

Svend Nielsen

The Rímur Poetry of Ten Kvæðamenn

Research on Variations

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RÓSA ÞORSTEINSDÓTTIR

Introduction

It can truly be said that the research published here breaks new ground in the studies of Icelandic *kvæðamenn* and *rímur* melodies. Although alteration and variation are the signature characteristics of folkloric material that is transmitted without reference to books, research on such material and reflections on what it is that changes from one performance to another has not been prominent in folkloristics (see Honko 2000, 3-4). In his study, Svend Nielsen describes how he, Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson, and Thorkild Knudsen searched the country for *kvæðamenn* who had grown up with *kveðskapur* (*rímur* poetry), intoned it as young men and could still intone long passages of *rímur*. Fortunately, the search was successful, and now, more than fifty years later, an analysis of the *kveðskapur* of ten such *kvæðamenn* that was recorded between 1964 and 1971 has been published. In the following introduction, this research will be described and put into the context of other research on the oral performance of *rímur* poetry. Further sources will also be pointed out, but first, more precise definitions of *rímur* and *rímur* poetry will be given than appear in the study itself.

Rímur

Rímur (singular, *ríma*) are long poems in a regular form (*rímnahættir*, *rímur* meters) in which stories are told. The oldest extant *ríma* is *Ólafs ríma Haraldssonar*, the *ríma* of Saint Ólafur Haraldsson, preserved in the 14th-century *Flateyjarbók* manuscript, showing that the roots of *rímur* can be traced back to that century. This is a single *ríma*, but it quickly became the norm for the subject matter to be divided into individual *rímur* that together form a set or cycle (*rímnaflökkur*). In *rímur* from the Middle Ages, it was most common for the same meter to be used in most or all of the *rímur* in the same set, but later it became customary to change the meter for each new *ríma* in a set. The authors of medieval *rímur* are mostly unknown, but attempts have been made to determine the age of the *rímur* based on their style and to identify their common characteristics (see Haukur Þorgeirsson 2021). Most often, *rímur* appear to have been composed based on pre-existing tales, often *riddarasögur* (chivalric sagas), *fornaldarsögur* (legendary sagas), or *ævintýri* (fairytales), and to follow the same rules of such genres (Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir 2016,

19). Some *rímur* are based on *Íslendingasögur* (sagas of Icelanders), some are based on translated stories and legends, and there are occasional ones on Christian topics. Key studies of *rímur* and the *rímur* tradition include Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson's article in *Arv* (1975), Davíð Erlingsson's treatment in the sixth volume of *Íslensk þjóðmenning* (1989), and Sverrir Tómasson's article in *Ritið* (2005). The following discussion is supported by those studies as well as Pétur Húni Björnsson's Master's thesis from 2020.

It may be said that *rímur* poetry was the Icelanders' main form of entertainment for five hundred years, and it is not difficult to compare it with modern forms of entertainment. The *rímur* were intoned during *kvöldvökur*, evening vigils or gatherings (see Magnús Gíslason 1977) and most *ríma* sets were so long that it took many evenings to get through them, so that they became serials, like modern soap operas and other television series of today. The division of a set of *rímur* into individual *rímur* often follows chapter- or episode divisions in the story, but often, the narrative is left hanging at an exciting moment to help build anticipation for what comes next, as is done in modern crime shows. Films also use methods reminiscent of older forms of entertainment; for example, no Bond movie is made without Bond getting into intense gunfights and chases involving all sorts of vehicles. All audiences know this, but that does not stop them from wanting to see the latest Bond movie. Nor is any set of *rímur* based on ancient sagas without descriptions of feasts, ship voyages, and battles, but this does not seem to have prevented people from wanting to listen to the same set of *rímur* year after year (see Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir 2016, 22).

Before each *ríma* in a set, the poet generally adds a short prologue called a *mansöngur*. It is always shorter than the *ríma* that follows, with the poet introducing material that is most often unrelated to the story told in the *ríma*: "The poet typically bemoans women's lack of interest in him, his advancing age, declining health, and lack of poetic ability" (Pétur Húni Björnsson 2020, 5).

Rímur are composed in specific meters, with fixed rules governing rhyme and alliteration. They use poetic language, such as *heiti* (synonyms) and kennings, as will be discussed in more detail below. This makes the diction of the *rímur* far from common, and it takes some practice to be able to follow the storyline. Consequently, it has been argued that the *rímur* poets rarely display an independent understanding of the contents of their source stories and lack "the will to change the storyline and make the story their own" (Davíð Erlingsson 1989, 335). This, however, is perhaps not the most important thing, because in general it can be said that it matters much more to the audience "how the poets are able to let the story take its course, to convey it" (ibid.).

Rímur Meters (Rímnahættir)

As mentioned before, *rímur* meters are characterized by fixed rules governing rhyme, alliteration, and number of syllables. Stanzas are alliterated, forming so-called *braglínupör* (“line pairs,” couplets; singular *braglínupar*), i.e., two lines that alliterate. The first line of the *braglínupar*, called the *frumlína* (initial line), has two alliterated trochees, and the so-called *síðlína* (final line), the second line in the pair, begins with a *höfuðstafur* (initial alliterated syllable) corresponding to the alliteration of the *frumlína*. The group of three alliterated syllables of the *braglínupar* are called by the single name *ljóðstafir*. *Braglínur*, or *vísuorð* (lines of verse) are divided into so-called *kveður* (singular *kveða*) or *bragliðir* (singular *bragliður*), i.e., feet, which in some respects correspond to beats in music. All *rímur* meters are based on *tvíliðir* (trochees, singular *tvíliður*; i.e., every *kveða* has two syllables), have end rhyme, and always alliterate according to the aforementioned rules. *Rímur* meters are either four-line, three-line, or two-line. The length of the lines varies depending on the meter, but this is also governed by strict rules. For example, there are seven syllables in the initial lines (*forlínur*)— the first and third— of a traditional quatrain in the *ferskeytt* (four-line) meter, but six syllables in the final lines (*síðlínur*)— the second and fourth. End rhyme is almost universal, most often (abab) in the *ferskeytt* meter, (aaa) in *braghenda* (a three-line meter), and (aa) in *afhending* (a two-line meter). There are a number of variations of each of these three basic meters, consisting of different syllable counts in the lines and different rhyme schemes for the end rhyme and so-called internal rhyme (Pétur Húni Björnsson 2020, 5-6).

For ages, Icelanders have composed other types of poetry using the same meters as *rímur*, not least *lausavísur* (single-stanza compositions, sometimes called in English occasional verse or simply quatrains). Composing *lausavísur* may be said to have been a national practice in Iceland since ancient times, and the role of these stanzas and their content is practically interwoven with the life of the Icelanders. Their topics include nature, love, homesickness, and bereavement, but such stanzas were and are also composed about horses, travel, drinking, and the weather. There are also countless nursery rhymes composed in *rímur* meters, also varied in content. They often convey simple images from a child’s everyday environment: animals and flowers, the children themselves and their games and chores (Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir 2009, 4). All stanzas and poems written in *rímur* meter can be intoned to *rímur* melodies.

Helgi Sigurðsson (1892) provides a very detailed description of the metrics of *rímur* in his work *Safn til bragfræði íslenzkra rímna*, and Finnur Jónsson (1892) discussed the metrics of *rímur* in his survey, *Stutt íslensk bragfræði*. Later

publications on metrics include Sveinbjörn Beinteinsson's *Bragfræði og Háttatal* (1953), and *Íslensk bragfræði* by Ragnar Ingi Aðalsteinsson (2013); Ragnar Ingi also dealt specifically with the metrics of *rímur* in the book *Segulbönd Iðunnar*, published in 2018. An accessible introduction to the metrics of *rímur*, written by Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir and Pétur Húni Björnsson, can be found in the collection *Silfurplötur Iðunnar*, from 2004.

Along with the meters, the special poetic diction of the *rímur* must be considered part of their form. *Rímur* diction is characterized by the use of kennings and *heiti*, which could be suitable stock both for putting together lines of the right length with the right alliteration, and for use as rhyming words.

- **Heiti** are words that are used almost exclusively in poetry. By using a variety of *heiti*, the *rímur* poets are able to avoid constantly using the same words for phenomena that appear frequently in their *rímur*. Numerous *heiti* exist, but the most common are synonyms for a king (e.g., *buðlungur*, *lofðungur*, *döglingur*, *fylkir*, *hilmir*, *ræsir*, *stillir*, *sjóli*, *jöfur*, and *þengill*), a man (e.g., *halur*, *rekkur*, *seggur*, *höldur*, and *skati*) and a woman (e.g., *fljóð*, *lind*, *hrund*, *snót*, *sprund*, and *pilja*) (Craigie 1908, 104).
- **Kennings** are more complex than *heiti*, but they “mainly involve rewording things in a systematic way by joining nouns, stems of words, and epithets, typically referring to the definitions of the words as given in the myths of the *Snorra Edda* [...] Basically, a kenning is saying in an elevated way that something is someone's, such as calling gold Grani's burden— Grani was Sigurður Fáfnisbani's horse, which carried the gold of Gnitahiði for him— or that a woman is a menja Hrund— a valkyrie of necklaces” (Pétur Húni Björnsson 2020, 6). The most common kennings are those that denote man, woman, gold, poetry, battle, and sword (Craigie 1908, 105).

Rímur appear to have been performed in a similar manner over a long period of time, and it is traditional to call their mode of performance “að kveða,” to intone. Today, “að kveða” is actually defined as a style of singing that lies roughly halfway between singing and speaking, and could be called low-key singing or elevated elocution.

Rímnalög — Rímur Melodies

The *rímnalög* (*rímur* melodies, also called *kvæðalög* or *stemma*) are characterized by the fact that they are not connected to specific texts, but rather, are applied to particular meters. Put simply, in order to intone a set of *rímur* composed in several

different meters, a *kvæðamaður* (intoner, plural *kvæðamenn*) needs to know at least one *rímur* melody for each meter. However, as demonstrated in this study, there are countless examples of a *kvæðamaður* using the same melody for different meters. Apart from those created on the spot, enormous numbers of *rímur* melodies have been preserved both in transcriptions and recordings. They are found in countless variations and versions, are of various types and have many different appearances and moods. Just as different *rímur* meters call for different *rímur* melodies, the material can dictate the choice. A melancholy melody can go well with *mansöngur* stanzas or love poems, but if descriptions of bloody battles are being intoned, it is often more appropriate to use fast-paced melodies that cover a small melodic range. The choice of melody therefore depends on the subject and circumstances, and in fact Hreinn Steingrímsson (2000, 111) quotes a *kvæðamaður* who says that the melodies are inherent in the stanzas. Ólafur Davíðsson (1888-1892, 218-222) published notations of *rímur* melodies in his essay on *rímur* poetry, and Bjarni Þorsteinsson's book *Íslensk þjóðlög* (1906-1909, 817-919) contains transcriptions of 253 *rímur* melodies. There are quite a few 20th-century recordings of informants born in the 19th century (see, e.g., *Silfurplötur Iðunnar* 2004, *Segulbönd Iðunnar* 2018). The vast majority of these recordings are preserved in the folklore collection of the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, such as those collected by Svend Nielsen in Iceland, and are available online at *ismus.is*. Transcriptions and descriptions made in the 19th century are focused on *kvæðamenn* born around 1800, and based on both the written material and recordings, it can be demonstrated that the performance of *rímur*, *kvæði*, and stanzas that are composed according to *rímur* meters has been in the same or similar manner for the past three centuries. "If we allow ourselves to view the tradition that was then practiced as a legacy from previous centuries, it is not a great stretch to view the *rímur*-poetry tradition that we know today as a direct descendant of the same tradition as practiced from the start" (Pétur Húni Björnsson 2020, 12; see Ragnheiður Ólafsdóttir and Nicola Dibben 2019, 50-52).

The Study

Svend Nielsen has previously published research on Icelandic *rímur* melodies in his treatise on the *kveðskapur* of Þórður Guðbjartsson, which is also examined in the current study (see Nielsen 1982). Otherwise, it may be said that the only other detailed study of *rímur* poetry is that of Hreinn Steingrímsson, published after his death in the year 2000 in the book *Kvæðaskapur: Icelandic Epic Song*. In that work, Hreinn analyzes, among other things, the *kveðskapur* of four of the same *kvæðamenn* who appear in Svend's study: Pétur Ólafsson, Guðmundur Ólafsson,

Pórður Guðbjartsson, and Þorgils Þorgilsson, often relying on Svend and Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson's recordings. Like Svend, Hreinn focuses on Breiðafjörður and the Westfjords, and says that the *kveðskapur* in western Iceland is one representative example of an old *kveðskapur* style (Hreinn Steingrímsson 2000, 52-53). Svend Nielsen, on the other hand, comes to the conclusion that this style cannot actually be found elsewhere ([see below](#)). Although these two musicologists follow different paths and are not looking for exactly the same things, they sometimes reach similar conclusions about the *kveðskapur* style of individual *kvæðamenn* (see, for example, Hreinn Steingrímsson 2000, 57 and 61-65). Elsewhere they do not agree, for example on whether the same melody can be used for all *rímur* meters. Hreinn divides *rímur* meters into three groups and says that the same melody can be used for all the meters belonging to the same group. However, Hreinn does add, among other things, that the *nýhenda* meter stands apart, in that the *kvæðamenn* do not use the same melodies for it as for other meters (Hreinn Steingrímsson 2000, 57). Svend, on the other hand, gives quite a few examples in his study of a *kvæðamaður* using the same melody for the *nýhenda* meter (7/8/7/8) and various other four-line meters.

The aim of Hreinn's research is different than Svend's; he puts forward general theories about *kveðskapur*, for instance that no melody has a single correct form, but is constantly stretched and pulled in terms of rhythm, melodic intervals, and the order of *hendingar* (musical phrases, singular *hending*) (Hreinn Steingrímsson 2000, 111). In this regard, we might say that we have here returned to the core of the matter concerning material that survives in oral tradition, and also to the core of Svend Nielsen's research. It is quite clear that the ten *kvæðamenn* whom Svend studies have long been influenced by other people's *kveðskapur*, which they have heard performed live and even on recordings and radio (see Guðmundur Steinn Gunnarsson 2018, 39). Even if the *kvæðamenn* believe that they intone as they did when they were young and that they always intone the same melody in the same way, it is quite clear that their *kveðskapur* must have developed over time, and that external circumstances could have an effect on each performance. Thus, it is not certain that the *kvæðamenn* change the melody in the same way from one recording to another or intone in precisely the same way for their household members the day after a recording has taken place. As is the case with other performers of oral material, it is clear that a good *kvæðamaður* must both follow the rules of the tradition and express his own individual creation (see for example Ákeson 2009, 8). As in all traditional oral storytelling, the *kvæðamaður* must give the audience members what they expect, and Astrid Nora Ressem (2009, 129) has in fact pointed out that in research on variations, what remains constant is as interesting as the

variations themselves. She believes that changes are not made for their own sake, but are a part of the preservation of a traditional style, of keeping it alive.

The variations that Svend Nielsen finds in the *kveðskapur* of the ten *kvæðamenn* he studied are not restricted to *rímur* melodies, but are characteristic of all music that does not rely on notation (see Guðmundur Steinn Gunnarsson 2018, 39-40). For example, there are recordings of the Faroese Súsanna Samuelsen from Húsavík on Sandoy singing five hymn verses and altering the melody in each verse (Clausen 2006, 216-218). Svend Nielsen has in fact written about Icelandic hymn singing, but does not mention variation in that context (Nielsen 2006).

Svend and Hallfreður's search for *kvæðamenn* who could improvise the melody as they intone was successful, but such a thing is not a uniquely Icelandic phenomenon. Astrid Nora Ressem studied the 19th-century transcriptions of the songs of a Norwegian ballad singer and finds that approximately half of his ballads begin on the same note. She puts forward three possible explanations, one of them being that the ballad's melody was not fixed in advance, but developed and was adapted to both the material and rhythm of the lyrics. The melody is thus built on phrases that the singer has at hand (Ressem 2009, 134-136). Margareta Jersild comes to a similar conclusion in a study of the songs of two Swedish singers. In the case of these two, she finds phrases that cover one line of the lyrics, comparable to what Svend finds in the *kveðskapur* of both Einar Einarsson and Þórður Guðbjartsson. Jersild states that the construction of the melodies does not follow the division of the ballads' stanzas, but rather, that the melodies are built on these phrases that occur again and again throughout all of the stanzas. She believes that this is a remnant of an older technique in which formulas are used to create a melody (Jersild 2009, 181).

Svend comes to the conclusion that six of the *kvæðamenn* he studied used improvisation to some extent in their *kveðskapur*, albeit to varying degrees. However, they all also have predetermined, fixed melodies in their repertoires, which suggests that Jan Ling (1986, 131) is correct when he says that the development from such a tradition to fixed melodies occurred little by little, without any watersheds.

The Edition

In his study, Svend Nielsen has included a useful list of terms. Regarding the Icelandic translation, an attempt was made to keep everything simple and use Icelandic terms, as Svend needed more words to explain things in Danish, which of course does not have words for *rímur*, *kvæðalag*, and *kveðandi* (intoning style), to name a few.

Svend's musical notations are not in fact actual transcriptions of the *rímur* melodies intoned in the recordings, but rather of the version of the melody that becomes apparent when listening to the *kvæðamaður*'s performance of many stanzas with the same one. Svend's notated version may be called a kind of average of repeated performances of the melody to different lyrics, and therefore, the occasional ornamentation, changes in stress, or odd deviation from the melody line in the *kvæðamenns*' deliveries are not included (see Gunnsteinn Ólafsson 2004, 36-37; Guðmundur Steinn Gunnarsson 2018, 40-41). In the notations, the melodies are written in the same or similar pitch, which is not always the same pitch as in the *kvæðamenns*' performances in the recordings. This makes it easier to compare the melodies and see at a glance how similar or dissimilar they are to each other. No time signatures are given in the notations because it is the meter that decides them, and consequently, bars are placed between lines or *hendingar*. Information about the stanzas given as examples is found in the stanza index at the end of the study itself, along with as links to the original recordings.

SVEND NIELSEN

Research on Variations

The Start

The original idea for a project that involved recording *rímur* poetry between 1965 and 1971 was sparked by the reading of comments made by Reverend Bjarni Þorsteinsson in the introduction to the *rímur* melodies published in his book *Íslensk þjóðlög (Icelandic Folksongs)*. There, he remarks on two different modes of *kveðskapur*, or two types of *rímur* melodies:

Some *rímur* melodies are common, and numerous people know them and intone them nearly identically in many different areas. Various exceptional *kvæðamenn* have special melodies that they have invented themselves, and always seem to use the same melody for the same meter. These melodies are either forgotten and die out with their *kvæðamenn*, especially if the melodies are not regarded very highly, or, if they are thought beautiful, the general public learns them and keeps them as a kind of remembrance of the deceased *kvæðamaður*, and thus they become common melodies, for example, the melodies of Gunnar at Gautastaðir, of Kristján the Poet, of Erlendur at Garður, etc. Some *rímur* melodies are the spontaneous invention of the one intoning; he has no specific melody in mind before he begins, but creates it at will as he intones — and for good, experienced *kvæðamenn*, this is easy. There is a risk that such melodies will be forgotten (810).

Benedikt Jónsson at Auðnir, who collected folksongs for Bjarni, confirms this view of Bjarni's in a report that he sent, and that is printed in part in the aforementioned introduction:

When men intone, each does so according to his own will; they have their own repertoire and draw from it as the spirit moves them each time, so that one might say that each *kvæðamaður* has his own melody, yet it is not always the same, but varies according to the material, the meter, and the moment's circumstances (812).

The question was whether it was still possible to find *kvæðamenn* who performed *rímur* melodies as Bjarni and Benedikt described, or at least mentioned; melodies that are created in the moment, as the spirit inspires the *kvæðamaður*.

Apart from documenting the *rímur* poetry and *kvæðamenn* that could be found, this was the guiding principle of the collecting project that we undertook. However, we did not fully realize this until the autumn of 1965, after we had already been collecting for a year and a half.

Background

Research at the National Museum of Iceland

When I first came to Iceland in 1964, I had been tasked by the Danish Folklore Archives (*Dansk folkemindesamling*) with looking into what folk music could be found in Iceland and whether anyone was collecting and researching Icelandic folk music. The staff of the Archives had a good idea of the folk music collected in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the Faroe Islands and how ongoing collecting and research were carried out there, but Iceland was like an unexplored country on the map.

I came to Reykjavík in April and visited the National Museum of Iceland, whose director, Kristján Eldjárn, received me amiably and obligingly. For a whole month, I sat in the tower of the National Museum and listened to tape recordings kept there. The oldest part of the collection did not have many recordings of *kveðskapur*, and a long time had passed between them. The main ones were, on the one hand, those made by Icelandic National Radio in 1941 and labeled “Jón Lárusson, farmer at Hlíð, 132 *rímur* melodies” and on the other hand, a collection made in 1958-1959 in the Westfjords by Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson in collaboration with a technician from Icelandic National Radio. After listening to all the recordings, I saw that few were made pre-1945, and that they contained almost exclusively *lausavísur*. The collection from 1958-59 was much larger. It held around ten hours of recordings of forty-two men and women who both sang hymns and intoned, and almost half of them not only intoned *lausavísur*, but also occasional snippets of *rímur*. Unfortunately, the latter were truly just snippets, not very long; in most cases only two, three, or four stanzas were intoned.

The Collecting Trips

The first collecting trip, 1964: Around mid-May, Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson returned to Iceland after completing his studies in folklore in Prague. Kristján Eldjárn introduced us, beginning a friendship and collaboration that did not end

until Hallfreður's death in 2005.

Kristján Eldjárn arranged for Hallfreður and me to undertake a trip throughout the south of Iceland to gather information about folklore, legends, fairytales, and whatever we could of sung verses such as ballads (*sagnadans*), hymns, and nursery rhymes (*þulur*), but not least, intoned *lausavísur* and *rímur*. We traveled around for half a month and collected a considerable amount of material in prose, folktales, and descriptions of folk beliefs, but when it came to music, the yield was much scantier. We found neither ballads, hymns, nor nursery rhymes, and only a few people knew how to intone. Those who could, intoned only *lausavísur*.

Second collecting trip, 1964: In late summer, Hallfreður and my colleague Thorkild Knudsen went on another collecting trip. They traveled through the north and east of Iceland, having set themselves the same goals regarding the material they wanted to collect. In the east, they managed to record a few hymns sung by three siblings, as well as other sung verses. As far as *rímur* were concerned, the results were the same as in the south; no one intoned long *rímur* passages, but only *lausavísur* and shorter verses.

Before Thorkild Knudsen returned to Denmark, he and Hallfreður took a short collecting trip to Snæfellsnes Peninsula, and among the few people they visited was Porgils Porgilsson at Porgilsstaðir. He himself had written verses about the seasons in a *rímur* meter, which he performed several times after a great deal of encouragement. This was the first example we had of a long text intoned in a *rímur* meter, and in the performance, it could clearly be heard how the *kvæðamaður* improvised in his creation.

After going carefully through the material collected in the south, north and east, without finding a single person who could intone *rímur*, it was clear that the material collected by Hallfreður in the years 1958-1959 gave hope for better results in the Westfjords. It was therefore decided that thereafter, we would focus on that region of Iceland. When I returned home in June 1964, I took along a copy of Hallfreður's recordings from the Westfjords, which I had made with the permission of Kristján Eldjárn. I went carefully through the recordings in the winter of 1964-1965, and from the forty-two *kvæðamenn* recorded there, I chose fifteen that I found most promising. My criteria for choosing the *kvæðamenn* was that they were not too old, that they were confident in their *kveðskapur*, that their melodies were interesting and that their *kveðskapur* was different from ordinary singing. I sent Hallfreður the list of these fifteen *kvæðamenn*, and he set about determining which of them would and could intone for us the next summer.

Collecting trip, 1965: This collecting trip began in the Westfjords. That spring,

Hallfreður had received the consent of three people on my list for us to visit them and record their *kveðskapur*. These were Þórður Guðbjartsson, Einar Einarsson, and Gísli Gíslason. Hallfreður had also arranged for us to visit Þorgils Þorgilsson at Þorgilsstaðir on Snæfellsnes, whom he and Thorkild Knudsen had recorded the year before. On August 2, we flew to Vatneyri in Patreksfjörður, where we visited Þórður Guðbjartsson and Einar Einarsson. We received permission to stay at the local school and Þórður, who lived right next door, came over to the school many times to intone for us. Einar lived a short distance from the school as well, but we went to his house and recorded him there. In five days, we did three recording sessions with each of them.

We then got someone to drive us south to the farm Fit in the Barðaströnd area, where Gísli Gíslason lived. We stayed with him for five days. During the day, we helped him with the haymaking, but most evenings, we recorded Gísli's *kveðskapur*, resulting in five recordings. On the afternoon of August 10, at the encouragement of Gísli, we went to another farm in the vicinity, where we recorded the *kveðskapur* of the farmer Þórður Marteinnsson. Hallfreður had also visited and recorded him in 1958, but he was not one of those on our list now, as his melodies were very fixed in form and his *kveðskapur* was quite close to singing. The purpose of including his *kveðskapur* in the study was primarily to highlight the difference between it and that of the other *kvæðamenn*.

After a few visits to others whom we could not get to intone long passages, we headed back to Reykjavík. From there, we traveled to Þorgilsstaðir on Snæfellsnes and visited Þorgils Þorgilsson. Þorgils intoned, first and foremost, the verses on the seasons that he himself had composed and had intoned for Thorkild and Hallfreður the year before. We encouraged him to intone the verses several times. In addition, he intoned *rímur*, but only fragments. The visit lasted only that one day.

Collecting, 1967: In 1966 I did not make it to Iceland, but I returned there in August, 1967. On August 25 we set off and flew to Patreksfjörður, where we stayed for six days. We mainly continued recording Þórður Guðbjartsson, yielding five recordings, but also Einar Einarsson, who intoned for us in two recording sessions.

After staying for several days in Reykjavík, we headed on September 5 to Stóra-Tunga in the Fellsströnd area, to visit and record Pétur Ólafsson, a former farmer there.

Hallfreður had heard Pétur intone in the summer of 1966. He had met a young student who said he had recorded his father's *kveðskapur* at Christmas the year before. The father had practiced traditional *rímur kveðskapur* up until the mid-1950s, and for several evenings in a row over Christmas, had intoned for the

family, to entertain an old aunt who was visiting. Accordingly, Pétur Ólafsson appeared to be the person who had maintained the *rímur* tradition at his home for the longest time, and after receiving copies of his son's recordings, which were quite extensive, we were convinced that Pétur's *kveðskapur* style was extremely interesting.

Pétur was prepared to intone complete *rímur*, and we proceeded to record the *Rímur af Héðni og Hlöðvi* (*Rímur of Héðinn and Hlöðvir*) by Jón Eyjólfsson. The *rímur* set consists of eight *rímur*, and Pétur intoned one *ríma* per evening. The plan was to stay with Pétur for three weeks, but due to a death in my family, I was forced to stop collecting after only one week.

Collecting, 1968: That year, we recorded three *kvæðamenn*: Páll Stefánsson, Guðmundur Ólafsson, and Pétur Ólafsson. Hallfreður had gotten in touch with Páll Stefánsson and we visited him in Reykjavík at the start of our collecting. On that occasion, we made only one recording, but managed to record Páll again when we returned to Reykjavík at the conclusion of our collecting trip.

On November 23, we traveled from Reykjavík north to Fellsströnd, where we stayed first for three days with Guðmundur Ólafsson, Pétur Ólafsson's brother, and held five recording sessions. Like Pétur, Guðmundur could intone entire *rímur*, and he usually intoned one *ríma* at each session.

We then went on to Pétur Ólafsson, who lived not far from his brother. Recording with Pétur was the main goal of our trip. We were hoping to be able to stay with him for a while, in midwinter. In order to ensure that he had an audience, we had arranged beforehand for Guðrún Jóhannsdóttir, Pétur's wife, and Agnes, their daughter, to sit and listen to Pétur's *kveðskapur* with us. We did this hoping that, for the recordings, we could create conditions similar to the atmosphere that had prevailed while Pétur was still intoning for his household in the evenings. Over the course of ten days, twenty-three recording sessions took place; every day one was done in the middle of the day, another in the early evening, and sometimes we also recorded later in the evening. As in the previous year, Pétur intoned entire sets of *rímur*— one *ríma* and sometimes two— at each session.

