

PULUR IN SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL: AN ATTEMPT AT SKALDIC LEXICOLOGY

Elena A. Gurevich
Institute for World Literature, Moscow

Large systems of synonyms used to supply variation of kennings, cannot but draw the attention of scholars investigating skaldic poetry. Where did skalds get all these countless numbers of *heiti*? There can be no doubt that most of these synonyms were created in the skaldic tradition itself which to suit its own needs was constantly remaking the extensive word-stock placed at its disposal by the common language on the one hand and the foregoing epic tradition on the other. The skaldic systems of synonyms are either the transformed lexical groups within which all the individual differences between words are considered to be irrelevant and instead of them their most general meaning is pushed into the foreground, or the sequences of the former *nomina propria*, place- and mythological names transferred from a number of unique beings and objects to those classes they belong to and thus turned into common nouns. Skaldic synonyms are also made as entirely new lexical units. Then some word-building means are used which are active only in poetic language. The reinterpretation of various linguistic material and its conversion into the wholly formalized and interchangeable poetic vocabulary is a characteristic feature of skaldic tradition.

The main sources of our knowledge of poetic synonyms are skaldic poetry and *pulur*, versified lists of *heiti*, composed in the second half of the 12th or at the beginning of the 13th century and preserved in different versions in several manuscripts of *Snorra Edda* where the sets of *pulur* are appended to the end of *Skáldskaparmál*. The longest of these versions forms a collection of 59 *pulur* and contains 1370 lines in *fornyrðislag* in which no less than 2573 *heiti* for 55 subjects are enumerated. The average length of a *pula* is three or four stanzas but there are even longer ones, e.g. a list of *sverða heiti*, containing twelve stanzas, or a list of *skipa heiti* which consists of ten stanzas. On the other hand there are quite short *pulur*, not longer than a stanza or a *helmingr*. As the only contents of a *pula* are poetic synonyms, its length corresponds to a given list of *heiti*. As a rule it is very large: e.g. there are enumerated 59 *heiti* for tree, 60 *heiti* for fire, 112 *heiti* for river, 114 *heiti* for bird, 123 *heiti* for man, and 170 *heiti* for sword.

The relation of these synonymic lists to the poetic practice of skalds is the problem, which never seemed to be of importance to the students of skaldic poetry. For a long time it has been taken for granted that *pulur* are catalogues of *heiti*, extracted from skaldic verses, and that their presentation in the form of versified lists could have served only one purpose, namely mnemonic. However, a comparison of the poetic synonyms which were used and created in skaldic tradition with those enumerated in *pulur*, demonstrates the self-dependence of the latter. In fact, the *pula* proves to be not so much a catalogue of real skaldic lexical stock as a *generator of poetic synonyms*. Moreover, as I'll try to show it, in regard to its means of making the *heiti*, the *pula* goes far away from skaldic prac-

tice, although at the same time it never exceeds the limits of skaldic tradition.

* * *

The main difficulty for the analysis of the structure of a *heiti*-system offers a group of synonyms, which can be found only in poetry or in *þulur* (for I insist that it's necessary to distinguish between both of them) and which are usually treated as "neologisms", or on the contrary as "archaisms", or simply as "dark" and "rare" words. The possibility to interpret these *heiti* as "neologisms" must be based on the fact that many of them have a clear word-building form (e.g. *holdborí* (þ: raven)¹ 'flesh-borer', *herberí* (þ: sword) 'battle-killer', *herbrái* (þ: sword) 'shining in the battle', *oigr* (þ: hawk) 'noise-maker', *herkir* (fire) 'tumult-maker', *vinduðr* (þ: serpent) 'winding around' etc.) and on these grounds it is assumed that such poetic names could have been invented by skalds. On the other hand the possibility of interpreting many of them as "archaisms" proceeds from some other reasons, namely that we know nothing of their origin, or that these *heiti* are rarely used by skalds but more often are recorded only in *þulur*. The stand-points mentioned above do not exclude one another. Skaldic synonymic systems are made out of various lexical layers and the difficulty lies in the fact that in practice we are not able to distinguish what we suppose to be "neologisms" from what is in our eyes "archaisms" and vice versa, nor can we ascertain the skaldic origin of the former. The very fundamentals of skaldic creative activity which force the skald to draw his synonyms from numerous and diverse sources making no distinctions between them, permits us to assume that some of these *heiti* (e.g. those of animals) might be originally euphemisms or isolated names of some other kind, once used beyond the bounds of skaldic tradition. At the same time it may as well be assumed that skalds could create their own synonyms and in order to do that use a number of active means of derivation.

