however, leads into Ljóðatal on a theme of 'spells' included in Fimbuljǫð nío of 140, the 'nine gigantic spells' which Óðinn says he learned from Bolþorr.

How amusing that Óðinn 'knows' in Háv 138 that he 'hung'. Veit ek, at ek hekk. It is more than a little perverse that veit is the first word of a sequence critics must admit to knowing nothing about. In keeping with this, the two groups within this sequence. Óðinn's narrative in 138-141 and the odd heathen liturgy in 142-5, differ from the other allusions in being of variegated and imprecisely formulated subject matter. The words are perplexing in 138: gefinn Óðni, sjálf sjálfum mér, 'given to Óðinn, myself to myself'; demonstrably elusive in 138 and 139: á Peim meiðer manngi veit hvers hann af rótum renn, 'on that tree about which noone knows from whose roots it springs'; við hleifi mik salduð né við hornigi, 'they revived me neither with a loaf nor a horn': mystic in the chanting repetition of 141, and catechistic in the eight questions and three reflections of 144-5.

Above all, parts of this sequence are ambiguous. In 139/4-6:

nam ek upp rúnar. spandi nam.
 fell ek aðtr þaþóan.

I took up staves, screaming I learnt secrets. I fell back from ?there/then.

The same verb may draw from rúnar, 'runes', intangible and physical senses that this poet could exploit (Fritzner, sv. nema, nema upp) (The last line is defective.) There is a conundrum in the phrase af inum frægja syni Þolþors, Bestia föður, either Óðinn's maternal uncle or grandfather (Háv 140). There is further imprecision in the second half of this stanza:

ok ek drykk of gat ins dýra mjaðar
 ausinn Óðreri.

(Háv 140/4-6)

Either: and I got a drink of the precious mead which was poured from Óðrerir [kettle]

Or: and I, sprinkled with Óðrerir [mead], got a drink of the precious mead.

Óðinn leaves his torments to grow wise and fertile, to develop and do well; and then

orð mér af orði orðs leitaði,
verk mér af verki verks leitaði.

(Háv 141/4-7)

One word from another sought a third out for me, one deed from another sought a third out for me.

The starkness of these words, and the fact they were remembered without contextual relevance, imply the existence and loss of a contemporary ritual. This stanza, most of all, confirms that the sequence Háv 138-45 is fundamentally distinct from the other narratives and the rest of Hávamál altogether - with the exception of Háv 80.

The first division: 1-79 and 111-164

Though the scribe did not greatly distinguish the 'M' of Mál er at Pylja in 111 from the initial capitals of other stanzas at the start of a new line, stanza 111 is where we can first divide this poem into halves, a gnomic preface and Hávamál proper. This is because the phrase elements Háva mál, from which the poem's title seems to derive, do not occur until 111 (Mál and Háva) and 164 (Nú eru Háva mál kveðin).

Development of 111-164: Hávamál proper

To restate the arguments, the scribe seems to give the Rúnatal section an importance secondary to the opening of Hávamál by writing the 'U' of Veit ek at 18 two lines deep. There is no thematic continuity between the end of Loddfáfnismál and 138. Therefore in about 1270 the scribe may have known Rúnatal as a poem with a status of its own.

Ljóðatal is distinguished by an introductory Ljóð ek þau kann. 'Those spells I know', at Háv 146 and steady enumeration of 17 more 'spells' in as many stanzas leading up to the Farewell in 164. Therefore a section 138-45 could probably be isolated from within Hávamál as an independent

poem without our resort to evidence of Rúnatal and Ljóðatal attributions in paper manuscripts.

Possible internal unity of 138-45

Óðinn describes his self-sacrifice, hanging from a tree and wounded by a spear, in 138; a possible implication of attempts to revive him (but not with bread or liquids) in 139/1-2. Then he 'took up' and 'learnt' rúnar: then fell ek aprtr Paðan. 'I fell back ?from there/thence' (Háv 139/6).

