

## Anton Zimmerling

### The text-building functions of names and nicknames in *Sverris saga* and *Boglunga sogur*.

A prominent feature of Old Icelandic Sagas is that the narrative matter is not quite new. Moreover, a Saga is reliable iff it refers to events relevant for the audience and accepted as true by the whole community. The goal of the present paper is to provide evidence that proper names must be regarded as references to the background knowledge of the audience.

*Sverris saga* and *Boglunga sogur* (henceforth- *Sv* and *Bogl*) are especially interesting, since there is no historical distance between the story and the moment of script. The names of characters might belong to the common background of the epoch including the information about feuds, politic sympathies and evaluations, and the narrator could therefore mention given persons without introducing them specially. However, facts accessible to his contemporaries are no longer accessible to modern readers, since they usually fail to learn anything particular about 400 persons mentioned in *Sv* and 160 persons mentioned in *Bogl* from the text itself. It is therefore essential to look beyond the text and to establish the distinction between expressed and implied in *Sv* and *Bogl*. The best way to do it is to analyse the proper names as a constraint of genre. We shall henceforth confine ourselves with personal designations.

The Scandinavian oral tradition has developed two major narrative forms - a heroic song and a Saga. The comparison proves that the usage of proper names in these two genres is crucially different.

The number of proper names in heroic poems of the Edda is close or identical to the number of active figures\*. From the

---

\*Mythological songs are not taken into consideration; on the contrary, West-Germanic heroic songs conform to this requirement, cf. [Heusler 1969] 1.

viewpoint of logic, a poem presents a set of predicates expressed on a given amount of subjects. Since all characters are involved in the same conflict, the proper names appear here as functions of the plot and might be analyzed as "defined descriptions" in Bertrand Russell's sense (cf. Russell 1948:74,84). Thus, Helgi from "Helgakvða Hundingsbana I" = "Sigmund's son" /HH I 6,2, 11,2 etc/, = "Hunding's killer" /HH I 10,5-6, 53, 5-6/, = "Sigrún's bridegroom" /HH I 19,29, 56/, accordingly, Hundingr is "Helgi's victim".

On the contrary, Gunnarr from *Njála* is neither "Skammkel's and Ottkel's killer" nor "Haligerðr's husband", but "Gunnarr Hamundarson from Hlíðarenda, hereditary landlord from the South Quarter", and his status is fairly confirmed by juridic codes as *Landnáma*.

If names in heroic songs just denote the referent's role in a given poem, a Saga-like name verifies him as a real individual. The ontological status of x (cf. x = Helgi Birgisson *BogI* 4) is established by the fact that he took part in some incident A where some other individuals y and z may be traced as well. Important events (battles or assemblies) which involve many people, serve as verifiers, since there exists some accepted version of them.

On this account, the Sagas need some redundant number of proper names which serve as "points of reference"; the reliability of a story increases if the narrator tells the names of at least 3 of 10 persons involved in an episode. Moreover, Old. prosaic texts apply designations, which enable the audience to link each character with some empiric contexts. Each character has a "full" or "expanded" name consisting of his personal name + extra appositive designation, cf. *Únass kumbari* (Sv 1), *Hrói á Kjarrastöðum* (Sv 31), *Philippus af Vegini* (*BogI* 4). The appositive element is understood as the referent's acquired characteristics.

The nicknames are especially interesting, since they are always induced by the way of life of this particular

individual.\* Although the nicknames might transfer information humiliating or gloryfying their bearers, their reproduction was, as a rule, neutral and did not imply pejorative connotations. This impression is born out by the fact that the nicknames do not replace personal names, but are steadily reproduced together with them.† It seems likely that the main function of a nickname was to identify its referent by ascribing to him some particular feature. We have direct evidence that the nicknames were frequently used in formal context, as in cases of address or appeal:

1) Þá mælti konungr enn: "Páll helti ok yðr sveit upplendinga, takið skíð ok skíðfaeri ok stígið á ok farið upp á bergit fyrir ofan þá ok ..." (SV 163) cf. also SV 45, 110, 153 etc).

The nicknames are usually kept apart from the other types of appositive designations. It is, however, clear that the borders were rather vague. Cf., e.g., the episode with Sveinn munkr (SV 172) who is described as Sverrir's scout and not as a monk; the wording "maðr er nefndr Sveinn munkr" (ibid.) implies that the narrator was not sure about Sveinn either.

