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Epithets awarded to kings by the skalds and their potential value for historical studies — the case of Magnús góði

There have been numerous attempts so far to include pieces of skaldic poetry in historical studies. One can mention several contributions to Scandinavian encounters in late Anglo-Saxon England, the Danish Conquest of England 1015—1017 or the beginnings of the cult of Saint Óláfr in Norway, made by A. Campbell, R. Poole and T. Bolton and others¹. The urge to look for sufficient evidence in the skaldic corpus is distinct, despite some obvious methodological problems. Skepticism and caution are the effects of the wellknown fact that most of the corpus is preserved only in manuscripts that were written even 200 years after the postulated time of composition. Very often it is a matter of not only late but also poor state of textual preservation of either single stanzas (*lausavísur*) or whole poems. There is a case of potential later fabrications and textual variations, changes of content and attribution. This tendency is of course linked to a great extent with the problem of authenticity of stanzas, regarding their postulated dating and attribution².

All those important conditions of the preservation of skaldic poetry do not mean that the corpus has no historical value. Obviously, it is also the case of

¹ A. Campbell: *Skaldic Verse And Anglo-Saxon History*. London 1971; R. Poole: *Skaldic Verse and Anglo-Saxon History*. "Speculum" 1987, Vol. 62; T. Bolton: *The Empire of Cnut the Great. Conquest and Consolidation of Power in Northern Europe in the Early Eleventh Century*. Leiden—Boston 2009.

² See articles in *Skaldsagas. Text, Vocation and Desire in the Icelandic Sagas of Poets*. Ed. R. Poole. Berlin—New York 2001; and very recently S. Ghosh: *Kings' Sagas and Norwegian History. Problems and Perspectives*. Leiden—Boston 2011.

political encounters in 10th- and 11th-century Scandinavia³. The aim of this study is to pay attention to a particular feature of skaldic encomia of monarchs and rulers, namely epithets the skalds used to describe their heroes. Special, although not only, attention will be paid to skalds' references to ruler's reign over a specific territory and/or its people. On this occasion I want to refer to several important research questions. First of all, it is interesting to what extent those epithets reflect not only artistic and conventional requirements of the genre but the real state of affairs, that is either control over or claims to rule over a given land by a given ruler. Consequently, it is a question of potential priority of political accuracy over the skald's eagerness to meet the expectations of the genre and prove his artistic skills. Finally, it is a question of the circumstances in which skaldic court poetry was composed.

Poetry composed for Magnús góði (the Good), the king of Norway (c. 1035—1047) and Denmark (1042—1047), that to a great extent refers to his long-lasting conflict with Sveinn Ulfsson, gives us a good opportunity to analyse above mentioned problems. Importantly, we have various, contemporary and later, sources at our disposal that let us verify the accounts provided by skalds. Moreover, it is a case of poets who are regarded as historical figures, and their relatively large artistic legacy is well defined (regarding attribution and content of the poems) and preserved in medieval sources.

The several-years long war of Denmark between Magnús and Sveinn is thoroughly described by the authors of the kings' sagas. According to their accounts, shortly after death of king Harðeknútr, "Magnús took over Denmark"⁴. It was certainly the main cause of conflict. Sveinn Ulfsson, as the cousin of the former ruler, hoped to gain the throne after him. Sagas describe the most important stages and moments of war (initial) meeting between both rivals at Göta River, where Sveinn become appointed a jarl of Jutland by Magnús; Sveinn's treachery and alliance with Anund Jacob, king of Sweden; main military encounters: at Áróss, Æro and Halganes; then Sveinn's short alliance with Harald harðráði; finally Magnús' ability to deprive Sveinn of Denmark and the repression of his supporters⁵.

The conflict ended actually with Magnús' death in 1047. Despite another war, this time with Harald harðráði, Sveinn was able to keep power in Denmark and become a king⁶.

³ See argument used by J. Jesch: *Ships and Men In the Late Viking Age. The Vocabulary of Runic Inscriptions and Skaldic Verse*. Woodbridge 2001, pp. 32—33.