Collecting, 1969: That year, the collecting was a bit special, as it took place during my and my wife's summer-holiday trip to Iceland. The collecting locations had been chosen to fit well into our itinerary, so we stopped at Siglufjörður and Siglunes on our way to Lake Mývatn. In Siglufjörður, we first visited Hallgrímur Jónsson and spent one afternoon recording him— three recordings in all.

The next morning we sailed out to Siglunes, where Jón Oddsson lived alone. We were there almost all day, and made twenty-six recordings. The next day we

returned to Siglufjörður and continued recording Hallgrímur's *kveðskapur*. That time, we made five recordings.

Collecting, 1971: While finishing writing my Master's thesis, I spent a short time in Iceland. At that time, I took a short trip with Hallfreður to Patreksfjörður in order to take photographs of Þórður Guðbjartsson and Vatneyri. During that visit, we made several recordings of Þórður's *kveðskapur*. Only two recordings (four stanzas in total) that yielded something new are included in this study, but the description of Þórður's *kveðskapur* is based on my Master's thesis.



Þórður Guðbjartsson and Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson, along with three young girls staying for the summer in Patreksfjörður, 1971

The Framework of the Study

The main goal of our collecting trips was to investigate the possibilities of finding examples of melodies of the type that Bjarni Þorsteinsson described in *Íslenzk þjóðlög* as opposite of the unchanging, well-known ones:

(...) melodies [that] are the spontaneous invention of the one intoning; he has no specific melody in mind before he begins, but creates it at will as he intones— and for good, experienced *kvæðamenn*, this is easy (810).

In other words, our goal was to determine whether there were still to be found *kvæðamenn* whose *kveðandi* was characterized by and based on improvisation, or if some of them at least changed their melodies from one performance to another to a noticeably greater extent than previously known, for example in traditional Danish ballads. The project, that is, would involve describing the extent and consistency of variations that occurred in the performances of individual *kvæðamenn*. To that end, it was necessary for us to determine what should be measured and how that should be done. The variations can occur in two areas: the melody itself and the rhythm, and in both instances, the melody can be fixed; that is, it can have only one form, or it can be open and variable.

Variations in *Rímur* Melodies

Distribution

The melodic variations can be distributed in various ways. Sometimes changes are made to individual notes in the melody; they can also be confined to one *hending* or spread out over the entire tune.

Scope

The variations can alter the melody negligibly (i.e., it is mainly unchanged) or alter it significantly. In this study, the melody in instances of the first case will be described as somewhat variable. The variations are, among other things, conspicuous if they cause changes in the range or structure of the melody. For this reason, these two factors are important criteria. Last but not least, it is important to determine whether there are variations from one recording to another, or if differences are heard from one stanza to another in the same recording.

Variations in Rhythm

As is the case with the melodies themselves, the same applies to their rhythms. A rhythm can be fixed, allowing for only one specific rhythm pattern within the melody, or it can be variable, allowing for rhythm changes within the same melody.

Theoretically speaking, eight different rhythm patterns are found in the research data, with two of them dominant. The rhythm is more variable if its variations occur not only from one recording to another, but when it changes from one stanza to another in the same recording.

TERMS USED IN THE RESEARCH

Rímur

Rímur are lengthy narrative poems composed according to *rímnahættir* (*rímur* meters). The material (*rímur*, set or cycle) is divided into chapters (*rímur*, singular *ríma*), and at the start of a new *ríma* within the set, the meter usually changes.

Lausavísur

Lausavísur are single stanzas composed in *rímur* meters and intoned to melodies, like *rímur*. The same applies to verses composed in *rímur* meters.

Bragarhættir

The term *bragarháttur* (meter, plural *bragarhættir*) refers to the composition of a stanza. The *rímur* meters are called *rímnahættir*, all of them trochaic. Stanzas are comprised of lines (*vísuorð*, *línur*, *hendingar*), and each line has a certain number

of syllables. Stanzas composed in *rímur* meters are two to four lines, and each line can have three to twelve syllables.

In their performances, the ten *kvæðamenn* use twelve *rímur* meters out of the twenty basic, common ones:

- four-line meters:
 - ferskeytt (7/6/7/6);
 - stikluvík (7/6/7/7);
 - samhenda (7/7/7/7);
 - gagaraljóð (7/7/7/7);
 - nýhenda (7/8/7/8);
 - úrkast (8/4/8/4);
 - skammhenda (8/5/8/5);
 - langhenda (8/7/8/7) and
 - breiðhenda (also called *nýlanghenda*) (8/8/8/8).
 - They also use *hagkveðlingaháttur* (7/7/7/7), which is a variant of *samhenda*.
- three-line meters:
 - stuðlafall (10/7/7);
 - braghenda (12/8/8).
- three-line meter:
 - afhending (12/8).

Kveðandi

Kveðandi (intoning style) is the manner in which *rímur* and *lausavísur* are performed. The *kveðandi* is usually considered to be somewhere between speech and singing. Each *kvæðamaður* has his own *kveðandi*, but in *rímur* performance, the most important thing is to convey the text to the audience.

Kvæðalag (*stemma*, *rímnalag*)

The series of notes, that is, a phrase or melodic line that is connected to each line of verse as a whole regardless of the rhythmic structure or number of syllables of the lines, is called a *kvæðalag* (melody) or *stemma* (the English term “melody/melodies” is used in the following for *kvæðalag/kvæðalög*). *Kvæðalög* (melodies) can be variable or fixed. With variable melodies, there is the possibility of significant changes, and therewith, multiple variations. With fixed melodies, there are only minor changes, and therefore, few or no variations. In the following, the term *stemma* is used to refer to melodies that are related and differ to a significant

extent from others in the repertoire of the *kvæðamaður*. Different variations of the same *stemma* are called models.

The combination of *hendingar*

A melody's *hendingar* are arranged in combination with each other, with short melodic phrases making up one *hending* (one line) in the *kveðandi* of the *kvæðamaður*. Each phrase is clearly distinguishable from other phrases. A distinction is made between whether one or more *hendingar* is identical/ nearly identical or if they differ from one another. If no *hending* in a melody is identical, the combination is delineated ABCZ, but if, for example, the first and third *hending* are the same and the second and fourth are the same, the combination is delineated ABAB. Usually the final *hending* is represented by Z, unless it is identical to one of the other *hendingar* in the melody. Variations with minor changes are indicated by a lowercase letter following the relevant *hending*.

Elasticity

A melody is elastic if it can be expanded or contracted to fit different meters that are distinguished from each other by the number of syllables in each line or the number of lines in each stanza. Elasticity is thus a measure of variability of length of the *hendingar* in a melody.

Rhythmic Structure

In the *kveðskapur* of the ten *kvæðamenn* in the study, eight different rhythmic structures are heard, with two simplest and most common rhythm types, duple and triple, dominant.

Melodic Range

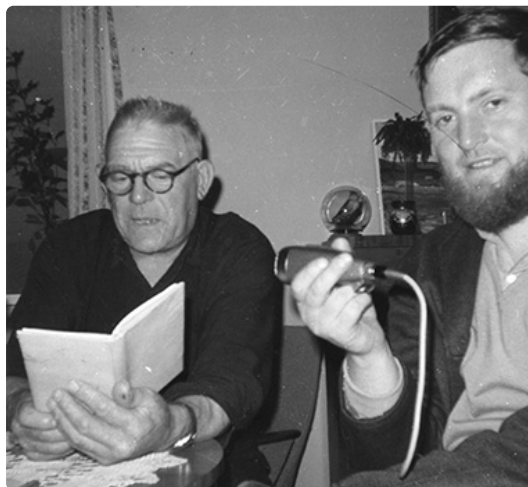
The space between the lowest and highest notes in any *rímur* melody is its range. Sometimes it is expressed relatively (e.g., in intervals of a second, third, or fourth), sometimes absolutely (e.g., interval 1 to 6 or interval -3 to 5).

Intervals

When the *rímur* melodies are notated, they are done so based on middle G (g'), here called G for simplicity's sake. In most instances, G is the final note of the melodies and the tonic in the specified ranges. Note 1 is thus G, note 2, a', is A, note 3, h' or b', is here H or B, etc. Note -1 is f# and note -2 is e, here called F# and E for simplicity's sake.

Einar Einarsson

Einar Einarsson (1905-1984) was a carpenter in Patreksfjörður (Vatneyri), but was born at Haukaberg in the Barðaströnd area. Einar does not remember having learned *rímur* melodies from anyone in particular, a *kvæðamaður* or anyone else. At his home, *rímur* were often intoned from common printed editions, such as *Númarímur*. It was customary for the *kvæðamaður* to draw out the final note of each stanza (*að draga seiminn*), but ordinarily, the audience did not join him in doing so.



We visited Einar three times in 1965 and once in 1967. Each visit lasted about two hours, and during that time we made 32 recordings of Einar's *kveðskapur*. Einar intoned a total of 325 stanzas in eleven different meters: *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *gagaraljód* (7/7/7/7), *samhenda* (7/7/7/7), *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8), *breiðhenda* (8/8/8/8), *skammhenda* (8/5/8/5), *úrkast* (8/4/8/4), *braghenda* (12/8/8), *stuðlafall* (10/7/7), and *afhending* (12/8). In the 32 recordings, four clear *stemma* are found. The meters mainly determined Einar's use of each particular *stemma*.

Stemma 1

Einar uses this melody in thirteen recordings with 121 stanzas, for the meters *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *gagaraljód* (7/7/7/7), *samhenda* (7/7/7/7) and *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8). All of these meters are four-line, with seven syllables in the first and third lines. The only difference between them is whether they have six, seven or eight syllables in the second and fourth lines. The effect of this on the melody is therefore very small. The melody is quite variable, but inelastic. The *stemma* provides leeway for many changes, even major ones. The variations occur both from one performance to another and in the same recording, as seen in Examples 1-4, and the variations will hereafter be called models.



Example 1: Fjarlæg ströndin heillar hug



Example 2: Fjarlæg ströndin heillar hug



Example 3: Hægir róður hrönnum á



Example 4: Hægir róður hrönnum á

Upon closer inspection, it can be seen that the vast majority of the variations found within the *stemma* are heard in only one or two models, and occur without exception in the first stanza in the recording. Apart from these models, five models can be found to occur in fixed melodies.



Example 5: Model 1: Ljósið fæðist, dimman dvín



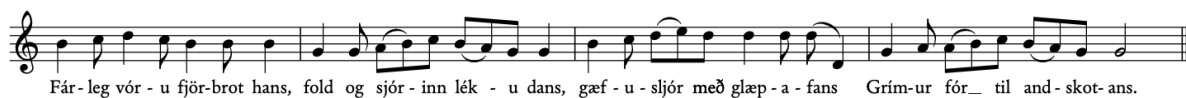
Example 6: Model 2: Leó kærur þakkar þá



Example 7: Model 3: Dagaláardísirnar



Example 8: Model 4: Fljótt á kviði Fjörgynjar



Example 9: Model 5: Fárleg voru fjörbrot hans

Looking closer at this *stemma*, it can be seen that Einar has a repertoire of phrases, each of which comprises one *hending*. Einar has fourteen phrases at his disposal, each with a fixed form; that is, only negligible variations are heard. This particularity is unique to Einar and Þórður Guðbjartsson.

However, seven phrases out of these fourteen appear only once or twice each in the recordings. The other seven phrases are therefore dominant in Einar's *kveðandi*: Phrases a, b, c, d, e, f, and z. Some of them are linked to specific *hendingar* in the melody: Phrases b, c, d, and f, whereas others can appear in various other lines.

Example 10 shows the dominant phrases (*frasi*) that Einar uses in individual *hendingar* in his *kveðandi*. For the first *hending*, he uses three different phrases, as he does for the second *hending*, then five for the third *hending*, whereas for the final *hending* he uses only one. The five models that Einar uses, Examples 5 to 9, are created with different combinations of the phrases that he has in his repertoire.

Fraasi a 92 visur	Fraasi a 82 visur	Fraasi b 66 visur	Fraasi z 121 visa
Fraasi c 22 visur	Fraasi z 19 visur	Fraasi d 18 visur	
Fraasi e 6 visur	Fraasi e 19 visur	Fraasi f 17 visur	
		Fraasi e 14 visur	
		Fraasi a 4 visur	

Example 10: Dominant phrases that Einar uses

Model 1 is composed of phrases a/a/b/z

Model 2 is composed of phrases a/a/d/z

Model 3 is composed of phrases a/z/e/z

Model 4 is composed of phrases c/c/b/z

Model 5 is composed of phrases e/b/e/z

The melodic range is variable. It swings from a fourth (interval 1–4) to a sixth (interval 1–6). The combination of *hendingar* also varies. In four stanzas, four different combinations of *hendingar* are heard: ABCZ, ABAZ, AABZ and ABBvZ.

The final *hending* is almost always fixed in all forms of the melody: an arc going from g - a over middle c (c') and back down to g. The rhythm is fixed: Rhythm b.

Stemma 2

Stemma 2 occurs in fifteen recordings, with a total of 176 stanzas. It is linked to five meters, all of which have more than seven syllables in the first line. The meters are either two-, three-, or four-line, but the line lengths are variable. The four-line meters are *breiðhenda* (8/8/8/8), *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), *skammhenda* (8/5/8/5), and *úrkast* (8/4/8/4).



Example 11: Síðan þreyða þig til vinar

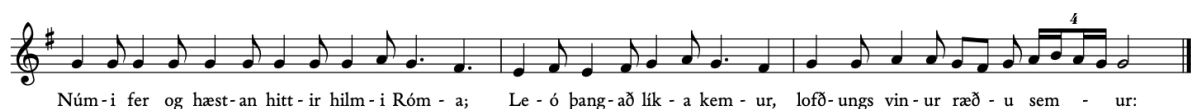


Example 12: Eins og fjalla efst frá tindum

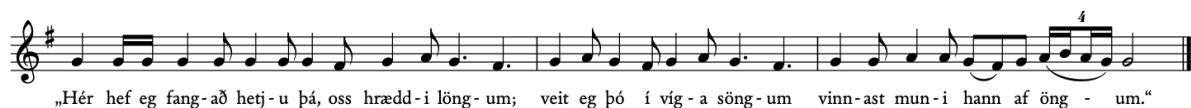


Example 13: Allt hvað skeði eins réð segja

The three-line meter intoned by Einar is *braghenda* (12/8/8):



Example 14: Númi fer og hæstan hittir hilmí Róma



Example 15: Hér hef eg fangað hetju þá, oss hræddi löngum

Afhending (12/8) is the two-line meter that occurs:



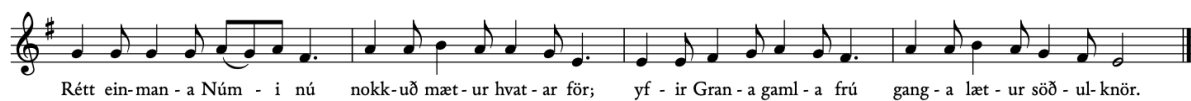
Example 16: Pó ég eigi dikti drósum dýra bragi

The variability of the melody is limited. The *kvæðamaður* can choose between a few different methods for shaping the opening note, but otherwise, the melody is fixed. It revolves firmly around note 1, which is also the dominant note, but it can be shifted up by as much as two pitches over and under note 1, and as the opening note in the first and third *hendingar*, one can hear note -3 and then a jump up to note 1. The variations can take place not only from one recording to another, but also from stanza to stanza in the same recording.

The melody is particularly elastic with regard to length of the *hendingar*, making it possible to use it for as many different meters as is the case. The melodic range is variable, changing from a third (interval -1 to 2) to a sixth (interval -3 to 4), but the variations are much more minor than they first appear, especially ignoring the differences resulting from different meters. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed in this *stemma* and the rhythm is fixed, Rhythm b.

Stemma 3

This *stemma* can be heard in three recordings, each of which contains stanzas in one particular meter: *breiðhenda* (8/8/8/8), *gagaraljód* (7/7/7/7), or *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8). There are a total of 46 stanzas using this *stemma*.



Example 17: Rétt einmana Númi nú



Example 18: Lengi fer svo fram um reit



Example 19: Lofðung eftir lesinn dóm



Example 20: Núi poldi varla við

The melody is fixed, ignoring the fact that the first *hending* can have one form in the opening stanza and another in the stanzas that follow. The melody is slightly elastic, but since the difference between the meters is not great, there turns out to be no need to lengthen or shorten the length of the *hendingar*. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, ABAVZ. The range is always a fifth, spanning the interval -2 to 3, which is rather unusual, with a lowered third. The rhythm is fixed: only Rhythm b is heard.

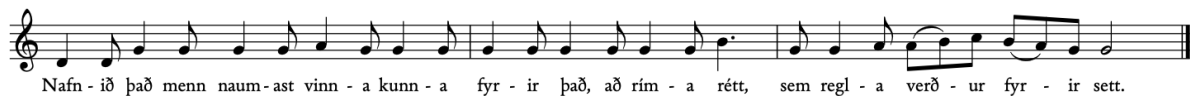
Stemma 4

This *stemma* appears in eighteen stanzas over two recordings. In both recordings, the three-line meter *stuðlafall* (10/7/7) is used. The melody is variable, with variations occurring in all three *hendingar*. However, the melody is inelastic, as it is always intoned to the same meter.

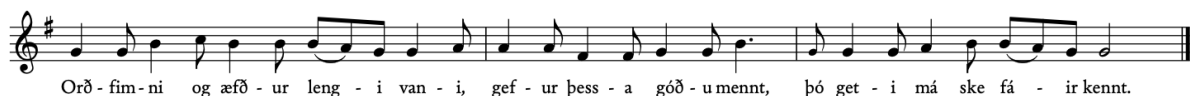
The melodic range varies, usually interval -1 to 4, but sometimes the melody begins with a jump from note -3 to note 1. Consequently, the range can widen to a seventh (interval -3 to 4). The combination of *hendingar* is variable, with variations occurring between stanzas in the same recording. The rhythm is always the same, Rhythm b.



Example 21: Skal eg mega um skáldin nokkuð tala



Example 22: Nafnið það menn naumast vinna kunna



Example 23: Orðfimni og æfður lengi vani



Example 24: Orð og þanka alla úr hinna bókum

Þórður Guðbjartsson

Þórður Guðbjartsson (1891-1981) was born at the farm Fjörður in the Múlasveit area, in the southern part of the Westfjords. As a young man, he worked as a fisherman, but later as a laborer in the freezing plant at Vatneyri in Patreksfjörður. He grew up with *kveðskapur*, and one *kvæðamaður* in particular had a great influence on him: Brynjólfur Björnsson, from Siglunes in Barðaströnd, whom Þórður says was a popular *kvæðamaður* at the nearby farms. However, there is no indication that Þórður had Brynjólfur's melodies specifically in mind, but rather his *kveðandi*, as well as the *lausavísur* that Þórður learned from him.



Þórður intoned for others, both as a young fisherman and after he moved to Vatneyri, but when he was in his thirties, he realized that *kveðskapur* was no longer held in high esteem by people and he stopped intoning. Concerning the *rímur* performances that Þórður was introduced to as a child, he was able to say that the audience used to participate in intoning the final syllables of a stanza and the extended final note.

Hallfreður and I visited Þórður three times in the years 1965, 1967, and 1971. Hallfreður had met him before, in 1959, and recorded a total of thirteen stanzas—mainly *lausavísur*—over five recordings. In 1961, Hallgrímur Helgason and John Levy visited Þórður and made three recordings of ten *lausavísur*. In all, Hallfreður and I recorded 309 stanzas over 22 recordings. Þórður used nine different *rímur* meters: *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8), *samhenda/hagkveðlingaháttur* (7/7/7/7), *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7), *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), *braghenda* (12/8/8), *skammhenda* (8/5/8/5), *stuðlafall* (10/7/7), and *úrkast* (8/4/8/4).

In his *kveðandi*, Þórður uses three *stemmaur*:

- Stemma 1 is linked to the *ferskeytt*, *hagkveðlingaháttur*, and *stikluvik* meters.
- Stemma 2 is linked to the *stikluvik*, *langhenda*, *braghenda*, *skammhenda* and

úrkast meters.

- Stemma 3 is linked to the *nýhenda* og *hagkveðlingaháttur* meters.

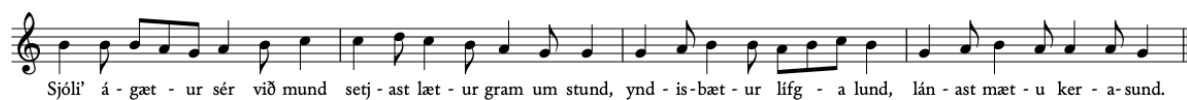
Stemma 1

This *stemma* is dominant in Þórður's intoning; he uses it in forty-four recordings, with a total of 290 stanzas. The stanzas are in three meters that are very similar to each other in terms of syllable count: *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *hagkveðlingaháttur* (7/7/7/7), and *stikluvík* (7/6/7/7).

The melody is highly variable and, as the 1971 recordings display clearly, elastic. The melody's forms are so varied and different from each other that it can be difficult to hear that they have anything in common. The variations are found in all four *hendingar*, though least often in the final line.



Example 1: Reiðar þurrka þeir ei val



Example 2: Sjóli ágætur sér við mund



Example 3: Upp á grundu einstig fann



Example 4: Arnljóts bróðir ekki sljór

These major variations occur not only from one recording to the next but also from stanza to stanza in the same recording, such as here, in the 8th *ríma* of Bernótus Borneyjarkappi, stanzas 3-5:



Example 5: Söng í reiða kífinn kár



Example 6: Sigla drengir dag sem nátt



Example 7: Kár með jöfnum þrótti þar

The combination of *hendingar* varies. Combinations such as ABCZ, AAvBZ, ABBvZ, and ABAZ can be heard. The melodic range is highly variable, changing from a third (notes 1 to 3) to a sixth (notes 1 to 6) from one stanza to another. The rhythm is fixed; all stanzas are in Rhythm a.

In two recordings of Þórður's *kveðskapur* made in 1971 (after I had completed my Master's degree research), one with six stanzas and the other with one, it turned out that he could also use *Stemma 1* to intone the *stuðlafall* meter (10/7/7), showing that the melody is elastic.



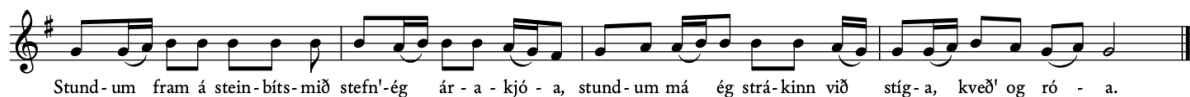
Example 8: Sunnlendingur sem að Björn er nefndur



Example 9: Húsmóðirin honum gaf að borða

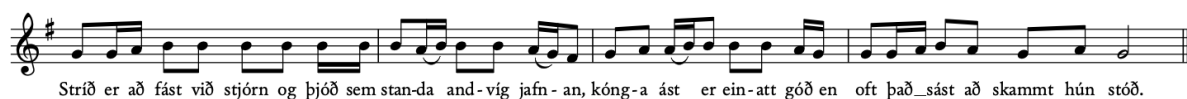
The overwhelming number of variations can be grouped into eight melody models (groups of *rímur* melodies with common characteristics that distinguish them from other groups). Examples of the models are shown here, but it must be emphasized that each model has many variations, none taking precedence over another.

Model 1 (10 stanzas):



Example 10: Stundum fram á steinbítismið

Model 2 (35 stanzas):



Example 11: Stríð er að fást við stjórni og þjóð

Model 3 (26 stanzas):



Example 12: Í landsins hjarta lifði þar

Model 4 (6 stanzas):



Example 13: Hnúti við stóran hafli beins

Model 5 (19 stanzas):



Example 14: Faldasunna sál var heið

Model 6 (21 stanzas):



Example 15: Hrópi í staðinn heyrði þá

Model 7 (6 stanzas):



Example 16: Hátt upp gerði hrópa þar

Model 8 (151 stanzas):



Example 17: Breiða- fyrst á firðinum

The eight models, and therewith, the entire *stemma*, can be described as follows:

they are made up of twelve phrases that can then be put together in different but irregular ways in the first three *hendingar* of the melody. There are also a number of variations to each phrase. The numbers below the notes indicate how often the phrase occurs in the *stemma*.

 Frasi a 226 hendingar	 Frasi b 206 hendingar	 Frasi c 34 hendingar	 Frasi d 48 hendingar
 Frasi e 46 hendingar	 Frasi f 45 hendingar	 Frasi g 35 hendingar	 Frasi h 23 hendingar
 Frasi i 13 hendingar	 Frasi j 6 hendingar		

Three phrases (za, zb, and zc) are final phrases that appear only in the fourth *hending* of the melody.

 Frasi za 202 hendingar	 Frasi zb 20 hendingar	 Frasi zc 4 hendingar
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Example 18: Dominant phrases that Þórður uses

As mentioned above, Þórður and Einar Einarsson were the only ones among the *kvæðamenn* discussed here who intoned using different phrases in this way. A more detailed description of this *stemma* of Þórður's is found in my book, *Stability in Musical Improvisation*.

Stemma 2

Þórður uses this *stemma* in eight recordings, for a total of 100 stanzas. The stanzas are in six different meters, many of which have more than seven syllables in the first line: *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7), *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), *braghenda* (12/8/8), *skammhenda* (8/5/8/5), *stuðlafall* (10/7/7), and *úrkast* (8/4/8/4).

The melody is rather fixed, yet quite elastic in terms of length, the number of syllables in the meters being variable. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, taking into account the differences in the meters. The melodic range is nearly fixed, generally a sixth, spanning the interval -3 to 3. In rare cases, the melody begins on note -4 or is stretched up to note 4, widening the range to a seventh. The rhythm pattern is fixed, with only Rhythm b occurring.



Example 19: Smala hlýðinn hjarðar fjöldinn



Example 20: Sé eg það, að sorg þú berð í sinnu ranni

Stemma 3

This *stemma* is heard in nineteen stanzas over four recordings, the stanzas being either in the *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8) or *hagkveðlingaháttur* (7/7/7/7) meter. The melody is fixed and inelastic, the difference in the number of syllables of each verse in these two meters being small and therefore having little effect on the melody. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed. The melodic range is fixed, spanning a fourth, from note 1 to 4. The rhythm is fixed: Rhythm a.



Example 21: Firna stórum fjöllum á



Example 22: Súða lýsti af sólunum

Gísli Gíslason

Gísli Gíslason (1910-2001) was born at Hrísnæs in Barðaströnd and grew up at the farm Siglunes, in the same area. When we visited and recorded him in 1965, he was a farmer at Fit in Barðaströnd. Gísli was one of those whom Hallfreður recorded in 1959, and when I listened to those recordings in the autumn of 1964, I chose him as one of the people we should try to record again. Gísli himself says that he heard *rímur* performances in his childhood, and that is when his interest in *kveðskapur* was sparked. He could not say exactly from whom it was he learned the melodies, but believed he had just learned them on his own, trying to imitate what others intoned.



We stayed with Gísli and his family for four days, helping with the haymaking by day and recording Gísli's *rímur* in the evenings. The result of this was a total of 31 recordings, mostly short or long parts of *rímur*, and in the recordings there are seven different meters, some more prominent than others. *Ferskeytt* meters are heard in sixteen recordings, the *stikluvik* meter in five, *nýhenda* in four, and *langhenda* and *braghenda* in three each. *Afhending* occurred in two recordings, but *stafhenda* and *stuðlafall* in only one each. Gísli has seven different *stemma* in his *kveðskapur* repertoire.

Stemma 1

Gísli uses this *stemma* often. It is heard in ten recordings with a total of 148 stanzas, all of which are intoned to one of two different *rímur* meters, *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6) or *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7). These meters are very similar to each other in terms of the number of syllables in the lines.

The melody is highly variable and offers the possibility of major, radical variations. The variations occur not only from one recording to another and are not

limited to individual notes, but can extend over entire *hendingar* in the melody in the same recording. The melody must be considered mainly inelastic due to the minor difference between the two meters.



Example 1: Par var greina protið smíð



Example 2: Hart fram veður Hyrningur

The melodic range is variable, and can swing from a fifth up to a sixth (interval 1 to 5 and 1 to 6). The combination of *hendingar* is variable (ABCZ and ABAZ) and the rhythm is fixed: Rhythm a.



Example 3: Sumars blíðan svo út rann



Example 4: Heiman ferð um haustið bjó



Example 5: Síðan heima að sumri er

Stemma 2

Stemma 2 appears in fifteen recordings, with 175 stanzas. The stanzas are all in one of two similar four-line meters, *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6) or *staðhenda* (7/7/7/7). The melody is fixed and displays only small variations, and due to the comparable number of syllables of the meters, the melody must be considered inelastic.