The well attested examples from the family Sagas show that the nicknames transfer the information about some particular incidents. E.g., *Án hrismagi* "Án Brushwood in the Belly" from *Laxdoela* -this man dreamed that someone had taken out his guts and thrust brushwood instead; shortly after that he was wounded in the stomach. SV and *Bogl* provide us with similar stories concerning the origin of nicknames (*Gudlaugr*) *gnitaskor* "G. Lousy Hair" (SV 28) and (*Erlingr*) *steinveggr* "E. Stonewall" (*Bogl* 2), and once (SV 127) the character's nickname emerges from the context:

---

\* Proper names of this type, i.e. tied down to particular individuals, are called "embodied" [Gardiner 1954:16]. Embodied names are frequent in toponymics, cf., e.g. Dartsmouth -a) proper name b) "the mouth of Dart".

† Cf., e.g. SV 163: "many excellent merchants perished on this occasion: Sveinn sveitarskitr ("Sveinn the Shit of the country")..."

2) **Hreidarr** hét maðr víkverskr, er lengi hafði þá verið af landi í brott ok víða farit. Hann kom þat sumar í Noreg með bréfum ok innsigli því, er kallat var Bullbóluskrá. Þat innsigli hafði sent Kirjalax Erikkjakonungr Sverri konungi, en þat stóð á bréfum, at Sverrir konungr .....

**Hreidarr sendimadr** talaði oftliga fyrir konungi sitt erindi, ok tók konungr fyrst líkliga...

If expanded names are not commented upon in the same text, they may be regarded as quotations\*. E.g., the above mentioned **Hreidarr The Envoy** belongs to 35 persons who occur both in *SV* and *BogI*, cf. *BogI* 18:

2') Hann (=Pétr Steypir) reri þá upp á skip **Hreidars Sendimanns**. "He (=Pétr the Trampler) run against the ship of **Hreidarr the Envoy**".

We propose a working hypothesis that *Saga-like names are linked with coherent texts, so that each reference of type (2') implies the existence of a basic text like (2)*.

The family Sagas conform to our suggestion, since the tradition has preserved a lot of texts devoted to the outstanding icelanders of the "söguöld". The contemporary Sagas offer a puzzle, since we have nothing of a circle of texts devoted to the norwegians of Sverrir's lifetime. We have therefore to assume that the proper names in *SV* and *BogI* appeal not to the completed texts on their referents, but to the listener's capacity to build such texts himself.

If someone has acknowledged a name of certain **Hallvarðr hlíðarfaxi** "Hallvarðr the Stallion from the Slope", he should be able to utter a text of given length about him, as, e.g.:

[1] There was a man, whose name was *Hallvarðr*; ]

[2] On some occasion this *Hallvarðr* was called "*hlíðarfaxi*".]

---

\* Special investigations devoted to the nicknames [Kahle 1910; Lind 1921 ] discuss first or foremost the origin of particular nicknames. Usually the association between the verbal form and the situation of naming is trivial yet there are difficult cases, as. e.g. Þórðr inn lagi "P. the Short" from *Heim II*, 135, who was "strong and extremely tall" (ibid).

- [3) Hallvarðr hlíðarfaxi belonged to the *Birkibeinar* .1  
 [4) Hallvarðr hlíðarfaxi was killed by *Trondheimr's*  
 capture - *BogI* 11].

This level of understanding was reached only in the idealized model of the epic consciousness. Nevertheless, one should not underestimate the phenomenon of oral transmission: to possess any information meant to be able to tell it. *BogI* 19 serves as a fine illustration. One of the first listeners (or scribes) has found a name familiar to him, that of *Sárkvir snapr "S. Dolt"* (*BogI* 6,18), and added an extra episode from the civil war with this *Sárkvir*. Thus, the principle of naming - every name is induced by the referent's way of life - approves the status of all characters. The text-building function of Saga-like (or "Saga-ready", i.e. identifying) names hinges on their cognitive value.

We can now turn to features specific for *SV* and *BogI*.

Both Sagas provide no place for the heroic poetry, but there are glimpses of some minor genres - propagation, fables and anecdotes (mostly in *Sverrir's* speeches). The most instructive is *SV* 47 where *Sverrir* tells his troops before the battle that they should not be afraid of their enemies! the latter are just farmers who do not care much about the kings, everyone dreams of his sweetheart, *munfögur Jórunn*. This prototypical "*Jórunn with rosy lips*" would have turned into "a woman, whose name was *Jorunn...*", if she took part in an episode important for the Saga.