As far as this metrically imperfect line can be relied upon, its words seem to forestall the end of the whole sequence. There, after a strange catechism of runic rite and sacrifice and advice, it seems, not to importune the gods, is reference to Pundr's (Óðinn's) 'return' from a time and place unspecified:

Par hann upp um reis. er hann aprtr of kom.
(Háv 145/8-9)

he rose up there/then where/when he came back.

Pundr is one of Óðinn's names, at Grimnismál 46/5. Do these lines then make a bizarre comment on Óðinn's fell ek aprtr Paðan in Háv 139? Repetition of aptr would support this, though whether it was one or several authors that had thus unified Rúnatal is not an important speculation. This sequence lies so apart from other episodes in Hávamál, and is so obscure, that it can be counted its own poem.

Loddfáfnismál and Ljóðatal: 112-137 and 146-163

Ljóðatal is closer in subject matter to Rúnatal, for its 18 ljóð, 'spells', seem thematically linked with (half the number of) fimbulljóð, 'gigantic spells', in 140.

Six lines link Ljóðatal with Loddfáfnismál in 162/4-9, of which the first three are

Ljóða Þessa mundu. Loddfáfnir,
lengi vanr vera.

You will long be in need of these spells. Loddfáfnir.

Evans believes this half-stanza may 'properly belong to Loddfáfnismál' (p. 143). But these lines seem firmly in place with their inclusion of ljóð. It therefore seems that this surprise reference to Loddfáfnir was an organizing measure to bind the disparate Loddfáfnismál and Ljóðatal together. Already between them, in any case, there probably stood the Rúnatal on which Ljóðatal especially seems appended.

Introduction and Farewell: 111 and 164

Whether or not of one author, stanzas 111 and 164 share the words Háva, mál and hollu í and are of one purpose in Hávamál: they frame what comes between. In 111 the ráð seem to anticipate the Ráðumk formulae in Loddfáfnismál: rúnar the runic stanzas 139 and 142-5; manne mál is obscure. The parting words of 164, particularly njóti. sá er nam, seem to duplicate those of 162/7-9, in particular nýt. ef þú nemr. 'useful (sc. spells) if you learn them'.

Evolution of Hávamál proper

1. Respected for its incoherence, a mystical core (138-45)
2. was preserved within an accumulation of Ljóðatal and (then?) Loddfáfnismál (112-63), then

3. framed with stanzas of Introduction and Farewell (111, 164).

These would have been 'Sayings of the High One' delivered to a pupil who repeated them word for word - not a complex structure for the poem at this suggested stage of development.

The bridge and a road over it: Háv 80(-90) and 91-110

I shall now try to show how Háv 80, looking back to at least 27 in the gnomic preface and forward to 111, and 142 in Rúnatal, may have been used to bridge, in part, the gap between 1-79 and Hávamál proper.

If an 'unwise man', Ósnotr maðr, is lucky with money or a woman's love, his 'human intelligence', manvit, will not keep pace with his growing delusions of greatness (79). After this:

Pat er pá reynt er þú at rúnum spyrn,
inum reginkunnum,
þeim er gørðu ginnregin
ok fáði fimbulþulr;

þá hefir hann balt ef hann þegir.

(Háv 80)

Then will be proved what you ask for from the god-descended runes, those that the aboriginal powers made, and the gigantic sage painted, Either: he will do best at that time if he is silent, Or: that will be proved at the time you inquire of the runes.

The phrases gørðu ginnregin and fáði fimbulþulr are repeated in 142, in which the speaker's audience þú is told he 'will find' runes that he and Óðinn, among others, have cut. With rúnar and fimbulþulr, stanza 80 anticipates the mention of runes and þular stóll in 111, 'thrones of the sage'. But in stanza 80 it is not clear which words Pat, þú and hann refer to, if hann is the 'sage' straight before or even the 'unwise man' earlier. This stanza's place in the immediate context is a mystery (cf. Evans (1986), p. 113-14, 135-6). Klaus von See, however, believes Pat er balt, at hann þegir, used of another (garrulous) Ósnotr maðr at 27, is evidence that 80 was composed as a concluding formula for the whole poem preceding (1972, p. 53). As it is founded on a phrasal parallel unique to the whole poem, this is an theory worth accepting.

