

# KNÚTR IN POETRY AND HISTORY: RECONSTRUCTING HALLVARÐR HÁREKSBLESI'S *KNÚTSDRÁPA*

Judith Jesch  
University of Nottingham

## I. Introduction

In a recent article on poetry at the court of Knútr, Roberta Frank (1994, 108n.) adopts the rearrangement of the stanzas of Hallvarðr háreksblesi's *Knútsdrápa* proposed by Bjarne Fidjestøl (1982, 172) in his 'Skjematisk oversyn over korpus', implicitly rejecting Finnur Jónsson's reconstruction in *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning* (1912-15, AI 317-18, BI 293-4). However, this latter arrangement seems quite logical to me and Frank does not note that Fidjestøl, elsewhere in his book (1982, 125), describes it as 'meir eller mindre sikker', uncharacteristically failing to justify his own rearrangement of the stanzas on p. 172. This paper aims to reconsider this question and establish the best order of these stanzas, starting from Finnur Jónsson's arrangement.

As six of the stanzas are preserved only in manuscripts of *Snorra Edda*, and one each in *Heimskringla/Oláfs saga helga* and *Krýttlinga saga*, the prose contexts do not provide any indication of the proper order of the stanzas. Thus, my argument will take the following factors into account:

- discourse situation (which relates content to context)
- content of the stanzas (including comparisons with other poems)
- poetic diction (in so far as it confirms or contributes to the content)
- metrical patterns

Once I have dealt with these issues, I propose to look briefly at the use of stanzas from this poem and from Óttarr svarti's *Knútsdrápa* in *Heimskringla* and *Krýttlinga saga*.

## II. The discourse situation

I start from the observation that there are two kinds of stanzas in this poem, 'narrative' [N], in which the poet describes an event or a situation, and 'vocative' [V], in which the poet addresses the recipient of the panegyric directly. As will be seen, the latter can also contain narrative elements within the vocative framework.

1. [V]      Súdǫngum komt Sveiða  
              (sunds liðu dýr frá grundu)  
              sigrakkr, Sólsa bekkjar,  
              Sveins mögr, á tröð hreinum.

*komt*<sup>1</sup> in the first line is a 2nd-person sg. past-tense verb, collocating with *sigrakkr Sveins mögr* in ll. 3-4, a vocative (including noun, adjective and patronymic). The second line contains a narrative parenthesis in the 3rd person, past tense (*sunds dýr liðu*).

2. [V]      Vestr lézt í haf, hristir,  
              harðviggs, síkulgjarðar,

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that one ms. (748=A) has the 3rd-person form *kom*.

umbands allra landa,  
íss, framstafni vísat.

Again, the first line contains a 2nd-person sg. past-tense verb (*lézt*),<sup>2</sup> collocating with the vocative (a warrior-kenning this time) *hristir sikuljarðar íss*.<sup>3</sup>

3a. [V] Knútr lézt framm til Fljóta,  
(frægr leið vqrðr of ægi)  
heiptsnarr (hildar leiptra)  
harðbrynjuð skip dynja;

The stanza starts with another vocative *Knútr* (a proper name this time), collocating with an adjective *heiptsnarr*, as in 1., and a 2nd-person sg. past-tense verb in the first line (*lézt*).<sup>4</sup> Again, there is a narrative parenthesis (3rd person, past tense) in the second and third lines (*frægr vqrðr hildar leiptra leið of ægi*).

3b. [V] Ullar lézt við Ellu  
ættleifð ok mó reifðir  
sverðmans snyrtiherðir  
sundviggs flota bundit.

The first line again has the 2nd-person sg. past-tense *lézt*,<sup>5</sup> again collocating with a vocative warrior-kenning (*Ullar sundviggs snyrtiherðir*).<sup>6</sup> There is another 2nd-person sg. past-tense verb (*reifðir*).

**Note:** If 1. and 2. formed one stanza, it would be almost identical in structure to 3.: with a name vocative in the first half, a kenning vocative in the second half, and a narrative parenthesis in the second line.

4. [N] Grund liggur und þqr bundin  
breið holmfjqturs leiðar  
(heinlands höddum grandar  
Hqðr) eitrsvqlum naðri.