*SV* and *BogI*, indeed, refer to two Norwegian beauties! both cases conform to the same scheme - "a chieftain abducts the wife from her husband. The husband takes vengeance on the violator" - *SV* 16, *BogI* 8. Nevertheless, the Sagas do not mention the names of these women, since they play no active role. The narrator intended to tell a story about the chieftain's end, and his name (*Philippus Birgisson / Jón dróttning*) is of major significance. The information about the husband is scanty (note that we know neither his patronym, nor nickname), but his name (*Erlendr [prestr] / Þrándr [bondi]*) should be given as well, since his actions have caused the chieftain's death. The wife deserves no name, because the predicate "- be beautiful" is not an action up

to the "Saga mind"!

On the same reason, we do not know the name of king Ingi's girl in Trondheim (*BogI* 11), although the tradition has preserved the housekeeper's name: it was important to localize the king by the moment of Trondheim's capture. It is characteristic that when someone has to warn the king that the enemies are near, the reply is ascribed not to Ingi's concubine (*frilla*), but to some vague "women" (*konurnar*): warning is a speech action, and if the narrator decided to ascribe it to any particular subject, he were obliged to tell his name. Quite analogically, if the narrator prefers to say that the *Boglar* have left in Forsbjorg **one single man**, he has to adduce his name - **Forbjorn the Curved**:

3) ..ok letu þar enga mann, nema einn, er hét Forbjorn skisifr (*BogI* 16).

*Forbjorn* may of course be a fiction of genre, but his name increases the reliability of the Saga: it was, perhaps, better, to invent a proper name, than to say "some vagrant".

All the above stated enables us to propose a formula: *the Sagas are exclusively devoted to the active figures; people regarded as active should be provided with names; actions require definite names and, in turn, definite names should be verified by some particular actions.*

We have arrived at the conclusion that all proper names in *SV* and *BogI* may be explained as functions of the phrases like **one single man** (cf. *BogI* 16). It is therefore instructive to analyze the fragments which antecede the proper names in the Sagas, i.e. the *introductory formulas*.

The proper names in formulas of the type "x het naddr" behave as definite noun groups, which is emphasized by the means of syntax (relative clauses and/or anaphoric pronouns), cf. 1

4 a) *Eyvindr skrápi het naddr. Hann var for Birkibein, ok inn mesti hereadr... hann toku þeir ór kórnum í Kristkirkju (SV 27/).*

4 b) *Sa naddr er nefndr Þorgrímr, er fyrir var búgndunum ok aesir var þessa samnaðar (SV 21) .*

4 c) *Ok hét sá Andrés, er stýrði (SV 41).*

4 d) *Sa naddr hljóp í síðari lagi, er Helgi hét ok var*

**kallaðr byggvomb. (Sv 28).**

The analysis has shown that the introductions may be analyzed as mini-texts, whereby the structure of an introduction depends on the person's role in the Saga. Both *SV* and *Bögl* display a consequent system of narrative ranks. It is convenient to propose following classification for *SV*:

A) RULERS ; B) CHIEFTAINS ; C) EPISODIC CHARACTERS ; D) NAMES IN CASES OF ENUMERATION ; E) BACKGROUND NAMES.

According to [Chafe 1976] we will keep apart two cognitive parameters: the division into "given" and "new" elements and theme/rheme analysis. The informative characteristics *given/new* relates to words and larger fragments; it shows the position of the element in the text. E.g., the verbs of naming *heita*, *kalla*, *nefna* imply that proper names in 4a-d) enter in the Saga for the first time and are "new". The division into *theme/rheme* characterize syntactic structures, whereby the *rheme* is defined as "the communicative purpose of a sentence".

A) RULERS. This rank collects people whose social position ought to be regarded as unique. Hence proceeds the possibility to replace their personal names with descriptions, e.g. Sverrir /"the king", Margret/"the queen", Erlingr skakki /"the earl", ..../"the king's son", ..../"the bishop", and the narrator often applies it.

The RULERS are normally not introduced; the impostors, Sverrir (Sv 1) and Eiríkr (SV 59) form an exception, but they are brought up as ordinary people and not as king's children, so that their status is not approved from the very beginning.