Themes of trust and delusion: 81-90

Stanzas follow stanza 80 on the theme dropped in 79, delusion and how to avoid it; in intense málaháttir, punctuated and slowed by ljóðaháttir at 84 and 88. Delusion leads into mistrust of others, then at 91 a speaker offers to speak openly, Bert ek nú máli. He takes up the growing theme of friðr kvenna, 'women's love', in 90 and then turns it around with an admission of male caprice of a kind elsewhere known to be Óðinn's. The way is now open, at any rate, for Óðinn's tales of Billings mar and Gunnlöð: delusion as it is suffered and practised.

Óðinn, Billings mar and Gunnlöð: 91-110

The picture I have drawn so far is of two poems being changed, enlarged and brought together by awkward use of Háv 80: which caps the gnomic poem with repetition of 27/3 and

anticipates 111 and the Rúnatal with isolated reference to runes and runic lore.

More apposite to context are Óðinn's 'fabliaux' of antithetical góðar konur (Háv 101/5, 108/5). These follow smoothly from the gnomes on sexual mistrust; and Óðinn's Pat ek pá reynda, 'I proved that then..', to start his first tale, echoes Pat er þa reynt of Háv 80.

In stanza 109 it is said that the hrímfursar, 'frost-ogres', go to Háva holl, 'the hall of the High One', to ask the whereabouts of Bolverkr, the name which Óðinn adopted, according to Skáld chapter 6, to get into Suttungr's mountain (SnE, p. 83). Snorri implies that hrímfursar were the oldest and most remote beings in creation (Gylf, p. 9). Mention of them here might indicate the real scale of Óðinn's second adventure; for if by the following day news of a riot involving a certain Bolverkr has carried even to their corner of the universe, the sorry tale of Gunnlöð might have more importance than Óðinn has led us to believe. As Evans hints, it is not clear if the ogres know *Hávi and Bolverkr are the same (1986, p. 123). If this is so, their visit would be the social call of one titan to another. Óðinn has now become known as *Hávi, and has grown, in a controlled way, to an awesome presence conversing in his own hall with creatures of prehistory. In this way the poet of these tales would have better adapted a gnomic poem to the grand ensemble of runes, magic and giants to which it had already been joined.

Evolution of the completed Hávamál

1. A traditional gnomic poem (c. 1-79)
2. was joined to an existing compilation of mundane, mystic and magic poems wrapped in stanzas of Introduction and Farewell (111-164)
3. with awkward use, in part, of a stanza from the same ritual tendency as one part of the old compilation (80);
4. and this bridge was made roadworthy by a poet who composed an uncertain number of stanzas, including two extended allusions (95-110), to lead into the Introduction (111) and develop the persona of Óðinn or *Hávi central to the evolving poem.

The voice of Óðinn

I suggest that Hávamál was formed in ^{two} ~~three~~ consecutive stages.

Firstly, Óðinn, as the discoverer of runic letters and secrets, the thief and drinker of the Mead of Poetry, may have been thought fit to be a traditional author of unattributed gnomic and magical poems. This is a lending of sage-status to legendary figures which is paralleled in The Proverbs of Alfred, a twelfth-century collection of proverbs which was ascribed in the thirteenth century to king Alfred the Great

with as much or as little reason as proverbs or maxims have been fathered on other prominent persons noted for their wisdom, for instance Solomon, Cato the Censor or Charlemagne. [5]

Similarly in a time when all gnomic poems could be fathered on Óðinn, Ljóðatal and Loddfáfnismál would have accrued to Rúnatal, and then a form of this compilation accrued to the sequence 1-79 (itself formed before ca. 960). All this could

have been done by a sequence of authors probably working with memory and then later with writing, in the eleventh to twelfth centuries in Iceland.

In the second process of performance, the poet would play the parts of himself and Óðinn. It is the last poet contributing who would have improved an earlier join between 1-77 and Hávamál proper (111-164) with the two love-narratives on Billings mör and Gunnloð, and the ensuing development in the characterisation of Óðinn (thus 781-110). It is this poet who could have performed the whole poem straightforwardly without any contradiction arising between his persona and that of Óðinn.