This is a narrative stanza with two 3rd-person present-tense verbs, *liggur* (descriptive) and *grandar* (active, referring to a warrior). The latter has a warrior-kenning as its subject (*heinlands Hqðr*).

5. [N] Rauðljósa sér ræsir

<sup>2</sup> The mss all have the long form *léztu* or equivalent.

<sup>3</sup> The reading comes from two mss. (T and 757=B), while R and C have *hristum* and *svikul*.

<sup>4</sup> N.b. K has *letztu*.

<sup>5</sup> N.b. K has *letztu*.

<sup>6</sup> The interpretation of this kenning and indeed of the half-stanza has been disputed and needs further discussion.

(rít brestr sundr en hvíta)  
baugjörð brodda ferðar  
(bjúgrend) í tvau fljúga.

Again, a narrative stanza in the 3rd-person present (is this a 'historic' present? It is not discussed by Poole 1991). Again, one descriptive verb (*brestr*) and one active (*sér*), the latter again with a warrior-kenning as its subject (*ræsir brodda ferðar*).

**Note:** With their parallel structures, 4. and 5. seem to belong together, although one could argue that 5. should come first (see below).

6a. [N]      Englandi ræðr Yngvi  
              einn (hefsk friðr at beinni)  
              bqðrakkr bænar nokkva  
              barkrjóðr ok Danmqrku;

Another narrative stanza in the present tense, with one descriptive verb (*hefsk*),<sup>7</sup> and one active verb (*ræðr*)<sup>8</sup> with a warrior-kenning + adjective as its subject (*bqðrakkr bænar nokkva*), with a *heiti* (*Yngvi*) in apposition.

6b. [N]      ok hefr (odda Leiknar)  
              jalm-Freyr und sik malma  
              (hjaldrórrr haukum þverrir  
              hungr) Nóregi þrungit.

Two 3rd-person verbs, both active, but one a participial construction (*hefr þrungit*), introducing an element of pastness, the other a simple present (*þverrir*). Both have kennings (of a sort) as their subject (*malma jalm-Freyr* and *hjaldrórrr*).

**Note:** Again, there is parallelism between the two halves of the stanza (particularly if we see *hefr þrungit* as equivalent to a descriptive verb), but there is also some sort of progression, from the purely descriptive present-tense verbs of 4. and 5., to present-tense verbs that describe a state or situation rather than an event. The two active verbs represent the ruler's two sides, as warrior and as statesman, where the previous verbs all referred to his military activities.

7. [N/V]      Esat und jarðar hqslu,  
              orðbrjótr Dqnum forðar  
              moldreks, munka valdi  
              mæringr an þú næri.

The stanza starts as a narrative in the present, but moves back to the vocative, bringing the poem full circle. Like 6., there is one 3rd-person present-tense verb describing a situation (*esat*) and one 3rd-person present-tense verb describing how the ruler rules

---

<sup>7</sup> Note that J2 and some *ÓsH* mss have the past form *hofz*.

<sup>8</sup> In *Hkr.* mss and St4 only, while J2 and other *ÓsH* mss have the past form *réd*. Note that the prose introduction in both *Hkr.* and *ÓsH* says *Réd hann þá fyrir þrimr þjóðlqndum*.

(*fordar*), with a kenning as its subject (*moldreks orðbrjótr*). The vocative element is introduced in a comparison (*an þá*).

**SITUATION OF UTTERANCE:** Of the three persons (1st, 2nd and 3rd) possible in a discourse, the 2nd person predominates in this poem. Even when there is a switch to 3rd-person verb-forms, these still refer to the king being addressed, and have the effect of depersonalising the address and increasing the king's importance (indeed the 3rd person is used in many languages as a form of polite address, see e.g. Hammer 1983, 188). It is probably significant that the switch occurs at the point when the poem establishes and asserts Knútr's claims to rule.

This strong vocative element in the poem indicates that it was composed for performance in the presence of the king. As Hofmann (1955, 97) has pointed out, st. 4. makes clear that this took place in England: if you are addressing the king, then the 'ground under' him must literally as well as figuratively be England. The 1st person (the poet) is present in the poem only by implication, as every 'you' implies an 'I'.