B) There are 80 persons mentioned on at least two different occasions. We call this group CHIEFTAINS, because people belonging here are, as a rule, officers, rich landlords or governors (*hirdmenn*, *sveitarhöfðingjar*, *lendr menn*). The verbs of naming fail in the first reference to a CHIEFTAIN. Contrarywise, both examples where *SV* comments the origin of a nickname fall on this rank. (SV 28, SV 127).

The names of CHIEFTAINS always present "given" information; at the same time, their communicative status varies.

There are sentences where a CHIEFTAIN's name forms the focus of contrast and is "rhematic", cf. 1

5) *(Var þar Jón Gunnarsson fyrir því liði (SV 15)*  
"*It was Jón Gunnarsson, who) was the head of the*  
*troop*"; the rheme is put into brackets.

The neutral word order would be Subject- Verb:

5') Jón Gunnarsson (var fyrir því liði)

"Jon Gunnarsson (was the head of the troop)".

In a large majority of cases a name occupies the initial position and presents the theme, cf. 1

6) *Philippus af Vegini (var lostinn með grú). (SV 161)*

"*Philippus from Vegin (was stuck with an arrow).*"

The communicative purpose of 6) is to tell what happened to a CHIEFTAIN in the battle. This analysis goes from the assumption that both the description of the battle and the CHIEFTAIN's name are already given in the preceding fragment. The name *Philippus af Vegini* is, indeed, mentioned a few chapters before (SV 156), but the first reference can not serve as the basic context either, since its structure is identical to that of the second: the name remains thematic and unexplained:

7) *En Hallvarðr af Sístadir ok Philippus af Vegini (vildu*  
*bíða konungs), / en biskup réð at út var róit... (SV 156)*

"*But Hallvarðr from Sístadir and Philippus from*  
*Vegin (wanted to wait for the king), / yet the bishop*  
*insisted...*

It is, of course, possible to assign 7) a "deep structure" as, e.g. 7') "There was a man, whose name was (Philippus). Philippus (wanted to wait for the king)", but it would be entirely wrong, since the Saga does not permit to unfold such texts. The correct explication has therefore the structure:

7'') "There was (a council). Philippus / (was there). He / (wanted to wait...)."

Finally, the name of a CHIEFTAIN may be commented afterwards, cf. 1

8) *Asbjörn Jónsson, (kom fjórða dag páska til Korungahelli).*  
*Hann var af liði Magnuss konungs. (SV 8:3)*

"*Asbjörn Jónsson (arrived at Korungahella on the fourth day*



of Eastern). He was from king Magnús's men\*†.

C) EPISODIC CHARACTERS are those whose role in the Saga is restricted with one particular situation. All 50 persons introduced with *heita, kalla or nefna* belong to this group. The references are arranged as "short stories" (*þættir*) and consist of two parts. The exposition asserts the existence of X, the final part ascribes some properties or actions to X. The verbs of naming serve as existential predicates, which proceeds from the segmentation, cf.†

9) *Ljótr* het maðr. // *Hann* var Haraldsson. *Hann* var á bati ok tveir menn með honum... (SV 95).

The first part of 9) is confined to the very fact of *Ljótr*'s existence, and whatever extra information concerning him, even his identification (*Ljótr* = Haraldr's son) is ousted to the final part.

It should be emphasized that the distinction between CHIEFTAINS AND EPISODIC does not proceed from the character's social status: some CHIEFTAINS were surely of low origin (*þorparasynir* "villains" - SV 90), whereas the list of EPISODIC CHARACTERS includes some noblemen, cf. e.g. *Ivarr öldi, maðr gofugr* (SV.87). The clue is furnished by their function in the text: the first (say, *Ásbjörn Jónsson*, fig.8) are important as such, their names verify the narrative matter, the latter (say, *Ljótr Haraldsson*, fig. 9) are important owing to their role in one particular episode††, (thus, *Ljótr Haraldsson* is worth mentioning as *the man who found king Magnús's corpse*).

From a formal point of view, an episode is linked with a short text: the text presents several predicates uttered on the same subject. Hence follows that the EPISODIC names enter in the Saga at least twice, and their status changes: they are new/rhematic in the exposition, then their usage is

---

\*The example is not quite clear: *Ásbjörn* has been mentioned before (for the first time - in SV 53), but SV 53 and SV 8.3 are possibly furnished by different people, so the second narrator (or scribe ?) decided to repeat general information concerning this CHIEFTAIN.