⁴ *Theodoricus Monachus. Historia de Antiquitate regum Norwagiensium. An Account of the Ancient History of the Norwegian Kings*. Eds. D. McDougall, I. McDougall. London 1998, p. 48; *Ágrip af Noregskonungasögum*. Ed. M.J. Driscoll. London 1995, p. 49; *Morsskinskinna*. Ed. F. Jónsson. København 1932, p. 34; *Fagrskinna. Noregs kononga tal*. Ed. F. Jónsson. København 1902—1903, p. 202.

⁵ See J. Morawiec: *Wolin w średniowiecznej tradycji skandynawskiej*. Kraków 2010, pp. 426—439.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 439.

Accounts found in the kings' sagas are to a great extent based on skaldic poems, mainly three of them:

- Þjóðólfr Arnórsson's *Magnúsflokkur*,
- Arnórr Þórðarson's *Hrynhenda-Magnúsdrápa*,
- Arnórr Þórðarson's *Magnúsdrápa*.

Both poets are renowned artists, who were active at the courts of various Scandinavian rulers. In the early 1040s they both found their place at Magnús góði's court. Þjóðólfr's *flokkur* and Arnór's *Hrynhenda* were most likely composed during Magnús' life, whereas the latter's *drápa* was most probably an *erfidrápa*⁷, composed after the king's death in 1047. I include also those of Þjóðólfr's stanzas that are supposed to be either part of *Magnúsflokkur* or closely associated with the poem by its content, and follow Diana Whaley, its latest editor, referring to them as *Danaveldi* part⁸.

All three poems present various moments in Magnús' life and political career, especially somehow retrospective in Arnór's *drápa*. Particular stanzas in a more or less direct and clear way, refer to following stages of war between Magnús and Sveinn Ulfsson. The extent to which both skalds pay attention of the audience (and the king) to these encounters, also suggests the importance of this conflict for Magnús' establishment as a king, first of all in Denmark.

Both Þjóðólfr and Arnórr mention major battles between Magnús and Sveinn and the former's fights with the jarl's supporters in various parts of Denmark. Besides, both skalds refer to Magnus' strife with the Slavs and his attack on Wolin. Interestingly, both the content of all three poems and the way Magnus was addressed by their authors, strongly suggest, that king's encounters with Slavs were in fact part of his campaign against Sveinn Ulfsson.

References to Magnús' reign in Denmark are not numerous in all three poems. Skalds recall the king's rule over particular parts of Denmark. It is Jutland in one instance when Arnórr calls Magnús *Jóta gramr* (prince of the Jótar) in stanza 3 of *Hrynhenda*⁹. There are three references to Magnús' rule in Scania. Þjóðólfr calls the king *gramr Skönunga* (lord of Scanians) in stanza 5 of *Magnúsflokkur* and *aldrprúðr allvaldr Lundar* (life-splendid overlord of Lund) and *snarr harri Skönungar* (valiant ruler of Scanians) in stanza 5

⁷ A poem belonging to subgenre of skaldic poetry (*erfíkvæði*), composed to commemorate deceased person, mainly ruler.

⁸ There are several editions of these poems. Here I refer to the very recent one of D. Whaley: *Þjóðólfr Arnórsson Magnúsflokkur, Stanzas about Magnús Ólafsson in Danaveldi; Arnórr Þórðarson Hrynhenda-Magnúsdrápa, Magnúsdrápa*. In: *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2*. Ed. K.E. Gade. Part 1. Turnhout 2009, pp. 61—88, 181—228 (henceforth D. Whaley: *Poetry*).

⁹ Ibidem, p. 185.

of Danaveldi part¹⁰. There is another kind of reference in Arnór's *Magnús-drápa*. The skald describes the king as *ballr Skönunga* (baleful to Scanians) in stanza 14¹¹.

Not surprisingly, all those epithets appear in stanzas that are entirely devoted to Magnús' encounters with Sveinn Ulfsson. Þjóðólfr chooses to call the king the lord of Scanians when he dictates oaths to the jarl at Götaälv. According to the same skald, Magnús is the ruler of Scanians and on overlord of Lund when his army chases Sveinn and his troops across Denmark. Arnór chooses to describe Magnús as baleful to Scanians when his army overcomes Sveinn's fleet at either Áróss or Helganes, depending on various saga accounts.