Example 6: Skipti manna bauð í ból



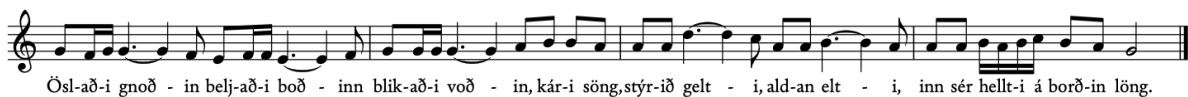
Example 7: Són og varnir sýndu þeir

The melodic range varies; usually a sixth (interval -2 to 4), but it can also be a fifth (interval -2 to 3). Unusually, the third note above the final one is lowered. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, ABABv, and the rhythm is fixed, always Rhythm a.

Stemma 3

This *stemma* is heard in eight recordings, with a total of 90 stanzas. There are three different meters, which differ considerably from each other in terms of the number and length of lines. These are the four-line meter *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), the three-line *braghenda* (12/8/8), and the two-line *afhenda* (12/8).

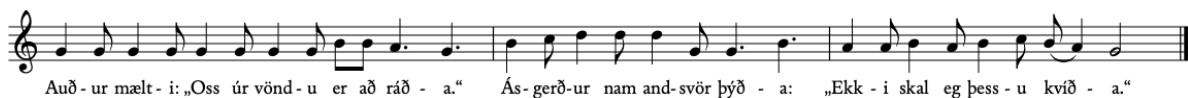
The melody is quite variable and the variations are heard from one stanza to another. Thus, two different forms of the first *hending* can be distinguished, spanning different melodic ranges. The melody is very elastic, as it must be to accommodate those very different meters. However, the combination of *hendingar* is fixed, taking into account the meters: AZvBZ / azvBZ / abvZ. The melodic range varies. It can change from a fifth (interval 1 to 5) to a seventh (interval -2 to 5) from one stanza to another in the same recording, but the variations are not dramatic. The rhythm varies; both Rhythm b og Rhythm c occur.



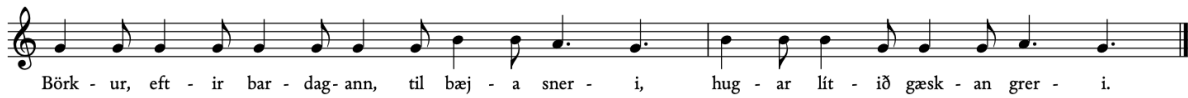
Example 8: Öslaði gnoðin, beljaði boðinn



Example 9: Húsfreyjurnar hugsandi um hagi slæma



Example 10: Auður mælti: „Oss úr vöndu er að ráða.“



Example 11: Börkur, eftir bardagann, til bæja sneri

Stemma 4

This *stemma* appears in three recordings, with 54 stanzas. The performance in each recording has its own meter: *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7), *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), and *stuðlafall* (10/7/7). The melody is somewhat variable and the variations can be heard from one stanza to another in each recording, but they are not dramatic.

The melodic range is variable, changing from an eighth (interval 1 to 8) to a ninth (interval 1 to 9). The melody is very elastic, fitting different meters. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed but the rhythm varies; both Rhythm a and Rhythm b are heard.



Example 12: Ekki gleymist Gísli mér



Example 13: Njótar lófa neggja hófu leika



Example 14: Sumars blíðan svo út rann

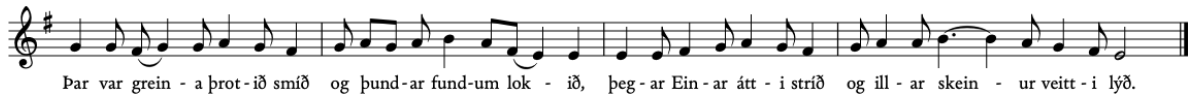
Stemma 5

Stemma 5 appears in only two recordings, with a total of 34 stanzas in the *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8) and *staðhenda* (7/7/7/7) meters. The melody is highly variable, as with *stemma 4*, and the variations are conspicuous. However, the melody must be considered inelastic in terms of length, due to the minor difference between the two meters.

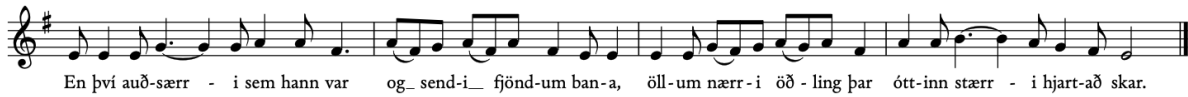
The combination of *hendingar* is fixed: ABAB. The melodic range is variable, fluctuating between a fourth (interval -2 to 2) and a fifth (interval -2 to 3). The rhythm varies, with both Rhythm d and Rhythm e heard in the recordings.



Example 15: Pegar helja handaköld



Example 16: Þar var greina þrotið smíð



Example 17: En því auðsærri sem hann var

Stemma 6

Stemma 6 occurs only in one recording of 34 stanzas, all in *ferskeytt* meter. The melody is fixed and inelastic in terms of length; variations are unlikely due to the meter being always the same.

The combination of *hendingar* is fixed: ABABv. The melodic range is also fixed, spanning an octave (interval 1 to 8). *Stemma 6*, along with *Stemma 7*, is clearly distinct from Gísli's other *stemma* as it is based on triads and is singable. The rhythm is fixed: always Rhythm a.



Example 18: Drauma undur orðið hér

Stemma 7

Gísli uses *stemma 7* in only one recording with 14 stanzas in the *nýhenda* meter (7/8/7/8). The melody is fixed and inelastic, as only the one meter appears in the recording.

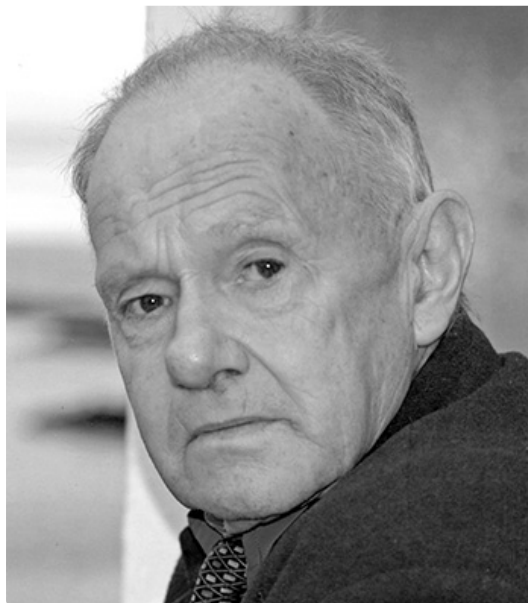


Example 19: Líkafrón og lagsmenn tveir

The melodic range is a fixed sixth, spanning notes 1 to 6. The rhythm is fixed: Rhythm e. This *stemma*, like *Stemma 6*, is also distinct from Gísli's other *stemma* in that it is singable.

Þórður V. Marteinsson

Þórður Valdimar Marteinsson (1932-2008) was a farmer at Holt in the Barðaströnd area. It was Gísli Gíslason who pointed him out to us, and we visited him only once while we were staying with Gísli at Fit. We made six recordings in all, with a total of 67 stanzas in five different meters: *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8), *stuðlafall* (10/7/7), and *braghenda* (12/8/8). In his performance, Þórður uses three different *stemma*.



Stemma 1

This *stemma* appears in three recordings with a total of 48 stanzas, using two *rímur* meters, *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6) and *stuðlafall* (10/7/7). The melody is fixed, with very few variations, but its length is elastic, usable as it is for meters as different as *ferskeytt* and *stuðlafall*. The melodic range is fixed, spanning a ninth (interval 1 to 9). The combination of *hendingar* is nearly fixed, as well: ABCZ / abCZ. The rhythm varies, as both Rhythm a and Rhythm b are heard.



Example 1: Fékk ég bréf þitt, Fúsi minn

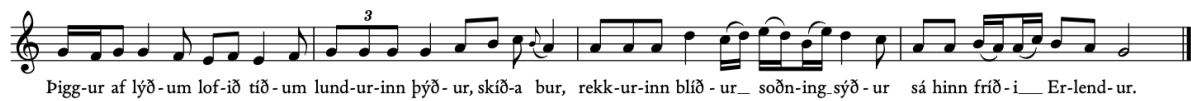


Example 2: Njótar lófa neggja hófu leika

Stemma 2

Stemma 2 is heard in two recordings, with a total of 14 stanzas in two meters, *langhenda* (8/7/8/7) and *braghenda* (12/8/8). The melody is fixed, with negligible variations, but also elastic, being usable for two different meters.

The melodic range is invariable, an octave with interval -1 to 6. The combination of *hendingar* is almost entirely fixed, taking into account the different meters: ABCZ / abCZ. The rhythm, however, is quite variable, with both Rhythm a and Rhythm b occurring.



Example 3: Þiggur af lýðum lofið tíðum



Example 4: Húsfreyjurnar hugsandi um hagi slæma

Stemma 3

Stemma 3 appears in only one recording, in which four stanzas are intoned to the *nýhenda* meter (7/8/7/8). The melody is fixed, with very minor variations, and does not appear to be elastic based on the available data. The melodic range is fixed at a sixth (interval 1-6), and the combination of *hendingar* is also fixed: ABAB.

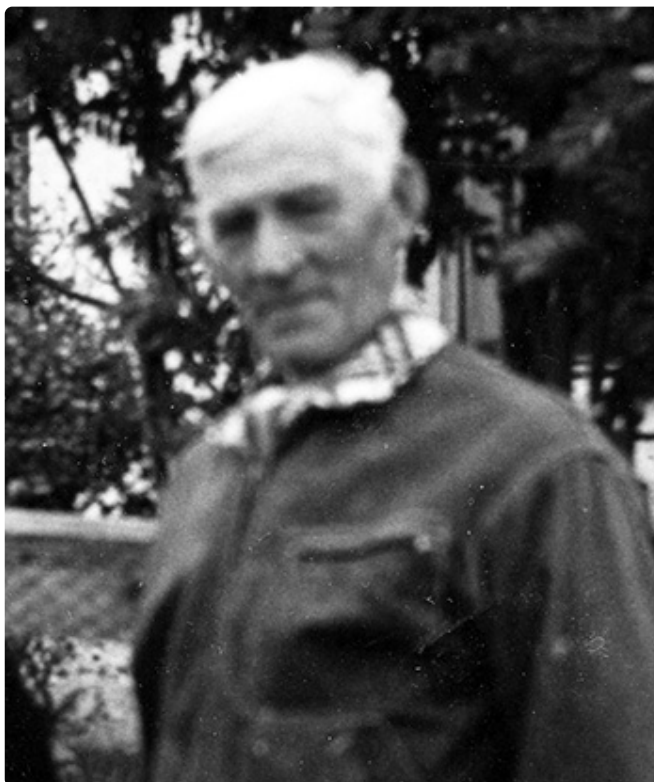


Example 5: Fjörulallar fóru á kreik

The rhythm appears to be fixed. Þórður Marteinsson's *kveðandi* is closer to song than *kveðskapur*, and the melodies are very singable.

Porgils Porgilsson

Porgils Porgilsson (1884-1971) was born at Búlandshöfði and lived at Porgilsstaðir on Snæfellsnes Peninsula. During two visits to him, a total of 23 recordings were made, comprising a total of 110 stanzas in five *rímur* meters: *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8), *braghenda* (12/8/8), *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), and *stuðlafall* (10/7/7).



The *ferskeytt* meter is most common, being heard in twelve recordings with a total of 89 stanzas. In four of these recordings, Porgils performs his own verses, *Árstíðirnar* (*The Seasons*). Apart from that, the *nýhenda* meter appears in four recordings, two with five stanzas each, one with two stanzas, and one with only one stanza.

There are four *braghenda* stanzas in three recordings, *stuðlafall* in one recording with two stanzas, and *langhenda* can be heard in two recordings with one stanza each. For the *ferskeytt* meter, Porgils uses a total of four different *stemma*, and a particular *stemma* for each of the other meters. This means that he uses nine *stemma*, and in addition, he intones eight stanzas without them.

Only the *ferskeytt* meter appears often enough for it to give any certain indication as to how many variations there are, yet the *nýhenda* stanzas suggest that it may be stated with some certainty that they are open to variation. Four *stemma* are heard for the *ferskeytt* meter: *Stemma* 1, 2, 3 and 5.

Stemma 1

This *stemma* is linked to a *ferskeytt* meter and is heard in 38 stanzas over a total of six recordings. The melody is variable, but inelastic. Variants are common, both between stanzas and from one stanza to another, but they are not significant and

occur almost exclusively in the first *hending*. The final note of each stanza (note 1) is raised in pitch. The combination of *hendingar* varies, most often ABCZ, but it can also be ABAZ.



Example 1: Vorsins blíða lýða lund



Example 2: Grænkar víða grund að sjá



Example 3: Sumri hallar haustar þá

The melodic range is fixed, spanning a sixth, from note -1 to 5. In the first *hending*, the interval is 3 to 5, while the other three stick to interval -1 to 3. The rhythm is fixed: Rhythm c.

Stemma 2

Stemma 2 is used for the performance of stanzas in *ferskeytt* meter and appears in 29 stanzas over six recordings. All but two of the recordings (with ten stanzas) were made in 1964. The melody is variable, with numerous variations, but the form shown in Example 6 is dominant. The melody is inelastic in terms of length.

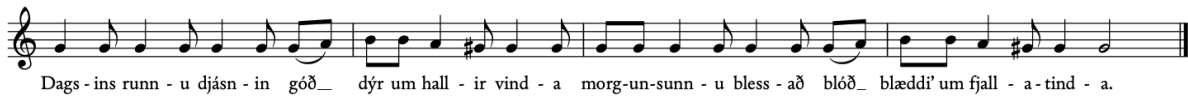
The combination of *hendingar* varies, and can be either ABCZ, ABBvZ, or ABAvZ. The melodic range is variable, swinging between a third (interval 1 to 3) and a fifth (interval 1 to 5). The rhythm varies; both Rhythm a and Rhythm b are heard.



Example 4: Geislar ljóma um grund og haf



Example 5: Þá vetur klæðist kufl sinn í



Example 6: Dagsins runnu djásnin góð

Stemma 3

This *stemma* is also linked to the *ferskeytt* meter, and is heard in only two recordings, both from 1965. In one recording, this *kveðskapur* mode is used for the performance of fifteen stanzas, and for two in the other.

The melody is quite variable, and different variations can be heard in the stanzas' first three *hendingar*, both between recordings and from one stanza to another in the same recording, but the variations are minor. The melody is inelastic in terms of length. The final tone is usually raised in pitch. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed: always in the form ABCZ. Likewise, the melodic range is fixed, spanning a sixth, from notes -1 to 5. The rhythm varies, with both Rhythm a and Rhythm c occurring.



Example 7: Vorsins blíða lýða lund



Example 8: Unaðs hljómar um þá tíð

Stemma 4

Stemma 4 can be heard in three recordings, in the performance of a total of eight stanzas, all of which are in the *nýhenda* meter (7/8/7/8). The melody does not undergo major changes, yet there are a large number of minor ones. The final note's pitch is raised. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, always in the form ABaVZ. The melodic range is also fixed at a fifth (interval 1 to 5) and the melody is inelastic, being used for only one meter. The rhythm is invariable: only Rhythm b.



Example 9: Stafninn klýfur strauma dátta



Example 10: Nú skal vinda voð að hún

Stemma 5

This *stemma* is linked solely to the *ferskeytt* meter. It can be heard in eight stanzas in a single recording made in 1965. The melody appears to be rather variable, with distinct variations. The melodic range also varies: sometimes a fourth, and sometimes a fifth (interval 1 to 4 or 1 to 5). The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, ABAZ, and the rhythm is fixed. Only Rhythm a occurs.



Example 11: Vorsins blíða lýða lund



Example 12: Að sumars blíða svífur tíð

Stemma 6

This *stemma* is linked solely to the *braghenda* meter (12/8/8) and occurs in four stanzas over three different recordings. The melody varies to a limited extent. The final note's pitch is raised. The melody is inelastic in terms of length, which is unsurprising since it is solely used for *braghenda* stanzas.

The melodic range varies, fluctuating from a fourth (interval 1 to 4), to a sixth (interval -1 to 5) or a seventh (interval -3 to 4). The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, ABBv, and the rhythm is fixed: Rhythm b.



Example 13: Á ég að halda áfram lengra eða hætta



Example 14: Á ég að halda áfram lengra eða hætta



Example 15: Högnakenni eg, hefna nennir hlýra sinna

Stemma 7

Porgils uses this *stemma* for only three stanzas in the *nýhenda* meter (7/8/7/8), in two recordings. The melody is quite variable, and variations can be heard in all of the *hendingar*. The final note is most often raised in pitch. The combination of *hendingar* varies and can be either AZBZv or AZAvZv. The melodic range, on the other hand, is fixed at a fifth (interval -1 to 4). The rhythm varies; both Rhythm a and Rhythm b can be heard.



Example 16: Líkafrón og lagsmenn tveir



Example 17: Ill var færð og óhrein leið

Stemma 8

Stemma 8 is linked to the *stuðlafall* meter (10/7/7) and is heard in only two particular stanzas. It cannot be determined if two different *stemma* are used here, or a single, variable one. In both stanzas, the combination of *hendingar* is AAZ. The melodic range is variable, in the one instance a fifth (interval 1 to 5), and in the other a fourth (interval -1 to 3). The rhythm varies: Rhythm a and Rhythm b.



Example 18: Andri hlær svo höllin nær við skelfur



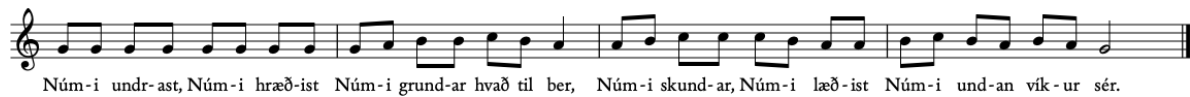
Example 19: Andri hlær svo höllin nær við skelfur

Stemma 9

This *stemma* is heard only when the *langhenda* meter (8/7/8/7) is intoned, and it occurs only in two particular stanzas. The melody appears to vary only slightly, as only minor variations can be heard in the final two *hendingar*. It is, however, difficult to confirm this due to the limited data. The melodic range spans a fixed fourth (interval 1 to 4), and the combination of *hendingar* is invariable: ABCZ. The rhythm is also fixed; Rhythm a can be heard in the examples.



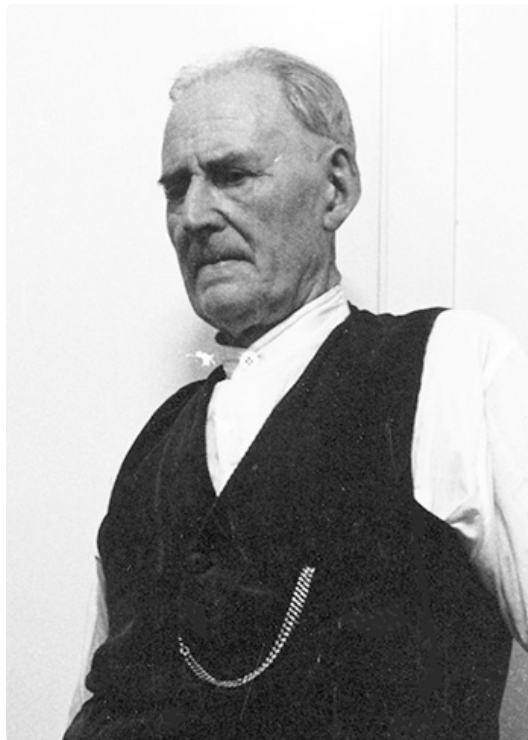
Example 20: Ofan lúðir fjallið fóru



Example 21: Númi undrast, Númi hræðist

Páll B. Stefánsson

Páll Böðvar Stefánsson (1886-1973) was born and raised at Fossá in the Kjós district until the age of fifteen, but then moved to Reykjavík. He completed his training in carpentry and worked in house construction. When we visited him in 1968, he was eighty-two years old and lived in Reykjavík. We did not get any information as to where he had learned to intone. We met him only one afternoon at the start of our collecting trip, before we headed west to Fellsströnd to record Guðmundur and Pétur Ólafsson.



We made seven recordings of Páll, and in them, he intones parts of *rímur* in three different meters: *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), and *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8). Only three of the excerpts that he performed contained long, coherent passages. One of them is in the *nýhenda* meter, and two are the same text in the *ferskeytt* meter, intoned to different melodies. The data is thus very limited, and therefore, the description of Páll's *kveðandi* must be made with certain reservations. In the recordings, Páll uses six different *stemmaur*.

Stemma 1

The first *stemma* is heard in two stanzas in the *langhenda* meter (8/7/8/7), in a single recording. The melody does not vary, if the limited recordings that exist of it are anything to go by. The combination of *hendingar* is also invariable, ABAB, and the melodic range is a fixed seventh (interval -1 to 6). The rhythm is fixed; only Rhythm d occurs.



Example 1: Man ég fyrrum þyt á þökum

Stemma 2

This *stemma* can be heard in 29 stanzas over two recordings with the same texts, in the *ferskeytt* meter. The melody does not change, and is clearly fixed. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed: ABCD. The melodic range is a fixed seventh (interval -3 to 5), with a lowered third note. The rhythm is also fixed: Rhythm pattern a is the only one heard.



Example 2: Ófær sýnist áin mér

Stemma 3

Stemma 3 occurs in twelve stanzas in the *nýhenda* meter (7/8/7/8) in a single recording. The melody varies little, with only a few negligible changes, and it is inelastic. The first and second *hendingar* of the melody correspond to the second *hending* of *Stemma 1*. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed: AABC. The melodic range is a fixed seventh (interval -1 to 6). The rhythm is fixed: Rhythm b.



Example 3: Vora tekur. Árla er

Stemma 4

This *stemma* is used for the *ferskeytt* meter and occurs in three stanzas in one recording. The melody does not vary and is entirely inelastic in terms of length. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, ABCD, and the interval is a fixed seventh (range 1 to 7). The rhythm is fixed; pattern a is the only one that appears.



Example 4: Fugla háan heyri klið

Stemma 5

This *stemma* occurs in two stanzas in the *ferskeytt* meter, in one recording. The data is therefore actually too meager to be able to evaluate it with certainty. The melodic range is a fixed sixth (interval 1 to 6) and the combination of *hendingar* is also

fixed: ABAB. The melody appears to be slightly variable. The rhythm is fixed: Rhythm a is the only pattern found in the melody.



Example 5: Ýmsum þykir einskis vert

Stemma 6

Stemma 6 occurs in four stanzas in the *ferskeytt* meter. The melody is variable and has the potential to display variations, especially in the final *hending*. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed: AABC. The melodic range varies. It can fluctuate from a fourth, spanning the interval from notes -1 to 3, to a sixth, spanning the interval -1 to 5. The rhythm pattern, on the other hand, is fixed, with only Rhythm a appearing.



Example 6: Af því nú er komið kvöld



Example 7: Sál mín bryn timer í sjafnar eld

Pétur Ólafsson

Pétur Ólafsson (1895-1991) was a farmer at Stóra-Tunga in the Fellsströnd area, where he lived with his wife and children. He was born at Stakkaberg, but his parents moved to Stóra-Tunga in Fellsströnd in 1897, where Pétur grew up and lived his entire life. As a young man, he worked as a farmhand and fisherman. At Stóra-Tunga, it was only Pétur's father who



intoned, which he did until 1907. Then his wife died, after which he stopped intoning. Ólafur intoned both *lausavísur* and whole *rímur*, using the same melody for the same meters. In the evenings, stories were read aloud or *rímur* were intoned. This entertainment usually lasted about an hour, and when *rímur* were intoned, it could be several *rímur* from the same set of *rímur*, but an entire *rímur* set was rarely ever intoned at once. Usually, the *mansöngur* prefaces were included, intoned to the same melody as the *rímur* themselves. Pétur later became a farmhand on another farm where the farmer intoned only *lausavísur*, never *rímur*. At Fellsströnd, *rímur* performance stopped around 1920; the number of people in the area started declining around 1910. Pétur intoned *rímur* as entertainment at his home for the last time in 1952.

We visited Pétur in 1967 and 1968, and both times we stayed with him for a good long time. With him, we had the opportunity to record whole *rímur*, and over the course of a few days we managed to record a complete *rímur* set. A total of 55 recordings were made, and *lausavísur* appear in only twelve of them. In the recordings, there are twelve *rímur* meters: *ferskeytt* (22 recordings), *langhenda* (seven recordings), *stuðlafall* (six recordings), *nýhenda* (five recordings), *stikluvik* (four recordings), *braghenda* and *samhenda* (three recordings each), *gagaraljód* and *afhenda* (two recordings each), and *breiðhenda*, *skammhenda*, and *staðhenda* (in one recording each).

For intoning each and every one of these meters, Pétur used eleven different *stemmaur*. All of the *stemmaur* display limited variability, but only minor variations are heard in them. On the other hand, many of them are elastic, so that each *stemma* can be used for more than one meter.

Stemma 1

Stemma 1 can be heard in nine recordings, with 259 stanzas. Pétur uses it primarily for the *stuðlafall* meter (10/7/7), but it can also be heard with the *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7), *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), and *gagaraljód* meters (7/7/7/7). The melody is slightly variable, i.e., tiny variations are heard in the final *hending*, but the combination of *hendingar* is invariable. The melody is also elastic, so it can be used for different *rímur* meters. The melodic range is variable: a second (interval 1 to 2) or third (interval 1 to 3). The melody line fluctuates slightly over two pitches except in the final *hending*, where it covers three pitches at most. The rhythm is fixed, with only Rhythm c occurring.



Example 1: Hákon þá er hniginn lá



Example 2: Héðinn sjóli sest að stóli valda

Stemma 2

This *stemma* is heard in eight recordings with 391 stanzas, all of which are in the *ferskeytt* meter (7/6/7/6). The melody is nearly invariable, undergoing only minor changes. It also seems to be inelastic in terms of length, but the *stemma*, as mentioned before, is used for only one meter. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, ABABv, and the melodic range is fixed at a third (interval 1 to 3). The rhythm is also fixed: Rhythm a.



Example 3: Bóndinn tér með blíðri önd

Stemma 3

Pétur uses *stemma 3* in seven recordings, with 340 stanzas. In six recordings, the stanzas are in the *ferskeytt* meter (7/6/7/6), and in one, this *stemma* is used for the *stikluvik* meter (7/6/7/7). The melody is almost invariable, displaying only very minor changes. It is also inelastic in length, as the difference between the two meters is negligible. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed always in the form

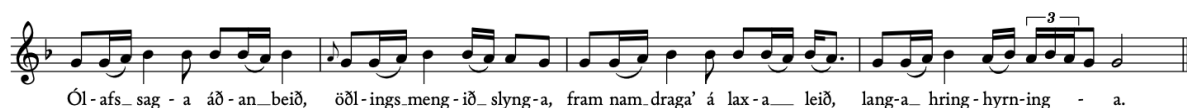
ABCZ. The melodic range is also fixed, spanning a fourth, from notes 1 to 4. The rhythm pattern is fixed, with Rhythm c being the only one that occurs.



Example 4: Hédinn dvelur heima þá

Stemma 4

Stemma 4 is heard in five recordings with 172 stanzas that are either in the *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6) or *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8) meters. The melody is practically invariable, with the variations heard being negligible. The melodic range is a third, spanning interval 1 to 3. The first and third *hendingar* are characterized by a rising melodic line, while the second and fourth *hendingar* are very similar to each other, both of them beginning and ending on note 1. The third note is lowered in pitch. The rhythm is fixed; only Rhythm b occurs.



Example 5: Ólafs saga áðan beið



Example 6: Skipið flaut og ferða naut

Stemma 5

This *stemma* can be heard in three recordings with 242 stanzas, all of which are in the *ferskeytt* meter (7/6/7/6). The melody is nearly invariable, displaying only negligible changes. It is also inelastic. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed and can be delineated ABBvBv. The melodic range is also fixed, spanning a fourth, interval 1 to 4. The rhythm, on the other hand, varies, with Rhythm a, Rhythm b and Rhythm c all occurring.