†† The segmentation of a Saga into "situations" provides some difficulties: the description of a battle may occupy several chapters.

anaphoric, and they turn to be given/thematic.

D) A large number of names occur only in CASES OF ENUMERATION. The lists of Saga-like names have a close parallel in the Old Germanic *pula*, i.e. oral recollection of synonymic names. The rests of this genre are found in the epic poetry, cf. OEagl. poem "Widsið" and Eddic "Grímnismál". Separate *pulas* survive in the Scaldic tradition; some of them are found in the "Snorra-Edda" [Gurevitsch 1992:15].

A *pula* names a set of objects without saying anything particular about them; all we really have to know about the names is that they represent objects of the same type, say "DWARFS" or "KINGS" [Steblin-kamenskij 1974:106]. Accordingly, the enumerations of characters are homogeneous, since the Saga assigns the same index to them - all of them are, e.g. "the fallen in the battle of X" (SV 93), or "the victims of *Heklungar*" (SV 143). This general characteristic is often the only thing we acquire, if the name emerges in one single case of ENUMERATION. Thus, one should include both CHIEFTAINS in 7.) - *Philippus* and *Hallvarðr* - into this rank, if we had no other references to them, e.g. 6).

Most enumerations combine the names of CHIEFTAINS with those which do not occur in the other contexts. The favourite form of enumerations is a martirologue; the maximum - 18 names is SV 93. The names of the fallen usually enter in the Saga for the first time. The contexts of ENUMERATION require nicknames and patronyms, i.e. operate with identified individuals.

The formal analysis is: the narrator sets a classifying predicat, e.g. "-BE PRESENT AT X"; the correct substitution is the list of individuals (A, B, C, ... N). The predicate introducing the list is rhematic, the names are thematic. In contrast to CHIEFTAINS, the names are here derived from the text and ought to be regarded as "new".

E) BACKGROUND NAMES. Each Saga mentions people from the remote ages or in the remote countries. SV adds several exotic names as *Pharao* and *Adam* to the usual list of patronyms and names of ancient kings.

The parameters are: given/thematic or given/ rhematic.

The notion of ranks may be sketched in the following table:

A. RULERS B. CHIEFTAINS C. EPISODIC D. ENUMERATION E. BACKGROUND.

descripti  
vation +

given given (a) new/rheme- (new) given  
theme/rheme theme/rheme b) -given/theme} theme theme/rheme.

*Bog1* is 4 times shorter than *SV* and shows a higher proportion of proper names; it refers to 160 different people vs. 400 in *SV*. *Bog1* is scribed shortly after *SV* and begins exactly where *SV* stops; 35 characters, e.g. 20% of the total amount, are mentioned in *SV*. The assumption that *Bog1* relates to *SV* as to the basic *Baga* is confirmed by the fact that *Bog1* avoids introducing new objects, the verbs of naming are scarce, the names of most characters enter in enumerations.

Despite the fact that *Bog1* is furnished later, it does not follow the narrative method of *SV*, moreover, it presents a less developed compositional principle.

Each narrator has to select relevant information. *SV* has two metatextual passages where the narrator elucidates his criteria: "there have happened many things worth mentioning, yet we follow the events we regard as most significant, where the kings themselves were present" (*SV* 71, analogically-*SV* 163).

*Bog1* describe the society where the kings (children or impostors) serve as a cover for the fighting parties; both *Birkibeinar* and *Baglar* admit their own kings. Under these conditions the descriptions "the king", "the earl" become equivocal, and the opposition between RULERS and CHIEFTAINS is violated\*\*. Accordingly, the narrator has to follow not

---

\* *Bog1* avoids introducing new objects. The formula "X hét *madr*" is applied 8 times (vs 30 in *SV*); it introduces 5 episodic characters and 3 kings (sic !). The total amount of contexts with *heita*, *kalla*, *nefna* is: 87 (*SV*) vs 15 (*Bog1*).