Apparent difficulties one comes across while studying these *heiti*, will become even more complicated if we accept a wide-spread view on *þulur* as a glossary to skaldic poems. But if we put aside the opinion that each *heiti* in *þulur* was drawn out of either preserved or lost skaldic verses, we'll have to take into consideration the following facts. First of all, only fifteen per cent of these *heiti* were used in skaldic verses and even these no more than once or twice, whereas the rest eighty five per cent of them are known only from *þulur*. Secondly, if we analyze the use of the former, comparatively small group of synonyms, in poetry, it becomes obvious that a part of them (to be precise, three per cent of the total amount of the *heiti* under investigation) can be found besides *þulur* only in late skaldic poetry, i.e. mainly in verses composed in the 14th century. According to the above evidence it's apparent that this restricted group of synonyms, which could have been drawn out of skaldic verses by the unknown compiler of *þulur*, is even smaller than it seemed to be at the beginning. The existence of the *heiti* which first appeared in *þulur* and after that only much later were used by younger skalds, provides us with evidence that such synonyms were taken direct from these

learned sources, and maybe that could have been the practice of those poets who were making their verses on the decline of skaldic tradition.

As we could see, these *heiti*, although they occupy a significant place in *pulur*, are scarcely used by skalds. This fact needs explanation and probably has to do with the nature of their meaning. Even a few examples given above are enough to show the main features of this group of synonyms and first of all the most important one which is as follows. These poetic words as such are not able to point at their referents but they are supposed to acquire this ability in accordance with their inner motivation while playing the role of *heiti*. For example, the two *heiti* of fire, *harkr* (þ) 'noise-maker' and *hrapi* (þ) 'hurrying' can't denote, but what they are really capable of is to describe. They are formed in the same way as nicknames or names of mythological beings, which also characterize their bearers according to those features they are notable for (cp. the name of Óðinn's wolf, *Freki* 'greedy', or that of a mythological river, *Vegsvinn* 'swift on its way'). The degree of concretization of such characteristics may be different. The *heiti* of horse *glitnir* (þ) 'glittering' or the given above *heiti* of fire are the names which themselves (that is unrelated to their referents) are not able to point to a strictly definite object, while the *heiti* of serpent *eitrungr* (þ) 'poisonous' or the *heiti* of fire *tandr* 'lit' probably can do this. Characterizing *heiti* (from now on we'll call them this way according to the nature of their meaning) of the first type are nevertheless met in *pulur* much more often than *heiti* whose motivation allows to refer them directly to their definite objects.

If we suppose (taking into consideration the given facts) that characterizing *heiti* are mostly skaldic innovations created by skalds from time to time we'll approach the problem of their identification with their referents. Really, the words having the meaning of 'noise-maker', 'hurrying' or 'glittering' are in no way tightly connected with such objects as horse or fire and can be applied to various referents. A necessary condition to establish a unique tie between such names and their referents is their frequent use as *heiti* and as a result of this their gradual loss of actuality of inner form up to the conversion of such *heiti* into unmotivated denotations. Probably, this is the case with comparatively few characterizing *heiti*, which are often used in skaldic verses during several centuries (e.g. *heiti* for sea *græðir* 'rising' to *græða* or *víðir* 'broadly stretching' to *víðr*). If the inner form of these *heiti* is no more essential than the inner form of a neologism itself, that is of a *heiti* created by a skald for the nonce and never adopted by the tradition (though carefully put into a *pulur*) is by all means relevant and accordingly the problem of its identification with its referent must be important. One can suppose that the referential meaning of such a *heiti* must be suggested either by the context of a *vísa* (first of all in case of its independent use in verses) or by the context of a *kenn-*ing. In practice it's usually like this.