Example 7: Frændur Merði fleins í klið

Stemma 6

Stemma 6 is heard in four recordings with 228 stanzas, in the *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6) and *gagaraljöd* (7/7/7/7) meters. The melody is invariable, or undergoes only negligible changes. It is also inelastic, as the two meters have such a similar number of syllables that the difference has little effect on the length of the *hendingar*. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed: always in the form ABABv. The melodic range is a fifth, spanning interval 1 to 5, but it varies between *hendingar* within the same stanza. In the first and third *hending*, interval 3 to 5 is used, but in the second and fourth *hending*, the interval widens to 1 to 5. The rhythm varies, with Rhythm a, Rhythm b and Rhythm c all occurring.



Example 8: Frægða háir fólkstjórar

Stemma 7

This *stemma* can also be heard in four recordings, with a total of 197 stanzas, either in the *langhenda* (8/7/8/7) or *skammhenda* (8/5/8/5) meters. The melody displays no significant variations, but it is elastic, the meters having somewhat different numbers of syllables. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, in the form BCBZ. The melodic range of this *kveðskapur* mode varies slightly, spanning either a fifth, interval -2 to 3, or a fourth, interval -2 to 2. The rhythm is fixed, with Rhythm a used in all the recordings.



Example 9: Hann Járngrímur sér að sjóli



Example 10: Ólafur Svía sjóli stýrir

Stemma 8

Stemma 8 occurs in four recordings with 154 stanzas, all of which are in the *langhenda* meter (8/7/8/7). The melody is invariable and also appears to be inelastic. However, the stanzas are all in the same meter, with the same number of syllables, so the melody's elasticity is untested. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, always in the form ABAB. The melodic range is also fixed and spans a third,

with an interval of notes 1 to 3. The rhythm is fixed, with only Rhythm d occurring.



Example 11: Par var aldan Óma þrotin

Stemma 9

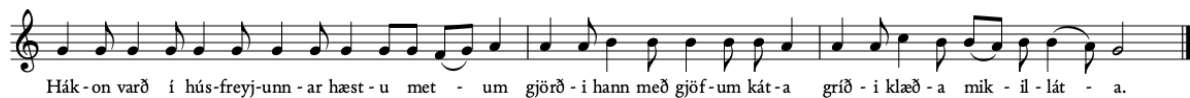
This *stemma* is heard in three recordings with 181 stanzas, all in the *ferskeytt* meter (7/6/7/6). The melody is fixed, but displays negligible variations. The melodic range is also fixed, spanning a fourth, interval 1 to 4. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed. They are entirely invariable; that is, all the *hendingar* sound the same, and thus the form may be delineated as AAAA. However, the rhythm varies, with both Rhythm b and Rhythm c occurring.



Example 12: Ólafs saga áðan beið

Stemma 10

Stemma 10 appears in three recordings, with 138 stanzas in the *braghenda* (12/8/8) and *úrkast* (8/4/8/4) meters. The melody is invariable but elastic, the meters being extremely different in terms of both length and number of *hendingar*. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed and can be delineated ABBv. The melodic range is a fixed fourth, interval 1 to 4. The rhythm is also fixed; only Rhythm b occurs.

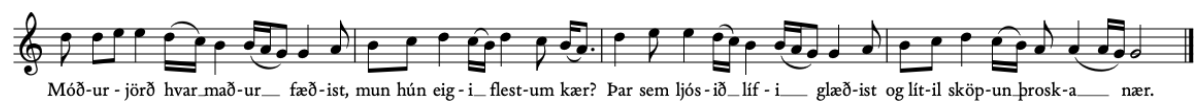


Example 13: Hákon varð í húsfreyjunnar hæstu metum

Stemma 11

This *stemma* can be heard in three recordings, with 21 stanzas in the *ferskeytt* (8/7/8/7) and *braghenda* (12/8/8) meters. The melody is practically invariable, but elastic in terms of length, there being a considerable difference in the meters' number of syllables. However, the final *hendingar* of the stanzas in the *braghenda* meter do display slight variations. The melodic range is a fixed sixth, spanning the interval 1 to 6. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed and can be delineated ABABv. The rhythm is also fixed: Rhythm c, although the *braghenda* meter is not

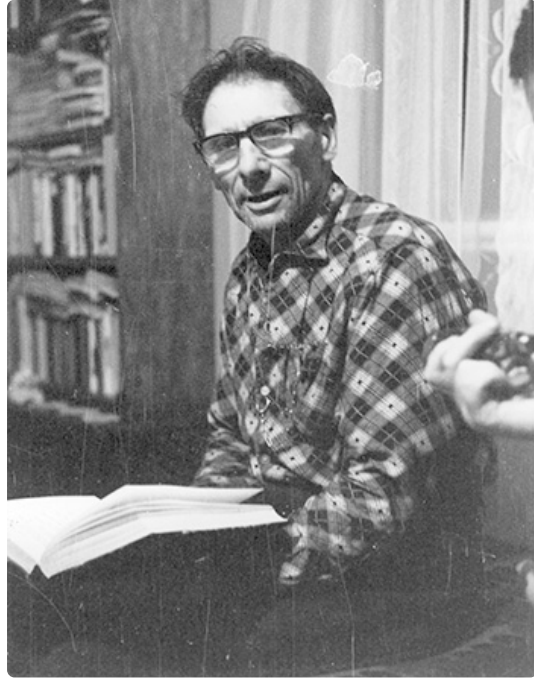
as perceptible in that rhythm.



Example 14: Móðurjörð hvar maður fæðist

Guðmundur Ólafsson

Guðmundur Ólafsson (1898–1978) grew up with his parents at Stóra-Tunga in the Fellströnd area. He was the younger brother of Pétur Ólafsson. Their father was a farmer there, and Guðmundur and his brothers took over the farming from their parents. Guðmundur moved to the farm Ytra-Fell in 1936. He never married, but lived with his sister and foster son. He was brought up with *kveðskapur* and it was first and foremost his father who intoned in the evenings, as mentioned before. Yet Guðmundur developed his own *kveðandi* and taught himself.



Hallfreður and I stayed with

Guðmundur and his wife for three days, and in that time we made seventeen recordings in which Guðmundur intones in seven different *rímur* meters: *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *samhenda* (7/7/7/7), *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8), *breiðhenda* (8/8/8/8), *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), *braghenda* (12/8/8), and *úrkast* (8/4/8/4). When intoning in these seventeen recordings, Guðmundur uses three different *stemmaur*.

Stemma 1

Stemma 1 is dominant in Guðmundur's *kveðandi*. It appears in his performance in ten recordings, where there are a total of 326 stanzas in the *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *samhenda* (7/7/7/7), and *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8) meters. It is surprising how varied the melody is, despite its concise form. Many variations occur, mainly from recording to recording but also from one stanza to another. However, the melody must be considered inelastic, there being such a small difference in the number of syllables of the three meters, *ferskeytt*, *samhenda* (*hagkveðlingaháttur*), and *nýhenda*, that they have very little effect on the melody.

The melodic range varies. Most commonly, it is a minor or major second (interval 1 to 2), as in examples 1 and 2, but a minor third is also heard (interval 1 to 3 or -1 to 2). It is interesting that from one recording to another, the second note

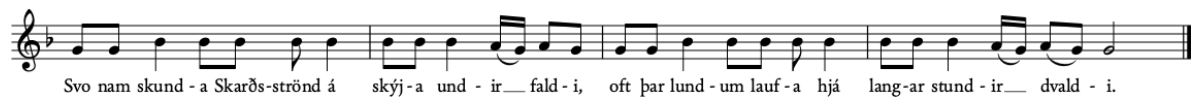
can sometimes form a major or a minor second, but in each recording, the notes are consistent. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed: ABAB. The rhythm appears to vary slightly. In most recordings, Rhythm c is heard, but in a few, Rhythm b occurs.



Example 1: Núi bálar brúna ljós



Example 2: Samt ég allra svásast finn



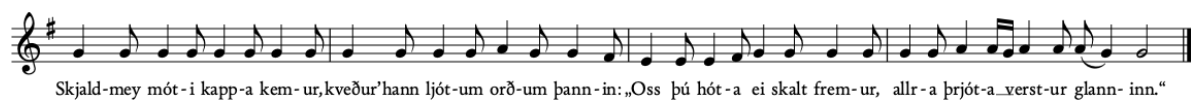
Example 3: Svo nam skunda Skarðsströnd á



Example 4: Þaðan yfir fór ég fjöll

Stemma 2

This *kveðskapur* mode is heard in four recordings with a total of 152 stanzas, and only in the *breiðhenda* (8/8/8/8) and *langhenda* (8/7/8/7) meters. The melody is invariable and also inelastic, with the difference in the meters having only a negligible effect on the melody. The melodic range spans a fourth, interval -1 to 3, and is invariable. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed and may be delineated in the form ABCZ. The rhythm varies; both Rhythm a and Rhythm b occur.



Example 5: Skjaldmey móti kapp kemur

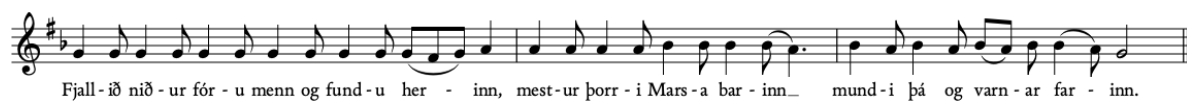


Example 6: Núi undi lengi í lund

Stemma 3

Guðmundur uses this *stemma* in three recordings, with a total of 95 stanzas. In two recordings, the *stemma* is linked to the *braghenda* meter (12/12/8), and in the third one, to the *úrkast* meter (8/4/8/4).

The melody varies moderately, with changes in the final *hending* from one stanza to another, but these changes are not dramatic. The melody is elastic, so it can be used for meters having either three or four lines. The melodic range varies, being either a fourth, spanning the interval -1 to 3, or a fifth, interval -1 to 4. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, taking into account the differences between the meters, and the rhythm is also fixed, with only Rhythm b occurring.



Example 7: Fjallið niður fóru menn og fundu herinn



Example 8: Á ég að halda áfram lengra eða hætta?



Example 9: Karlmennirnir kunna ekki kvæðamálið



Example 10: Á nær bjátar eymdin smáða

Hallgrímur Jónsson

Hallgrímur Jónsson (1884–1972) was born at Hraun in the Fljót area but grew up at Minniréykir in Flókadalur. He worked both at sea and on land and spent fourteen seasons on shark boats. When he was around thirty, he moved to Siglufjörður and worked there as a carpenter. Hallgrímur grew up with *rímur* poetry and always enjoyed intoning.

We visited Hallgrímur twice. It was in July 1969, with a two-day interval, before and after a visit to Jón Oddsson, and each time we recorded for about two hours. The result was a total of eight recordings, six with rather long, continuous chapters of *rímur*. Hallgrímur uses three *stemma* in his *kveðandi*.



Stemma 1

This *stemma* is heard in three recordings, with a total of 43 stanzas in the *langhenda* (8/7/8/7) and *samhenda* (7/7/7/7) meters. The melody is mostly fixed, except in the final *hending* of each stanza, where many variations are heard. The first two *hendingar* are intoned in the same note, but in the third *hending*, the melody arcs upward to the fourth note and then back. However, the melody must be considered inelastic, as the difference in the number of syllables in the two meters is minor. The melodic range is fixed and spans a fourth, interval 1 to 4. The combination of *hendingar* is fixed and may be delineated AABBV. The rhythm is also fixed; only Rhythm a occurs.



Example 1: Lék á seiða löndunum

Brátt fall-and - i byrj-ar föld, bíta' á sand-inn akk-er köld; svo á land-i set-ur öld sín ljóm-and-i fög - ur- tjöld.

Example 2: Brátt fallandi byrjarföld

Vörð-ur lýð- a fær þá frétt, fræg-um býð-ur sjól- a rétt heim um rið- a hauðr-ið slétt, hall- ar prýð- a sæt- i nett.

Example 3: Vörður lýða fær þá frétt

Stemma 2

This *stemma* occurs in two recordings, with a total of 20 stanzas. The stanzas are in the meters *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7) and *samhenda* (7/7/7/7). The melody is variable but inelastic, there being little difference in the meters' number of syllables and therewith the length of the *hendingar*. The variations can occur in all of the melody's *hendingar*, but the difference between the meters is so small that it does not affect the melody. The melodic range varies; either a fifth (interval 1 to 5) or a sixth (interval 1 to 6). The combination of *hendingar* also varies: ABABv, AABZ, and ABAvZ. The rhythm varies: Rhythm a, Rhythm c, and Rhythm d occur, and this can even happen in the same recording (Examples 4-7).

Ak-ron sagð-i um feðg-um frá fylk-is bragð-i ill-u, vart um þagð-i vonsk-u þá, vald sig- lagð-i þeir-a á.

Example 4: Akron sagði feðgum frá

„Til jarl-dæm - is hóf mig hann, heiðr-i sæm - ir stór - um; ill - a ræm - ist, ef við þann öðl-ing kæm - i frið - ar bann.“

Example 5: Til jarlsdæmis hóf mig hann

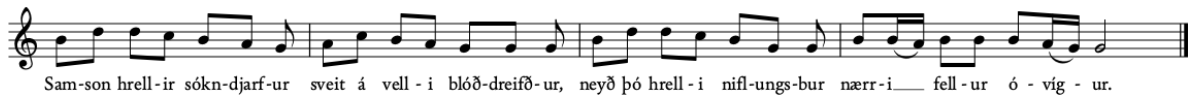
Unusually, in two stanzas under *Stemma 2*, examples 7 and 8, there is a melody that should actually belong to *Stemma 1*, but from the context, it can be seen that the lowest note in these stanzas can in fact answer to the third note in other stanzas intoned with *Stemma 2*.

Reim-ar fyrst og Fal eg tel, fólk-ið kvist-a vígs um mel, báð-ir list-a börð-ust vel, blóð-ug-an hrist-a drag- vend- il.

Example 6: Reimar fyrst og Fal ég tel



Example 7: Flötu merki fleygja réð



Example 8: Samson hrellir sókndjarfur

Stemma 3

Stemma 3 can be heard in three recordings in which Hallgrímur intones a total of ten stanzas in the *langhenda* (8/7/8/7) and *samhenda* (7/7/7/7) meters. The melody varies, yet not much; it is particularly the final *hendingar* that display variation, whereas variations in the first three *hendingar* are negligible. The melodic range is variable: either a fourth, interval 1 to 4, or a fifth, interval 1 to 5.



Example 9: Bylgjan spýtti boðunum



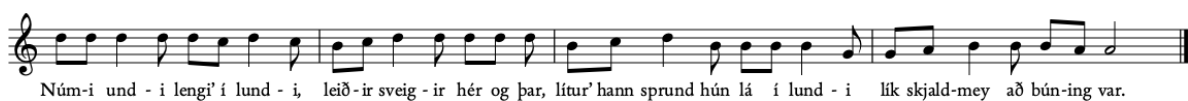
Example 10: Súða lýsti af sólunum



Example 11: Lét á seiða löndunum



Example 12: Höfuðið ljósa lagt hún hefur



Example 13: Númi undi lengi í lundi

The difference between the two meters is so small that it does not affect the melody,

which therefore must be considered inelastic. The combination of *hendingar* is variable: either ABCZ or AABZ. The rhythm varies as well, with both Rhythm a and Rhythm c used.

Jón Oddsson

Jón Oddsson (1904–1994) was a farmer at Siglunes in Barðaströnd, where he was born and raised. We visited him one day in July 1969, but in that short time we managed to make 35 recordings, with a total of 183 stanzas in the meters *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7), *samhenda* (7/7/7/7), *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8), *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), *stuðlafall* (10/7/7), and *braghenda* (12/8/8). In his *kveðandi*, Jón uses five different *stemma*.



Stemma 1

Stemma 1 is heard in 22 recordings, with a total of 126 stanzas in the meters *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), *braghenda* (12/8/8), *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7), *skammhenda* (8/5/8/5), *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *stuðlafall* (10/7/7), *afhenda* (12/8), and *samhenda* (7/7/7/7). The melody is variable, with numerous variations between recordings as well as from one stanza to another in the same recording, being used as it is for extremely diverse *rímur* meters. The variations affect both the combination of *hendingar* and the melodic range.

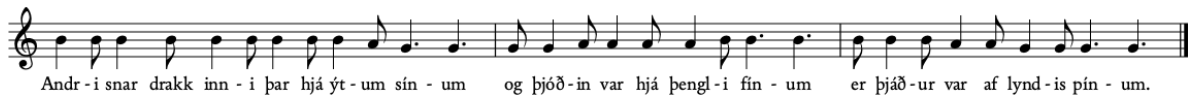
The melody is also elastic, being adaptable to two-, three-, and four-line meters. The range varies; sometimes a third (interval 1 to 3) and sometimes a fourth (interval 1 to 4), with the third being much more common. The combination of *hendingar* varies: either ABCZ or ABAZ. The rhythm is also variable, with Rhythm a, Rhythm b and Rhythm c occurring.



Example 1: Þrátt fyrir taman þjóðarsíð



Example 2: Ég í túni teina sá



Example 3: Andri snar drakk inni þar með ýtum sínum



Example 4: Innir sagan svo hér frá



Example 5: Málma skvaldur herðir hann



Example 6: Andri kallar upp og tér

Stemma 2

Jón uses this *stemma* in ten recordings, with 49 stanzas in three meters: *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7), and *samhenda* (7/7/7/7). The melody is quite variable, displaying numerous variations, especially in the first *hending*, but also somewhat in the second. When Jón intones *Stemma 2*, the variations are heard not only from one recording to another, but also from stanza to stanza in the same recording. However, these variations are not major, and do not affect the combination of *hendingar*. The melody must be considered inelastic, as the difference between the three meters is not great. The melodic range, on the other hand, is variable, being sometimes a fifth (interval 2 to 6) and sometimes a sixth (interval 1 to 6). The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, ABABz, as is the rhythm, which consists only of Rhythm a.



Example 7: Hranna skríður hesturinn



Example 8: Oddur minn er ærustór



Example 9: Það ber fyrst að heyrnar hurð



Example 10: Tveggja flíkum faldaðir

Stemma 3

This *stemma* has many unexpected characteristics. It appears in five recordings, with a total of 35 stanzas in the meters *langhenda* (8/7/8/7), *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7), and *samhenda* (7/7/7/7). Two of the recordings have thirteen stanzas each, and one has seven stanzas. In the last two recordings, there are only single stanzas.

Stemma 3 and *Stemma 1* appear to be related in some way; in two recordings, they both appear, mingled together. *Stemma 1* is heard in a total of 14 stanzas, and *Stemma 3* in 21 stanzas.

The melody is quite variable, but the variations are rather minor. It must also be considered inelastic, as the difference between the three meters is small and does not have a great effect on the melody. The melodic range is variable, spanning either a sixth (interval 1 to 6) or a fifth (interval 1 to 5). The combination of *hendingar* is fixed and may be delineated ABCZ. The rhythm is variable, with both Rhythm a and Rhythm b heard.



Example 11: Aldrei falla hann Andri vann

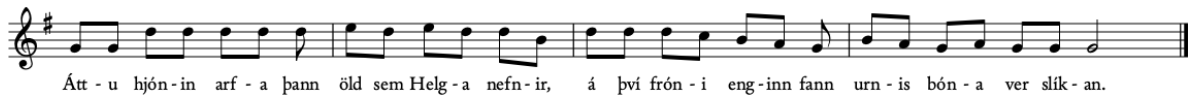


Example 12: Andra slyngur hjó í haus

These minor variations occur not only from one recording to another but also from stanza to stanza in the same recording, as can be seen in the next three examples.



Example 13: Góins bringa gnægt var léð



Example 14: Áttu hjónin arfa þann



Example 15: Býður þokka sér af sá

As mentioned before, this *stemma* occurs in two recordings in connection with Jón's other *stemma*, *Stemma 1*. In the second recording, Jón uses *Stemma 1* for the first six stanzas, and then *Stemma 3* for the last stanza. In the other, which was made a little later, he uses *Stemma 3* for the first five stanzas, while the last six stanzas are intoned to *Stemma 1*. In this latter recording, the keys of the *stemma* appear to be connected through the highest note, which is left unchanged.



Example 16: Helgi úr máta ræddi reiður



Example 17: Farðu skjótt úr skyrtu þinni

There is no obvious reason for this alternation between *stemma*.

Stemma 4

This *stemma* of Jón's is distinct from his other *stemma*, and it is unclear to whether it is one variable *stemma* or whether each recording where it occurs displays an independent *stemma* that shares certain similarities with the others. The *stemma* (or *stemma*) appears in four recordings, with a total of 19 stanzas in the *nýhenda* (7/8/7/8), *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6), and *samhenda* (7/7/7/7) meters.

The melody is somewhat variable, but the changes are rather minor and do not affect the combination of *hendingar*. It must also be considered inelastic, as the

difference between the three meters is small and does not have an appreciable effect on the melody. The melodic range, on the other hand, is variable, from a sixth (interval 1 to 6) to a fifth (interval 1 to 5). The combination of *hendingar* is fixed, AzAZ, and the rhythm is fixed: Rhythm b.



Example 18: Grímur þá kom gólfíð á



Example 19: Aldrei síðar sú er mín

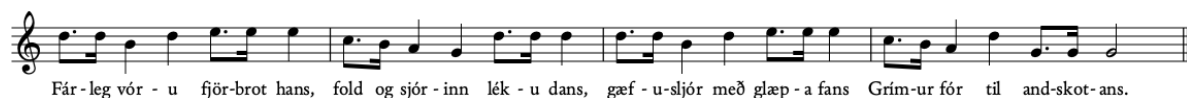
One recording is particularly distinctive. There, the melody is singable and the rhythmic structure is completely unique. The melody is almost like a well-known, invariable one that has developed into a *tvísöngur* (two-part polyphonic) *stemma*.



Example 20: Þá mun tíðin þér indæl

Stemma 5

Stemma 5 is used for only ten stanzas spread over five recordings, meaning in two stanzas in each recording. The stanzas are in the *ferskeytt* (7/6/7/6) and *samhenda* (7/7/7/7) meters, as well as *stikluvik* (7/6/7/7). The melody is fixed and must be considered inelastic, as the difference between the three meters is very small and has no appreciable effect on the melody. The melodic range is fixed: a sixth (interval 1 to 6), and the melody is singable. The rhythm is also fixed and clearly distinguishes itself from Jón's other *stemma*.



Example 22: Fárleg voru fjörbrot hans

Summary

My search with Hallfreður for Icelanders who were able to *kveða*, intone *rímur*, took place from 1964-1971. During that period, we spent time with the ten *kvæðamenn* discussed in this study. No other *kvæðamenn* were found who had intoned *rímur* at a young age and were still able to perform some of the material that they had in their *rímur* repertoires as young men.

Scope of the Study

The ten *kvæðamenn* are of different importance in the study due to the varying amount of material from each of them. Three of them contribute only a small amount of material to the research.

Pórður Marteinsson intones 67 stanzas in six *rímur* meters, over six recordings.

Páll Stefánsson intones 52 stanzas in two meters, over seven recordings.

Hallgrímur Jónsson intones 61 stanzas in three meters, over eight recordings. From each of these three, we have between six to eight recordings with fewer than 70 stanzas in total. It is an entirely different story when it comes to the research material that we acquired from the other seven *kvæðamenn*.

Einar Einarsson intones 325 stanzas in eleven meters, over 32 recordings.

Pórður Guðbjartsson intones 309 stanzas in nine meters, over 22 recordings.

Gísli Gíslason intones 549 stanzas in seven meters, over 33 recordings.

Porgils Þorgilsson intones 110 stanzas in five meters, over 23 recordings.

Guðmundur Ólafsson intones 319 stanzas in five meters, over 16 recordings.

Pétur Ólafsson intones 2,228 stanzas in eleven meters, over 55 recordings.

Jón Oddsson intones 183 stanzas in seven modes, over 35 recordings.

The Geographical Distribution of the *Kvæðamenn*

It should be noted that the ten *kvæðamenn* involved in our study all came from and had intoned *rímur* in the northern and western parts of Iceland. Pórður Guðbjartsson grew up in the Gufudalur area, but both he and Einar Einarsson, who was born in the Barðaströnd area, lived in Patreksfjörður. Gísli Gíslason and Pórður Marteinsson lived and grew up in Barðaströnd, and Guðmundur and Pétur Ólafsson were originally from Fellströnd. Porgils Þorgilsson was from Snæfellsnes, whereas Páll Stefánsson was from farthest south of all of them, having been born in Kjós. Hallgrímur Jónsson and Jón Oddsson were born in northern Iceland, and both lived

there.

This geographical distribution of our informants is not due to the fact that no search was conducted for *kvæðamenn* elsewhere in the country. In the spring of 1964, Hallfreður and I undertook a long collecting trip throughout southern Iceland, searching for people who could intone, but found no one apart from a single individual who could intone *lausavísur*.

In late summer of the same year, Hallfreður and my colleague Thorkild Knudsen undertook an extensive collecting trip throughout northern and eastern Iceland, with the same result as far as the performance of *rímur* poetry was concerned. Toward the end of Thorkild Knudsen's stay in the country, they also traveled west to Snæfellsnes, where they met Þorgils Þorgilsson, among others, and with him, they finally managed to record some long, continuous passages of *rímur* poetry.

In the years 1958 and 1959, Hallfreður made a collecting trip around the Westfjords on behalf of the National Museum of Iceland, to find people who could intone *rímur* and *lausavísur*, but in only a few cases was he able to record long chapters of *rímur*. Each recording from that trip usually contained only a few stanzas.

The Goal of the Research

The main goal of the research was to explore the possibility of finding examples of the sort of melodies described by Bjarni Þorsteinsson in *Íslensk þjóðlög* as contrasting to well-known, fixed melodies:

(...) melodies [that] are the spontaneous invention of the one intoning; he has no specific melody in mind before he begins, but creates it at will as he intones— and for good, experienced *kvæðamenn*, this is easy (810).

We certainly found examples of such *kveðskapur*, and were in fact surprised at how many such examples we found. Only Pétur Ólafsson used fixed melodies in his *kveðandi*, but he knew a large number of them. In addition, the *stemma* of three others in the group of ten *kvæðamenn* were nearly fixed. These were Þórður Marteinsson, Páll Stefánsson, and Hallgrímur Jónsson, and the variations in each of their individual *stemma* were few and inconspicuous. The remaining six *kvæðamenn* had *stemma* that were variable, and they all resorted to improvisation in their performances. It is also interesting to note that only some of their *stemma* were open, thereby allowing for improvisation, while other *stemma* were fixed and invariable.

The Extent of Improvisation

The extent and consistency of improvisation is extremely uneven, but it is possible to distinguish improvisation in two separate parts of the *kveðskapur*: the melody, on the one hand, and the rhythm on the other.

The Melody

Changes to and variations in the melodies are of all sorts, and new variations can be created through alterations to several notes of the melody. Changes can be limited to a single *hending* within the melody or be distributed throughout the melody. In addition, the melodic range can either be fixed or open to changes. Improvisation thus takes place within frames of different dimensions. The changes may well take place within a fixed melodic range, but can be greater if the range also varies from one recording to another, as well as between stanzas. If the combination of *hendingar* also varies, the variations from stanza to stanza set to the same melody and from one recording to another can be so great and radical that it can be difficult to hear that they are related in any way. Improvisation in a melody does not necessarily have to happen in the combination of *hendingar*, but can sometimes change that combination.

Elasticity

If a melody is fixed, it is theoretically linked to only one particular *rímur* meter, but some *rímur* meters are so similar that the difference in melodies is sometimes very small, as well. For example, with one melody, two notes can follow their respective syllables in a particular meter, but in a different meter, the notes might be tied and used to sing one syllable. Other melodies are either elongated or contracted to be used for meters that differ in terms of the number of *hendingar* and the length of each *hending*.

The Rhythm

In the *kveðskapur* of the ten *kvæðamenn*, there are eight different rhythm patterns. They are arranged here according to how often they occur in multiple *stemmaur*.



Rhythm a and Rhythm b are dominant, but the others occur occasionally. Several

of them, for instance Rhythm g and Rhythm h, appear in only a few stanzas in the study. Einar Einarsson uses only Rhythm b in his *kveðskapur*. Þórður Guðbjartsson sticks to Rhythm a and Rhythm b in his *kveðskapur*. He uses Rhythm a for *Stemma* 1, but only Rhythm b in his other two *stemma*. Excluding Einar, all the *kvæðamenn* use both Rhythm a and Rhythm b in their *kveðskapur*, and these two rhythm patterns are dominant among all of them.

Rhythm c is used primarily by Pétur Ólafsson, as a fixed rhythm in four of his eleven *stemma*. Apart from that, this rhythm appears as a fixed pattern in one of the *stemma* of Þórður Marteinnsson, Þorgils Þorgilsson, and Guðmundur Ólafsson. As for Hallgrímur Jónsson, it occurs in two variable *stemma*, along with Rhythm a.