The epithet *Jóta gramr* plays different role. Arnór calls Magnús that way when he, in stanza 3 of *Hrynhenda*, bids a hearing of the king and declares that he will present a mighty poem.

It seems rather obvious that references of this type were used by both poets to juxtapose Magnús' reign in Denmark with Sveinn's claims and attempts to deprive the rival. The poetic message is clear: It is Magnús who has exclusive rights to possess the Danish throne. Moreover, when he fights with Sveinn as lord of the Scanians, it means he fights with a false usurper, who must be defeated. What is more, the term *allvaldr* (overlord) could be understood as a reflex of supremacy over other lords in Denmark. Then one would see Þjóðólfr's willingness to underline the fact that Sveinn should stand as Magnús' vassal who is now rebellious, and that is why he should be punished for his treachery. Interestingly, both skalds seem to suggest that Magnús treated Sveinn's supporters and allies in the same way. They, his subjects, simply betrayed his rightful ruler¹².

Rule over various parts of Denmark (literally) and the whole country generally is the source of king's pride, underlined in skaldic encomia. Magnús is worth poetic praise because he both gained power in Denmark and was able to keep it, despite Sveinn's attempts. It is especially seen in stanza 3 of *Hrynhenda* when *Jóta gramr* is preceded by phrase: "I know no other to be more outstanding"¹³.

The question of why did skalds decide to choose Scania to underline Magnús' authority in the whole of Denmark, has various answers. Obviously, it was a key region to control not only Denmark but first of all, the Baltic straits. Moreover, control of the region meant much easier access to recourses in Norway. Besides, one cannot forget about the importance and potential of Lund as

¹⁰ Ibidem, pp. 69, 92.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 223.

¹² See J. Morawiec: *Wolin...*, p. 431.

¹³ D. Whaley: *Poetry*, p. 185.

a political and ecclesiastical centre¹⁴. Later saga accounts underline the fact that Sveinn Ulfsson, making following attempts to drive Magnús out of Denmark, could constantly count on help from the Swedish king Anund Jacob. Every time Sveinn was defeated, he looked for shelter in Sweden¹⁵. This is confirmed by Adam of Bremen who, referring to this conflict in his chronicle, states that each time Sveinn was defeated, he escaped to the king of Swedes Anund¹⁶.

Þjóðólf's and Arnór's poems show that the jarl had numerous supporters in various parts of Denmark, and especially in Scania. It explains Magnús' repressions toward inhabitants of these regions¹⁷.

This situation is to some extent reflected also by studies on Danish coinage of that time. Magnús' activity in that field seems to be quite exceptional, especially in comparison to Norway, where there was no royal coin production at that time. Although, as in previous decades, Lund still was the main centre of minting industry, scholars observe extensive coin production in either old (Hedeby) or new (Odense) mints¹⁸. Moreover, among series minted in Lund during Magnús' reign, scholars are able to distinguish one that is characterized by illegible obverses and absolutely legible reverses. It is believed that this series may reflect the uncertainty of the coin manufacturers in Lund about which party of the conflict, Magnús or Sveinn, would finally win¹⁹. The further analysis of Danish coins from this period makes scholars suppose that about 1044 Magnús lost control of the mint in Lund and was forced to find new ones, listed above. It seems likely that it was at this time when the king of Norway and Denmark was pushed out of Scania, where Sveinn Ulfsson's supporters were in majority. Since then, it was the jarl who could use the mint in Lund and produce coins presenting him as the king of Denmark even before 1047, as some series, identified by scholars, indicate²⁰.

¹⁴ See B. Malmer: *On the early coinage of Lund*. In: *People and Places in Northern Europe 500—1600*. Eds. I. Wood, N. Lund. Woodbridge—New York 1991, pp. 187—196; T. Bolton: *The Empire of Cnut the Great...*, pp. 159—187.

¹⁵ J. Morawiec: *Wolin...*, p. 429.

¹⁶ *Adami Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*. MGH *Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum*. Ed. B. Schmeidler. Hannoverae 1917, p. 136.

