GERARD BREEN

"The Wolf is at the door"
Outlaws, Assassins, and Avengers Who Cry "Wolf!"

There are two very common patterns of disguise found among out-
laws, scouts, assassins, and avengers across a range of cultures. The
first, common in primitive cultures, is for the fugitive to disguise him-
self as a wild beast (often wearing the hides of this animal), and in this
guise to carry out his reconnaissance or dastardly deed. The second,
practised more widely in all cultures, is for the fugitive to simply as-
sume a new name and alibi to avoid detection. In Norse literature
there is a pattern of behaviour which combines both of these prac-
tices: when committing a secretive killing, hiding as an outlaw, enter-
ing a foreign hall as a stranger, or scouting in enemy territory, the fugi-
tive assumes an animal name (*Úlfr, Bjǫrn, Hjǫrtr, Hrafn, Ǫrn*) to avoid
detection. This name is given as a response to any who should enquire
as to the identity of the suspect; the pattern of the motif almost in-
variably requires such an inquiry, followed by its enigmatic response.

While this is an outline of the overall onomastic pattern of fugitive
animal naming in Norse literature, there are many variations within
the pattern. These variations are not arbitrary, however, but fre-
quently relate specific animal names to specific fugitive functions. The
pattern as a whole can consequently be best examined through its
various sub-patterns.

The first sub-pattern involves pairs of fugitive companions who as-
sume doublet bird names; this pattern is rarely applied to the more
violent type of fugitive (such as assassins), but more usually to exiles
or outlaws. Such an application might be influenced by the poetic
suggestion of depicting the exile as a wild bird. In *Víglundar saga*
Víglundr has to flee into exile with a companion, Trausti. When
Víglundr and Trausti arrive together on possibly unfriendly shores,
they consequently wish to conceal their identities. To do so, Víglundr
advises his companion that they should adopt the names of wild birds:

"Þat þyki mér ráð, bróðir, þar er vit eigum sökótt, at þú nefnist Hrafn, en ek Örn."[1]

The assumption of doublet bird names by these fugitives is per-fectly replicated in *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*, the only difference being the names used by the fugitives. In this saga a pair of warriors named *Hrafn* and *Krákr* keep their identities mysteriously unknown to their comrades.[2] This naming pattern they have adopted is enough to pro-voke suspicion among their peers, however, and to indicate that they must have good reason for assuming such fugitive names. When they present themselves in his hall, Jarl Þorgnýr sarcastically expresses these suspicions: "'Illt var þá til góðra nafna', sagði jarl, 'er svá röskvir menn skyldu svá heita'."[3] His suspicions are later confirmed. The pair are actually Haraldr and Sigurðr, sons of Játgeirr of England; they had to flee in exile from Heinrekr after he killed their father and usurped the throne. They then assumed these names to avoid detection as they wandered many lands: "En vit bræðr höfum farit huldu höfði um ýmsi lönd ok nefnt okkr Krák ok Hrafn."[4] They later return with military forces to avenge themselves on Heinrekr, and so their names also function as avenger alibis.

The sub-pattern identified in both *Viglundar saga* and *Göngu-Hrólfs saga* has a near-perfect symmetry. Both cases involve a pair of com-panions who assume doublet bird names (*Hrafn* and *Ǫrn*; *Hrafn* and *Krákr*) in order to maintain a fugitive identity during a period of exile. It can be assumed that not only the other characters of the narrative, but also the saga audience, could immediately recognize the introduc-tion of such figures on the basis of onomastic suggestion alone.

The secondary function of the names of *Hrafn* and *Krákr* as avenger names introduces the next sub-pattern: youths who are avenging their murdered fathers adopt hound names, and often undergo initiation as outlaw hound warriors, as they await their moment of vengeance. The specific application of hound names to these youths might well be prompted by two factors of legal and poetic terminology. First, the terms *vargr* ('outlaw') and *vargdropi* ('son of an outlaw') connect out-lawry with wolfish behaviour; this is the social status of these young

[1] *Viglundar saga*, in *Kjalnesinga saga*, ed. by Jóhannes Halldórsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 14 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1959), pp. 61–116 (p. 106).

[2] *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*, in *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda*, ed. by Guðni Jónsson. 4 vols (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1950), III, 161–280 (p. 186).

[3] *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*, p. 186.