Pétur Ólafsson uses **Rhythm d** as a fixed rhythm pattern in two *stemma*, and the rhythm also occurs in two variable *stemma* of Þorgils Þorgilsson, together with Rhythm a and Rhythm b. Rhythm d also appears in one of Hallgrímur Jónsson's variable *stemma*, along with Rhythm a and Rhythm b.

Rhythm e is heard in two of Gísli Gíslason's *stemma*, one fixed and one variable, along with Rhythm f. This rhythm is also present in one of Þórður Marteinnsson's *stemma*.

Rhythm f occurs in one fixed and one variable *stemma* of Gísli Gíslason (along with Rhythm e), and in one of Páll Stefánsson's fixed *stemma*.

Rhythm g is heard solely in one of Jón Oddsson's *stemma*.

Rhythm h is used only by Gísli, also in only one *stemma*.

Each *Kvæðamaður's* Use of Improvisation

Þórður Guðbjartsson's *kveðandi* is the one that most closely resembles Bjarni Þorsteinsson's description of melodies created on the spot. This occurs in his *Stemma* 1, where the improvisation is prominent and radical, making it seem at first as if in one and the same melody, Þórður uses numerous completely independent phrases, both in terms of melodic range and combination of *hendingar* (Examples 5–7). However, the phrases all belong to the same melody, and are therefore closely related. This *stemma* of Þórður's, which is described precisely in my book *Stability in Musical Improvisation* (Copenhagen, 1982), is based on his use of twelve different phrases. Phrases are short melodic lines, each of which corresponds to one *hending*, and every two phrases are linked to a specific *hending*. Particular phrases display variations but are clearly distinct from other phrases (see Examples 18a and b).

Each phrase can occur in different places within the melody; Example 19 shows how a melody that starts with Phrase i is composed of other phrases. In the second *hending*, there is a possibility of six different phrases and the choice between them

then determines which phrases can be chosen for the third *hending*.

The diagram shows that most of the phrases can be used for more than one *hending*. Phrase i is used in the first and third *hending* and Phrase d in the second and third *hendingar*. Two phrases are firmly linked to the final *hending*. The combination of the phrases within the melody is also governed by Þórður's ideas of what can constitute a complete melody, and he appears to be able to choose between eight very different combinations (Examples 10–17).

Stemma 1 occurs only with four-line meters in which the first and third lines have seven syllables; *ferskeytt*, *samhenda*, *stikluvik*, and *nýhenda*.

Einar Einarsson also improvises. This happens to a limited extent in his *Stemma* 4, where variations can be found in all of the melody's *hendingar*, but the changes are not dramatic (Examples 21–24). In *Stemmur* 2 and 3, the variations are also negligible.

The variations are much more noticeable in *Stemma* 1. Einar uses this *stemma* for four-line meters that have seven syllables in the first and third lines: *ferskeytt*, *samhenda*, *gagaraljód*, and *nýhenda*. From one stanza to another in the same recording, the *hendingar* vary significantly, and the melodic range shifts from a sixth (interval 1 to 6) in the first stanza to a fourth (interval 1 to 4) in the second. Then it changes to a sixth (interval -1 to 5) in the third stanza, and a fifth in the fourth stanza (interval 1 to 5). The order of the *hendingar* can also change, varying between ABCD, ABAAv, AABC, and ABBvB. This can happen from one stanza to another in the same recording. The extent of the variations is thus comparable to those that we see in Þórður's *kveðskapur*, although they do not permeate all of Einar's *kveðskapur* in the same way. The majority of them are firmly linked to the first stanza in the recording, but the variations are then reduced to a few fixed models that act as fixed melodies in his performance. As with Þórður, Einar's *kveðandi* has 20 different phrases, most of which appear in only one or two stanzas. Seven of these phrases dominate his *kveðandi*. The phrases are fixed to certain spots in the melody, but by choosing different combinations of them, Einar creates different models.

Gísli Gíslason improvises in his *Stemmur* 1, 3 and 4, but in *Stemmur* 3 and 4, the changes are negligible. In *Stemma* 1, many variations can be heard, both in different melodic ranges, from sixths to fifths, and in the order of *hendingar*, from ABCZ to ABAZ. The variations are, however, less prominent than in Þórður Guðbjartsson and Einar's *kveðskapur*.

Pórður Marteinsson: Both of Pórður's *stemmaur* are fixed, with very minor variations.

Porgils Porgilsson: All nine of Porgils' *stemmaur*, apart from *Stemma* 4 and 9, appear to be more or less open to variations. In *Stemma* 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8, the variations are minor, and with the exception of *Stemma* 1, 2, and 3, there are not enough stanzas in each recording to make it possible to evaluate them fully. In *Stemma* 2, numerous and rather radical variations can be heard, comprising both changes in melodic range and the sequence of *hendingar*. It is clear, however, that the melody shown in Example 6 is dominant, while other forms are few and usually appear in the first stanza of a recording. Discernible variations can occur in *Stemma* 3, as can be seen from Examples 7 and 8, but they do not affect the melodic range or the sequence of *hendingar*. All of Porgils' *stemmaur* are inelastic, and each of them is used for only one meter.

Páll Stefánsson: All five of Páll's *stemmaur* are fixed and inelastic.

Pétur Ólafsson uses eleven different *stemmaur*. Each one of them has one fixed melody with only negligible variations, while five are elastic, so that they can be used for different, dissimilar meters.

Guðmundur Ólafsson: In only one of his *stemmaur*, *Stemma* 1, are there major variations, with the changes being significant. They affect the melodic range, and unusually, the variations occur between intervals 1 and 2. The sequence of *hendingar*, however, does not change.

Hallgrímur Jónsson uses three *stemmaur*. Two of them are fixed, but the third, *Stemma* 3, appears to allow for variations, which also occur in the melodic range. Since only ten stanzas using this *stemma* were recorded, the material is too sparse to permit conclusions to be made about it.

Jón Oddsson: Regarding Jón's five *stemmaur*, variations can be heard to a small extent in *Stemma* 2, 3 and 4, whereas *Stemma* 5 is a fixed melody. In *Stemma* 1 there are more numerous and more consistent variations, which affect both the range and the sequence of *hendingar*.

Conclusion

The ten *kvæðamenn* are divided into two main groups. The second group almost

exclusively uses fixed melodies in their *kveðskapur*. In general, if any changes are heard in their melodies, they are very minor. In this group are Þórður Marteinsson, Páll Stefánsson, Pétur Ólafsson, and Hallgrímur Jónsson.

With the other six *kvæðamenn*, improvisation is a prominent feature in their performance of *rímur*. The amount and consistency of the variations differ, and it is important to note that the improvisation occurs only in certain *stemma* of the *kvæðamenn*.

Clearly, Einar Einarsson and Þórður Guðbjartsson possess the most extensive techniques for variation or improvisation. For both, these improvisational techniques are connected to the *stemma* they use the most, referred to here as *Stemma 1* for both. Their *kveðskapur* tallies to a great degree with Bjarni Þorsteinsson's description of "*rímur* melodies [being] only a spontaneous invention of the one intoning," as he writes in *Íslensk þjóðlög*. Both *stemma* are replete with variations, not only from one recording to another, but also from one stanza to another in the same recording. The changes are so extensive that the melodies have different ranges and combinations of *hendingar*. For both of these *kvæðamenn*, their improvisation is based on a limited repertoire of phrases that are then put together in different ways. Characteristic of these *stemma* is the fact that they are inelastic. They are certainly used for more than one meter, but only meters that are sufficiently similar in structure for the differences between them to have a limited effect on the length of the *hendingar*. The two *kvæðamenn* both use a fixed rhythm. Einar uses only Rhythm b, and Þórður only Rhythm a.

Gísli Gíslason, Guðmundur Ólafsson, and Jón Oddsson also have *stemma* displaying major variations. The variations in their performance also affect the melodic range and combination of *hendingar*, but in comparison to Einar and Þórður's *kveðskapur*, those variations are all within narrower limits.

Variations can be heard in some of Þorgils Þorgilsson's *stemma*, but they only occur in the first stanza of his performance or in isolated *hendingar* in the melody.

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Summary

The book examines the performance of ten *rímur* singers. It describes how Svend Nielsen and Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson searched for individuals who had learned how to sing *rímur*, and had sung them for others, at a young age, and were still able to perform some of their early repertoire. The main aim of the collecting, which took place 1964–71, was to discover whether it was possible to find examples of *rímur* melodies of the sort Bjarni Þorsteinsson described in his *Íslensk þjóðlög* (1906–9). In contrast to the fixed, well-known *rímur* melodies, Bjarni said that some *rímur* melodies are the creation, on the spot, of the singer, who does not have a definite melody in mind before he begins, but creates it according to his own taste, as he sings, and this is easy for a good and experienced singer‘ (p. 810). In other words, their object was to determine whether there were still singers whose performance was varied and spontaneous, or whether some of them had, at least, changed their melodies from one performance to another to a greater degree than is known from, for example, traditional Danish singers. Changes might be found in two areas, in the melody itself or the rhythm, and in both cases the *rímur* melody can either be fixed, i.e., have only one form, or be free and variable. Svend and Hallfreður recorded the singing of the ten singers discussed in the book. They are of differing importance in the study, because there are different amounts of material from each one. It is striking that the ten individuals on which the study focuses all grew up and began their careers as singers in the north and west of Iceland, in spite of attempts to find singers in other parts of the country. It was surprising how many examples were found of singers who changed their melodies when they sang.

The conclusion is that the ten singers can be divided into two groups. One group used almost exclusively fixed melodies in their performance. At most, very small changes can be heard in their melodies. This group comprises Þórður Marteinsson, Páll Stefánsson, Pétur Ólafsson and Hallgrímur Jónsson. Only Pétur Ólafsson used exclusively fixed *rímur* melodies in his singing, and he knew very many. The melodies of the other three were generally fixed and there were few and unimportant variants within each performance. The other six singers showed marked improvisation in their performance of *rímur*. The number and density of variation differs; it is noteworthy that improvisation appears only in certain of their melodies.

It is clear that Einar Einarsson and Þórður Guðbjartsson have a greater tendency to vary and improvise. Each has a favorite melody they use most often. Both melodies are permeated with variations, not just between one recording and the next but also from one stanza to the next in the same recording. The changes are so

extensive that the melodies have different musical range and different patterns of phrasing. Both singers base their improvisations on a limited vocabulary of phrases that are put together in different ways. A characteristic of these two melodies is that they are not ‘elastic’. To be sure, they are used with more than one metre, but only with metres that are sufficiently similar in structure that the difference among them will have limited influence on the melody. Both singers use a fixed rhythm. Their singing corresponds, to a large extent, to Bjarni Þorsteinsson’s description when he says that ‘*rímur* melodies are the creation, on the spot, of the singer’.

Gísli Gíslason, Guðmundur Ólafsson and Jón Oddsson also knew *rímur* melodies where significant changes are found. The variation in their performances includes the musical range and influence the key and order of phrases, but compared to the performances of Einar and Þórður they use variants within much narrower bounds. Variation can be heard in some of Þorgils Þorgilsson’s melodies, especially in the first verse of the performance or in individual phrases.

The introduction of the book contains definitions of *rímur*, metres, poetic language and *rímur* melodies, with a list of additional sources. Svend Nielsen’s research is then put in the context of other Scandinavian research on oral performance of songs.

Index of Photos

Pórður Guðbjartsson and Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson, photo by Svend Nielsen

Einar Einarsson and Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson, photo by Svend Nielsen

Pórður Guðbjartsson, photo by Svend Nielsen

Gísli Gíslason, owner Guðrún Gísladóttir, reproduction by Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir

Pórður Marteinnsson, photo by Sigrún Helgadóttir, owner Ólöf Pórðardóttir

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Pétur Ólafsson, photo by Svend Nielsen

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Hallgrímur Jónsson, photo by Kristfinnur Guðjónsson, owner Síldarminjasafnið (Herring Museum, Siglufjörður)

Jón Oddsson, photo by Svend Nielsen

Index of Stanzas

Einar Einarsson:

Example 1:

Fjarlæg ströndin heillar hug
hafs í böndum víðum,
vængjum þöndum furðuflug
flýgur öndin tíðum.

Rósarímur, 3. ríma, 10. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Jón Rafnsson (1899–1980).

Intoned August 27th 1967.

SÁM 93/3707 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1018990>]

Example 3:

Hægir róður hrönnum á,
hlægir móðan strönd að ná.
ægis glóða foldum frá
fæ ég ljóðagjöldin smá.

Rósarímur, 6. ríma, 52. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Jón Rafnsson (1899–1980).

Intoned August 27th 1967.

SÁM 93/3707 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1018990>]

Example 5–6:

Ljósið fæðist dimman dvín,
dafnar næðið fróma,
loftið glæðist, láin skín,
landið klæðist blóma.

Leó kærur þakkar þá
þvita meiði hnúa,
vill svo færa leið að lá
langar skeiðir búa.

Númarímur, 12. ríma, 16. and 30. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 2nd 1965.

SÁM 84/65 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001075>]

Example 7:

Dagaláardísirnar
dyggvar, smáar, rjóðar
viljið þið sjá á vísurnar,
verið þið þá svo góðar.

Rímur af Tístran og Indíönu, 2. ríma, 1. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 2nd 1965.

SÁM 84/66 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001079>]

Example 8:

Fljótt á kviði Fjörgynjar
fylkt er liði allsherjar,
breitt um sviðið blikeldar
braka friðils Gunnlaðar.

Rósarímur, 6. ríma, 9. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Jón Rafnsson (1899–1980).

Intoned August 30th 1967.

SÁM 93/3720 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1019134>]

Example 9:

Fárleg vóru fjörbrot hans,
fold og sjórinna léku dans,
gæfusljór með glæpa fans
Grímur fór til andskotans.

Göngu-Hrólfssrímur, 18. ríma, 72. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Hjálmar Jónsson (1796–1875).

Intoned August 30th 1967.

SÁM 93/3720 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1019141>]

Example 11–12:

Síðan þreyða þig til vinar
þáði, hér af landsins konum
sverja eið fyrir allar hinar
ætla eg mér á hreppskilonum.

Eins og fjalla efst frá tindum
ógnarlegur klettur riðar,
sem í falli, frárrí vindum,
foldar vega sundur niðar.

Númarímur, 7. ríma, 11.–12. stanza (breiðhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 2nd 1965.

SÁM 84/65 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001074>]

Example 13:

Allt hvað skeði eins réð segja
ör að fregnum hann.
Númi á meðan þá réð þegja
því næst gegna vann:

Númarímur, 16. ríma, 46. stanza (skammhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 6th 1965.

SÁM 84/71 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001140>]

Example 14–15:

Númi fer og hæstan hittir hilmi Róma;
Leó þangað líka kemur,
lofðungs vinur ræðu semur:

„Hér hef eg fangað hetju þá, oss hræddi löngum;
veit eg þó í víga söngum
vinnast muni hann af öngum.“

Númarímur, 9. ríma, 20.–21. stanza (braghenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 2nd 1965.

SÁM 84/66 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001078>]

Example 16:

Pó ég eigi dikti drósum dýra bragi
fyrir því allt má fara í lagi.

Rímur af Tístran og Indíönu, 3. ríma, 3. stanza (afhending).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 2nd 1965.

SÁM 84/66 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001080>]

Example 17–18:

Rétt einmana Númi nú
nokkuð mætur hvatar för;
yfir Grana gamla frú
ganga lætur söðulknör.

Lengi fer svo fram um reit
forðast neyðir hetjan traust;
öngva sér hann vegi veit,
völlinn skeiðar þankalaust.

Númarímur, 11. ríma, 13.–14. stanza (gagaraljód).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 4th 1965.

SÁM 84/67 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001096>]

Example 19–20:

Lofðung eftir lesinn dóm
lætur farið heim að sölum
mikinn gjörðu Rómar róm
Rómúlar að fyrirtölum.

Númi þoldi valla við —
vaka ástarsárin — lengur
Tasa kóngs við hægri hlið
hugsandi og lotinn gengur.

Númarímur, 5. ríma, 11.–12. stanza (nýhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 4th 1965.

SÁM 84/68 EF.

Example 21–24:

Skal eg mega um skáldin nokkuð tala
fyrst eg er að erja við
óbúsæla handverkið.

Nafnið það menn naumast vinna kunna
fyrir það, að ríma rétt,
sem regla verður fyrir sett.

Orðfimni og æfður lengi vani,
gefur þessa góðu mennt,
þó geti má ske fáir kennt.

Orð og þanka alla úr hinna bókum,
þegar láta þrykta skrá,
þurfa slíkir jafnan fá.

Númarímur, 17. ríma, 1.–4. stanza (stuðlafall).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 6th 1965.

SÁM 84/71 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001141>]

Þórður Guðbjartsson:

Example 1:

Reiðar þurrka þeir ei val
þrautaslurk þó reyni
allt fram skurka Yxnadal
upp að Lurkasteini.

Rímur af Þórði hreðu, 16. ríma, 41. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Hallgrímur Jónsson (1787–1861).

Intoned August 3rd 1965.

SÁM 84/67 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001087>]

Example 2:

Sjóli ágætur sér við mund

setjast lætur gram um stund,
yndisbætur lífga lund,
lánast mætu kerasund.

Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa, 9. ríma, 64. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Magnús Jónsson (1763–1840).

Intoned August 6th 1965.

SÁM 84/70 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001137>]

Example 3:

Upp á grundu einstig fann
öðlingskundur téður,
komst svo undir kastalann
kesjuþunda meður.

Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa, 8. ríma, 17. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Magnús Jónsson (1763–1840).

Intoned August 5th 1965.

SÁM 84/68 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001103>]

Example 4:

Arnljóts bróðir ekki sljór
álma var sá njótur,
þar var hjá þeim þróttarstór
Þorsteinn uxafótur.

Rímur af Svoldarbardaga, 1. ríma, 50. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 30th 1967.

SÁM 93/3717 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1019100>]

Example 5–7:

Söng í reiða kífinn kár,
kólgur freyða stórar,
Ekkilsheiða yfir flár
öldu skeiða jórar.

Sigla drengir dag sem nátt

djúpt um engi þöngla,
rárnar lengi hljóða hátt,
hjól og strengir söngla.

Kár með jöfnum þrótti þar
þá um nöfnur úðar
brátt að höfnum Borneyjar
beindi hröfnum súðar.

Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa, 8. ríma, 13.–15. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Magnús Jónsson (1763–1840).

Intoned August 5th 1965.

SÁM 84/70 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001137>]

Example 8–9:

Sunnlendingur sem að Björn er nefndur
um það víst ég vitna skal
var hér nótt í Sauðlauksdal.

Húsmóðirin honum gaf að borða
finna bæði fisk og smjör
flautir og graut með bestu kjör.

Sunnlendingur sem að Björn er nefndur (stuðlafall).

Author unknown.

Intoned July 13th 1971.

SÁM 91/2383 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013521>]

Example 10:

Stundum fram á steinbítismið
stefni ég árákjóa,
stundum má ég strákinn við
stíga, kveða og róa.

Brynki var á fótum frá, 2. stanza. (ferskeytt).

Author Brynjólfur Björnsson (1845–1934).

Intoned in the summer of 1959.

SÁM 00/3985 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1038694>]

Example 11:

Stríð er að fást við stjórn og þjóð
sem standa andvíg jafnan,
kóngaást er einatt góð
en oft það sást að skammt hún stóð.

Alþingisrímur, 1. ríma, 14. stanza (stikluvík).

Author unknown.

Intoned August 6th 1965.

SÁM 84/70 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001132>]

Example 12:

Í landsins hjarta lifði þar
ljósið margt, sem fegurð bar.
Nú er bjart við Breiðamar,
búinn skarti kveldsólar.

Breiðfirðingavísur, 3. stanza. (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Ólína Andrésdóttir (1858–1935).

Intoned August 3rd 1965.

SÁM 84/66 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001082>]

Example 13:

Hnútt við stóran hafla beins
heilsan fóru að vanda
stigu af jórum undir eins
allir þórar banda.

Rímur af Þórði hreðu, 16. ríma, 42. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Hallgrímur Jónsson (1787–1861).

Intoned August 3rd 1965.

SÁM 84/67 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001087>]

Example 14:

Faldasunna sál var heið,
þær saumuðu, spunnu, stýrðu skeið,
þeim var kunnug láar leið,
lögð yfir grunna svæðin breið.

Breiðfirðingavísur, 8. stanza. (hagkveðlingaháttur).
Author Ólína Andrésdóttir (1858–1935).
Intoned August 3rd 1965.
SÁM 84/66 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001081>]

Example 15–16:

Hróp í staðinn heyrði þá
hirðir naðurs þetta,
múrinn gengur glaður á,
gerði hraður fréttu:

Hátt upp gerði hrópa þar
hoskur skerðir fleina:
„Býð eg verði Borneyjar
brynju og sverð að reyna.“

Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa, 8. ríma, 19. and 18. stanza (ferskeytt).
Author Magnús Jónsson (1763–1840).
Intoned August 5th 1965.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001103>]

Example 17:

Breiða- fyrst á firðinum
fékk ég vist á bátunum
hjá aflaþyrstum, þrekmiklum
þrauta og lista formönnum.

Breiðfirðingavísur, 5. stanza. (hagkveðlingaháttur).
Author Ólína Andrésdóttir (1858–1935).
Intoned August 3rd 1965.
SÁM 84/66 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001082>]

Example 19:

Smala hlýðinn hjarðar fjöldinn
heim að líður stekkjunum,
þar um síð á sumarkvöldin
eg sat í víðirbrekkunum.

Númarímur, 3. ríma, 6. stanza (langhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 3rd 1965.
SÁM 84/67 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001090>]

Example 20:

Sé eg það, að sorg þú berð í sinnu ranni.
Hermdu frá því, halurinn svinni,
hvað ógleði veldur þinni.

Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa, 4. ríma, 16. stanza (braghenda).
Author Magnús Jónsson (1763–1840).
Intoned August 5th 1965.
SÁM 84/68 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001104>]

Example 21:

Firna stórum fjöllum á
fundust ekki leiðir betri,
jöklar voru og hnúkar há
á heiðu sumri eins og vetri.

Líkafrónsrímur, 4. ríma, 12. stanza (nýhenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 5th 1965.
SÁM 84/68 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001102>]

Example 22:

Súða lýsti af sólunum
síla víst á bólunum,
einatt tísti í ólunum,
að sem þrýstu hjólunum.

Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa, 9. ríma, 58. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).
Author Magnús Jónsson (1763–1840).
Intoned August 6th 1965.
SÁM 84/70 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001105>]

Gísli Gíslason

Example 1:

Par var greina þrotið smíð
og þundar fundum lokið,
þegar Einar átti stríð
og illar skeinur veitti lýð.

Rímur af Svoldarbardaga, 6. ríma, 10. stanza (stikluvik).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 10th 1965.

SÁM 84/76 EF.

[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001205>]

Example 2:

Hart fram veður Hyrningur
hrönnum mönnum bylti
sverði meður máttharður,
sem Markús kveður lögmaður.

Rímur af Svoldarbardaga, 6. ríma, 43. stanza (stikluvik).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 11th 1965.

SÁM 84/78 EF.

[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001222>]

Example 3–5:

Sumars blíðan svo út rann,
sendir fríðum stála.
Drauma gríður verri vann
værðar tíðum brjála.

Heiman ferð um haustið bjó
hroftur erðis grana,
að Þorgerðar enn í ró
orma verður bana.

Síðan heima að sumri er
súta keiminn metur.
Aftur dreyma illa fer
að þá sveimar vetur.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 10. ríma, 12.–14. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 8th 1965.
SÁM 84/72 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001163>]

Example 6:

Skipti manna bauð í ból
bóndinn hrannar ljóma sól
öllum klæðum fleti frá
fyrst hann ræður kasta þá.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 12. ríma, 13. stanza (staðhenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 8th 1965.
SÁM 84/73 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001168>]

Example 7:

Sókn og varnir sýndu þeir
sást þá harðna gaman
hreppstjórnir traustir tveir
tóku þarna saman.

Kosningavísur (ferskeytt). Author Hallbjörn Bergmann Björnsson (1855–1925).
Intoned August 8th 1965.
SÁM 84/73 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001169>]

Example 8:

Öslaði gnoðin, beljaði boðinn
blikaði voðin, kári söng,
stýrið galti, aldan elti,
inn sér hellti á borðin löng.

Úr *Grímseyjarrímu* (langhenda).
Author Árni Jónsson Eyjafjarðarskáld (1760–1816).
Intoned August 10th 1965.
SÁM 84/76 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001199>]

Example 9–10:

Húsfreyjurnar hugsandi um hagi slæma,
réna létu ræðu gaman;
rauðar eins og blóð í framan.

Auður mælti: „Oss úr vöndu er að ráða.“
Ásgerður nam andsvör þýða:
„Ekki skal eg þessu kvíða.“

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 4. ríma, 13.–14. stanza (braghenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 8th 1965.
SÁM 84/72 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001161>]

Example 11:

Börkur, eftir bardagann, til bæja sneri,
hugar lítið gæskan greri.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 9. ríma, 17. stanza (afhending).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 8th 1965.
SÁM 84/73 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001167>]

Example 12:

Ekki gleymist Gísli mér;
gjörum þar að snúa:
kempan heima á Hóli er,
heldur illa dreyma fer.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 5. ríma, 13. stanza (stikluvik).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 8th 1965.
SÁM 84/73 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001165>]

Example 13:

Njótar lófa neggja hófu leika,
um sem vann ég vekja tal,
vetur þann í Haukadal.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 6. ríma, 15. stanza (stuðlafall).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 11th 1965.
SÁM 86/78 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001225>]

Example 14:

Sumars blíðan svo út rann,
sendi fríðum stála.
Drauma gríður verri vann
værðar tíðum brjála.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 10. ríma, 12. stanza (ferskeytt).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 11th 1965.
SÁM 86/78 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001226>]

Example 15:

Pegar helja handaköld
hniginn mundi Þorgrím taka,
Þórdís beljar óð á öld
alla biður menn að vaka.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 7. ríma, 13. stanza (nýhenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 8th 1965.
SÁM 84/72 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001162>]

Example 16–17:

Þar var greina þrotið smíð
og þundar fundum lokið,
þegar Einar átti stríð
og illar skeinur veitti lýð.

En því auðsærri sem hann var
og sendi fjöndum bana,
öllum nærri öðling þar
óttinn stærri hjartað skar.

Rímur af Svoldarbardaga, 6. ríma, 10. and 20. stanza (stikluvik).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 11th 1965.
SÁM 84/77 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001210>]

Example 18:

Drauma undur orðið hér
um það grundum stöku
fleina þundur einn sem er
ern í blundi og vöku.

Draumur Hallbjarnar Bergmann (ferskeytt).
Author Hallbjörn Bergmann Björnsson (1855–1925).
Intoned August 8th 1965.
SÁM 84/73 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001170>]

Example 19:

Líkafrón og lagsmenn tveir,
ljósin dags nær fá að skoða,
kveðja hjón, og því næst þeir
þaðan undir fjöllin troða.

Líkafrónsrímur, 4. ríma, 11. stanza (nýhenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned August 10th 1965.
SÁM 84/76 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001206>]

Þórður Marteinnsson:

Example 1:

Fékk ég bréf þitt, Fúsi minn,
sem fjallaði um kreppu og gengið,
en hitt er verra að húsviðinn
hef ég engan fengið.

Ljóðabréf (ferskeytt).
Author Óskar Arinbjörnsson (1889–1954).
Intoned August 8th 1965.
SÁM 84/74 EF.
[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001175>]

Example 2:

Njótar lófa neggja hófu leika,
um sem vann ég vekja tal,
vetur þann í Haukadal.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 6. ríma, 15. stanza (stuðlafall).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 8th 1965.

SÁM 84/74 EF.

[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001180>]

Example 3:

Piggur af lýðum lofið tíðum
lundurinn þýður, skíða bur,
rekkurinn blíður soðning sýður
sá hinn fríði Erlendur.

Piggur af lýðum lofið tíðum (langhenda).

Author Marteinn Gíslason (1908–1941).

Intoned August 8th 1965.

SÁM 84/74 EF.

[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001177>]

Example 4:

Húsfreyjurnar hugsandi um hagi slæma,
réna létu ræðu gaman;
rauðar eins og blóð í framan.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 4. ríma, 13. stanza (braghenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 8th 1965.

SÁM 84/74 EF.