¹⁷ J. Morawiec: *Wolin...*, pp. 433—435.

¹⁸ C.J. Becker: *Lund — Odense — Lund. Numismatiske bidrag til Danmarks historie i 1040'erne*. "Hikuin" 1985, Vol. 11, p. 178; Idem: *Magnus den Godes Hedeby-mønter-De første danske erindringsmønter*. "Nordisk Numismatisk Unions Medlemsblad" 1983, p. 43; Idem: *Nogle danske imitationer med elementer fra Knud den Stores engelske type „Short Cross"*. "Nordisk Numismatisk Årsskrift" 1979—1980, p. 92.

¹⁹ *Tusindtallets danske mønter*. Ed. J. Steen Jensen. København 1995, p. 26; C.J. Becker: *Danske mønter som historisk kildemateriale i 1000-tallet*. In: *Festskrift til Olaf Olsen*. Ed. A. Andersen. København 1988, pp. 125—130.

²⁰ C.J. Becker: *Studies in the Danish Coinage at Lund during the Period c. 1030 — c. 1046*. In: *Viking-Age Coinage in the Northern Lands*. Eds. M. Blackburn, D. Metcalf. Vol. 1. Oxford 1981, p. 459.

Those remarks seem even more interesting, when compared with poems referring to war between Magnús and Sveinn. The latter was probably quite desperate to underline his authority in Denmark by minting coins presenting him as *Rex Danorum*. Without doubt, both rivals knew very well that the mint in Lund was the most developed manufactory in the country. It may, at least to some extent, explain why both Þjóðólfr and Arnórr underlined Magnús' rule in Denmark choosing Scania as first and almost exclusive option. For the king himself, it was especially important to gain control of a region that would enable him to use very effective, additional channel of royal propaganda. The situation in the Lund mint suggests that we should probably treat skalds' references to Scania not as evidence of Magnús' rule there but as a reflex of his claims and both political and military goals during his conflict with Sveinn Ulfsson. Then, it is not surprising at all that both skalds did not hesitate to mention exactly this part of the country while describing the war between both rivals.

In *Hrynhenda*, Arnórr underlines Magnús' authority in Denmark, calling him *Skjöldungr* (descendant of Skjöld). He uses this term four times (stanzas 4, 12, 13, 20)²¹. Medieval tradition about origins or royal power in Denmark, authorized by various accounts leaves no doubt about the context of such references in the courtly environment. Arnórr chooses to do so in his poem when he: describes Magnús' sea journey from Russia to Sweden (stanza 4); refers to Magnús' fights with Slavs in Jóni and at Kongeå (stanzas 12 and 13); similarly to stanza 3, underlines superiority of his patron (stanza 20).

It is especially intriguing that Magnús is called *Skjöldungr* when skalds refer to the king's military encounters with the Slavs. Undoubtedly, Arnór's intention was to underline the fact that Magnús, invading Wolin and beating Slavs in the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, acted as the descendant of Skjöld, a king of Denmark. Consequently, all actions he was undertaking there, were also the result of his Danish policy. Interestingly, stanzas 12 and 13 of *Hrynhenda* (together with stanza 11, also contributed to invasion on Jóni), are identified by Diana Whaley as a part of the *steffjamél* of the poem. According to her, its possible role was to underline even more effectively, Magnús' virtues that strengthened and justified his rights to the crown of Denmark²². In this context, the implementation of the term *Skjöldungr* is not surprising at all. Consequently, such a way of describing the ruler was intended to supplement the image of Slavs (both Abodrites and the inhabitants of Jóm) as Magnús' arch enemies. Military expeditions against them, like other dealings of the king, were dictated both by the desire to justify the rights for the throne in Denmark as well as to keep it.

Additionally, in stanza 8 of Arnór's *Magnúsdrápa*, the inhabitants of Jóm are called *óskirð* (pagans) and *illvirkjar* (villains, evildoers). Rather without

²¹ D. Whaley: *Poetry*, pp. 187, 197, 198, 206.