[4] *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*, p. 268.

"hounds" as they await their moment of vengeance.[5] Second, the term *úlfr* can refer to a young family avenger; the term *hundr* could thus function as a diminutive form of this in reference to a very young avenger.[6] This combined status of the *úlfr* ('avenger') and *vargr* ('outlaw') probably prompts the suitability of these hound names.

The first case is taken from *Hrólfs saga kraka*. The sons of Hálfdan, Helgi and Hróarr, are planning to avenge the killing of their father by his brother Fróði. During this period they go into hiding, and assume hound names as a disguise:

> Þeir er j Vijfilz ey
> voru leingi
> og hietu þar
> hunda nǫfnum
> Hoppur ok Hö.[7]

The ruse works, and their hound names save them from detection by the object of their vengeance. They await their moment, and later avenge their father on Fróði.

Hoppr and Hó are not the only avengers who bear hound names while waiting to avenge their father. Haraldus was killed by his brother Frotho, who then assumed his position as king. The sons of Haraldus, Haraldus and Haldanus, began to plot vengeance on Frotho, and during this period they acted like hounds, wore wolf-claws as shoes, ate like hounds (*sub canum specie nutriebantur*),[8] and also assumed hound names as a disguise: "Latrantum quoque iis vocabula indita, quo minus latentium opinio vulgaretur."[9] After this period of disguises and alibis, vengeance is finally brought upon the murderer of their father.

While bird names are assumed by exiles, and hound names by young avengers, the name of the wolf is adopted by assassins. This

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[5] Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 2nd edn. rev. by William A. Craigie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 680.

[6] Cleasby and Vigfusson, p. 668.

[7] *Hrólfs saga kraka*, ed. by D. Slay, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, B.1 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1960), pp. 1–10 (p. 10). See also Otto Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen*, 2 vols (only vol. I published) (Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1934), pp. 207–208.

[8] Saxo Grammaticus, *Saxonis Gesta Danorum: Primum a C. Knabe & P. Herrmann recensita*, ed. by J. Olrik, H. Ræder and Franz Blatt, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1931–57), I, 182 (VII. i. 4).

[9] Saxo Grammaticus, I, 182 (VII, i. 4).

sub-pattern reflects a genuine hierarchy of danger, with the more dangerous role receiving the more dangerous animal name. In *Hrings saga ok Hringvarðar*, Randviður is a warrior sent to assassinate Hringur by Márus. When he finds his prey, he is questioned as to his name and assumes a wolf name: "Hann kvaðst Úlfur heita."[10] He is nevertheless detected, in spite of (or perhaps because of) his fugitive wolf name, and is promptly dispatched by Hringur.

Another pair of assassins with wolf names are those sent by Jarl Arnviðr to ambush Egill on his trip to Värmland. These bear lupine doublet names the very same as Randviður assumed: both are called *Úlfr*.[11] In this case, however, the names are not merely assumed by the assassins during the expedition, but are the actual names under which these characters are presented. Nevertheless, to name the two assassins *Úlfr* indicates that the saga narrator is adding a degree of onomastic suggestion to their literary role.

A dangerous opponent can assume a bear, as well as a wolf, name. When Hólmgǫngu-Bersi is attending a þing in *Kormáks saga*, he finds a hostile neighbour seated next to him. This fellow is clad in a bearskin with a full mask over his face. When asked to identify himself, he adopts the bear heiti *Glúmr* to accord with his disguise: "Bersi spyrr þenna mann at nafni. Honum er sagt, at hann heitir ýmisst Glúmr eða Skúma."[12] This man, who turns out to be Steinarr Ǫnundarson, augments the topos of the bear name with a full bear disguise. His intentions are also as hostile as his name indicates: he wishes to challenge Hólmgǫngu-Bersi to a hólmganga.

As a fugitive, one need not necessarily be so specific as to indicate a definite animal in the pseudonym one adopts; it can suffice to simply call oneself ON *dýr* or OE *deor* ('animal'). When Sigurðr is lurking in the forests with Reginn, he kills Fáfnir. Before dying Fáfnir asks Sigurðr his name, to which Sigurðr in *Fáfnismál* replies enigmatically, as an assassin would: "Gǫfvgt dyr ec heiti."[13] His reply in *Vǫlsunga*

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[10] *Sagan af Hringi og Hringvarði syni hans*, [n. ed.] (Reykjavík: Prentsmiðja Þjóðviljans (kostnaðarmaður: Skúli Thoroddsen), 1909), p. 33.