As for the 3rd person, Frank (1994, 108) assumed that the poet took account of 'Danes resident in England'. The implied audience of the poem is not strongly present in the text itself, though there are some hints. Knútr's launching of ships in the plural at the beginning of the poem implies followers, but there is no mention of them in the battle descriptions. However, they appear in st. 7. which asserts that Knútr 'protects Danes'. If the poem was indeed composed and performed in England, this statement has particular significance and suggests a king attempting to improve the morale of his followers in an alien environment. Given such an audience, the unusual historic present of st. 5. also makes sense. Although the stanza is presented as the king's experience of battle, the use of the present tense includes the audience in this experience, inviting them to see it, too, and perhaps recalling their own memories of fighting beside Knútr. In fact, although I have interpreted the stanza as referring to Knútr, because as a simplex, *ræsir* usually refers to a king, the kenning could actually refer to any warrior, thus generalising the experience.

**CONCLUSION:** There are strong arguments for linking sts. 1. + 2., and 4. + 5., making a poem of four full stanzas and one half-stanza (not including the refrain, discussed below). The structure of 1./2. is paralleled by that of 3., while 4./5. matches both 6. and 7. These two groups thus represent the two stages of the poem:

- vocative stanzas addressing the king in the present, but recalling for him (and the audience) his deeds in the past
- narrative stanzas linking the present situation with the king's current rule

8. Knútr verr jorð sem ítran  
alls dróttinn sal fjalla.

This quarter-stanza is clearly linked to the second of these stages in its verbal construction (*Knútr verr*), while recalling the first in its use of the king's name (though not as a vocative). The name of the poem (*Knútsdrápa*)<sup>9</sup> suggests that it had a refrain

<sup>9</sup> Preserved in *Knytlinga saga*.

and Fidjestøl (1982, 125) points out the similarity between this and the refrain in Þórarinn loftunga's *Höfuðlausn*. This refrain seems particularly appropriate at the end of the poem and we have no way of knowing how often it was used throughout the poem (nor indeed how much of the poem is missing), though it could also have been used effectively to mark the transition between the two stages of the poem (i.e. after 3.)

Thus, I would suggest that the most appropriate order of the stanzas is nearly as Finnur Jónsson had it:

1./2., 3., 5./4., 6., 7., (8.)

### III. The content of the stanzas

This ordering is supported by a consideration of the content of the stanzas, along with comparisons with other praise poems in which the order of the stanzas is relatively clearly fixed.

The reordering proposed by Fidjestøl (1982, 172) is:

2, 3, 4, 6, 7, {1, 5, 8

[The { indicates that he is uncertain about the placement of st. 1.] It will be noted that this order separates 1. from 2. and 4. from 5., but the arguments presented above have shown that these belong together.

Despite Fidjestøl's uncertainty, 1. clearly belongs at the beginning of the poem. It (or rather 1./2. together) is best described as a 'launch stanza', one which provides an image of the young warrior launching a ship and thereby his career (compare *Sigv. I,1; Ótt. II,3* and *III,1*).<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, a patronymic seems particularly appropriate in the first stanza of a praise poem and there are several other examples in skaldic praise poems (e.g. *ÞKolb. I,1; Sigv. IX,1; ÞjóðA. I,1*).

Fidjestøl's proposed reordering would also disturb what appears to be a clear sequence of events in the poem:

launch and sailing (1./2., 3a.)<sup>11</sup>

landing and attack (3b.)

success in battle (5./4.)<sup>12</sup>

rule of three countries (6.)

particular assistance to his Danish followers (7.)

This sequence can also be demonstrated in the tenses of the verbs: the verbs of 1.-3. are in the past tense. In 5., I would argue, we have a historic present (describing the battle through the king's eyes), making the link between the past actions that have brought him the present result (in 6., anticipated in 4.), that he rules three countries.

<sup>10</sup> See also my forthcoming article, 'Youth on the prow: three young kings in the late Viking Age'.