\*\*The test "NAME/description" does not work if there are many possible substitutions, e.g. an expression as "The Earl" in *Bog1* 12 refers both to a) Hakon (*Birk*) b) Philippus (*Bog1*), since this fragment is devoted to both of them. And in turn, since "the earl" is just "one of the officers", a name as *Philippus* has in *Bog1* 11 two equally valuable meanings: a) "the earl" b) "Ph. af Vegini".

one central figure, the king, but a large number of field officers in both camps; the epic measure grows small, and we get a dry synopsis of local campaigns. There is no place for the learned eloquence, speeches and dialogues are reduced to the minimum.

*BogI* is arranged as sequence of loosely connected episodes and battle scenes, whereby new situations always introduce new lists of names. A lot of names appear only once, and all the Saga has to tell about the referent is expressed by the formula "X belonged to the *Baglar/Birkibeinar*". This black-white vision has an excellent correlate in the ancient historiography: special names for a "group of the insurgents" emerge exactly when the kings forfeit their status as legal RULERS, and *Sverrir* was, in fact, right, when he dated Norway's decline back to the election of the first king who was not king's son, e.g. *Magnús Erlingsson* (SV 93).

The structure of *BogI* implies following distribution of ranks. Major FIGURES act in at least 3 different situations\*\*, the names of CHARACTERS are bound with short texts, the rest of referents is set in one single case of ENUMERATION. All but 3 persons belong to one of the fighting parties. The number of referents mentioned in SV is put in brackets.

\* Monologues are ascribed only to the FIGURES. Quite analogically, propositional attitudes as "X SAID that P"/"X THOUGHT that P"/"X DECIDED that P" mark the names of the higher rank in the indirect speech.

\*\*The criterion gives the names of 2 women and 18 most significant combattants from both camps.

A. *Baglar* - 13 : "The KING" = [Ingi Magnusson/ Erlingr Steinveggr/ Philippus Simunarson], "The BISHOP" = Nikulás Árnarson; Arnbjörn Jónsson, Arnþorr foka, Benedikt af Gumanesi, Byrðr Bentainsson, Hreiðarr sendimaðr, Loðinn stallari, Nikulás Botólfsson, Philippus af Vegini, Þórðr dokka.

B. *Birkibeinar* - 71 "The KING" = [Hákon Sverrisson/ Butthorðr Sigurðarson/ Ingi Bárðarson], Hákon galinn, Pétur steypir; Margrét dráttning, Kristín Sverrisdóttir.

Table 2

	FIGURES +SV	CHARACTERS +SV	ENUMERATION +SV	BACKGROUND +SV
Baglar	13 (4)	29 (0)	34 (2)	( 26 (16)
Birkibæinar	7 (4)	25 (3)	25 (6)	(
Neutral		3 (0) NEW		

The parameters for FIGURES and CHIEFTAINS are "given", apart from 8 cases where the names enter in the formula "X hét mædr"; names in ENUMERATION are "new", except those that occur in SV. The communicative status is ruled out by the same conditions as in SV.

Both SV and *Bögl* evidence that the names in a Saga are arranged as a **data base**. The system of ranks is an idealized model of the epic world. It is no wonder that it is better expanded in the larger text devoted to a longer period (1177-1201 in SV vs. 1201-1208 in *Bögl*), with a natural distance between the moment of script and the beginning of the Saga.

The names of the highest rank, the RULERS, form the narrative focus and enable selection of information. The names of the well-known people, the CHIEFTAINS serve as "cognitive anchors" and verify the story. The names of the EPISODIC characters imply short texts; their purpose is to characterize one single referent and to explain his role in the Saga. The names set in ENUMERATION associate the characters in particular situations.

Each rank counterparts with its level of data analysis. The lowest level, ENUMERATION, offers a primitive model of situation; it classifies the referents by assigning them the same index; at the same time, ENUMERATION makes sense iff the names represent different objects. Hence, ENUMERATION is *the basic text confirming the identity of particular individuals*; if the list includes several people with one personal name, they may be distinguished only upon identifying nicknames\*, cf. *Formódr þasarr*, *Formódr fylheim*

\* King and contemporary Sagas usually present a large number of namesakes; the peak in SV falls upon the name *Sigurdr* - 17 different persons. Possibly we have to deal with an epic attraction: the narrator recollects first and foremost those names that occur in his text several times. E.g., *Bögl* mentioned 3 women with the name Margret; a) the

(BogI 18), *Gudleikr flotbytta*/ *Gudleikr skreiðingr* (BogI 5). The identification requires a list of names, and vice versa. §§

All the above stated leads us to the conclusion that in spite of the fact that *SV* and *BogI* have possibly not existed in the oral form, the composition of these contemporary Sagas still reflects the traditions of oral transmission. The framework of proper names antecedes the Sagas, and, in turn, to understand a Saga meant to derive a data base from a coherent text.