Here are some examples. In the fifth stanza of *Pórfinnssdrápa* Arnórr uses the word *skelkvingr* ('frightening') in the context which shows that it is the *heiti* of a sword, *Hilmir rauð í hjalma / hreggi skelkving's eggjar* 'The ruler reddened in the

storm of helmets (i.e. in the battle) the edges of his sword'². This is the only place where the *heiti* is recorded. Special attention deserve those cases when characterizing *heiti* are used in kennings. In the tenth *lausavísa* by Kormákr the *heiti hyltingr* 'forest-dweller' as a part of the kenning for man *pollr hyltinga vallar* is most likely to indicate a serpent ('the fir-tree of the field of the serpent, i.e. of gold') and in his fifteenth *lausavísa* the word *herkir* 'noise-maker' in the kenning for woman *sunds herkis Gunnr* can denote only fire ('Gunnr of the fire of the strait, i.e. of gold'). In the last case the possibility of reference of this *heiti* is provided by its use in the *tvíkennt* because the kenning *sunds herkir* itself, when the meaning of the base word is not clear, cannot denote gold, for the modifiers of this kind are typical for the kenning of ship as well. But to correlate a kenning as a whole with its referent it's not always obligatory to know the exact meaning of one of its components. So, we can only guess that the *heiti ófr* 'threatening' (?) used by Sturla Þórðarson as part of the kenning for man *ófs dynviðr* 'the roaring tree of ...' (*Skjd.* II B, 134, 11) denotes a sword. The modifiers in this kenning are usually names of various weapons or armour.

The above mentioned examples (it's possible to give even more of them) show that the use of characterizing *heiti* is naturally restricted. The possibility of reference of such names to their supposed objects depends on the general context or the structure of kenning. The obvious dependence of characterizing *heiti* on the context (either of a *vísa* or that of a kenning) provides us with the evidence that most of such names must be skaldic innovations. Otherwise they wouldn't need the support a skald always searches for them. Not in all cases a skald is able to introduce in his verses a completely new lexical unit which is in no way connected with the referent he needs to name. This must be the reason of a relatively restricted use of characterizing *heiti* in the preserved verses. Then, how should one account for the fact that though skalds scarcely resorted to characterizing *heiti* such designations constitute more than one third of the general amount of *heiti* in *pulur*?

To answer this question will be possible if we analyze the percentage of characterizing *heiti* in *pulur*. It turns out that the highest percentage of characterizing *heiti* in synonymic systems (more than fifty per cent) is found first of all in *pulur* enumerating *heiti* of animals, birds (raven, eagle, hawk) and weapons, i.e. those lists which in the least degree can be formed with the help of the semantic means of creating *heiti*. Vice versa the synonymic systems which can be formed with the help of productive semantic means of creating *heiti*, i.e. by extracting the most general meaning of word (earth, bird, fish, tree etc.), and by transforming a proper name into a common one (island, fjord, river, horse etc.), and also by the use of words belonging to common language or those inherited from the epic tradition (man, konung, woman) demonstrate either a considerably lower per cent of characterizing *heiti* in their stock or their complete absence there. A generally outlined inverse dependence of the amount of characterizing *heiti* in *pula* (or even their presence in it) on the possibility to form its synonymic system at the expense of the units of some other types allows to suppose that the author of *pulur* resorted to characterizing *heiti* mostly when he was short of *heiti* to name

a certain object. This very fact makes us think that characterizing *heiti* were being created in *pulur* and by their author. In this connection one can remember that only fifteen per cent of the general amount of such *heiti* are used in poetry from which twelve per cent are registered in verses created earlier than *pulur* and three per cent are met only in later poetry mainly that of the 14th century and first of all by two skalds, Einar Gilsson and Árni Jónsson. These facts prove that the above mentioned supposition is true. As for the main proof of the learned origin of the majority of characterizing *heiti* it should be searched in the structure of a synonymic list of *pula*.

