

***Hervarar saga's* Stanzas and the Manuscript that Met the Reader
(Abstract)**

**Karl G. Johansson
(Universitetet i Oslo)**

There are two versions of *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* extant in medieval manuscripts: GKS 2845 4to (R) and AM 544 4to (H). A third version with independent text-critical value is found in the seventeenth-century paper manuscript R: 715 in Uppsala University Library (U). There are paper manuscripts containing copies of these three versions, but they are considered to be without independent text critical value. The three versions are to a high degree divergent from one another. In my paper I will focus on the two versions that are extant in medieval manuscripts, but the third version will also be taken into consideration.

The two versions present diverging use of stanzas to accompany the saga prose. They therefore provide an interesting insight into the transition of narrative and the use of poetry inserted in the prose in fourteenth-century Iceland. In my paper I will address questions concerning the manuscript versions that actually were available to medieval readers, i.e. the manuscript versions will be considered as representing actual speech-acts. I will argue that it is the manuscript rather than the *work* that communicated with its contemporary users. From this perspective the varying uses of prose and stanzas in the individual manuscripts will have to be studied, i.e. we can not fully understand the use of prosimetrum in the fourteenth century without studying the work in transition.