²² D. Whaley: *The Poetry of Arnórr jarlaskáld. An Edition and Study*. London 1998.

coincidence, Arnórr, when describing the same events in stanza 12 of *Hrynhenda*, calls Magnús *hlenna þrýstir* (crusher of thieves)²³. We may only guess that in this case skald's intention is not only to emphasize king's sense of justice. One can link term "thieves" with the inhabitants of Jóm who are consequently called villains. It is true that we do not know what they stole but if it is a ruler's competence to punish them, we can assume by stealing they acted against the king who is now punishing them rightfully²⁴.

It seems especially important, when one remembers about primary purpose of *Hrynhenda* — praise of warlike and victorious king. Arnórr is able to complete his task also thanks to appropriate composition of the poem that at the beginning and the very end equally underlines both Magnús' superiority and his exclusive rights to Danish throne.

References to Magnús' kinship with Saint Óláfr are even more numerous in all three poems. Both skalds stress this fact in various ways, especially when they address their hero. There are six instances of calling Magnús *Áleifs sonr* (son of Óláfr), in Þjóðólf's *Magnúsflokkr* (stanzas 1, 5); in Danaveldi part (stanzas 1, 9); in Arnór's *Magnúsdrápa* (stanzas 3, 15)²⁵. In a few cases, this kinship is articulated in more sophisticated way. Magnus is called *bróðurson Haralds* in Þjóðólf's *Magnúsflokkr* (stanza 7)²⁶. Moreover, expression *kundr hilmis* (ruler's kinsman), that we find in stanza 11 of *Hrynhenda*, as Diana Whaley has already suggested, also refers to Saint Óláfr²⁷.

All three poems include also references to Visundr, Magnús' ship, that had previously belonged to his father²⁸. Three of four Visundr instances refer to Danish affairs, namely both skalds underline the fact that Magnús conquered Denmark sailing on his father's ship.

Not surprisingly, references to Saint Óláfr in context of war between Magnús and Sveinn Ulfsson are more frequent. In stanza 5 of Þjóðólf's *Magnúsflokkr*, the king dictates oaths to Sveinn as Ólaf's son. In the second helming of this stanza, skald directly linked references to Magnús' kinship with Olaf and his authority in Denmark:

réð Áleifs sonr eiðum,
 átt hafa þeira sáttir
 skemra aldr an skyldi,
 Skönunga gramr, hönunm²⁹.

²³ D. Whaley: *Poetry*, pp. 197, 217.

²⁴ See J. Morawiec: *Wolin...*, pp. 456—457.

²⁵ D. Whaley: *Poetry*, pp. 64, 69, 88, 97, 211, 225.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 72.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 196.

²⁸ Stanza 4 of Þjóðólf's *Magnúsflokkr*, stanzas 9 and 16 of Arnór's *Hrynhenda*, stanza 6 of Arnór's *Magnúsdrápa*.

²⁹ D. Whaley: *Poetry*, p. 69.

This example shows that both references (son of Óláfr; lord of Scanians) were of equal importance for explanation of Magnús' actions towards Sveinn and his rights to become jarl's overlord.

According to both poets, Þjóðólfr and Arnórr, Magnús waged war against jarl Sveinn also as son of Saint Óláfr. In stanza 1 of *Danaveldi* part, it is a case of sea battle, identified in saga tradition as battle of Áróss. Similar context can be attached to stanza 15 of Arnór's *Magnúsdrápa*, where skald describes fight on the shores of Jutland³⁰.

A specific way in which both skalds use references to Magnús' authority in Denmark, let us assume that king's military encounters with Slavs were actually part of his campaigns against Sveinn Ulfsson. A similar situation can be observed with reference to Magnús' kinship with Saint Óláfr. Both poets use them in stanzas describing both battle at Hlyrskógsheidr and attack on Jóm. In stanza 7 of Þjóðólfr's *Magnúsflokkr*, the king fight against Abodrites as *bróðurson Haralds*. In stanza 11 of Arnór's *Hrynhenda*, Magnús eliminates inhabitants of Jóm as *kundr hilmis*³¹.