<sup>11</sup> Hallvarðr's introductory stanzas echo the beginning of Þórr Kolbeinsson's *Eiríksdrápa* (III,1-2) in their vocabulary and imagery.

<sup>12</sup> It is because of this sequential aspect that I would propose reversing the order of 4. and 5.: 5. describes a battle scene, while 4. shows the land (England) subjugated as a result, anticipating the subjugation of Norway in 6. (*hefr ... und sik ... Noregi þrungit*).

This historic present of st. 5, perhaps performs the function of creating an 'idealized immediacy of experience' (Poole 1990, 178), but in st. 4. it also has a generalising function, which is its only function in sts 6. and 7.: Knútr is king now and always, and the longevity of his kingship is implied in the comparison with God in the refrain (8.).

#### IV. Poetic diction

The diction of the poem, and particularly its heavy use of mythological kennings and obscure conceits, has been ably analysed by Frank (1994, 119-24), but a number of points can be added. In particular, the development of the poem at the metaphorical level reinforces the stanza order proposed above.

1./2.: In this first stanza, the topic is sailing, expressed using the 'animals of the sea' [=ships] conceit, n.b. *sunds dýr*, *harðviggs*. The main statement in 1. is ambiguous, as the various elements of the sentence could be combined in different ways (though without really changing the meaning). Thus, it could be read as *komt Sveiða hreinum á Sólisa bekkjar trøð*<sup>13</sup> or *komt Sólisa bekkjar hreinum á Sveiða trøð*.<sup>14</sup> Of course, both of these mean 'you launched ships' but, despite Faulkes and Frank, the second seems preferable as it plays with the contrasts and parallels between sea and land that are an important part of the whole poem (see further on this below).

The second half of the stanza (i.e. 2.) introduces the warrior (*hristir sikulgarðar íss*), anticipating the emphasis on him in the next stanza.

3.: The use of *sundviggs* harks back to the conceit of the previous stanza, but the main topic here is battle, expressed through an accumulation of terms for weaponry: for the ship (*harðbrynjuð*), for the warrior (*vorðr hildar leiptra*), and in a kenning for the raven (*mó sverðmans*). A shield also appears disguised in the kenning *Ullar sundviggs*.<sup>15</sup>

5./4.: The topic of battle continues, but here it moves firmly off the ships and on to land, suggested by the kenning *baugjarð* for a shield (this also links back to the shield

---

<sup>13</sup> Faulkes (1987, 124) translates 'you have brought ... Sveidi's reindeer on the path [sea] of Sól's bench [ship]' though see his note in the glossary (p. 245) that 'the prose comment [i.e. in *Snorra Edda*] says it is a kenning for "sea", which is harder to fit into the context' (see next footnote for this possibility). Frank (1994, 121) follows Faulkes.

<sup>14</sup> Meissner (1921, 93) has both *Sólisa bekk* and *Sveiða trøð* as kennings for the sea, with base words implying 'ground' or 'base' linked with a sea-king's name as determinant. This would produce a translation of 'you brought the reindeer [ships] of Sól's bench [sea] onto the path of Sveiði [sea].' Elsewhere (p. 219) he notes the possible interpretation of *Sveiða hreinn* as 'ship' (as in Finnur Jónsson 1912-15, BI 293), but his translation follows Finnur Jónsson's second thoughts on these kennings (1912-15, BI 683). In *Lexicon Poeticum*, however, Finnur Jónsson (1931) lists *Sveiða hreinn* as a kenning for ship under both elements.

<sup>15</sup> The second half of 3. needs some kind of emendation to make sense, and this brief discussion does not do justice to its problems.

in the second half of st. 3.).<sup>16</sup> As a result of the battle, the ground lies under (i.e. is subjugated to) the king, who is appropriately denoted by a tree-based kenning (*bor holmfjöturs leiðar*).<sup>17</sup> This kenning also manages to suggest his arrival from across the sea. The 'message' of the whole stanza is that the seafarer has come to conquer the land and is generous as a result (Frank 1994, 122). Thus, it moves naturally from images of splitting (*brestr sundr, í tvau fjúga*, representing the destructive effect of military conquest) to those of binding (*bundin, -fjöturs*, representing the healing rule of the conqueror).