It's essential that characterizing *heiti* in *pulur* are created not only in keeping with a limited and productive set of derivation means used mainly in skaldic poetry and in mythological nomination but they also follow certain semantic types and often form separate semantic systems within a *pula*. Because of lack of space we can give here only a few examples of such semantic systems.

1. Raven: 'borer' - *boringi* (p), *holdbori* (p);
2. Hawk: 'noise-maker' - *göllungr*, *olgr* (p), *prómmungr* (p); *ymir* (p);
3. Hawk: 'fooling' - *ginnarr* (p), *ginnungr*;
4. Horse: 'bright - glittering' - *glitnir* (p), *bráinn* (p), *vegbjartr* (p), *vigglitnir* (p); cp. the names of mythological horses which are enumerated as *heiti* in the same *pula*: *glær*, *gyllir*, *glæðr*;
5. Serpent: 'glittering' - *bráinn* (p), *fánn* (p), *fránn*, *fræningr*, *seimír* (p);
6. Serpent: 'winding around' - *reimír* (p), *vinduðr* (p);
7. Serpent: 'forest-dweller' - *hyltingr*, *viðnir* (p), *holtskriði* (p); cp. 'heath-dweller' - *heiðbúi* (p) and perhaps the name of a mythological serpent *móinn*;
8. Wind: 'noise-maker' - *þjótr* (p), *óhljóðr* (p), *gneggjuðr* (p) ('neighing'); cp. the names for wind in Alv. 20, *hlömmuðr* and *epir*;
9. Fire: 'noise-maker' - *harkr* (p) (cp. *herkir* to *hark* 'tumult' which is used only once in poetry and is not listed in the *pula*, *skerkir* (p), *snóra* (p), *túsi* (p), *olgr* (p), *dunsuðr* (p), *dusill* (p), and perhaps *dúni* (p);
10. Fire: 'hurrying - quick' - *hrapi* (p), *hripuðr* (which is also in Grm.1), *hvötuðr* (p); cp. the name for fire in Alv. 26, *hröðuðr*;
11. Moon: 'hurrying - moving' - *skýðir* (p), *æki* (p);
12. Sea: 'noise-maker' - *gjalfir*, *gjallir* (p), *snapi* (p) 'snuffling', and perhaps *gniðr* (p);
13. River: 'noise-maker' - *gilling* (p), *dún* (p), *dyn* (p), *prym* (p); cp. the names of mythological rivers which are listed as *heiti* in the same *pula*: *gjöll* and *þyn*;
14. River: 'glittering' - *glóð*, *glit* (p), *bró* (p); cp. the name of a river *leiptr* in the same *pula*;
15. Sword: 'noise-maker' - *gjallir*, *gellir* (p-?), *gellingr* (p), *galmr* (p), *blær* (p) 'bleating', *skerkir* (p), *primarr* (p).

We could give more examples of this phenomenon. Of course these semantic systems do not embrace all the characterizing *heiti* in *pulur*. A great number of lexical units which don't follow derivation means productive for *pula* or have no clear inner form are beyond their limits. But the very possibility to

find such semantic systems is of great importance for studying *heiti* in *pulur*. The fact of their existence not only makes it evident that characterizing *heiti* could and had to be created in *pulur* but it also gives a necessary direction for etymologization of a number of lexical units recorded in *pula*-lists. The point of view that *pulur* are no more than a glossary to skaldic verses containing mostly an archaic layer of poetic vocabulary is reflected as a rule in the etymological research of their lexical stock. We would not go wrong if we state that only *heiti* with an absolutely clear inner form have not obtained most complicated explanations in dictionaries. Such explanations usually make impossible the very assumption that they could ever have been derived from some well-known Icelandic words. On the other hand, if we follow the point of view that *pulur* are a certain generator of poetic synonyms, then the way of their etymological investigation should be different. Only when one is sure that it's impossible to find the nearest derivative or any semantic ties for *heiti* contained in *pulur* one should search for other and more remote etymological correspondences which can throw light on their meaning.