Stanza 13 of *Hrynhenda* provides us with even more important instances. Describing Magnús' confrontation with Slavs at Hlyrskógsheidr, Arnórr calls the king *vári* (defender). Besides, he concludes second helming of this stanza stating that the defeating Abodrites was in fact a victory of "stout lord" (*digra grams*) that was granted to him. I agree with Diana Whaley that this phrase may allude to the legend of Saint Óláfr, supporting personally his son during that battle. The whole story is thoroughly described in kings' sagas and some *þættir*³². Consequently, we may consider early origins of the legend, maybe reaching even the direct aftermath of the battle. Such a view may be supported by another series of Magnús' coins, minted in Hedeby in mid — 1040s. This group is represented today by four preserved obverse dies. They show a nobleman, portrayed en face, holding a pastoral staff with cross in one hand and an axe in another one. All of these dies have obscure and completely illegible inscriptions. However, texts on three of them begin with IOLI³³. One can only agree with C.J. Becker that series in question presents Saint Óláfr, proving very early attempts to commemorate holy king and to bound his cult with new regime in Denmark, established by his son.

³⁰ J. Morawiec: *Wolin...*, pp. 429—430.

³¹ D. Whaley: *Poetry*, pp. 72, 196.

³² J. Morawiec: *Wolin...*, pp. 477—478; Idem: *Relacje skald — władca w islandzkich þættir jako reminiscencja kultury dworskiej w średniowiecznej Skandynawii*. W: *Kultura ludów Morza Bałtyckiego*. Red. M. Bogacki, M. Franz, Z. Pilarczyk. Toruń 2008, pp. 71—72.

³³ C.J. Becker: *Magnus den Godes Hedeby mønter. Den første danske erindringsmønter*. "Nordisk Numismatisk Unions Medlemsblads" 1983, pp. 42—47; Idem: *Olav den Hellige på danske mønter*. In: *Tusindtallets danske mønter...*

In this context, we can associate a term *vári*, used by Arnórr stanza 13 of *Hrynhenda* with the expression *hlenna þreytir* from stanza 8 of his *Magnús-drápa*, already mentioned. Both instances, used in context of Magnús' confrontations with Slavs, present the king as a just ruler who defends his subjects and eliminates those who question his rule. The latter are named very clearly by Arnórr in stanza 8 of *Hrynhenda* as pagans and evildoers. Magnús is able to overcome them as both son of Saint Óláfr and rightful king of Denmark.

The case of three skaldic encomia praising Magnús góði, in particular the way both skalds addressed the king, seems to be a good example of potential value of skaldic court poetry for historical studies, even for the period of the first half of 11th century.

Various sources, both contemporary and from later tradition, leave no doubt that the main task of Magnús as the king of Denmark was to maintain power and control of the country, constantly challenged by jarl Sveinn Ulfsson. Magnús was forced to withstand not only direct threats from Sveinn but also his supporters both within the country and beyond (the king of Sweden Anund Jacob, Abodrites, inhabitants of Wolin). Despite a series of won battles, the king had to accept the loss of control over Scania, that was treated by both rivals as key region to gain control over the whole country. The status of Lund as a developed urban site, important ecclesiastic and minting centre, absolutely justify Magnús' attempts to regain power there. The urge to keep the Danish throne made the king and his retinue constantly legitimize his claims. Magnús tried to prove his rights by presenting himself as a just and effective protector of his Danish subjects, able, supported by his holy father, to maintain peace and safety and eliminate their enemies. It included both the false usurper and his cruel pagan Slavonic allies.

Poems composed by Þjóðólfr and Arnórr reflect the same propagandistic flavour. Both skalds, praising Magnús, focus on his kinship with Saint Óláfr and his military successful encounters with jarl Sveinn and pagan Slavs as the main sources of his royal authority in Denmark. The king's claims to control over Scania, in a wider perspective the whole country, are justified by patronage of his holy father and ability to defend his Danish subjects before evildoers and pagans.

Undoubtedly, all three skaldic poems closely reflect the political atmosphere of the royal court. Their content, and in particular the way Þjóðólfr and Arnórr address the king, suggest that both skalds were fully aware of king's expectations. Thus, one can assume that there was probably much more space for political accuracy in their utterances than for free artistic invention, proving individual skills of both poets — the source of their status and fame in later saga tradition.