[11] *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal, Íslenzk fornrit, 2 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1933), p. 233.

[12] *Kormáks saga*, in *Vatnsdæla saga: Hallfreðar saga, Kormáks saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 8 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1939), pp. 201–302 (p. 247).

[13]*Norrœn fornkvæði: Islandsk samling af folkelige oldtidsdigte om Nordens guder og heroer, almindelig kaldet Sæmundar Edda hins fróða*, ed. by Sophus Bugge (Oslo: Malling, 1867), p. 219, verse 2.

saga is equally ambiguous: "Eth min er monnum ukunnigh. Ek heite gaufugt dyR, ok a ek engan faudur ne modur, ok einn saman hefi ek farit."[14] This enigmatic reply by Sigurðr works on three levels simultaneously. First, it conforms with the aforementioned practice of the killer providing an animal name when asked to identify himself. Second, his reply provides a metaphoric elaboration on the function of such names when adopted by exiles: the exile is like a wild animal who, unknown to other humans, roams in solitude without kith or kin. In this respect, Sigurðr orally elaborates the poetic metaphor already postulated for the assumption of bird names by exiles. Third, his answer is not merely enigmatic, but is also a riddle; Sigurðr is indeed a *gofugt dýr*, as he is of a noble theriophoric wolf tribe, the *Ylfingar*. His reply is consequently designed not solely as a concealment of identity, but also to give his listener a genuine opportunity to guess his true identity by means of this riddle. The threefold function of the reply – pseudonymic, poetic and genealogical – shows an extremely deft use of the motif.

Another character who will not specify his animal name beyond the general is *Deor* in the Old English poem of that name. His role is not that of the dastardly assassin; in fact he has no malicious intentions at all, but is an entertainer. Nevertheless, he wanders from court to court, and when presenting himself in halls seems to call himself by the animal name *Deor*, just as Sigurðr presented himself as *dýr*. It is strongly implied that this is not his actual name, but is simply an alibi which he formerly used to present himself in halls; note the use of the past tense in the following citation: "Me wæs Deor noma".[15] That his name was, rather than is, *Deor* implies that he is no longer using it. The names *Deor* and *dýr* might consequently serve the same function: enigmatic, anonymous presentation, whether in the hall or as an assassin.

The next episode, in elaboration of the pattern identified in *Deor*, contains multiple court presentations with an animal alibi.[16] Two travellers, *Bero* and *Refo*, present themselves at the court of King Goto in Norway. They are bearing, as indicated, doublet animal names. They

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[14] *Vǫlsunga saga*, in *Vǫlsunga saga ok Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, ed. by Magnus Olsen, STUAGNL, 36 (Copenhagen: STUAGNL, 1906–08), pp. 1–110 (p. 42).

[15] *Deor*, in *The Exeter Book*, ed. by G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936) pp. 178–179 (p. 179, line 37). However, the name *Deor* might also mean 'precious, dear'.

[16] Saxo Grammaticus, I, 247 (VIII. xvi. 1–2).

receive good gifts, but during their stay have a dispute with an animal-named courtier, *Ulvo*, as to the relative generosity of King Goto and King Gøtricus of Denmark. This leads to a wager, and Refo must again present himself at another court – this time that of Gøtricus – to compare his generosity with that of Goto. When presenting himself, he puns on his own animal name: "A quo, quisnam esset, rogatus, vulpeculæ sibi nomen esse respondit."[17] The king extends the pun on his name, and has the "little fox" trap a treasure, a larger one than that of Goto: "'Vulpem', inquit Gotricus, 'ore prædam excipere convenit'".[18] These puns indicate the levity with which such an animal name was regarded in the context of a court presentation. Refo then returns to the court of Goto, and demonstrates the risk inherent in hospitality to such a stranger; he kills Ulvo and abducts the daughter of Goto for Gøtricus. This episode therefore combines three animal names (*Bero, Refo, Ulvo*), multiple court presentations, punning on the names, and a denouement which confirms the risk of hospitality to such strangers.