6.: The main topic here is of political power and, following on from the previous stanza, the imagery is partly of prosperity and fruitfulness (note the use of the fertility god-names Yngvi and Freyr to denote Knútr, as well as *friðr*). But the poet shows that he is in no doubt that this peace was achieved through war, with a complex warrior-kenning for Knútr in the first half (*boðrakkr bænar nokkva barkrjóðr*) and an image of his martial activities in the second (*hjaldrórr þverrir hungri odda Leiknar haukum*).

7.: The topic of religion (hinted at in the previous stanza) is predominant here, with the specifically Christian reference of *munka valdi*. This is linked to more natural imagery (especially of the earth: *jarðar hqslu, moldreks*), anticipating the 'heavenly' emphasis of the refrain.

8.: The burden of the poem has been to link Knútr closely with the land that he (as a seafarer coming from another land) has conquered. The refrain expands this idea by drawing an explicit parallel with the ruler of heaven.

### V. Metrical considerations

As well as being a metaphorical tour de force, Hallvarðr's *Knútsdrápa* is also metrically intricate.<sup>18</sup> The main characteristic of Hallvarðr's use of *skjálfhenda*<sup>19</sup> is that the third line of each half stanza invariably has the alliteration on the first and third syllables, with the first internal rhyme (*frumhending*) in either the first or second syllable. Although alliteration is the essential feature of *skjálfhenda* (Faulkes 1991, 59), this secondary choice of either the first or second syllable for the *frumhending* may give a further clue to the grouping of the stanzas. In the two stanzas that survive whole (3. and

<sup>16</sup> And is thus a further argument for suggesting that 5. should be the first half of this stanza.

<sup>17</sup> This also cunningly enmeshes ideas of the land and the sea: the 'fetter of islands' is the (world-)serpent (who lives in the sea), the 'path of the serpent' is gold, so the king is a 'tree of gold'.

<sup>18</sup> Hofmann (1955, 100) calls his 'Skjálfhent-Verse ... eindrucksvoll und prächtig'.

<sup>19</sup> Faulkes (1991, 79) says that this poem 'is predominantly in *in nýja skjálfhenda*', with the main difference between *in forna* and *in nýja* being that the former prefers *aðalhending* in the third line and the latter *skothending* (p. 59). But by my calculations there are 4 examples of each in this poem, + 1.3 in st. 6. where the internal rhyme of *-rakkr* and *nokk-* would normally have been considered an *aðalhending*.

6.), the choice of the first or second syllable is consistent in the two half stanzas,<sup>20</sup> thus in 3. it is the first syllable that has the *frumhending* in both 1.3 (*heipt-*) and 1.7 (*sverð-*), while in 6. it is the second (*-rakkr*, and *-órr*). This then provides further support for linking stanzas 1. and 2. (*frumhending* on the second syllable in 1.3 of each, *-rakkr* and *-bands*) and 5. and 4. (*frumhending* on the second syllable in 1.3 of each, *-jorð* and *-lands*). In 7., the *frumhending* is on the first syllable again (*mold-*).

Stanzas 6b. and 7. have *skjálfhenda* in l. 1 as well as l. 3 (with *aðalhending* in both cases), making them what is known as *tvískelft*. This metre is naturally difficult to keep up for a long time, even Snorri in *Háttatal* 28 manages it only by using *skothending* in lines 1 and 5. It is likely that Hallvarðr chose this especially demanding form for the climactic part of his poem.

Although a closer study of Hallvarðr's metrical competence increases our respect for his poetical skills, his use of the available forms is probably not consistent enough for this to be a significant criterion in reconstructing the order of the stanzas, although his choices do not contradict the ordering arrived at by other criteria.

## VI. Conclusion

With only two whole stanzas, five half stanzas and one quarter-stanza surviving, it is unlikely that we have the whole of Hallvarðr's poem, particularly if it was indeed a *drápa*, which was generally supposed to be long and splendid. The foregoing analysis is therefore almost certainly far too pat in constructing a tightly-woven unity and clear logic for what can only be a fragmentary poem. At the most, it may be that, fortuitously, a continuous part of the original poem survives, so that the links between the stanzas are not just a figment of the modern reader's imagination. But even though we cannot retrieve those lost stanzas of *Knútsdrápa*, we are, I think, still justified in attempting to make as much sense as possible of those that survive.