[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001179>]

Example 5:

Fjörulallar fóru á kreik
frekt þó hallað var af degi
heim þeir dralla og hyggja á leik
héldu að karlar svæfu eigi.

Fjörulallabragur, 1. stanza. (nýhenda).

Author Marteinn Gíslason (1908–1941).

Intoned August 8th 1965.

SÁM 84/74 EF.

[<https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001178>]

Porgils Porgilsson

Example 1–3:

Vorsins blíða lýða lund
lífgar, kvíða ei seður
fuglar víða flökta um grund
fjaðraprýði meður.

Grænkur víða grund að sjá
grösin fríð fá völdin
lækir hlíðum líða frá
liljum skrýðist fjöldinn.

Sumri hallar haustar þá
hvín í fjalli og klifi
blómin vallar blikna smá
byrgð í mjallardrifi.

Úr *Árstíðavísun* (ferskeytt).

Author Porgils Porgilsson (1884–1971).

Intoned September 11th 1964.

SÁM 84/44 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1000710>]

Example 4–5:

Geislar ljóma um grund og haf
glöðum rómi er sungið
loftið hljómar lífi af
lífsins ómi þrungið.

Þá vetur klæðist kufl sinn í
klaka þræðir sína
fellur á svæði fönn á ný
fegurð og gæði dvína.

Úr *Árstíðavísun* (ferskeytt).

Author Porgils Porgilsson (1884–1971).

Intoned August 18th 1965.

SÁM 84/85 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001317>]

Example 6:

Dagsins runnu djásnin góð
dýr um hallir vinda
morgunsunnu blessað blóð
blæddi um fjallatinda.

Númarímur, 12. ríma, 15. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned September 11th 1964.

SÁM 84/44 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1000716>]

Example 7:

Vorsins blíða lýða lund
lífgar, kvíða ei seður
fuglar víða flökta um grund
fjaðraprýði meður.

Unaðs hljómar um þá tíð
upp sprettur drómi kífsins
anga blómin undurfríð
allt er í blóma lífsins.

Úr *Árstíðavísun* (ferskeytt).

Author Þorgils Þorgilsson (1884–1971).

Intoned August 18th 1965.

SÁM 84/86 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001323>]

Example 9:

Stafninn klýfur strauma dátt,
stormur svífur yfir höfin,
bylgjan kýfist borð við þrátt,
blakta stífust mastratröfin.

Vísur ortar eftir norðanveður 1916 (nýhenda).

Author Þorgils Þorgilsson (1884–1971).

Intoned September 11th 1964.

SÁM 84/44 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1000709>]

Example 10:

Nú skal vinda voð að hún
vænt svo syndi dýrið flóða,
æða vindar áls um tún
og æsa lyndi ránar jóða.

Vísur ortar eftir norðanveður 1916 (nýhenda).

Author Þorgils Þorgilsson (1884–1971).

Intoned September 11th 1964.

SÁM 84/44 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1000712>]

Example 11–12:

Vorsins blíða lýða lund
lífgar, kvíða ei seður
fuglar víða flökta um grund
fjaðraprýði meður.

Að sumars blíða svífur tíð
síst fer að líða að kvíða
blómum skryðist brekkan fríð
blómsturhlíðar fríðar.

Úr Árstíðavísu (ferskeytt).

Author Þorgils Þorgilsson (1884–1971).

Intoned August 18th 1965.

SÁM 84/85 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001317>]

Example 13:

Á eg að halda áfram lengra eða hætta
og milli Grænlands köldu kletta
kvæðin láta niður detta?

Númarímur, 9. ríma, 1. stanza (braghenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned September 11th 1964.

SÁM 84/44 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1000718>]

Example 14:

Á eg að halda áfram lengra eða hætta
og milli Grænlands köldu kletta
kvæðin láta niður detta?

Númarímur, 9. ríma, 1. stanza (braghenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned September 11th 1964.

SÁM 84/44 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1000720>]

Example 15:

Högna kenni eg, hefna nennir hlýra sinna,
vorir menn því fjörtjón finna,
fast því spennum dörinn stinna.

Rímur af Andra jarli, 5. ríma, 54. stanza (braghenda).

Author Hannes Bjarnason (1776–1838).

Intoned August 18th 1965.

SÁM 84/85 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001321>]

Example 16–17:

Líkafrón og lagsmenn tveir,
ljósín dags nær fá að skoða,
kveðja hjón, og því næst þeir
þaðan undir fjöllin troða.

Ill var færð og óhrein leið,
útilegumenn og tröllin
byggðu ærð, um bratta heið
bönnuðu mönnum leið um fjöllin.

Líkafrónsrímur, 4. ríma, 11.–12. stanza (nýhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned August 18th 1965.

SÁM 84/85 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001322>]

Example 18–19:

Andri hlær svo höllin nær við skelfur

við sína granna sagði hann:
„Sjáið þið manninn vitlausan?“

Rímur af Andra jarli, 2. ríma, 104. stanza (stuðlafall).

Author Hannes Bjarnason (1776–1838).

Intoned August 18th 1965.

SÁM 84/85 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1001320>]

Example 20:

Ofan lúðir fjallið fóru
fornar flóðir lilju ranns.
Átta búðir í honum vóru,
úti stóð þar fjöldi manns.

Rímur af Úlfari sterka, 9. ríma, 50. stanza (langhenda).

Author Árni Böðvarsson (1713–1776).

SÁM 84/44 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1000713>]

Example 21:

Númi undrast, Númi hræðist,
Númi grundar hvað til ber,
Númi skundar, Númi læðist,
Númi undan viku sér.

Númarímur, 3. ríma, 49. stanza (langhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned September 11th 1964.

SÁM 84/44 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1000715>]

Páll B. Stefánsson

Example 1:

Man ég fyrrum þyt á þökum
þreyta styr við eljadrög,
þá á kyrrum kvelda vökum
kveiktu hyrinn rímnalög.

Man ég fyrrum þyt á þökum (langhenda).

Author Jóhannes úr Kötlum (1899–1972).

Intoned November 18th 1968.
SÁM 87/1077 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1036370>]

Example 2:

„Ófær sýnist áin mér,
állinn þessa verstur,
stóra jaka straumur ber,
stendur hann enginn hestur.

Sveinn Pálsson og Kópur, 1. stanza. (ferskeytt).
Author Grímur Thomsen (1820–1896).
Intoned November 18th 1968.
SÁM 87/1077 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1036371>]

Example 3:

Vora tekur. Árla er.
Æskan rekur gullna þræði.
Sólin vekur, gegnum gler,
geislum þekur rekkjuklæði.

Bjartir morgnar, 1. stanza. (nýhenda).
Author Stefán frá Hvítadal (1887–1933).
Intoned November 18th 1968.
SÁM 87/1077 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1036372>]

Example 4:

Fugla háan heyri klið
hressir dável muna.
Glaður bláa vatnið við
verð ég þá að una.

Fugla háan heyri klið (ferskeytt).
Author Baldvin Jónsson (1826–1886).
Intoned November 18th 1968.
SÁM 87/1078 EF.
[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1036373>]

Example 5:

Ýmsum þykir einskis vert
er annarra kvika svíður.
Eitthvert strik er eftir hvert
augnablik sem líður.

Ýmsum þykir einskis vert (ferskeytt).

Author unknown.

Intoned November 18th 1968.

SÁM 87/1078 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1036374>]

Example 6–7:

Af því nú er komið kvöld
og kærstur liðinn dagur
rennur undir rekkjutjöld
röðull skær og fagur.

Sál mín brynni í sjafnar eld
sæl um njólu stundir
ef hjá mér rynni hlý í kveld
hringasólin undir.

Kvöldvísur (ferskeytt).

Author Símon Bjarnarson Dalaskáld (1844–1916).

Intoned November 18th 1968.

SÁM 87/1078 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1036376>]

Pétur Ólafsson

Example 1:

Hákon þá er hniginn lá,
og hetjan móð á velli stóð,
Jökull brá sér beinin á,
blossa tróð að stjörnu rjóð.

Rímur af Víglundi og Ketilríði, 8. ríma, 11. stanza (gagraljóð).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned November 28th 1968.

Example 2:

Héðinn sjóli sest að stóli valda,
vinsæll náði verða fljótt
vopna ráður gæddur þrótt.

Rímur af Héðni og Hlöðvi, 3. ríma, 6. stanza (stuðlafall).

Author Jón Eyjólfsson (1850–1924).

Intoned September 6th 1967.

SÁM 93/3722 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1019150>]

Example 3:

Bóndinn tér með blíða önd
baldri mundar steina:
„Tökum okkur tafl í hönd
týnum efni meina.“

Rímur af Víglundi og Ketilríði, 12. ríma, 14. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned November 29th 1968.

Example 4:

Héðinn dvelur heima þá,
harmar sprundið fríða,
greipar hélu geymir sá
gæti finnur lýða.

Rímur af Héðni og Hlöðvi, 2. ríma, 7. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Jón Eyjólfsson (1850–1924).

Intoned September 5th 1967.

SÁM 93/3721 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1019145>]

Example 5:

Ólafs saga áðan beið,
öðlings mengið slynga,
fram nam draga á laxa leið,
langa hringhyrninga.

Rímur af Svoldarbardaga, 2. ríma, 11. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned November 30th 1968.

Example 6:

Skipið flaut og ferða naut,
flenntust skaut á haflabúðum;
stormur þaut, en láin laut
limablaut að öllum súðum.

Rímur af Víglundi og Ketilríði, 10. ríma, 10. stanza (nýhenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned November 28th 1968.

Example 7:

Frændur Merði fleins í klið
fylgi sögðust veita,
bræðralag svo binda við
börinn góins reita.

Rímur af Héðni og Hlöðvi, 8. ríma, 10. stanza (ferskeytt).
Author Jón Eyjólfsson (1850–1924).
Intoned September 9th 1967.

Example 8:

Frægða háir fólkstjórar
freyjum bráins torgar
vagni á um úlfamar
aka þá til borgar.

Rímur af Héðni og Hlöðvi, 6. ríma, 4. stanza (ferskeytt).
Author Jón Eyjólfsson (1850–1924).
Intoned September 8th 1967.

Example 9:

Hann Járngrímur sér að sjóli
sundur kvistar lið,
rétt við lá í rænubóli
reiddist hraustmennið.

Rímur af Héðni og Hlöðvi, 7. ríma, 8. stanza (skammhenda).
Author Jón Eyjólfsson (1850–1924).
Intoned September 8th 1967.

Example 10:

Ólafur Svía sjóli stýrir
sundakríum þangs um rann,
öðling frúi orð þau skýrir:
„Ekki flýja mun eg þann!“

Rímur af Svoldarbardaga, 3. ríma, 57. stanza (langhenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned December 5th 1968.

Example 11:

Þar var aldan Óma þrotin
út við kalda humra lá,
hlóð Sigvalda sagður flotinn
seglum tjalda haukum á.

Rímur af Svoldarbardaga, 3. ríma, 7. stanza (langhenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned November 30th 1968.

Example 12:

Ólafs saga áðan beið,
öðlings mengið slynga,
fram nam draga á laxa leið,
langa hringhyrninga.

Rímur af Svoldarbardaga, 2. ríma, 11. stanza (ferskeytt).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned November 30th 1968.

Example 13:

Hákon varð í húsfreyjunnar hæstu metum
gjörði hann með gjöfum káta
gríði klæða mikilláta.

Rímur af Víglundi og Ketilríði, 6. ríma, 9. stanza (braghenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned November 27th 1968.

Example 14:

Móðurjörð, hvar maður fæðist,
mun hún eigi flestum kær?
Þar sem ljósið lífi glæðist,
og lítil sköpun þroska nær.

Númarímur, 3. ríma, 1. stanza (langhenda).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned December 5th 1968.

Guðmundur Ólafsson

Example 1:

Númi bálar brúnaljós
brúðar til að vonum,
eik forsjála eisu sjós
eins á móti honum.

Númarímur, 8. ríma, 12. stanza (ferskeytt).
Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).
Intoned November 25th 1968.

Example 2:

Samt ég allra svásast finn
sólarfall við Jökulinn;
vermist mjallar vanginn þinn,
vesturfjalla kóngurinn.

Breiðfirðingavísur, 2. stanza. (hagkveðlingaháttur).
Author Ólína Andrésdóttir (1858–1935).
Intoned November 23rd 1968.

Example 3:

Svo nam skunda Skarðsströnd á
skýja undir faldi,
oft þar lundum laufa hjá
langar stundir dvaldi.

Svo nam skunda Skarðsströnd á (ferskeytt).
Author unknown.
Intoned November 23rd 1968.

Example 4:

Þaðan yfir fór ég fjöll,
frekar þandi göngu,
fönnum drifin alveg öll
á Hornstrandir löngu.

Þaðan yfir fór ég fjöll (ferskeytt).

Author unknown.

Intoned November 23rd 1968.

Example 5:

Skjaldmey móti kapp kemur,
kveður hann ljótum orðum þannin:
„Oss þú hóta ei skalt fremur,
allra þrjóta verstur glanninn.“

Númarímur, 7. ríma, 18. stanza (breiðhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned in November 1968.

Example 6:

Númi undi lengi í lundi,
leiðir sveigir hér og þar,
lítur hann sprund, hún lá í blundi,
lík skjaldmey að búning var.

Númarímur, 4. ríma, 13. stanza (langhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned November 24th 1968.

Example 7–9:

Fjallið niður fóru menn og fundu herinn,
mestur þorri Marsa barinn
mundi þá og varnar farinn.

Á eg að halda áfram lengra eða hætta
og milli Grænlands köldu kletta
kvæðin láta niður detta?

Karlmennirnir kunna ekki kvæða málið,

ætli það sé þá ekki galið
að eg lengi kvæðaskjalið?

Númarímur, 9. ríma, 16., 1. and 3. stanza (braghenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned November 23rd 1968.

Example 10:

Á nær bjátar eymdin smáða
og eitthvað hallast
sumir láta hugann hrjáða
og hendur fallast.

Númarímur, 13. ríma, 2. stanza (úrkast).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned November 25th 1968.

Hallgrímur Jónsson

Example 1–3:

Lét á seiða löndunum
lægis skeiða bröndunum;
áls á heiða öndunum
í hvein reiða böndunum.

Brátt fallandi byrjarföld,
bíta sandinn akker köld;
svo á landi setur öld
sín ljómandi fögur tjöld.

Vörður lýða fær þá frétt,
frægum býður sjóla rétt
heim um ríða hauðrið slétt,
hallar prýða sæti nett.

Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa, 9. ríma, 59. and 61.–62. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Magnús Jónsson (1763–1840).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2193 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013468>]

Example 4:

Akron sagði feðgum frá
fylkis bragði illu,
vart um þagði vonsku þá,
vald sig lagði þeirra á.

„Til jarldæmis hóf mig hann,
heiðri sæmir stórum;
illa ræmist, ef við þann
öðling kæmi friðar bann.“

Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa, 6. ríma, 17. and 22. stanza (stikluvik).

Author Magnús Jónsson (1763–1840).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2194 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013470>]

Example 6–8:

Reimar fyrst og Fal eg tel,
fólkið kvista vígs um mel,
báðir lista börðust vel,
blóðugan hrista dragvendil.

Flötu merki fleygja réð
Falur sterki vígs um beð,
löndungsherki mætur með
mengið lerkar heljar téð.

Samson hrellir sókndjarfur
sveit á velli blóðdreifður,
neyð þó hrelli niflungsbur
nærri fellur óvígur.

Rímur af Reimari og Fal, 13. ríma, 15. and 25.–26. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur). Höfundur Hákon Hákonarson (1793–1863).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2194 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013472>]

Example 9:

Bylgjan spýtti boðunum
byrjar títt í hroðunum;

veðrið strítt í voðunum
ver, sem flýtti gnoðunum.

Súða lýsti af sólunum
síla víst á bólunum,
einatt tísti í ólunum,
að sem þrýstu hjólunum.

Lét á seiða löndunum
lægis skeiða bröndunum;
áls á heiða öndunum
í hvein reiða böndunum.

Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa, 9. ríma, 57.–59. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Magnús Jónsson (1763–1840).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2193 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013468>]

Example 12–13:

Höfuðið ljósa lagt hún hefur
létt á skjöldinn, vanga hjá
hjálmur drósar, hýrt er sefur,
hulinn öldu stjörnum lá.

Númi undi lengi í lundi,
leiðir sveigir hér og þar,
lítur hann sprund, hún lá í blundi,
lík skjaldmey að búning var.

Númarímur, 4. ríma, 14. and 13. stanza (langhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013471>]

Jón Oddsson

Example 1:

Þrátt fyrir taman þjóðarsið
þeim er sama núorðið
hvort aftan, framan eða á hlið

eiga gaman fljóðin við.

Þrátt fyrir taman þjóðarsíð (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Þorleifur Þorleifsson (1837–1912).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2189 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013408>]

Example 2:

Eg í túni teina sá
tálið Þorgríms vinar fálu,
geig við rúna gímu þá
gunnbliks norna á skeiði hálu.

Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni, 7. ríma, 53. stanza (nýhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2190 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013419>]

Example 3:

Andri snar drakk inni þar með ýtum sínum,
og þjóðirnar hjá þengli fínum
sem þjáður var af lyndis pínum.

Rímur af Andra jarli, 5. ríma, 13. stanza (braghenda).

Author Hannes Bjarnason (1776–1838).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2191 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013431>]

Example 4–6:

Innir sagan svo þar frá,
sem þó mætti dragast frá,
í þrjá daga stælti stjá
styr óragur kappinn sá.

Málma skvaldur herðir hann,
hvíldum aldrei sinna vann
eyðir skjalda, ýtar þann
allir halda vitlausan.

Andri kallar upp og tér:
„Er það varla geðfellt mér
að drepi alla ýta hér
ofnis palla frægur grér.“

Rímur af Andra jarli, 3. ríma, 92.–93. and 95. stanza (samhenda).

Author Hannes Bjarnason (1776–1838).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2191 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013433>]

Example 7:

Hranna skríður hesturinn
hafs úr stríðu róti
Siglu- fríði fjörðurinn
faðminn býður móti.

Hranna skríður hesturinn (ferskeytt).

Author unknown.

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2189 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013405>]

Example 8:

Oddur minn er ærustór
unan fylgir halnum
gaf mér núna brenndan bjór
bóndi á Engidalnum.

Oddur minn er ærustór (ferskeytt).

Author Símon Bjarnarson Dalaskáld (1844–1916).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2189 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013406>]

Example 9–10:

Það ber fyrst að heyrnar hurð,
heimurinn stóð í villu,
trúar lista ljóss var þurrð
lengst fyrir Kristí hingað burð.

Tveggja flíkum faldaðir,
fjóri og sigri héldu,
tiggja líkar týr hraustir
tóku ríki gamlaðir.

Rímur af Hjálmari hugumstóra, 1. ríma, 23. and 27. stanza (stikluvík).

Author Hallgrímur Jónsson læknir (1787–1861).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2189 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013400>]

Example 11:

Aldrei falla hann Andri vann
ætíð skalla bar harðan,
en nú til vallar hnígur hann,
Hárek kalla má seigan.

Rímur af Andra jarli, 3. ríma, 115. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Hannes Bjarnason (1776–1838).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2191 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013435>]

Example 12:

Andra slyngur haus í hjó
hrottinn syngur fagurt þó,
hins ei springur kjálka kró,
kífmæringur síst af dró.

Rímur af Andra jarli, 3. ríma, 56. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Hannes Bjarnason (1776–1838).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2191 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013434>]

Example 13–15:

Góins bingja gnægt var léð
gram sem nefndist Logi,
Hálendingum ráða réð
rausn höfðingja stórri með.

Áttu hjónin arfa þann
öld sem Helga nefnir,
á því fróni enginn fann
urnis bóna ver slíkan.

Býður þokka sér af sá
sjóla fríði kundur,
liðaðist hrokkið höfði frá
hár í lokkum mjaðmir á.

Rímur af Andra jarli, 1. ríma, 13. and 21.–22. stanza (stikluvik).

Author Hannes Bjarnason (1776–1838).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2191 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013432>]

Example 16–17:

Helgi úr máta ræddi reiður
reflum styrjar kasta vann:
„Þú munt láta líf og heiður
ljótan fyrir ofstopann.

Farðu skjótt úr skyrtu þinni
skjóminn af sem hrökkur minn
fyrir er drótta stýrir stinni
stoltur gaf þér faðir þinn.“

Rímur af Andra jarli, 8. ríma, 83.–84. stanza (langhenda).

Author Hannes Bjarnason (1776–1838).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2191 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013440>]

Example 18:

Grímur þá kom gólfið á
gestur sá var boðinn ekki —
mörgum brá er manninn sá,
mæla náir kappinn þekki:

Rímur af Víglundi og Ketilríði, 3. ríma, 25. stanza (nýhenda).

Author Sigurður Breiðfjörð (1798–1846).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2189 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013398>]

Example 19:

Aldrei síðar – sú er mín
sárust kvíða alda –
sólin blíða brúna þín
blikar hlíð á falda.

Hjálmarskviða, 64. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Sigurður Bjarnason (1841–1865).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2190 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013425>]

Example 20:

Þá mun tíðin þér indæl,
þoka kvíði úr geði.
Lif nú, blíða brúður sæl,
blóm þig skrýði gleði.

Hjálmarskviða, 72. stanza (ferskeytt).

Author Sigurður Bjarnason (1841–1865).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2190 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013428>]

Example 21:

Fárleg vóru fjörbrot hans,
fold og sjórinna léku dans,
gæfusljór með glæpa fans
Grímur fór til andskotans.

Göngu-Hrólfsrímur, 18. ríma, 72. stanza (hagkveðlingaháttur).

Author Hjálmar Jónsson (1796–1875).

Intoned July 22nd 1969.

SÁM 90/2190 EF.

[<https://www.ismus.is/tjodfraedi/hljodrit/1013422>]

Appendix

Examples of the *kveðskapur* of the ten *kvæðamenn*

Recordings

Pórður Guðbjartsson:

- Breiðfirðingavísur (brot)
- Breiðfirðingavísur
- Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa (IV 15–18)
- Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa (VIII 13–26)
- Sveinn Pálsson og Kópur
- Svoldarrímur (I 14–19)
- Númerímur (III 2–6)

Einar Einarsson:

- Svoldarrímur (IV 10–14)
- Númerímur (XVII 1–10)
- Rímur af Tístran og Indíönu (III 1–7)
- Númerímur (XVI 45–51)
- Númerímur (V 11–15)
- Svoldarrímur (I 14–21)

Gísli Gíslason:

- Draumur Hallbjarnar Bergmann
- Vísur
- Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni (IV 13–21)
- Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni (V 13–23)
- Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni (VIII 16–25)
- Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni (IX 17–26)
- Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni (XII 13–20)
- Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni (XIV 16–25)
- Svoldarrímur (I 14–19)
- Svoldarrímur (V 9–17)

Pórður Marteinsson:

- Ljóðabréf frá Erlendi í Naustum til Sigfúsar í Flatey
- Fjörulallabragur
- Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni (IV 13–24)
- Rímur af Gísla Súrssyni (VI 15–31)

Porgils Þorgilsson:

- Árstíðavísur
- Árstíðavísur (Vor)
- Líkafrónsrímur (IV 11, 14)

Páll B. Stefánsson:

- Sveinn Pálsson og Kópur
- Kvöldvísur
- Bjartir morgnar
- Fram til heiða

Pétur Ólafsson:

- Víglundarrímur (III 11–19)
- Víglundarrímur (VI 16–23)
- Víglundarrímur (VIII 11–20)
- Víglundarrímur (IX 17–25)
- Svoldarrímur (VIII 49–59)

Guðmundur Ólafsson:

- Breiðfirðingavísur
- Númerímur (IV 13–21)
- Númerímur (V 1–8)
- Númerímur (VII 14–20)
- Númerímur (IX 76–82)
- Númerímur (XII 1–14)
- Vísur um Hornstrandir

Hallgrímur Jónsson:

- Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa (VI 17–23)

- Rímur af Bernótus Borneyjarkappa (IX 57–73)
- Gránuvísur
- Fjallið fagra
- Rímur af Reimari og Fal (XIII 15–19, 25–28)
- Númerímur (IV 13–14)

Jón Oddsson:

- Hjálmarskviða (brot)
- Rímur af Andra jarli (V 13, 28–29)
- Siglingavísur
- Vísur um Odd Jóhannsson frá Siglunesi
- Númerímur (IV 13–14, 19, 23, 17)
- Víglundarrímur (III 25–27, 30–34, 36–38)

[The recordings are accessible under the Icelandic title of the book on Spotify](#)

TEXTS

RÍMUR by Sigurð Breiðfjörð (1798–1846)

SVOLDARRÍMUR

I 14–21 (ferskeytt):

14. Lifnar hugur líka geð,
ljóð til sögu víki;
Ólafur Tryggva arfi réð
öllu Norvegs ríki.

15. Með sér hafði mikinn her
milding tamur röndum,
því kóngur hafði kosið sér
kappa úr ýmsum löndum.

16. Á þeim tíma, er um ég get,
út hjá grundar jöðrum,
byrðing kóngur byggja lét,
betri flestum öðrum.

17. Menn til valdi mildingur
að mynda knör af liði;
Þorgeir hétu og Þorbergur
þóftubjarnar smiðir.

18. Fékk til kóngur fleiri en þá
firða smíðishaga;
sumir skyldu sauminn slá,
en sumir viði laga.

19. Á góðum efnum víða völ
vissu smiðir spakir,
en fengu ei tré að fella í kjöl,
fyrir lengdar sakir.

20. Einhvern dag að öldubekk
ítar feta, að morgni;
mikill þeim á móti gekk
maður, og nefndist Forni.

21. Móts við smiði manninn bar;
mjög til göngu hraður,
yfirlita illur var,
einsýnn, rauðskeggjaður.

IV 10–14 (samhent, hagkveðlingaháttur):

10. Þar ég hróður bíða bað,
buðlung rjóðum þrír í stað
greiddu róður gylfar að,
glóði Óðins ljósa blað.

11. Kóngur Dana um hnísu hlað
herinn manar, eftir það
náði flana fyrst á stað
flóða grana löngum að.

12. Gildur sjóli Svíþjóðar
síldarbóla krákurnar
að skipi Óla öðlings þar
ysta róla lét um mar.

13. Annarsvegar að kemur,
ógnarlega harðfengur,
eyddur trega Eiríkur,
eggjar dregur seggja hvur.

14. Sér járnbarða jarlinn á,
sem jöfur sparði ekki þá,
sleginn harður stáli blá
stelkur fjarða mundi sá.

V 9–17 (ferskeytt, hringhenda):

9. Þar ég höldum lokið lét
lagar öldum grana,
glumdi á skjöldum skjóma hret,
skálkar kvöldust bana.

10. Norðmenn slá og eirðu ei,
Óma gljáir roðinn,

þeir stafnljái færðu á fley,
flest þau lágu hroðin.

11. Blóðið dundi í brimla tjörn,
bófar hrundu í grúa,
Svíum mundi veiklast vörn,
vildu undan snúa.

12. Með hetjum ströngum geyst fram gekk
gylfi í slöngu veður,
hlífði öngvum hetjan þekk,
hér um söng Hallfreður:

13. „Hugardeig var Svía sveit,
síst má feigur tóra,
hræðslu geigur hjartað beit
við hirðar eiga stjóra.“

14. Trauðir dóu á tjald-öndum,
tók við óa skaðann,
skipin hjóu úr haldböndum,
hraðast róa þaðan.

15. Höfðu tapað manna mergð
mikið hrapalega;
það var skapleg skammarferð,
skjómar gapa vega.

16. Mjög sannspár varð sjóli að því
af seggjum báru ei fríum;
lifðu sára eymslum í,
þeir eftir váru af Svíum.

17. Í römum gný við randa spjöll
rauna stíu átti,
Dana og Svía öldin öll,
undan flýja mátti.

VIII 49–59 (ferskeytt, frumhenda):

49. Þorgeir hneig og Hyrningur

hörðum fyrir brandi,
varð og feigur valdauður
Vikar af Tíundalandi.

50. Leið þar dauða dáðrakkur,
dörva skjótur meiður,
Úlfur rauði örendur
og Indriði fótabreiður.

51. Ívar nýtur ljómi leið
líka strangan bana,
Þorsteinn hvíti þáði deyð
þar á ranga grana.

52. Líka skelkur Þorsteinn þá
þungan бага gisti,
húna stelknum einnig á
æfidaga missti.

53. Ótal fleiri afreksmenn,
á valströndu gistu,
þungum geiri særðir senn,
sína öndu misstu.