Only by setting the title aside can we make sense of which voice speaks where. To start with, one reciter might be inferred from heill, gá er kvað of 164/5, 'luck to him who has spoken'. But there appear to be at least two speaking voices in this poem, if we start the count in two of the narrative episodes, 104-110 and 138-45, for in each episode Óðinn speaks and is then spoken of in the third person by a new voice in 109-110 and 142-3. In the last group:

Óðinn með ásum, en fyrr álfum Dáinn,
Dvalinn dvergum fyrir,

Ásviðr jotnum fyrir:
ek reist sjalfr sumar.

(Háv 143)

Óðinn among the Æsir, and Dáinn on the elves' behalf, Dvalinn on the dwarves' behalf, Ásviðr on the giants' behalf, I have cut some myself.

If we follow the title in taking Óðinn to be speaker of the whole poem, we are first faced with the difficulty of explaining the second voice on the last line above and in 109-110.

Even if we give these sequences to Óðinn, however, suggesting that he can speak of himself in the third person, we run into further problems. Óðinn may deliver 1-110, as he probably speaks 13-14 and certainly 96-102 and 104-8 (and for this argument 109-110), and there are no textual signals by which we can distinguish other voices in this section. But at 111 he would have to repeat what he heard in his own hall (Háva hollu st. 1), and as Loddfáfnismál moves into 138-45 with no indication of a change of speaker, then by implication what Óðinn repeats at 112 onwards can only be what Óðinn says himself.

That Óðinn cannot be in two places at once effectively dictates a minimum of two speakers in Hávamál. Stanza 143 shows in any case a clear juxtaposition of characters, Óðinn's and another's.

Óðinn shows himself briefly in 13-14, more extensively in 96-108, and evasively in 138-141. This is inescapable because his name identifies him the last two contexts (98, 138); his link with Gunnloð in the first and elsewhere, with cross-reference to Skáld chapter 6 (13, 105, 108, SnE, v. 83-4). Apart from these contexts, the pronoun ek, 'I', appears in stanzas 39, 47, 49, 52, 66-7, 70, 73, 77, 78 and 91. In some cases it is difficult to decide which of the two, the reciter or his Óðinn-persona, is speaking (as in 78); in others, such as with the wandering motif of 47, it is hard not to identify the speaker with Óðinn. In all, the poet entrusting himself with Háv 1-79 was probably

understood to use Óðinn's persona as the first-person narrator of allusions to specific, rather than generalised incidents.

The poet of hold ok hjarta in Háv 96, 'flesh and heart', describing the fancied infatuation of Billingr's 'wife' (or 'daughter'), may have patterned his phrase on the cor e cors of French troubadours or the herz und lip of German Minnesinger. This is suggested by von See as a sign of a date at least in the twelfth century. [6] If this influence was made, then it is in the later twelfth century, or even in the early thirteenth century, that this last contributor to Hávamál might have been working (in this case with manuscripts). The absence of Christian material in Hávamál would be quite compatible, even in the thirteenth century, with the use of Óðinn as the source of wisdom poems, as von See also suggests (1987, 140).

From a passage in Ynglinga saga it is likely that Snorri knew Hávamál as a poem with two speakers. He hints here at Óðinn and imitators:

Önnur [ífrótt] var sú, at hann talaði svá snjallt ok slétt, at öllum, er á heyrðu, þótti þat eina satt. Malti hann allt hendingum, svá sem nú er þat kveðit, er skáldskapr heitir. Hann ok hofgoðar hans heita ljóðasmiðir, því at sú ífrótt hófsk af þeim í Norðrlandum. (íf XXVI 17)

Another skill was this, that Óðinn spoke so eloquently and fluently that to all who listened, only what he said seemed true. He spoke everything in verses in such a way as what is now called poetry is recited. He and the priests of his temple are called song-smiths, because this skill was started by them in northern lands.