For his *Edda*, the mythographer Snorri chose stanzas 1.-2., 4.-5. and 7.-8. for the light they shed on poetic diction in *Skáldskaparmál*. The historian Snorri, on the other hand, interested in Knútr only insofar as his life intersected with that of Óláfr, quotes only one stanza, 6., in his *Heimskringla* (II, 311). He is similarly cavalier with Þórarinn loftunga's *Hofuðlausn*, of which he quotes only the refrain (*Hkr.* II, 307), to illustrate an anecdote in which the poet had to avert Knútr's displeasure by revising a *flokk* he had composed about him, by adding the refrain and some stanzas. This anecdote introduces a much longer quotation in the next chapter from Þórarinn's *Tögdrápa*, also for Knútr and commemorating his subjugation of Norway in 1028. The following chapter (172) concentrates on Óláfr's reaction to this political defeat and reiterates Knútr's total victory: *ok hafði hann Nóreg eignazk orrostulaust*. Almost by the way, Snorri then notes: *Réð hann þá fyrir þrim þjóðlögnum*, and adduces Hallvarðr's st. 6. as evidence for this.

In this context, st. 6., and particularly the intercalated present-tense statement *hjaldrórr þverrir hungur odda Leiknar haukum*, appears to contradict the assertion of the prose that Knútr won Norway without a battle. But, as we have seen above, this

<sup>20</sup> This is also true of *Háttatýkill* 41, identified as *skjálfhenu*, and *Háttatal* 35, the textbook example of *in forna skjálfhenda*.



statement is a general one about the king's martial qualities intended for his own ears and those of his followers in England, and does not refer specifically to Norway. Snorri chooses the stanza because it underlines the ruthlessness of Knútr and the extent of his power, not because it gives any details about how he conquered Norway (*Tøgdrápa* is his main source for that). In their original context of performance, such present-tense statements had a deictic function that is either useless to the thirteenth-century historians as evidence for their narratives, or even at variance with them. This may be why relatively few such stanzas survive. Russell Poole (1991, 24-56) has studied the use of the present tense in a variety of Old Norse poetry, and sees it as an 'accepted stylism' that has the effect of 'running commentary'. He assumes (1991, 195) that the basic mode of skaldic poetry is narrative, and that those poems which use the present tense to indicate the 'main march of events' constitute a 'special genre'. To me, it seems that, for eleventh-century praise poetry at least, the attempt to reconstruct the original poem, as far as possible, and to locate it in its original historical context, can be just as fruitful an approach to explaining the poet's use of tenses.

Thus, Hallvarðr's *Knútsdrápa* illustrates the shifts between narrative and vocative, and past tense and present tense, that are required in the context of utterance when the poet recalls the king's past deeds in his presence.

#### VII. Excursus: Óttarr svarti's *Knútsdrápa*

Just as the vocative, present-tense statement of Hallvarðr's st. 6. contradicts Snorri's narrative history, so there is a similar disjunction when the author of *Knytinga saga* uses the past-tense st. 3. as evidence for his narrative in ch. 8. While there are no contradictions of fact between the stanza and the prose narrative of this chapter (which is in any case heavily based on skaldic verse), there is a disjunction between the omniscient 3rd-person narrative and the vocative, 2nd-person forms of the stanza. Here it is not only Hallvarðr's verse that makes clear the distinction between narrative and source, however, for six of the seven stanzas in ch. 8 are vocative, the others all being from Óttarr svarti's *Knútsdrápa*. This poem contains both direct address to the king and two uses of the present tense referring to the king (one with future meaning), so it can only have been composed in Knútr's lifetime. It describes the king's early career, in which he sailed from Denmark to conquer England, and lists a number of the battles he fought there, which we can more or less identify with battles fought in 1016 and mentioned in Anglo-Saxon sources (Poole 1987). The final stanza, if it does belong to this poem (which is not certain), notes his victory over the Swedes at the battle of Holy River. Thus, the poem is of the same type as Sighvatr's *Vikingarvísur*, i.e. a catalogue of a king's youthful battles, presented to him some time after the majority of those battles had taken place.