54. Um Eirík jarl það inna má,
álma hristir ríka,
kappa alla sína sá
sjálfur missti líka.

55. Stallari kenndur Kolbeinn þá,
kauða skara fletur,
langa stendur Ormi á,
enn þá varist getur.

56. En nær þyngja aðsókn fór
og ekkert skjól var lengur,
í lyftingu álmaþór
upp til sjóla gengur.

57. Allt eins klæði og öðling bar
þar eggja dundi senna,

mátti skæða þjóðin þar
þá ei sundur kenna.

58. Svo var eggja þryman þrá,
þrýtur róin manna,
að skildir beggja skúfast þá
skeytum óvinanna.

59. Að lyfting þrengir þjóðin reið,
og þá sem lifa sníða,
sá þá mengi að ljós eitt leið
lofðung yfir fríða.

NÚMARÍMUR

III 2–6 (langhenda):

2. Í fleiri lönd þó fengi drengir
forlaganna vaðið sjó,
hugurinn þangað þrengist lengi,
er þeirra fögur æskan bjó.

3. Mundi eg eigi minnast hinna
móðurjarðar tinda há
og kærna heim til kynna minna
komast hugarflugi á.

4. Jú, eg minnist, fóstra forna,
á fjöllin keiku sem þú ber,
í kjöltu þinni kvölds og morgna
kvikur leikur muni sér.

5. Um þína prýði að þenkja og tala,
það er tíðast gleðin mín,
í högum fríðu hlýrra dala,
hjörð um skríður brjóstin þín.

6. Smala hlýðinn hjarða fjöldinn
heim að líður stekkjunum,
þar eg síð á sumarkvöldin
sat í víðirbrekkunum.

IV 13–21, 23 (langhent, víxlhenda):

13. Númi undi lengi í lundi,
leiðir sveigir hér og þar,
lítur hann sprund, hún lá í blundi,
lík skjaldmey að búning var.

14. Höfuðið ljósa lagt hún hefur
létt á skjöldinn, vanga hjá
hjálmur drósar, hýrt er sefur,
hulinn öldu stjörnum lá.

15. Hárið bjarta brynju þekur;
í bylgjum gylltum niður flaut,
allt hvað hjartans undrun vekur;
augun fyllti brúðar skraut.

16. Spjót eitt undir hefur hendi,
hún í dúni skógar lá,
ljósið þundar ljóma sendi,
linda túni meyjar frá.

17. Svona í drauma dái liggur
día ljóminn, Freyja ber;
þangað laumast Loki hyggur
og lágt í grómi falinn er.

18. Flakir um bringu og meyjar maga
men brísinga hálsi frá,
blóðshræringar léttar laga
liljur kringum brjóstin smá.

19. Svefninn býr á augum ungum
eru þau hýr, þó felist brá,
rauður vír á vangabungum
vefur og snýr sig kringum þá.

20. Sig innvikla í rósum rörum
rauðu taumar æða blá,
litir sprikla létt á vörum
og laga drauma brosin smá.

21. Andinn hlýr, sem ilminn nýta
óspart léna vitum sinn,
í lífinu býr og brjóstið hvíta
í bungur þenur og dregur inn.

...

23. Dúir andinn undir nafla
en svo hvít er hörunds brá
sem hlæjandi sólin skafla
silfur spýti geislum á.

V 1–8 (mansöngur), **11–15** (nýhenda):

1. Vandi er þeim, sem völdin á,
vel á tignarstóli drottna,
mikilsverð er maktin há,
ef manndyggð lætur eigi þrotna.

2. Margur kóngur mjög að dáð,
málum öllum vilja snúa;
en ef þeir hafa illgjörn ráð,
undir þeim er neyð að búa.

3. Sá með eigin augum sér,
ekki nema slots hræsnara,
undirsáta örlög hér
ekki kann frá meinum vara.

4. Slíkur múgur vísir ver,
að vant að stjórnarháttum gæti;
fólkið kúgast, fantarnir
flykkjast upp í valdasæti.

5. Til að seðja fýsna feikn
flesta kosti þá er völ um:
brjóstakrossa, titla og teikn
tekst að fá með ríkisdölum.

6. Einn ef hyggur öðrum tjón
eitruðum hreyfir laga skjölum

og kaupir margan þarfapjón;
það fæst allt með ríkisdöllum.

7. Allt skal vinna aftan til
og í læstum ráðasöllum,
svo er vænt að vinnist spil
ef vasinn miðlar ríkisdöllum.

8. Eitt mér vanta þykir þó
um þetta efni fyrst við töllum:
hamingja sönn og hjartans ró,
hún fæst ei með ríkisdöllum.

...

11. Lofðung eftir lesinn dóm
lætur farið heim að söllum
mikinn gjörðu Rómar róm
Rómúlar að fyrirtöllum.

12. Númi þoldi valla við —
vaka ástarsárin — lengur
Tasa kóngrs við hægri hlið
hugsandi og lotinn gengur.

13. Rennur honum í þanka þá
þungu hlífartrollin hvetja
vífi fylgja valþing á
og verða öllum frægri hetja.

14. Að verja brúðar væna líf
og vera hennar brjósti skjöldur
vaða svo með Hildarhníf
heitar gegnum dreyra öldur.

15. Þetta metur þankinn skást
því er hann fús til hryðjuverka
mætti vinna meýjar ást
máski um síðir höndin sterka.

VII 14–20 (breiðhent, hringhent or víxlhenda):

14. Úr hans brotum eldur stekkur,

öngvu notast kyrrðarstaður;
smalinn rotast, hjörðin hrekkur,
hræðist lotinn ferðamaður.

15. Jörðin grætur, hristist heimur,
hrynur um stræti bjargið þétta,
uns það mætir eikum tveimur
sem allar rætur saman flétta.

16. Þessar stansa steininn firna,
styður aðra hvor sem getur,
fótum hans við falli spyrna,
ferðir þáðra bjargið letur.

17. Leó þannig stöðvar stinnur
stáls í dýjum ferða æði,
þegar hann í hernum finnur
Hersilíu og Núma bæði.

18. Skjaldmey móti kappa kemur,
kveður hann ljótum orðum þannin:
oss þú hóta ei skalt fremur,
allra þrjóta verstur glanninn.

19. Þú skalt, færður fyrir skjóma,
falla brátt með stærstu kvölum;
að hafa særðan ræsi Róma,
raupa máttu í heljar sölum.

20. Nú tvíhendir hrottann beitta,
hjarna strendur mærin yfir;
brosti að kvendi kempan sveitta,
kyrr hann stendur þó, og lifir.

IX 76–82 (braghent, baksneitt):

76. Hilmir biður: „Hættu þessu, hetjan góða,
sjóinn æða að sefa rauða,
sárin mörg eg hef til dauða.

77. Guðunum vil eg gjalda lof og gleyma meinum,

að eg fæ í örmum þínum,
anda þeim að skila mínum.

78. Dóttur minni bið eg blítt þú bjarga vildir,
henni ekki munu mildir
morðingjarnir bræði fylldir.“

79. Segir hinn: „Eg sver við þína sál ófeiga!
þar til dagar dvína mega,
dóttur þína besta að eiga.

80. Mér ei sómir morðingjum að mægjast þínum,
Tasíu skal eg elska eina,
ástum hinnar gleyma og leyna.“

81. Öðling faðmar ungan mann með ástarhendi,
tala vill, en – í því anda
uppgaf bestur stýrir landa.

82. Hilmis lík á herðar tekur hetjan fróma,
ber hann heim til borgar Róma,
býr nú um með tign og sóma.

XII 1–14 mansöngur (ferskeytt, hringhent or víxlhenda):

1. Kom þú, Braga brúðin góð,
í blóma himinklæða!
heilla dagar hressi þjóð!
harpan glymur kvæða.

2. Minna strengja hljómur hreinn,
hugar þrenging reyri;
kveð eg lengi, kveð eg einn,
kveður enginn fleiri.

3. Skinnaklæða hrundir hér,
(hverfur gæða efni),
hljóða og æða undan mér,
ef eg kvæðin nefni.

4. Heima forðum Fróni á
friðar góðu stundu,

bragar orðum betur hjá
blessuð fljóðin undu.

5. Hugar leyna máir mátt,
menju steina glóa,
man eg eina og þrái þrátt;
þau ei meinin gróa.

6. Þér ég gleymi aldrei, ó,
eyjar bráar dýna!
því tveggja heima heill og ró
hjá þér sá eg mína.

7. Þína ást eg aldrei þó
með orðum gjörði fala;
í huga sástu hvað mér bjó,
hvorugt þurfti að tala.

8. Þig til handa þá eg sá,
þegni öðrum ganga;
flúði eg landið frá þér þá,
flúði eg götu langa.

9. Flúði eg norður hálfu heims
og heiminn svo að kalla;
mér þú, skorðin glampa geims,
götu fylgir alla.

10. Veistu að nú í vetur hér
vildir bætur kenna,
dillaðir þú í draumi mér,
drósinn nætur þrennar.

11. Eg þegjandi hengdi haus,
hræddist trúá öndin,
hvort mun andinn ljúfi laus
líkamans við böndin.

12. Og svo hingað hvarfla sér
hægt til drauma bóta,
yfir, kring og innra í mér,

á loftstraumum fljóta.

13. Eða mundir, linda lín,
lífs á götu þinni
þenkja stundum mjúkt til mín,
manns í útleigðinni.

14. Þegar þú heyrir, heillin mín,
hanann brúna gala,
ljáðu eyrun þessi þín!
um þig eg núna tala.

XVI 45–51 (skammhenda):

45. Djúpt sig hneigir hirðir skjóma
hann svo spjalla réð:
„Heill þér — segir hann — hilmir Róma
hrósi allra með.“

46. Allt hvað skeði eins réð segja
ör að fregnum hann.
Númi á meðan þá réð þegja
því næst gegna vann:

47. „Þó mig höldar hylli og ginni
hveð sem skeður ger
yðar völdum ei ég sinni
eða héðan fer.

48. Fjallaskjól eg vænna virði
og værri á hér stað
um tignarstólinn hót ei hirði
hermdu frá mér það.“

49. Auðmjúkastur aftur vekur
óskir sendimann.
En Sóróaster tala tekur
til svo vendir hann:

50. „Þín er skylda, Númi, næsta
— nú þar lendir við —

fólkið milda orustuæsta
og því senda frið.

51. Ástin þína athöfn villir
en að því gáum hér
dóttir mín og hennar hylli
horfin frá þér er.“

XVII 1–10, mansöngur (stuðlafall):

1. Skal eg mega um skáldin nokkuð tala
fyrst eg er að erja við
óbúsæla handverkið?

2. Nafnið það menn naumast vinna kunna
fyrir það, að ríma rétt,
sem regla verður fyrir sett.

3. Orðfímnir og æfður lengi vani,
gefur þessa góðu mennt,
þó geti mäske fáir kennt.

4. Orð og þanka alla úr hinna bókum,
þegar láta þrykta skrá,
þurfa slíkir jafnan fá.

5. Eins er það um útleggingu kvæða,
ef þekkir bæði þjóðmálin;
þetta gerir rímarinn.

6. Hinn er skáld; sem skapar, fæðir, malar
myndir þær í þanka sér,
sem þekktum aldrei forðum vér.

7. Hann sem sér, með hvössu sjónar báli,
hulda gegnum hugi manns,
og háa fræði skaparans.

8. Hann á allan heiminn til forráða,
býr á hauðri, himni og sjó,
en hæli ekkert festir þó.

RÍMUR AF TÍSTRAN OG INDÍÖNU

III 1–7 (afhending):

1. Viljiði stúlkur vísur heyra og vera kátar
en þar að auki lítillátar
 2. skal ég yður skrifa bréf með skálda anda
og fyrir yður frammi standa.
 3. Þó ég eigi dikti drósum dýra bragi
fyrir því allt má fara í lagi.
 4. Það er af sem áður var að yrkja um Rósu
mína stirða mansöngsglósu.
 5. Því ég veit að varla skeyta vísum linum
þeir sem lifa í heimi hinum.
 6. Ég hef haldið heitorð mín því hýra vífi
meðan hún var hér á lífi.
 7. Hýrri kvað ég hringagjörð í hægum tímum
mansöngva í mörgum rímum.
-

RÍMUR AF GÍSLA SÚRSSYNI

IV 13–24 (braghent, baksneitt):

13. Húsfreyjurnar hugsandi um hagi slæma,
réna létu ræðu gaman;
rauðar eins og blóð í framan.
14. Auður mælti: „Oss úr vöndu er að ráða.“
Ásgerður nam andsvör þýða:
„Ekki skal eg þessu kvíða.
15. Þegar ég með Þorkel leggst á þægum beði,
hendur um hans háls ég breiði,
hygg ég þá hann týni reiði.
16. Hann mun þetta halda vera höfuðlygi.“
„Aðferð þessi,“ Auður segir,

„ekki hygg eg duga megí.

17. Eg mun Gísli öll vor segja orða kvæði,
biðja hann svo bestu ráða,
í bólið þegar kem til náða.“

18. Gísli kom frá eyjum heim, þá húma náði,
Þorkell var með þungu geði,
þannig við hann Gísli téði:

19. „Mun þér frændi meint af sótt?“ hann máli sneri.
„Ver er mér, en veikum fari,
við um það ei tölum parið.“

20. Þorkell ekki þáði mat, en þá til hvílu
gengur hann, með gremju og fýlu,
getur notið fata skýlu.

21. Ásgerður nam einnig klæðin af sér taka,
niður vildi leggjast líka,
lagar bóndinn ræðu slíka:

22. „Ásett hefi ég eigi í nótt við yrðum bæði,
Ása mín, á einum beði.“
Aftur svara konan réði:

23. „Hverju gegnir, hætti skulum hafa nýja?“
„Sæmir best um það að þegja,“
þá nam aftur bóndinn segja.

24. „Síst þá mun ég,“ sagði fljóð, „til sængur troðast,
mér skal ekki meira leiðast,
máttu velja um kosti greiðast.“

V 13–23 (þríhent stikluvík):

13. Ekki gleymist Gísli mér;
gjörum þar að snúa:
kempan heima á Hóli er,
heldur illa dreyma fer.

14. Tvennar nætur sá í samt,

svefn þá efna hinir,
illa lætur, ei var tamt,
örlög sæta munu framt.

15. En nær þjóðin þriðju nátt,
þar að snarast beði,
veðra hljóðin meiða af mátt
mænis tróðu dýrið hátt.

16. Stormar veina um fjalla far,
flóða hríðir vatna,
loftið hvein og hristi þar
húsin, steina og grundirnar.

17. Vötnin spýttast ekru á;
órar vara storma,
þeirra hlíta þróttur má,
þakið slíta húsum frá.

18. Húsin flæða himinstraum,
hríðir stríðar vara,
konur æða og gera glaum,
garpar klæðin fengu naum.

19. Gísli spratt hinn frækni frá
fljótast heitum beði,
með sér hvatti sveina sá,
svo þeir hratt úr bænum gá.

20. Vésteinn inni og Auður þá
eru kyrr á beði,
og þræll, er sinna þjónkun á,
Þórður slinni nefnist sá.

21. Gísli allir aðrir með
úti bæta að heyjum,
storma svallið rymja réð,
og regnfall um svartnættið.

22. Hjótt og spakan heyra má,
um húsin geysar maður;

liggur vakinn Vésteinn þá,
voðum nakinn undir lá.

23. Eigi fregnast um hver bar
eiturskeytið kalda,
bæsing þegn á beði var
brjóstið gegnum lagður þar.

VI 15–31 (stuðlafall, frárímað frumhenda):

15. Njótar lófa neggja hófu leika,
um sem vann ég vekja tal,
vetur þann í Haukadal.

16. Knattleik hafa huglar stafir linna,
Gísli má við Þorgrím þá
þreytast á og leikinn há.

17. Tíðum manna milli vann að bera,
hvor við mesta hreysti bjó,
halda flestir Gísla þó.

18. Á einni tjörn þeir eiga vörn og sóknir,
Vésteins hjá sá haugi var,
höldar knáir leika þar.

19. Einhvern dag, sem á er fagurviðri,
fjöldi manna fer á kreik,
úr fjörðum, þann að sækja leik.

20. Gísli tér: „Það gjörir mér að leiðast
Þorgrím einan etja við,
aðrir reyna komið þið.“

21. Þegnar inna: „Þetta sinn vér báðum
þig að sækjast Þorgrím við,
þar um flækist umtalið.

22. Hvor af yður afli miður stýri,
höldar segja að hlífist þú,
en hafðu ei þann vanda nú.

23. Allir þér vér unnum bera sóma,
afl ef meira er þér hjá,
álma freyri láttu sjá.“

24. Vitur tjáir: „Verða má það reynist.“
Síðan leikast seggir á,
sóknir eykur Gísli þá.

25. Vannst Þorgrími varla glíman betur,
hnöttinn missti, er halda á,
hauður kyssti fallinn þá.

26. Skinn af knúum skúfast nú og knjánum,
blóð úr vitum buna fer,
bjóður þvita mundar tér.

27. Að Vésteins haug hann velti auga og tjáði:
„Í sárum gnast, við guma stjá,
geir, en ekki lasta má.“

28. Knöttinn Gísli glímu sýsli tamur,
honum sendi herðar á,
hann svo endur falla má.

29. Og þá spjallar ullur mjalla handar:
„Böllur stalli byrðar á,
brast en varla lasta má.“

30. Þorkell tjáir: „Það hér sjáum allir,
hvor þar meiri máttar er
mækja freyr og best að sér.

31. Nú skal hætta hnattar slætti þessum.“
Við það linna leikarnir,
til landa sinna hver einn fer.

VIII 16–19 (langhent, víxlhenda):

16. Þorstein myndu hefndir hræða,
því hrekki bráða kerling ól;
á Gísla fundinn gat að læðast,
gott þar náði þiggja skjól.

17. Síðan hirðir handar jaka
hefnd á meðan færi gaf,
í Borgarfirði far nam taka,
og fluttist héðan landi af.

18. Börkur frétti kynstur kyngja
kerlingar og þangað fer,
tekur gretta gríði hringa,
gat hún þar ei forðað sér.

19. Í Saltnes færir Auðbjörg illa
yggur hæru friggjar sá,
steinum særíst digur drylla,
dauðans klær svo gista má.

IX 17–26 (afhending):

17. Börkur, eftir bardagann, til bæja sneri,
hugar lítið gæskan greri.

18. Gísli fótar sárið sitt nam sjálfur binda,
heim svo sneri lundur linda.

19. Ferju mikla fær hann sér og ferma réði
ærnu fé á ála beði.

20. Einn hann fer með Auði sína, og Guðríði,
ferju heldur fram á víði.

21. Hestinn sjós við Haganesið hefti strengur,
heim að bænum Gísli gengur.

22. Heimamaður heitis spurði hetju snjalla,
órétt hann sig eitthvað kallar.

23. Kastar Gísli stórum steini að storðar bandi,
fram í hólma langt frá landi.

24. Bað hann segja bóndans nið það bragð að reyna,
hvort hann lengra hendi steina.

25. „Þá mun,“ kvað hann, „þykjast vita þegninn hraður,
hver hér verið hafi maður.“

26. En það var á engra færi eftir leika,
til skeiðar nam svo kappinn kreika.

XII 13–20 (stafhent, mishenda):

13. Skipti manna bauð í ból
bóndinn hrannar ljóma sól,
öllum klæðum fleti frá
fyrst hann ræður kasta þá.

14. Gísli hjálminn auðan á
yggur skálma lagði þá,
síðan klæði og sængum hann
særðan slæðir yfir mann.

15. Ofan á þetta allt saman
út af slettist húsfreyjan,
ljótu sprundi lag er á,
liggja undir Gísli má.

16. Flokkinn kvenna eg bestan bið,
í brjósti að kenna um mannvalið.
Refur þá við ristil tér:
„Ráð nú má eg leggja þér.

17. Ef hingað æða illmennin,
opnaðu bæði munnvikin,
ældu flestum orðum þá,
eins og best þér takast má.

18. Háðung alla, hark og blót,
hátt skalt kalla þeim á mót,
þetta sinn, ef svalar þér,
seinna kynnir hlífa mér.“

19. Um þær stundir átta manns
inn af skunda dyrum ranns.
Refur leitar fréttu frí,
firðar beita svari því:

20. „Vont er okkar vega skil,

veistu nokkuð Gísla til,
bælist ei í bænum sá?“
Bóndinn segir: „Langt er frá.“

XIV 16–25 (ferskeytt, frumhenda):

16. Sagna þáttum fram svo fer,
flóa týrinn eima,
sumar nátt þá síðust er,
situr Gísli heima.

17. Ekki blund í bænum má
bóndinn hrelldur taka,
silki grundir honum hjá
hryggvar báðar vaka.

18. Í fylgsni undir kleifar kann
konum ganga meður,
það að blunda hyggur hann,
hreint og bjart er veður.

19. Kyrтли réðu klæðast fljóð,
kuldinn skyldi ei бага,
honum með þær helju slóð
húsa milli draga.

20. Gísli kefli í höndum hélt,
heflar það til rúna,
spóna skeflur fær hann fellt
í förin þeirra núna.

21. Hann og sprundin hæli ná,
hlynur mána strauma
fýsti blund í fylgsni þá,
og fær nú slíka drauma:

22. Í fugla líki læmingjar
leynt um húsin krjúpa;
eru slíkir ásýndar
öllu meiri en rjúpa.

23. Volgu blóði volkaðir
voru og létu illa;
úti hljóð nú heyrast fer,
höfga má hann spilla.

24. Eyjólf kenna kominn þar;
kunni fæði ylgja,
fimmtán menn, þeim verstur var,
vopnum búnir fylgja.

25. Kyrtila slóðann kvenna þeir
kunnu að fylgsni þræða;
upp þá stóð og girðist geir
Gísli kempan skæða.

LÍKAFRÓNSRÍMUR

IV 11, 14 (nýhent, frumhenda):

11. Líkafrón og lagsmenn tveir,
ljósin dags nær fá að skoða,
kveðja hjón, og því næst þeir
þaðan undir fjöllin troða.

...

14. Ill var færð og óhreinn leið,
útilegumenn og tröllin,
byggðu ærð, um bratta heið,
bönnuðu mönnum leið um fjöllin.

VÍGLUNDAR RÍMUR

III 11–19, 25–27, 30–34, 36–38 (nýhent, víxlhenda):

11. Hrynum spúði Hræsvelgur,
hróðug greiðir bylgjutröfin,
þegar prúði Þorgrímur
þandi skeiðir yfir höfin.

12. Að Norveg settu sjóhestar;

svinnur veitir stjörnu hylja
öðrum frétti að Ólöf var
eignarheitin móti vilja.

13. Kóngrs sér beiðir lið að ljá,
lundin svall af ást og bræði,
baugaheiði burt að ná,
bóndi og jarl þótt móti stæði.

14. Undan skorast vísir vann,
vinskap Ketils rækir fremur;
svo fram bera svörin vann:
„Soddan ei að haldi kemur —

15. Við hann etja ei mun tjá,
álfinn branda frægðir styðja;
en dóttur Ketill eina á,
sem eg til handa þér mun biðja.“

16. Viðris tjalda viður tér:
„Vil eg þín ei ráðin nýta;
við Ólöfu halda eg ætla mér
eiða mína, en hvergi slíta.

17. Ef eg náí ei að fá
ágætt sprund, sem til eg vona,
mína skal þá arma á
engar stundir leggjast kona.

18. Þér ei fremur þjóna vil,
þar ei dáðir viltu sýna.“
Milding semur málaskil:
„Máttu ráða um hagi þína.“

19. Hetjan unga orðaslyng
öðling kveður; ríkur tiggi
merkurþungan handarhring,
hetjan biður af sér þiggi.

...

25. Grímur þá kom gólfið á,

gestur sá var boðinn ekki;
mörgum brá er manninn sá,
mæla náir kappinn þekki:

26. „Er þér, Ketill, Ólöf fest
orðum hennar með og vilja?“
Bóndinn metinn góðum gest
gjörði senn á móti þylja:

27. „Þórir fljóðið festi mér,
frekast slíku mun hann ráða,
litlar bjóðast þakkir þér,
þótt eg þíku eignist fjáða.“

...

30. „Þú skalt aldrei fljóðið fá,“
fleytir Ketill orðum þráum.
„Skilja baldur álma á,
undan lét eg manni fáum.“

31. „Garpar þora,“ Grímur tér,
„grobbið reyna þitt og hendur;
á hólmi eg skora hrikinn þér,
hafi meyna sá sem stendur.“

32. „Þess skal njóta,“ Ketill kvað,
„kappa næga hefi eg inni;
héðan fljótast farðu á stað,
fyrir en dægur ævi linni.“

33. Gyðjan Freyja Gimli á
sem glæðir blíðar tilfinningar
nú með eigin augum sá
ástarstríðið brúði þvingar.

34. Tók sem á, af hvítum hauk
ham, og brá nú skjótast viður,
loftið bláa straumi strauk
og stefndi þá til jarðar niður.

...

36. Varð í ranni þoka þá
þar sem vangi fálkinn skekur,
ekkert manna augað sá,
óttinn fanga brjóstin tekur.

37. Grímur fann þó fljóð sem ann,
faðmar þá í arma báða,
út úr ranni hvatar hann,
hinir sjá ei reyni dáða.

38. Inni hrindast hinir mest
haukurinn góði líður þaðan;
ljós í skyndi síðan sést
sá nú þjóðin líka skaðann.

VI 16–23 (braghent, samrímað or baksneitt):

16. Hólmkell segir: „Hitt mér þykir henta betur
að hafi fljóð á Hóli setur —“
húsfreyjan þá ræðu hvetur:

17. „Hingað skal nú heim til vor sú hýra píka,
þó ég eigi sjálf að sækja
sáðjörðina mána lækja.

18. Vil eg eigi Víglundur þá væli brúði
heldur kýs að Hákon fríði
henni giftist nú með prýði.“

19. Hólmkell það í huga veit, að hún mun enda
eftir brúði sjálf að senda —
sá nam því að Hóli venda.

20. Grímur fagnar hraustum hal með hverja prýði;
Víglundur sem vanda kvíði
veik á tal við Ketilríði.

21. „Hér er kominn Hólmkell en mér hugur segir
að þú heim með honum eigir
og hlýðin þessu vera megir.

22. Okkar samt þig ætíð láttu eiða minna
því aldrei muntu, afbragð kvenna,
úr ástarheitu brjósti renna.“

23. Gegnir honum fríðast fljóð og fór að gráta:
„Forlög munu á bága brjóta
að blíðu þinnar fáir njóta.

VIII 11–20 (gagaraljóð, víxlhent og oddhenda):

11. Hákon þá er hniginn lá,
og hetjan móð á velli stóð,
Jökull brá sér beinin á,
blossa tróð að stjörnu rjóð.

12. Illur dárinn ei var sár
eða móður vals á lóð,
heiftargrár sem argur ár
Óma hróðugt veifar glóð.

13. Berjast þeir nú báðir tveir,
bestum dreng þó lá við spreng;
þeirra heyrir hvína geir
heldur lengi um sóknareng.

14. Enginn má á milli sjá
mækjaprá hvor vinni sá:
sverðin grá við hlífar há
hljóða þá og fljúgast á.

15. Víglund blæðir allmörg æð,
Óðinsglæða veldur fæð,
bugar mæðin brjóstið skæð,
blóð um flæðir sóknarhæð.

16. Í loftið háa hetja frá
hjörnum þá og skildi brá,
Hildur grá þó herði stjá,
í höndum sá þeim skipta má.

17. Í hægri rönd, en vígavönd

vinstri brá sem skjótast þá:
aðra hönd við hlífagrönd
hjörinn tá af Jökli þá.