As there is no place to dwell upon the problem of etymologization of this group of synonyms I'll mention only one example in order to show that it is the synonymic system of a *pula* that really can help to understand the meaning of a *heiti* otherwise treated as a 'dark word'. In *Altnordisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* de Vries relates the *heiti* of an arrow *fenna* (p) with the verb *finna* and for this reason assumes that its meaning is 'die ihr ziel findende'. The next word in the dictionary is the verb *fenna* 'zusammenwirbeln von schnee' which at first sight has nothing to do with the *heiti* in question. Explaining thus the *heiti* of an arrow, de Vries apparently is proceeding from its functions, although in the same *pula* one can find another *heiti*, *drífa* that is none other than *drífa* 'a fall of snow'. According to this it would be natural to relate the *heiti* of an arrow *fenna* to the verb *fenna* which has the same meaning and thus to interpret it as 'a snow-storm'. Such an interpretation finds support in the traditional image of an arrow which is evident from the kennings *bogna hagi*, *alms hagi* and the like.

The above example is typical in every respect for it can demonstrate not only the usual method of investigating *heiti* listed in *pulur* but also the usual way of inventing them. The *heiti* in *pulur* are often built according to certain patterns even in those cases when nothing indicates that there are some distinct semantic systems within a *pula*. In both cases the process of their creation is the same. A *heiti* of a certain semantic structure becomes a model for other ones, and as for the initial pattern, this can be either established in a *pula* or arise outside it. According to the types of characteristics one can observe in *pulur* it's sometimes even possible to find direct or indirect sources of the *heiti* listed there. As we shall see, they are twofold. First of all, as it could have been expected, the author of *pulur* while extracting poetic synonyms from verses, produced his own ones upon the patterns created by the skalds themselves. This fact is manifested both in the emergence of *heiti* which are semantically identical with those drawn out of poetry (cp. N 2, 5, 7 etc.) and in the structural transformation of the latter, i.e. in the creation

of a new derivational form different from that used by skalds (cp. N 3, 9). A variation of word-building means appears to be, in general, an appropriate technique devised to multiply the synonyms built in *þulur* (cp. *hornglóinn* and *hornglói* (þ) *ram* 'with glittering horns', *holdvarinn* and *holdvari* (þ) *serpent* 'eager for flesh' etc.). But nevertheless the most important part in the formation of characterizing *heiti* in *þulur* play the mythological names which undergo there such changes that have no analogy in skaldic tradition.

The transformation of a mythological name into a *heiti* both in poetry and in *þulur* is attained by means of its conversion into a common noun, the process which in no way can affect the inner form of a proper name. A *heiti* created that way is motivated only by a mythological being, a bearer of the name, but not by its meaning (cp. *Freki* 'greedy', the name of the wolf → *wolf*). However, characterizing *heiti* in *þulur* are often determined by the inner form of those mythological names which are present on the same *þula*-list. As one can assume, the names of the mythological rivers *gjöll* and *þyn* ('noise-maker') entail the appearance of such characterizing *heiti* for river as *dýn* (þ), *dún* (þ), *þrym* (þ) and the like which is only possible if the inner form of the proper name is treated as relevant. Thus, the position of a mythological name in *þulur* is ambiguous. It becomes a *heiti* when transformed into a common noun but since then its destiny in *þulur* is linked with that of characterizing *heiti*, for the former mythological names are motivated there again by their inner form and because of this can be used as models for new synonyms created in *þulur*. Moreover, as we'll see later, a mythological name transformed into a common noun could itself, when placed in a *þula*, become a characterizing *heiti*.