A related episode occurs in *Kristni saga*. When Óláfr at Haukagili is holding a wedding at his home two very unwanted guests appear; these are wandering marauders and berserkir who challenge the guests and fight with the missionary Þorvaldr víðfǫrli.[19] The two unwanted guests are brothers and are both suggestively named *Haukr*; this conforms with the hall presentation of the unwanted guest under an animal name.[20]

It is obvious that such a literary motif could not avoid becoming hackneyed through continual use. Its onomastic function in a classificatory naming scheme must have caused the topos to become so familiar as to be an automatic indication of a character's forthcoming narrative role. It was already observed that Jarl Þorgnýr reacted with

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[17] Saxo Grammaticus, I, 247 (VIII. xvi. 2).

[18] Saxo Grammaticus, I, 247 (VIII. xvi. 2).

[19] *Kristnisaga*, in *Kristnisaga: Þáttr Þorvalds ens víðfǫrla, Þáttr Ísleifs biskups Gizurarsonar, Hungrvaka*, ed. by B. Kahle, Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek, 11 (Halle a. d. S.: Niemeyer, 1905), pp. 1–57 (p. 8); *Vatnsdæla saga*, in *Vatnsdæla saga: Hallfreðar saga, Kormáks saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 8 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1939), pp. 1–131 (pp. 124–26); *Þáttr Þorvalds ens víðfǫrla*, in *Kristnisaga: Þáttr Þorvalds ens víðfǫrla, Þáttr Ísleifs biskups Gizurarsonar, Hungrvaka*, ed. by B. Kahle, Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek, 11 (Halle a. d. S.: Niemeyer, 1905), pp. 59–81 (p. 70–71 (III. 5)).

[20] See also Gerard Breen, 'Personal names and the Re-creation of Berserkir und Úlfheðnar', *Studia anthroponymica Scandinavica*, 15 (1997), 5–38.

immediate suspicion to the names *Krákr* and *Hrafn*, and that Hringur immediately suspected his would-be assassin named *Úlfur*. Saxo's playful naming of *Ulvo*, *Bero* and *Refo* also shows an over-familiarity with the motif. In the following late saga, *Knúts saga Steinssonar*, the motif is so glibly and lightly used that it indicates a definite over-familiarity with the topos. Knútur meets a certain Björn, who interrogates him as he enters a hall. The time comes to exchange names. Knútur reveals his name to Björn through a riddle, and Björn guesses it correctly. Björn then provides his own name in the form of a riddle too (just as Sigurðr had with his animal name). But Knútur seems accustomed to hearing such animal names riddled by challengers, and can immediately list by rote the many animal names that such an individual might adopt:

> "Nú vil eg heyra þitt nafn." "Leita skalt þú þess á meðal villidýra skógarins", segir maðurinn. Knútur svarar: "Eigi er þad svo auðvelt að ráða, því margt getur þú heitið. Þú getur heitið Leó, Hjörtur, Úlfur eða Björn, og ertu þar til líklegastur að eiga það nafn."[21]

Björn confirms that Knútur has indeed guessed correctly, and that his name is *Björn*. This humorous use of the motif, being from a very late and derivative saga, nevertheless manages to brighten up the repetitive use of what must by then have been a hackneyed cliché.

Having examined instances of the motif until the period in which it became a tired literary topos, it is worth noting that the motif was not always so automatic, nor always even literary. In fact the origin of the motif may well be legal, dating from the time when legal terminology was steeped in metaphor. The terms *úlfr* ('avenger') and *vargr* ('outlaw') display such a mixture of metaphor and legal terminology. In addition, a wolf or a bear could actually be outlawed at the þing, further reinforcing this legal connection between the animal and the outlaw. These factors only provide rudimentary legal clues to the practice, however. The most striking evidence lies in the following extract from the elder *Gulaþingslǫg*. It describes the procedure for the declaration of a killing (*Um víglýsing*), and specifies that when the killer announces his name he should give it in its proper form: "oc lysa þar vigi hvatke monnum sem inni ero. Callasc hvarke ulfr. ne biorn

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[21] *Sagan af Knúti Steinssyni heimska*, [n. ed.] (Akureyri: Prentsmiðja Odds Björnssonar, 1911), p. 5.

nema sva heiti hann".[22] This passage is legal evidence that assassins probably did adopt animal names, and provides a satisfying explanation for the true origin of the many assassins named *Úlfr*, the outlaws named *Bjǫrn*, and the various other wrong-doers adopting animal names. As well as being a protective alibi while committing the deed, it was also a means of avoiding legal responsibility thereafter.