Snorri shows that Óðinn was now proverbially a source of wisdom poetry: only Óðinn's words are truth, hence true sayings are only Óðinn's. This refers to the process of gathering poems on a great authority.

Snorri goes further to say that mortal poets who composed gnomic poetry were believed, as hofgoðar, to imitate Óðinn's style, that is to say the style of a master who had lived in bygone times. This is Snorri's allusion to the second process, for in the subordinate role of hofgoðar, he implies that each mortal wisdom poet could compose for his own persona besides playing that of Óðinn, his god.

Style of performance: one hypothesis

Codex Regius Hávamál can be recited by a man adopting the persona of a disciple of Óðinn (later named a hofgoði by Snorri).

At certain moments within the gnomic preface (stanzas 1-110) the disciple is understood to slip in and out of the part of Óðinn, to whom he owes his instruction (13-14, 47, 49, 80, 91, 96-108). He develops a gnomic theme and leads it slowly away from the world of men and women, building up the world of Óðinn, whose role in his last performance he plays with absorbing skill and without reference to the original theme of gnomic wisdom. In 109-110 the reciter delivers an epilogue to Óðinn's second tale which places him, the god and us firmly in a supernatural hall adjacent to the 'well of Fate'. This is as if 1-110 was a long walk up the path to a second door, this time opening into a magical realm. Óðinn's involvement with human affairs, his

worldly dalliance with a femme fatale, and his disguise as Bolvercr in Gunniqð's hall are now discarded and his divinity revealed.

At stanza 111 the reciter introduces a new scene full of mythological details, and begins to mumble formally in 112, no longer impersonating Oðinn, but instead repeating him and perhaps other spiritual voices verbatim. He repeats first precepts laboriously addressed to him by the name 'Loddfafnir'; then Oðinn's story of his own mystery, deviously and incoherently told. At 142 or 143 we understand the reciter speaking as his mortal persona, to offer comment, catechism and proof of his own status as a runemaster, until, at 146, he goes back to repetition of a supernatural voice promising Loddfafnir (cf. 162/5) the knowledge of 18 spells.

In the last stanza the reciter of Hávamál speaks as himself again, the latest inheritor of old Odinic lore, and bids a wiser audience farewell.

NOTES

- 1 Haandskriftet nr. 2365 4to., Gl. kgl. Samling, ed. L. Wimmer and F. Jónsson (Copenhagen, 1891), p. lxxii. Gustav Lindblad, Studier i Codex Regius av Aldre Eddan (Lund, 1954), p. 233-5, 257, 263-5.
- 2 Hávamál, ed. D.A.H. Evans, Viking Society for Northern Research, Text Series VII (London, 1986), p. 1-4. Klaus von See, Die Gestalt der Hávamál (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 30-53. Klaus von See, 'Disticha Catonis und Hávamál', BGdSL XCIV (1972), 1-18; 'Probleme der altnordischen Spruchdichtung', ZfdA CIV (1975), 91-118. Also in Edda, Saga, Skalden (Heidelberg, 1981), p. 17-44; 45-72. Review of Evans, 'Common Sense und Hávamál', Skand XXVII (1987), 135-47.
- 3 For further echoes, cf. Ludvig Holm-Olsen, 'Konungs skuggsjá og norrøn poesi', Einarsbók: Afmáliskveðja til Einars Ól. Sveinssonar, ed. Bj. Guðnason (Reykjavík, 1969), p. 114-20.
- 4 Sigurður Nordal, 'Billings mæ', Bidrag till nordisk filologi tillagnade Emil Olsson (Lund, 1936), p. 288-295.
- 5 The Proverbs of Alfred: An Emended Text, ed. and trans. Olof Arngrart, Kungl. humanistiska vetenskapssamfundet (Lund, 1978), p. 5, 23.
- 6 Klaus von See, 'Das Herz in Edda und Skaldendichtung', Skand VIII (1978), 16-26 (25); also in Edda, Saga, Skalden (Heidelberg, 1981), p. 73-83 (82). Cf. Roland Köhne, 'Zur Mittelalterlichkeit der eddischen Spruchdichtung', BGdSL CV (1983), 380-417 (387-414).