* * *

Already in those few examples of semantic systems which were listed above we could observe a remarkable phenomenon. In various *þulur* one and the same semantic pattern was regularly used in application to different objects. So, a word that means 'noise-maker', as a *heiti*, may be applied to a wide range of objects including both birds and weapons. The same can be said about such universal characteristics as 'glittering' or 'bright'. It's no surprise that these words can be as well used to denote such objects as sword, sea, fire, horse etc., for they are no more than epithets, which are merely characterizing each of these objects according to one of its qualities. However, it's obvious that such a phenomenon can hardly be regarded as a common one. Being epithets in respect to their inner form, characterizing *heiti* are shaped as nouns (mostly as *nomina agentis*) and are synonyms of such ordinary and poetic words, as *eldr*, *fúrr* ('fire'), *sverð*, *mákir* ('sword'), *haf*, *sær*, *ægir* ('sea') or *hest*, *vigg* ('horse'). Hence, they ought to acquire, in conformity with their functions (even if these are performed only in *þulur*), that referential meaning which was peculiar to a given set of synonyms. In other words, in *þulur* any lexical unit that means 'noise-maker' is not an epithet, but a denotation of fire, sword etc., and that's why it has to take upon itself the meaning 'fire', 'sword' and the like. Beyond all doubt, these *heiti* are not fit to denote and

so, the only way for them to obtain such an ability is to eliminate their inner form, i.e. their meaning as characteristics ('noise-maker' etc.) which motivates their relation to the referent, and as a result of this to turn into unmotivated names. One can see, however, that the application of one and the same type of characteristics to different classes of referents cannot but prevent characterizing *heiti* from establishing close links with any of objects they denote. This, again, can cast doubt on their ability to act as poetic synonyms. All the same, the author of *pulur* apparently was never concerned about the fact, for he developed the principle of universality of the semantic patterns used in his *pula*-lists to its logical end. Different *pulur* contain not only the same semantic patterns for creating *heiti* but also their identical manifestations, i.e. certain lexical units which are at the same time attached to several referents. For example, *olgr* (p) 'noise-maker' is a *heiti* for hawk, ox, fire and *Oðinn*, *gellir* (p) 'noise-maker' ('shouter') is that for ox and sword, *blær* (p) 'noise-maker' ('bleating') is used both for ram and sword, *skerkir* (p) 'noise-maker' - for fire and sword, *viðnir* (p) 'forest-dweller' - for hawk, wolf and serpent, *bráinn* (p) 'glittering' - for horse and serpent, *skolkr* (p) 'threatening' - for sword and helmet. One can see that these *heiti* are applied to different objects entirely owing to their inner form as well as to the possibility to characterize various referents in the same manner in conformity with their nature. The described phenomenon may be called the *polysemy of heiti*.

The polysemy of *heiti* differs much from what we are used to in a common language. Within *pulur* it is realized in a number of equal and absolutely undetermined by one another references of the same word the meaning of which (i.e. its meaning as that of a characteristics) remains invariable. Properly speaking, just the polysemy of *heiti* makes it evident that the meaning of such words as *olgr* or *gellir* is no more than 'noise-maker' and that the meaning 'hawk' or 'ox' or 'sword' which is put over it in *pulur* is only that of a *pula*-list and can be by no means maintained outside the range of *pulur*.

We see, then, that the correlation of the referential meaning of a word and its conceptual meaning if applied to characterizing *heiti* is far from being usual, for the meaning of a *heiti*, i.e. its denotational meaning proves to be not only different, but even in no way connected with the own meaning of lexical units functioning as *heiti*. Of course, while distributing these *heiti* to *pula*-lists or borrowing them from one *pula* into another, the author of *pulur* succeeded in increasing the amount of *heiti* in every synonymic system. Another accomplishment of his was that he displayed the relativity of these *heiti* as denotations of certain referents and thus excluded the very possibility of their use outside the set of *pulur*. Such a development which is in keeping with the nature of characterizing *heiti* is the most convincing evidence of their learned origin in *pulur*. Everything points to the fact that their author had no need to trouble about the fate of the *heiti* he created and least of all about their ability to act as real poetic synonyms. The mere presence in a *pula*-list was enough to secure their position as full and equal members of a synonymic system.