Having examined the assumption of these names by the protagonists of criminal and vengeful deeds, the assumption of the names by their tutors (in legal terms their "aiders and abetters") shall now be discussed. Where assassins or avengers do not themselves adopt an animal name, they frequently hide out in the woods with a tutor who bears an animal name instead of his fledgling avenger.

In *Færeyinga saga* Sigmundr and Þórir must flee the Faeroese islands after the killing of their father. During their exile they are assisted by two animal-named helpers and tutors. They are initially ferried from the islands by *Hrafn*.[23] When they reach safety, they gain a second animal tutor, this time named *Úlfr*.[24] This wolf tutor trains them in weapons, and for him they kill and then set up a bear. It might be added that the tutor *Úlfr* fulfils two of the criteria of animal-naming. Not only is he a tutor who trains an assassin, but he himself is also an outlaw. His original name was Þorkell þurrafrost, and he only assumed the name *Úlfr* as an alibi when he became an outlaw for the stealing of a maiden.[25] While the name of the helper *Hrafn* has a single motivation, that of the tutor *Úlfr* has a double motivation.

The second animal-named tutor is *Bjarki*, who is well known for many aspects of his bear nature. Among these is his role as a bear-named tutor to the young Hǫttr. Hǫttr is being brutalized and physically bullied by warriors at the court of Hrólfr kraki. The role of Bjarki as animal tutor is almost identical to that of Úlfr: he changes him from an untrained boy into a warrior, and even re-enacts the very same killing and setting-up of an animal as part of the process. The outcome of the training is, however, different: Hǫttr does not avenge himself on his enemies, but instead becomes accepted among them.

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[22] *Norges gamle Love indtil 1387*, ed. by R. Keyser and others, Det Kongelige Norske Videnskabers Selskab, 5 vols (Oslo: Gröndahl (Grøndahl), 1846–95), I: *Norges Love ældre end Kong Magnus Haakonssöns Regjerings-Tiltrædelse i 1263*, ed by R. Keyser and P. A. Munch (1846), p. 61 (§ 156).

[23] *Færeyinga saga*, ed. by Ólafur Halldórsson, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 30 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1987), pp. 15–19.

[24] *Færeyinga saga*, pp. 23–37.

[25] *Færeyinga saga*, pp. 32–37.

The next tutor bears the name *Witolfus*; this is a Latinization of *Viðólfr*, and thus denotes a wolf who lurks in the forest.[26] This is in keeping with his role: he is a soldier, lives in solitude in the woods, and trains Haldanus in military skills. In *Gesta Danorum* he cares for Haldanus after he is wounded in a fight with Haquinus. However, this particular chapter of *Gesta Danorum* is both confused and disorganized throughout. Perhaps the role of Witolfus as wolf-named tutor might be better motivated if it were placed approximately forty lines earlier: when Haldanus and Haraldus are (as previously observed) mumming as hounds, eating as hounds, are bearing hound names, while they hide in preparation to avenge their father. Textually, this would provide Witolfus with the more suggestive role of a wolf-named tutor training two young "hounds" to exact vengeance. Extra-textually, it would also conform better with the pattern of the wolf tutor as trainer of the fledgling avenger.

Even when tutor names are not as fully motivated as those of Úlfr, Bjarki and Witolfus, many tutors nevertheless seem to receive such animal names by a simple process of onomastic default. For instance, in *Vatnsdæla saga* it is *Bjǫrn* who takes Þorkell to his ancestral home in the Orkneys, and in *Flóamanna saga* it is *Bjǫrn*, who is owner of the farm where Þorgils is staying when he has his first battle. It might be argued that these names are significant, and conform with the general pattern of tutor names examined above.[27] It is more likely, however, that such names are indeed applied by pure default to otherwise cipher-like tutors and assistants with no real consideration as to the bestial nature of the names.