*Jakub Morawiec***Epitety, którymi skaldowie opisywali władców,
i ich przydatność w studiach historycznych —
przykład Magnusa Dobrego****Streszczenie**

Status poezji skaldów jako wiarygodnego źródła historycznego, a tym samym jej przydatność w studiach nad dziejami Skandynawii w X i XI wieku, od dawna rodzi dyskusje wśród badaczy. Ze względu na późny stan zachowania i charakter poematów słusznie postuluje się ostrożność w sięganiu po przekazywane przez poetów informacje. Nie oznacza to jednak, że ta kategoria źródeł jest bezpowrotnie utracona dla historyków, czego dobrym przykładem są badania na obecnością Skandynawów w Anglii przełomu X i XI wieku. Podobnie jest z poezją tworzoną na dworze króla Norwegii i Danii Magnusa Dobrego (ok. 1035—1047). Dotyczy to przede wszystkim sposobu, w jaki skaldowie zwracali się do władcy w poematach komponowanych na jego cześć.

Szczegółowa analiza trzech wierszy (*Magnúsflokkur* Þjóðólfa Arnórsson, *Hrynhenda-Magnúsdrápa* i *Magnúsdrápa* Arnóra Þórðarsona) wskazuje na dbałość ze strony skaldów o określanie króla właściwymi mianami tak, aby w pełni oddawały one jego zabiegi w sprawie legitymizacji swojej pozycji w Danii, szczególnie wobec konfliktu ze Swenem Ulfssonem, pretendentem do tronu. Poezja na cześć Magnusa wskazuje na to, co potwierdzają też inne współczesne źródła. Magnus opierał swoją władzę o Danii na pamięci o swoim ojcu Olafie Świętym, a sposobem na zdobycie efektywnej przewagi w walce o tron było przejęcie kontroli nad kluczowym regionem kraju, jakim była Skania.

*Jakub Morawiec***Die von den Skalden gebrauchten Bezeichnungen
für Könige und deren Rolle bei historischen Studien —
am Beispiel von Magnus I. dem Guten****Zusammenfassung**

Die Rolle der Dichtung von Skalden als einer glaubhaften historischen Quelle bei den Studien über die Geschichte Skandinaviens im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert löst unter den Forschern seit langem viele Diskussionen aus. In Anbetracht des Charakters und des Zustandes der Poeme wird es empfohlen, vorsichtig zu den von den Dichtern übermittelten Informationen zu greifen. Das soll aber nicht bedeuten, dass diese Kategorie der historischen Quellen für Historiker unwiederbringlich verloren ist, wovon beispielsweise die Forschungen über die Präsenz der Skandinaviern in England an der Wende des 10. zum 11. Jh. zeugen können. Genauso brauchbar ist auch die auf dem Hof des Königs von Norwegen und Dänemark, Magnus I. des Guten (etwa 1035—1047) geschaffene Dichtung, aus der man erfahren kann, auf welche Weise der König in den von den Skalden zu seinem Ehren geschaffenen Poemen angesprochen war.

Eine genaue Analyse von drei Gedichten (*Magnúsflokkur* von Þjóðólf Arnorsson, *Hrynhenda-Magnúsdrápa* und *Magnúsdrápa* von Arnór Þórðarson) lässt feststellen, dass die Skalden für solche angemessenen Namen für den König sorgten, die seine Bemühungen um Legitimierung der königlichen Macht in Dänemark, besonders angesichts des Konfliktes mit dem Prä tenden-

ten, Swen Ulfsson, vollkommen wiedergeben würden. Die Dichtungen zu Ehren von Magnus I. bestätigen die in anderen zeitgenössischen Quellen enthaltenen Informationen: Magnus gründete seine königliche Macht in Dänemark auf das Andenken an seinen Vater, Olav II. Haraldsson (als Olav der Heilige bekannt), und um im Kampf um den Thron den Vorsprung zu haben versuchte er, die Aufsicht über das wichtigste Gebiet des Landes — Schonen — zu übernehmen.