18. Undan gekk sá grandíð fékk,
gat ei eftir hetjan keppt,
finnur rekkur fíls á bekk,
fár sem heftir, spjótið skeft.

19. Eftir skaut þeim æddi braut,
á nam miða herðasvið:
Jökull laut, því fleinninn flaut
fram um kvið á gríðarnið.

20. Allir spá, að spekist sá,
spjóti á sem hniginn lá:
varð að náí fýlan flá —
feginn má eg segja já.

IX 17–25 (úrkast, frumhenda):

17. „Biðjið þið með blíðuskrafi
bræður harða
að flytja yður yfir hafið
Ísajarðar.“

18. Klæðagrundin Ketilríður
kafin trega,
um þær stundir angur líður
alla vega.

19. Langar nætur vífið vakir
vafin banni
sat og grætur svanninn spaki
í saumaranni.

20. Um þá nótt er bræður búast
burt frá Hóli
báðir fljótt að Fossi snúa
faxastóli.

21. Fundu bragnar foldu rjóða
Freyju trega:
hlýrum fagnar haddatróða
hjartanlega.

22. Svörin stillir seims við viði
svanninn hæfi:
„Funda milli finnst mér liðin
fyrna æfi.

23. Samt eg kætist loks að líta
á lífi báða,
margar nætur mátti sýta
mærin þjáða.“

24. Sest hjá sprundi svo Víglundur
sæll að kjörum
segja mundi sörvagrundu
af sínum förum.

25. Sagðist una svanninn því
og síðan tjáði:
„Aldrei mun eg amafri
að ástaráði.“

BREIÐFIRÐINGAVÍSUR

by Ólína Andrésdóttir (1858–1935)

(samhent, hagkveðlingaháttur)

1. Gyllir sjóinn sunna rík,
sveipast ró um Faxavík.
Esjan glóir gulli lík,
gleði bjó mér fegurð slík.

2. Samt ég allra svásast finn
sólarfall við Jökulinn;
vermist mjallar vanginn þinn,
vesturfjalla kóngurinn.

3. Í landsins hjarta lifði þar
ljósið margt, sem fegurð bar.
Nú er bjart við Breiðamar,
búinn skarti kveldsólar.

4. Munu enn á æskulóð
afbragðsmenn og tignarfljóð,
í sem rennur breiðfirskt blóð,
brim í senn og ástarglóð?

5. Breiða- fyrst á firðinum
fékk ég vist á bátunum
hjá aflaþyrstum, þrekmiklum
þrauta og lista formönnum.

6. Bundu þeir ærinn ægiskraft,
að þó bæri lagið knappt,
eins og þeim væri' í eðli skapt,
afl að færa á brimið haft.

7. Happalúkum hraðvirkum
þeir hækkuðu dúk á bátunum,
létu fjúka í ferhendum
og fram hjá strjúka holskeflum.

8. Faldasunna sál var heið,
þær saumuðu, spunnu, stýrðu skeið,
þeim var kunnug láar leið,
lögð yfir grunna svæðin breið.

9. Öllum stundum starfsamar,
styrkum mundum konurnar,
ýttu á sundin árarmar,
öxluðu og bundu sáturnar.

10. Hyldu ísar hafflötinn,
hætti að lýsa dagurinn,
ljóðadísinn leit þá inn,
lagaði vísur hugurinn.

11. Hver sér réði rökkurum í,

rétt á meðan áttum frí;
þá var kveðið kúttinn í,
kviknaði gleði oft af því.

12. Vetrar löngu vökurnar
vóru öngum þungbærar,
við ljóðasöng og sögurnar
söfnuðust föngin unaðar.

13. Ein þegar vatt og önnur spann,
iðnin hvatti vefarann,
þá var glatt í góðum rann,
gæfan spratt við arin þann.

14. Teygjast lét ég lopann minn;
ljóða metinn söngvarinn
þuldi hetju þrekvirkin;
þá var setinn bekkurinn.

15. Þar frá landi lífs míns far
lagði í andbyr gæfunnar.
Fyrir handan fjöll og mar
fann ég strandir ókunnar.

16. Gefa þér hygg ég hjarta og önd,
hugurinn tryggir sér þín lönd.
Æ meðan byggist ey og strönd,
yfir þig skyggi Drottins hönd.

RÍMUR AF BERNÓTUS BORNEYJARKAPPA

by Magnús Jónsson in Magnússkógar (1763–1840)

IV 15–18 (braghent, baksneitt):

15. Grátfeigin varð reffarist og réði greina:
„Mér er það nú mest til rauna,
megna ekki neinu launa.

16. Sé eg það, að sorg þú berð í sinnu ranni.
Hermdu frá því, halurinn svinni,

hvað ógleði veldur þinni.

17. Eður hvers af öllu helst þú æskja mundir,
lát mig heyra.“ – Laufabendir
listaríkur svarar kvendi:

18. „Öllu fremur óska eg, að öðlings dóttur
Faustínu eg finna mætti;
fálu veðurs mein það bætti.“

VI 17–24 (stikluvik, hringhenda):

17. Akron sagði feðgum frá
fylkis bragði illu,
vart um þagði vonsku þá,
vald sig lagði þeirra á.

18. Sagðist vilja seims við njót
síðan skilja aldrei,
eður dylja hlýðnishót
hvað sem bylja næði mót.

19. Náði jarlinn nýtan við
niðja spjalli hreifa:
„Hér á hjalli, þenki eg, þið
þurfið valla hafa bið.

20. Eftir fjöri ykkar snart
öðling gjörir sækja,
lýð til kjörinn lands óspart
lætur hjörinn reyna hart.

21. Illa sóma má það mér,
megn ef róma skeður,
móti fróma fóstbróðir
fara, og skjóma reyna hér.

22. Til jarldæmis hóf mig hann,
heiðri sæmir stórum;
illa ræmist, ef við þann
öðling kæmi friðar bann.“

23. Spyrja fjáðan föður réð
fofnisláða viður,
hvað til ráða honum með
hirðir dáða gæti séð.

VIII 13–26 (ferskeytt, hringhenda):

13. Söng í reiða kífinn kár,
kólgur freyða stórar,
Ekkilsheiða yfir flár
öldu skeiða jórar.

14. Sigla drengir dag sem nátt
djúpt um engi þöngla,
rárnar lengi hljóða hátt,
hjól og strengir söngla.

15. Kár með jöfnum þrótti þar
þá um nöfnur úðar
brátt að höfnum Borneyjar
beindi hröfnum súðar.

16. Fleinar hníga fljótt til grunns,
flet í síga reyðar,
svo af stíga hestum hlunns
horskir vígameiðar.

17. Upp á grundu einstig fann
öðlingskundur téður,
komst svo undir kastalann
kesjuþunda meður.

18. Hátt upp gerði hrópa þar
hoskur skerðir fleina:
„Býð eg verði Borneyjar
brynju og sverð að reyna.“

19. Hróp í staðinn heyrði þá
hirðir naðurs þetta,
múrinn gengur glaður á,
gerði hraður fréttar:

20. „Hver er gildi seggur senn,
sem oss hildi býður?“
Svara vildi aftur enn
arfi mildings friður:

21. „Kóngsins niður Lýdia-lands,
lukkan styður fróma,
Kaston yður, beitir brands!
býður hviðu skjóma.“

22. Spurning ferjar máls um mið
mána Herjans beitir:
„Sakir hverjar hef eg við
höggvisskerja veitir?

23. Manni ókenndum með ófrið
mér á hendur reisir.“
Orku-vendur utan bið
úr því sendur leysir:

24. „Fylkir stífi í Frýgía,
Fofnisþýfi hlaðinn,
bað þig lífi leiða frá,
lofaði vífi í staðinn.“

25. Ægisbálaullur spyr
eyði stála ríkan:
„Var þá nálavefjan kyrr
við skilmála slíkan?“

26. Hinn réð spjalla hjals af urð
hirði gjallars téði:
„Hún var valla hér að spurð;
hilmir snjall því réði.“

IX 57–73 (hagkveðlingaháttur):

57. Bylgjan spýtti boðunum
byrjar títt í hroðunum;
veðrið strítt í voðunum
ver, sem flýtti gnoðunum.

58. Súða lýsti af sólunum
síla víst á bólunum,
einatt tísti í ólunum,
að sem þrýstu hjólunum.

59. Lét á seiðalöndunum
lægis skeiða bröndunum;
áls á heiða öndunum
í hvein reiða böndunum.

60. Skemmti söninn skötnum sá
skerjalóni djúpu á,
þar til fróni Frýgía
fögur ljónin mastra ná.

61. Brátt fallandi byrjarföld,
bíta sandinn akker köld;
svo á landi setur öld
sín ljómandi fögur tjöld.

62. Vörður lýða fær þá frétt;
frægum býður sjóla rétt
heim um ríða hauðrið slétt,
hallar prýða sæti nett.

63. Boðið þáði saddur seim
sjóli, og náði ferðast heim;
höndum fjáðum tiggi tveim
taka gáði móti beim.

64. Sjóli ágætur sér við mund
setjast lætur gram um stund;
yndisbætur lífga lund,
lánast mætu kerasund.

65. Staupin bera þegnar þar;
þjóðir gerast ölvaðar;
góms um þverar grundirnar
gengu kera elfurnar.

66. Gramur kenndur glaður tér

geirs við bendi, frægð sem ber:
„Hvert erindi eigið þér
Óma á kvendi til vor hér?“

67. Stýrir lýða orðaör
ormahlíða svarar bör:
„Biðja um fríða baugavör,
best er smíðar yndiskjör.

68. Það er yðar dóttir dýr,
dyggðasiðar blóminn skýr,
sem til miðar hugur hýr
hjálmaviðar ekki rýr.“

69. Gylfi fljótur gegna vann:
„Gef eg snót og ríkis ann
álmanjóti, æfibann
ef Bernóti vinna kann.“

70. Mót öðlingi hóf upp hljóð
hilmir slyngur máls af slóð:
„Hans jafningi, hermir þjóð,
hjörs á þingi enginn stóð.

71. Vígi öruggt hafi hann,
herma gjörir þjóð með sann,
og til kjörinn margan mann,
mjög við hjörinn týhraustan.

72. Frek þó heita furða má,
ef fleygir skeyta megnar sá
styrjar veita vörn í þrá,
vel ef leita margir á.

73. Þetta reyna þó eg vil,
þeirra greina ef ljáið til
mistilteinameiða og fyl
mars í fleina harðan byl.“

by Grímur Thomsen (1820–1896)

(ferskeytt)

1. „Ófær sýnist áin mér,
állinn þessa verstur,
stóra jaka straumur ber,
stendur hann enginn hestur.

2. Áin hljóp, sem oft til ber
eftir milda vetra;
vertu í nótt, því vísast er,
að verði á morgun betra.“

3. „Væri ei nauðsyn næsta brýn,
náttstað yrði eg feginn,
en kona í barnsnauð bíður mín
banvæn hinumegin.“

4. „Skal þá, læknir, ljá þér Kóp,
láttu hann alveg ráða;
honum, sem fljóði fóstrið skóp,
fel eg ykkur báða.“

5. Vandlega kannar Kópur straum,
í kvíslina drepur grönum;
slakan lætur læknir taum
leiðratanda vönum.

6. Var í strengnum stríðast fall,
straums í ólgu halla
jakabólginn bylgjan svall,
blakk þó hrakti valla.

7. Óð hægt Kópur. Yfir skall,
æðar jökuls þjóta,
drengs þó hjarta drap ei stall,
drösull missti ei fóta.

8. Reyndi á beinin föst og fim
flaums í þriðja svipnum;

líkt og á skeri brýtur brim,
braut á stólpagripnum.

9. Komst þá Sveinn í krappan dans,
Kópur skalf á beinum,
er hann náði loks til lands
laminn jökulfleinum.

10. Af eðli göfgu fákur fann,
fæti að mátti ei skeika,
læknir skyldu verkið vann,
verkið mannkærleika.

11. Úr barns og móður bætti hann þraut,
blessun upp því skar hann,
önnur laun hann engin hlaut,
ánægður þó var hann.

12. Þó að liggi lífið á,
láta þeir núna bíða
í jökulhlaupi Jökulsá
og jakaburði að ríða.

DRAUMUR HALLBJARNAR BERGMANN

by Hallbjörn Bergmann Björnsson (1855–1925)

(ferskeytt, hringhenda)

Drauma undur orðið hér
um það grundum stöku
fleina þundur einn sem er
ern í blundi og vöku.

Í háseta hýsi fann
hvíld ómetinn undi
um skal getið eitt sinn hann
illa lét í blundi.

Svitableytu hnyklótt haf
hal af feitum dundi

mikilleitur, megni af,
mæðu og þreytu stundi

Halur snar þá vakinn var
viður svarar glauminn
firða skarann fyrir þar
fram svo bar hann drauminn.

Himingeima hulinn veg
hugurinn sveimar gladdur
þegar dreymir, því að ég
þóttist heima staddur.

Bænum hjá ég þóttist þá
þeli stjá með gljúpu
mæni háum hússins á
hvíta sá ég rjúpu.

Um hana glitið rósa rann
roða litað baugum
firðar viti að fegri en þann
fugl hef ei litið augum.

Numinn frá mér hreint varð hér
hyggju þá um teiga
físn varð áköf fyrir mér
fuglinum ná og eiga.

Flatur skríða fór ég þá
föt þó níða kynni
fuglinum síðan fékk ég náð
í fullri prýði sinni.

Enskur hundur þar kom þá
þeigi lundar hægur
hugurinn grundar: garmur sá
grimmur mundi og slægur.

Vildi frá mér fögrum hann
fugli ná og bíta
hann ég knáast verja vann

varð mér þá að hlýta.

Glennti hramma, hala skók
hauðrið þrammar gleiður
sókn allramma sá mér jók
svartur og kjamma breiður.

Rakkinn barði reif og sló
reynt hér varð um stundu
aðsókn harða en ég þó
annarri varðist mundu.

Handar var mín hreint orðlögð
hreysti, þar frá inni,
reyndi ég snar mín rómu brögð
rjúpunu bar í hinni.

Reif hann klæði margföld mín
mettur bræði og trega
grettið bæði og grimmlegt trýn
geipaði hræðilega.

Hart fram sótti síðan þá
sinnið rótt ei nýtti
loksins flóttu lagði hann á
löppunum óttinn flýtti.

VÍSUR

by Gísli Gíslason

(ferskeytt, hringhenda)

Lúinn hrærist lífs um stig
lundur hærist geira
árin færast yfir mig
alltaf lærist meira.

Ella myndi lífið leitt
lítið yndi og gaman
ef ég fyndi ekki neitt

eða bindi saman.

LJÓÐABRÉF FRÁ ERLENDI Í NAUSTI TIL SIGFÚSAR Í FLATEY

by Óskar Arinbjörnsson (1889–1954)

(ferskeytt)

Fékk ég bréf þitt, Fúsi minn,
sem fjallaði um kreppu og gengið
en hitt er verra að húsviðinn
hef ég engan fengið.

Heilræðin ég þakka þér
þau skal hafa í minni
en góður varstu að gefa mér
gagnið af reynslu þinni.

Holdið meyja heitt og mjúkt
hálf næring gefur
því hefur orðið þér svo drjúgt
það sem þénast hefur.

Kennt mun hafa þörfin þér
þínum tota að ota
enda kanntu meira mér
miðstöðvar að nota.

Ég vil spyrja ef ég má
og þú vilt mig fræða:
Kanntu líka listina þá
að lifa án húsa og klæða?

Ég má þreyja einn á strönd
oft mig beygja rokin
þú í eyjum heitri hönd
hýrrar meyjar strokinn.

Kofann hríðar hrista minn
hugarstríð sem boðar
heiminn blíða þegar þinn

þú án kvíða skoðar.

Þegar höldum hinsta haust
heim úr jarðleiksveri
eitt við setjum upp í naust
ósjófæra kneri.

Á einu merkist munurinn
á mönnum, herrum, þjónum
hverjir betur baggann sinn
bera þá frá sjónum.

Kjörin lífsins landi á
lát þig ekki hryggja
við skulum kannski kofa þá
hver með öðrum byggja.

Einn fyrir mig ef efni er til
annan þér til handa
en til beggja eins ég vil
að öllu leyti vanda.

Um efnið ræði ég ekki í bráð
úr sem byggja megir
en illa tálgað hárbeitt háð
hafa mun ég eigi.

Óglöggð lengra eygi veg
út í tilveruna
svo ei fleira segi ég
en sitt af hvoru gruna.

Svo kveð ég þig, Sigfús minn,
samt með rýrðu trausti
ævinlega er ég þinn
Erlendur í Nausti.

FJÖRULALLABRAGUR

by Martein Gíslason (1908–1941) (fragm.)

(nýhent, hringhenda)

Fjörulallar fóru á kreik
frekt þó hallað var af degi
heim þeir dralla og hyggja á leik
héldu að karlar svæfu eigi.

Var þar fótum enginn á
allir hrjóta vært í náðum
drauma ljóta dreymdi þá
drengjum þrjóta værðir bráðum.

Dýrin börðu og rifu af rögg
rekkar gjörðu værðir þrjóta
hristist jörð við hramma högg
húsið spöruðu ei að brjóta.

Angaði pestin óvætt frá
óaði flestum, það má letra,
einn þó mestur er að sjá
eins og hestur tíu vetra.

ÁRSTÍÐAVÍSUR

by Þorgils Þorgilsson (1884–1971)

(ferskeytt, hringhenda)

Vor

Vorsins blíða lýða lund
lífgar, kvíða ei seður
fuglar víða flökta um grund
fjaðraprýði meður.

Fuglasveimur furðudátt
frúr og beima gleður
lofts um geiminn líða þrátt
ljóðahreimi meður.

Geislar ljóma um grund og haf
glöðum rómi er sungið

loftið hljómar lífi af
lífsins ómi þrungið.

Grænkur víða grund að sjá
grösin fríð fá völdin
lækir hlíðum líða frá
liljum skríðist fjöldinn.

Vallar gróin grundin mær
gufar upp snjór um heiðar
líður um sjóinn léttur blær
laufgast skógarmeihar.

Skepnur fyrst þá fara á stjá
fagran gista haga
sínar listir leika þá
lausar við vistaraga.

Úti við bláan úthafssjá
eygló náir vaka
á heiðar gráa þokan þá
þéttum stráir raka.

Sumar

Að sumars blíða svífur tíð
síst fer að líða að kvíða
blómum skryðist brekkan fríð
blómsturhlíðar fríðar.

Unaðs hljómar um þá tíð
upprættur drómi kífsins
anga blómin undurfríð
allt er í blóma lífsins.

Svífur njóla af sjónarhól
af sævarbóli upp hafin
glitrar fjóla um grund og hól
geislum sólar vafin.

Rösklega slegið og rakað er

reitt heim hey af engi
knálega dregið, keppst við er
kveldinu er fegið mengi.

Haust

Sumri hallar haustar þá
hvín í fjalli og klifi
blómin vallar blikna smá
byrgð í mjallardrifi.

Vindar þræða um voga og strönd
valda ónæði tíðum
bylgjur að flæða og brjóta upp lönd
með býsna skæðum hríðum.

Hjarðsveinskall um hól og fjall
svo hrín í mjallarklíðum
árnar falla stall af stall
straums með falli tíðum.

Vetur

Þá vetur klæðist kufl sinn í
klaka þræðir sína
fellur á svæði fönn á ný
fegurð og gæði dvína.

Bifast land við brimsins gný
blómum grandar klakinn
fannir standa fjöllum í
af frera er grandinn þakinn.

Þá vetri út hallar vermir sól
víkja mjalla bungur
sér á hjalla og sérhvern hól
svella falla klungur.

Vors þá blíða að viku stund
vandar þýðum blænum
sérhver hlíð á svipri grund

serki skríðist grænum.

KVÖLDVÍSUR

by Símon Bjarnarson Dalaskáld (1844–1916)

(ferskeytt)

Af því nú er komið kvöld
og kærstur liðinn dagur,
rennur undir rekkjutjöld
röðull klæðafagur.

Sál mín brynni af Sjafnar eld,
sæl um njólu stundir,
ef hjá mér rynni hlý um kveld
hringa sólin undir.

BJARTIR MORGNAÐAR

by Stefán frá Hvítadal (1887–1933)

(hringhenda)

Vora tekur. Árla er.
Æskan rekur gullna þræði.
Sólin vekur, gegnum gler,
geislum þekur rekkjuklæði.

Sálin hressist, fær nú frið.
Feigð úr sessi hné í valinn.
Flutt er messa. Vaknið við.
Vorið blessar yfir dalinn.

Gekk þar lengi stað úr stað,
stukku hengjur blárna mjalla.
Víða þrengir vetri að,
vorið gengur nú til fjalla.

Lækir flæða, hækka hreim.
Hugljúf kvæði skap mitt yngja.

Engin mæði amar þeim.
Æskubræður mínir syngja.

Árglöð kalla ærslin þar,
yngist sjálfur vori feginn.
Hálfar falla hendingar,
hoppa álfar fram á veginn.

FRAM TIL HEIÐA

by Stefán frá Hvítadal (fragm.)

(nýhent, hringhenda)

Vængir blaka, hefjast hátt,
heiði taka, þrárnar seiða.
Sólheit vakir sunnanátt,
svanir kvaka fram til heiða.

Blána fjöll og birtir nótt,
brak og sköll um heiðarlendur.
Vatnaföllin vaxa ótt,
vetur höllum fæti stendur.

Týnast rökin — vonlaus vörn.
Vor kann tökin, fannir sjatna.
Sveimar vökull auðnarörn
yfir þökum silungsvatna.

Gott um veiði, gnægðir þar,
grænar breiður undan fönnum.
Eitt sinn heiðaauðnin var
eina leiðin sekum mönnum.

Þessum hlóðu örlög óð,
einir stóðu, lögin fengu.
Drifnir blóði daggarslóð
dalsins hljóðu synir gengu.

VÍSUR UM HORNSTRANDIR

(ferskeytt, víxlhent/hringhenda)

Þaðan yfir fór ég fjöll
frekar þandi göngu
fönnum drifin alveg öll
á Hornstrandir löngu.

Mjög eru tvennslags þjóðir þar
því á fenna láði
skýrleiksmenn og skrælingja
skjótt ég kenna náði.

GRÁNUVÍSUR

by Ásgrímur Sigurðsson (1856–1936)

(ferskeytt, hrinhenda)

Margt vill hrella huga og hold
heims er brellinn siður.
Fyrir elli ofar mold
allt má skellast niður.

Hörð mig þjáir hugar þín
hvergi eg nái þreyja,
hryssan gráa mátti mín,
sem margur fá að deyja.

Hún var ættuð Fljótum frá
firða kætti tíðum,
en kynþætti eg um þá
ei fékk rætt hjá lýðum.

Hún var lengi lífs á slóð
lista gengi búin.
Geðs um engi gladdi þjóð
galla strengjum rúin.

Hennar víða ei myndast mynd
á mótum þýðum vega.
Búin prýði beislahind

bar mig prýðilega.

Gild og há var hún að sjá
heldur kná því var hún
lýðum hjá því lýsa má
litinn gráa bar hún.

Harma felldi hófa ljón
hlín hjá elda laga,
er þaut sem elding yfir frón
eins um kveld sem daga.

Tauma mundum teygði frá
týru sunda lundi,
á reiðarfundum fremst var þá
fleiðraðist grundin undir.

Blak ei þoldi af keyriknút
kvalráð voldugt mannsins
þá nam holdið þrútna út
þyrlaðist moldin landsins.

Undan fótum grýttist grjót
geist að njótum sverða,
eins var fljót sem elding skjót
á reiðmótum ferða.

Bragna óslaka bar hún vel
bakkar taka að skjálfa,
sprengdi klaka, mold og mel
molaðist þakið álfa.

Geðs af róti gnúði mál
og grimmdar hótum stundi
leiftur þjóta lands um mel
logaði fótum undir.

Hvort hún þaut um for og fell
að fagnar lautir rynni
aldrei hnaut þar eða féll
ævibraut á sinni.

Kvæðið linna læt ég hér
lítt sem kynnir vana.
Gránu minning úti er
aldrei finn ég hana.

Nú er ég Gránu orðinn án
ei má Gránu finna.
Seinna af Gránu síst hef lán
sakna ég Gránu minnar.

FJALLIÐ FAGRA

by Sigurður Breiðfjörð (excerpt)

(langhent, víxlhenda)

1. Hér er yndi á háu fjalli
að horfa um unn og jarðar mó,
og lepja í vinda léttu falli
loftið þunna úr veðra sjó.
 2. Vinda andi í vöggum sefur,
vogar þegja og hlýða á,
haf um landið hendur vefur
hvítt, og spegilslétt að sjá.
 3. Straumar bindast brjóstum landa,
– beggja hlýna vingan má;
eyjar synda, sofa, standa
silfurdýnum Ránar á.
 4. Ekki úr sporum blómstur bærast,
– brjóst þeim gefa foldin kann;
vindar þora ei hót að hrærast,
því heilög sefur náttúran.
 5. Fossar skauta fjalla stöllum,
flytja í boga vötnin þunn;
lækir tauta í lágum föllum
og læðast voga fram í munn.
-

RÍMUR AF REIMARI OG FAL

by Hákon Hákonarson (1793–1863)

XIII 15–19, 25–28 (hagkveðlingaháttur)

15. Reimar fyrst og Fal eg tel,
fólkið kvista vígs um mel,
báðir lista börðust vel,
blóðugan hrista dragvendil.

16. Ruddu braut í fylking fram
fleinagautar blóðs um damm,
margur hlaut þá skáلكur skamm
og skaðapraut við hrottaglamm.

17. Blóðið þrátt af lýðum lak,
linaðist sátt við geira blak,
heyra mátti bresti og brak,
brandapátts við yfirtak.

18. Hers var munur lands um leir,
lítt þó uni kappar tveir,
kóngsins hrunu höldar meir,
hjörs við dunur svæfðust þeir.

19. Falur sér að fylkis þjóð
falla gerir vígs um lóð,
fram í herinn áfram óð
yggjar ber í hendi glóð.

...

25. Flötu merki fleygja réð
Falur sterki vígs um beð,
löndungsherki mætur með
mengið lerka heljar téð.

26. Samson hrellir sókndjarfur
sveit á velli blóðdreifður,
neyð þó hrelli niflungsbur
nærri fellur óvígur.

27. Reimar meiddi mengi á grund,
mörgum eyddi stálapund,
frægðir greiddi fylkismund,
fimmtíu deyddi á litlri stund.

28. Högginn stóru hvínandi
hjálms var þórinn sýnandi,
til heljar fóru hrínandi,
hinir voru blínandi.

HJÁLMARSKVIÐA

by Sigurður Bjarnason (1841–1865) (excerpt)

(ferskeytt, hringhenda)

66. Roðnaði klára hetjan há
hug af sáravörmum;
ljósa báru Þrúðar þá
þerrði tár af hvörmum.

...

77. Fór nú korða Fengur á
fákinn borða valda;
eftir horfði honum þá
hrygga skorðan falda.

78. Svona orðum svifar þá
silkiborða Nanna:
„Varla forða feigum má,
forlög skorðuð banna.“

...

82. Falda Borgund beið ei hjá
báru torgi lengur,
hjúpuð sorga hreggi þá
heim til borgar gengur.

RÍMUR AF ANDRA JARLI

by Hannes Bjarnason (1776–1838)

V 13, 28–29 (braghent, samrímað, samhent (skjálfhenda))

13. Andri snar drakk inni þar með ítum sínum,
og þjóðirnar hjá þengli fínum
sem þjáður var af lyndis pínum.

...

28. Drekkur skarinn drótta þar með dans og kæti.
Nú vaktarar ljót með læti,
litu fara mann um stræti.

29. Geist sá æddi, grand ei hræddist gaura skarann,
svörtum klæddur kufli var hann,
kylfu ómæddur gadda bar hann.

SIGLINGAVÍSUR

(ferskeytt, hringhenda)

Hranna skríður hesturinn
hafs úr stríðu róti
Siglu- fríði fjörðurinn
faðminn býður móti.

Voðir teygja veðrin hörð
vart þótt fleygið kafi.
Inn á Eyja- fagran fjörð
framan úr reginhafi.

(*Ásgrímur Sigurðsson*)

Stjörnur lýsa und logahjúp
leið á hnýsu mýri
fram um Ísafjarðardjúp
firðum stanza stýri.

VÍSUR UM ODD JÓHANNSSON FRÁ SIGLUNESI

(ferskeytt/stikluvik)

Oddur minn er ærustór
unan fylgir halnum
gaf mér núna brenndan bjór
bóndi á Engidalnum.

(Símon Dalaskáld)

Oddur ræður Engidal
orku bóndinn slyngi
kaldan fram um keilusal
kapteinn á Víkingi.

(Símon Dalaskáld)

Oddur græðis grundu á
gota beitir ranga
þó að æði aldan blá
ekki hræðist drengur sá.

(Björn Pétursson)

Djarft þá glæðist dagurinn
djarfur rær á sæinn.
Á þótt flæði aldan stinn
ekki hræðist karlfuglinn.

(Þorleifur Þorleifsson)

Hirðir kýr og kindurnar
karl í betra lagi.
Oddur stýrir öldumar
yfir mýri skervallar.

(Þorleifur Þorleifsson)