A few remarks on the constraints of oral performance. *SV* and *BogI* give us some hints on this account. On the one hand, a Saga-like text presupposes correct, juridically grounded speech and the attitude towards extensive monologue. Codified speech was characteristic for the folk assemblies and meetings. One of the most archaic family Sagas, *Heidarvíga* (it might be scribed parallel to *BogI*, i.e. about 1210), includes a formulaic juridic text - the "Oath of piece" (*Hvg*, 33). *BogI* refers to a similar oath proclaimed by *Birkibeinn* and landlord *Gunnarr grjónbakr* "G. Shaggy Back" (*BogI* 18). *SV* adds to Gunnar's portrait that he could act as intercessor before the KING and save - by a subtly organized speech - the deserter *Forsteinn Kugadr* "Forsteinn Startled" (*SV* 153).

On the other hand, the narrator has to address to many listeners altogether, since only few of them are able to tell the story on another occasion. A large audience gets together, beyond folk assemblies, also on a feast or at the KING's court. *BogI* concludes with an anecdote told by another

-----  
constant is "the QUEEN", b) "Dagfinnr's wife" - less reliable, the patronym fails c) "one woman from *Vindland*" - dubious.

§§ The namesakes may be safely distinguished as different people, if they are confronted in a list of names, [... *Eiríkr Tofason* + *Eiríkr* + ...] - *BogI* 18, or if they have different nicknames, i.e. designations linked with enumerations. Otherwise we fail to prove that. e.g. *Lodinn stallari* "Lodinn the marshal" (*BogI* 9) is not the same referent as *Lodinn bóndi af Leikin* (*BogI* 4), since the Saga gives no hints that the landlord from *Leikin* could not be elected the marshal.

landlord, **Pórir Vettir "P. Chatter"** - again in the presence of a king (Bögl 20). One of the listeners - king **Philippus** - found the story entertaining and told it once more. His listener decided to write it down.

#### REFERENCES

The texts are quoted upon:

**SV** and **Bögl** - Konungasögur, II. Guðni Jónsson bjó til prentunar. Reykjavík, 1953.

**Höim** - Heimskringla Snorra Sturlusonar, I-III. Um prentun sá Páll Eggert Ólason. Reykjavík 1946-1948.

**Hvg** - Íslensk Fornrit, III, Borgfirðingasögur. Sigurður Nordal and Guðni Jónsson gáfu út. Reykjavík, 1938.

(The numbers put into brackets refer to chapters)

Edda. Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern. Hrsg von Gustav Neckel. 4. te umgearbeitete Auflage von Hans Kuhn. I, Texte. Heidelberg, 1962.

Chafe, Wallace. Givenness, Definiteness, Subjects, Topics, and Point of View, In: "Subject and Topic", Ch. N. Li (ed.), New York, 1976, pp. 27-55.

Gardiner, Alan H. A Theory of proper names. A controversial essay. London, 1954.

Gurevitsch, Elena. Skaldische Synonymik und ihre Interpretation in den frühen islandischen gelehrten Poetik (über eine Systematisierungsmöglichkeit der *höiti* in den *Þulur*). In: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Germanistik und Skandinavistik, 30. Peter Lang Verlag, 1992.

Heusler, Andreas. Der Dialog in der altgermanischen erzählenden Dichtung. In: Kleine Schriften, II. Walter de Gruyter. Heidelberg, 1969.

Kahle, Bernhard. Die Altwestnordischen Beinamen bis etwa zum Jahre 1400. In: Arkiv för nordisk filologi, vol. 26 (1910), n 2-3, S. 142-260.

Lind, Erik H. Den Norsk -islandska personbinamn från medeltiden. Uppsala, 1921.

Russel, Bertrand. Human knowledge, its scope and limits. London, Austin, 1948.

Steblin-Kamenskiy, Mikhail I. Drevneislandskaja toponomastika kak material k istorii imeni sobstvennogo ("the evidence of Old Icelandic toponomastics and the history of proper names"). In: Spornoje v jazykoznanii. Leningrad, 1974.