The 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons participating in the communication are easily identified. Thus, the poet twice refers to himself in the 1st person, in stanzas 3 and 7. However, it is the 1st person's counterpart, the 2nd person, who is dominant in the poem. In Finnur Jónsson's B-text (1912-15, BI 272-5), there are 40 examples of 2nd-person forms of verbs or pronouns, which works out at an average of four per stanza. They all refer to Knútr, who is mentioned by name in the first stanza, and by a variety of terms and phrases in the other stanzas. Although Finnur Jónsson's B-text of the poem has no 3rd-person references to the king, the manuscript versions do have such forms.

All the stanzas of the poem except the last are preserved only in *Knýtlinga saga*, which is not always a very good text and even Bjarni Guðnason, in his edition, cannot avoid emending the verse texts on occasion. However, he does keep the manuscript reading of the verb-forms. In stanzas 2, 3, 6 and 10, five verbs referring to Knútr occur in 3rd-person forms in the manuscript rather than 2nd-person ones. This does not affect the overall dominance of the 2nd person, for there are still 26 2nd-person verbs in the poem (not including separate pronouns), but it does introduce a new dimension into our reading of the poem. Kock, commenting on stanza 6 (NN 737), complained about Finnur Jónsson's emendation of the manuscript text and asserted that the alternation between 2nd and 3rd person in referring to the king relieved the monotony of the stanza (though he was happy enough to let Finnur get away with it in other stanzas). As well as making the diction of the poem more interesting, it could be argued that judicious use of the 3rd person for Knútr helps link him to his followers, since their actions are also described in the 3rd person, thereby suggesting their participation in his triumph. These are Knútr's men who, in st. 2, are said to have followed him from Denmark. They also crop up in the battle descriptions of sts 5, 7 and 8, and are named in a variety of ways: *Jótar*, *víkingar*, *danskr herr* and *verðung*. They can also be said to be implicitly present in many of the statements in which the king is the subject, particularly when they have a plural object. When the first stanza says that Knútr launched ships (in the plural), it is clear he did not do this entirely on his own.

Thus, Óttarr's *Knútsdrápa* can be shown to have been composed for the same context of utterance as Hallvarðr's poem.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, ed. (1979) *Snorri Sturluson: Heimskringla*.  
 Bjarni Guðnason, ed. (1982) *Danakonunga sögur: Skjöldunga saga, Knýtlinga saga, Ágrip af sögu Danakonunga*.  
 Faulkes, Anthony, trans. (1987) *Snorri Sturluson: Edda*.  
 Faulkes, Anthony, ed. (1991) *Snorri Sturluson: Edda. Háttatal*.  
 Fidjestøl, Bjarne (1982) *Det norrøne fyrstedikter*.  
 Finnur Jónsson, ed. (1912-15) *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*.  
 Finnur Jónsson, ed. (1931) *Lexicon Poeticum*.  
 Frank, Roberta (1994) 'King Cnut in the verse of his skalds,' in *The Reign of Cnut*, ed. Alexander R. Rumble, pp. 106-24.  
 Hammer, A.E. (1983) *German Grammar and Usage*.  
 Hofmann, Dietrich (1955) *Nordisch-englische Lehnbeziehungen der Wikingerzeit*.  
 Johnsen, Oscar Albert and Jón Helgason (1941) *Saga Óláfs konungs hins helga. Den store saga om Olav den hellige*.  
 Kock, E.A. (1923-44) *Notationes Norroenae*.  
 Meissner, Rudolf (1921) *Die Kenningar der Skalden*.  
 Poole, Russell (1987) 'Skaldic verse and Anglo-Saxon history: some aspects of the period 1009-1016,' *Speculum* 62, 265-98.  
 Poole, Russell (1990) 'Skaldic praise poetry as a marginal form,' in *Poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages*, ed. Teresa Päröli, pp. 169-85.  
 Poole, R.G. (1991) *Viking Poems on War and Peace: A Study in Skaldic Narrative*.