

Eiríksmál (Eirik's poem), anonymous skaldic poem from c. 954, composed for Eiríkr blóðøx ("bloodaxe") Haraldsson, king of Norway

1. Hvat's þat drauma, hugðumk fyr dag rísa Valhǫll at ryðja fyr vegnu folki; vakðak Einherja, baðk upp rísa, bekki at stráa, bjórker at leyðra, valkyrjur vín bera sem vísi kæmi.	1. "What kind of dream is it in which just before daybreak I thought I cleared Valhǫll for coming of slain men? I waked the Einherjar, bade valkyries rise up, to strew the bench and scour the beakers, wine to carry as for a king's coming.	The initial speaker in this poem is taken to be Óðinn. "Einherjar" can be glossed as "lone-fighters" or "unique warriors."
2. Es mér ór heimi hǫlða vánir gǫfugra nǫkkurra, svá's mér glatt hjarta.	2. Here to me I expect heroes' coming from the world, certain great ones, so glad is my heart."	
3. Hvat þrymr þar Bragi sem þúsund bifisk eða mengi til mikit? Braka ǫll bekkþili sem myni Baldr koma eptir í Óðins sali.	3. "What thunders there," said Bragi, "Like a thousand stirring, or too mighty a multitude? All the benches are creaking as if Baldr is coming back to the halls of Óðinn."	Bragi is the god of poetry Baldr is a son of Óðinn, who is dead and resides with Hel in the afterlife.
4. Heimsku mæla skalat enn horski Bragi, þvít þú vel hvat vitir; fyr Eiríki glymr, es hér mun inn koma jǫfurr í Óðins sali.	4. "Words of folly, speak not, wise Bragi, when you well know the truth: it resounds for Eiríkr, who will be coming here, the prince, to the halls of Óðinn.	Here the speaker is again interpreted as being Óðinn.
Sigmundr ok Sinfjǫtli, rísid snarlíga ok gangid í gǫng grami, inn þú bjóð, ef Eiríkr séi; hans es mér nú vôn vituð.	Sigmundr and Sinfjǫtli, rise up speedily and go to greet the ruler; invite him in, if Eiríkr it be; [he] I now expect to see."	Sigmundr and Sinfjǫtli are two legendary heroes: father and son
Hví's þér Eiríks vôn heldr an annarra? þvít mǫrgu landi hann hefr mæki roðit ok blóðugt sverð borit.	"Why do you expect Eiríkr, more than [another]?" "Because many lands, with his sword he has reddened, and a bloodied blade carried."	Here the first speaker is interpreted as being Sigmundr, and Óðinn is the second.
Hví namt hann sigri þá, es þér þótti snjallr vesa? Óvíst's at vita, sér ulfr enn hǫsvi [greypr] á sjǫt goða.	"Why take away his victory, since valiant you thought him?" "For the future is uncertain, the hoary wolf is looking grimly at the gods' dwellings."	Again, this is interpreted as Sigmundr asking and Óðinn responding. The wolf is Fenrir, who will defeat Óðinn at Ragnarǫk.
Heill þú Eiríkr,	"Hail [to you], Eiríkr,	This is interpreted as

<p>vel skalt hér kominn ok gakk í holl horskr, hins vilk fregna, hvat fylgir þér jofra frá eggþrimu.</p>	<p>here you shall be welcome and enter the hall, brave hero. This I will ask you: what lords come with you from the clashing of blades?"</p>	<p>Sigmund addressing Eiríkr</p>
<p>Konungar ro fimm, kennik þér nafn allra, ek em enn sétti sjalf.</p>	<p>"[Kings there are five], I will tell you the names of all, I myself am the sixth."</p>	<p>This is interpreted as Eiríkr replying. Finlay notes that <i>Heimskringla</i> names the kings: "Guthormr and his two sons, Ívarr and Hárekr; Sigurðr and Rǫgnvaldr"</p>
<p>Old Norse text edited by R. D. Fulk, from <i>Skaldic Poetry of the Middle Ages</i>, http://skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au/db .php? if=default&table=poems&id=9</p>	<p>Translation by Alison Finlay, from <i>Fagrskinna: A catalogue of the kings of Norway</i>, Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 58-9, My emendations are in brackets.</p>	<p>The poem is preserved in <i>Nóregs konunga tal</i> (The List of the Kings of Norway), where Eiríkr blóðöx's (Erik blood-axe) wife Gunnlod is credited with commissioning the poem in her husband's honor.</p>