However, the polysemy of *heiti* affects not only synonyms built in *pulur*, but also mythological names. Being converted into *heiti* as a result of transformation into common nouns such names became motivated again, this time in *pulur*, and due to this do not differ much from characterizing *heiti*. The motivation of a former proper name by its inner form is expressed first of all as stated above in its ability to become a model for *heiti* created in *pulur*, and secondly, what is perhaps much more important, in its ability to be transferred to other referents. The name of a mythological wolf *Gerir* ('greedy') from a list of *vargs heiti* where it is among synonyms for wolf is transferred to that of raven (ρ), and the name of the other Óðinn's wolf *Freki* ('greedy') turns in *pulur* to a *heiti* for fire (ρ). The name of a serpent *Móinn* ('heath-dweller') is transferred to horse (ρ) and the name of another serpent *Níð-höggr* ('cruel-biter') to sword (ρ) etc. Sometimes mythological names which have nothing in common with referents behind *pula*-lists are used as *heiti* of quite different objects. So, the name of Freyja's palace *Sessrúmnir* ('multi-seater') becomes in *pulur* a *heiti* for ship (ρ) and the name of Forseti's home *Glitnir* ('glittering') the one for horse (ρ).

It's evident that the ambiguity of mythological names in *pulur* depends not only on the fact that after their transformation into common nouns they can behave as characterizing *heiti*, but on the very attitude expressed towards them by the author of *pulur*. Carefully collecting the old lore concealed in mythological names, the author of *pulur* at the same time "dis-embodied" the names themselves³ as he reduced their position to that of characteristics searching for what might become their suitable referents. It can be maintained, then, that the polysemy of *heiti* when extended to mythological name undermines the very fundamentals of the latter, for mythological nomination normally serves one purpose, namely that to distinguish the unique objects and beings or their different incarnations. As for polysemy in the system of characterizing *heiti* itself, it shows that creation of such synonyms never pursued any other aim than of increasing the number of *heiti* in *pula*-lists.

Thus, as we could see large *pulur* of synonyms listed in *Skáldskaparmál* are very far from being the catalogues of *heiti* extracted from skaldic verses. Moreover, in many respects they are in conflict with the systems of *heiti* used in poetic tradition. It may be assumed that the deformation poetic synonyms underwent in these learned lists is the direct result of their orientation on mythological *pulur*. However, having inherited from old mythological *pulur* their contents, names of mythological beings, and even the methods of their formation, *pulur* of synonyms differ a lot from their ancient ancestors. The mythological *pula* created names to describe the world completely and truly and therefore united them in sequences according to their sense and sound. In the *pula* of synonyms *heiti* are built first of all to fill up the lists and, as we know, the most part of these names cannot even perform the function they are intended for, that of real poetic synonyms.

Thus, as a poetic lexicology *pulur* of *heiti* demonstrate a great degree of independence in comparison with the vocabulary skalds made use of while composing their verses. However, a tremendous extension of the synonymic systems never supported by poetic tradition, can reveal another property of these

lists. Being a catalogue and a generator of *heiti* the *pula* enumerates different names of one and the same object, but at the same time, being a catalogue of all sorts of knowledge it enumerates the names of different objects all belonging to the same class of referents. The last purpose of *pulur* is evident from their susceptibility to medieval learning. We can find there a number of Latin and Greek words (*korvús, gallús, gallína, lúna, fengari, dies, nox, nis, laurus*) and exotic names (e.g. *Tífr, Ganges, Evfrátes, Jórdán, Níl* among *heiti* for river), which have nothing to do with skaldic poetic language and only prove the learned nature of *pula*-lists. This double function can be accounted for by the *pula*-genre itself, learned by its nature. Composed as a manual for skalds which discusses the poetic language in the poetic form, *pulur* of synonyms took the road which was chosen for them by the old genre of mythological *pula*. As a result, learned *pulur* came to be at the cross-roads of the two poetic traditions, epic and skaldic, and occupied a unique place in medieval Icelandic tradition of learned poetics.

Notes

1. Every *heiti* listed in *pulur* but never found elsewhere is marked with (p).
2. See Finnur Jónsson, ed., *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning* (Copenhagen, 1912-15; rpt. 1967-73), I B, 316, 5, 5 (hereafter abbrev. *Skjd.*).
3. The term was used in this sense by Alan H. Gardiner in *The Theory of Proper Names* (Oxford Un.Pr., 1940).