It was already observed that guests in a hall were automatically suspicious of any stranger who appeared unannounced bearing an animal name. This suspicion extends also to absorb the above tutor pattern:

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[26] Saxo Grammaticus, I, 183 (VII. ii. 2). See other epithets for the wolf denoting him as a forest hound, for instance Ger *holzhund*, OHG *walthunt*, Swed *skogshund* (Gunter Müller, *Studien zu den theriophoren Personennamen der Germanen*, Niederdeutsche Studien, 17 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1970), pp. 69–71; *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar. Udgivet efter håndskrifterne*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, Kommission for det Arnamagnæanske Legat (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1931), p. 212). Compare also the personal name **widuhu[n]daʀ** (Müller, p. 69).

[27] Benjamin Blaney, 'The Berserkr. His Origin and Development in Old Norse Literature' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, 1972; abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 33.8 (February 1973), 4332-A), pp. 128–29; 'Granted Bjǫrn was a common name, but it seems unusual to me that the only Bjǫrn mentioned in the *Vatnsdæla* saga should be this otherwise completely unknown man who took Þorkell to his ancestral home in the Orkneys. Similiarly, the only Bjǫrn in *Flóamanna saga* is the owner of the farm where Þorgils was staying when he had his first battle.'

an unannounced guest who enters a king's hall having spent the previous night with an unknown man (possibly a tutor) named *Úlfr* can be up to little good. This is indicated to Friðþjófr on his arrival in disguise to the hall of King Hringr, in exile from King Helgi, with what he might believe to be an impenetrable pseudonym and riddle: "Þjófr heiti ek, at Úlfs var ek í nótt."[28] After some more riddling, King Hringr naturally suspects that all is not well with such a guest: "Í skógi muntu í nótt hafa verit, því engi bóndi er sá hér í nánd, er Úlfr heitir."[29]

Here the animal name is again being used in a riddle, a practice previously adopted by both Sigurðr and Björn. Friðþjófr's riddle is open to immediate interpretation as suspicious and hostile on two levels: not only does he indicate hostile intentions by suggesting association with an unknown accomplice name *Úlfr*, but he gives this added resonance by assuming the suspicious pseudonym *Þjófr* himself. Furthermore, just as Sigurðr gave a clue to his ancestry in a riddle, so too does Friðþjófr give a clue in his identity by inserting the second element of his name into this alibi: *(Frið)-þjófr*. It does not take the king long to see through this thin onomastic disguise and realize that there is no *Úlfr*, but that the naming of such a fictitious character merely represents hiding as a fugitive or exile among wolves in the woods. The suspicions of King Hringr are justified: he is married to the woman Friðþjófr loves and might well abduct. However, Friðþjófr becomes a trusty retainer rather than an abductor.

There are additional, less pertinent, manifestations of the pattern elsewhere. The doublet bird names examined earlier (*Hrafn* and *Qrn*; *Hrafn* and *Krákr*) are replicated in *Hálfdanar saga Eysteinssonar*; a pair of warriors named *Haukr* and *Gaukr* are introduced, though their function is largely confined to battling with another bird-named opponent, *Valr*.[30] In *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka* there are warriors with the doublet bear names *Bjǫrn* and *Bersi*, and in *Beowulf* there are warriors with the doublet names *Eofor* and *Wulf*.[31] In *Gesta Danorum* there is a group of twelve island-dwelling rapists and marauders all of whom

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[28] *Friðþjófs saga ins frœkna*, ed. by Ludvig Larsson, Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek, 9 (Halle a. S.: Niemeyer, 1901), p. 42.

[29] *Friðþjófs saga*, p. 44.

[30] *Hálfdanar saga Eysteinssonar*, ed. by Franz Rolf Schröder, Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek, 15 (Halle a. S.: Niemeyer, 1917), pp. 137–39.

[31] *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka*, ed. by Hubert Seelow, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 20 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1981), p. 194, verse 67, line 141; *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by Fr. Klaeber, 3rd edn (Boston: Heath, 1950; repr. 1968), p. 112, line 2993.

have bear names, including *Gerbiorn, Gunbiorn, Arinbiorn, Stenbiorn, Esbiorn, Thorbiorn* and *Biorn*.[32] In *Wulf and Eadwacer* wild marauders (*wælreowe weras*) live on an island; one of them bears the name *Wulf*, and it seems that just as the twelve marauders on the island in *Gesta Danorum* assume bear names, so too might young wolf initiates of this island band assume wolf names.[33] The son of *Wulf* is a wolf cub (*hwelp*) who will be borne to the island by another wolf (*wulf*) member: "Uncerne earne hwelp | bireð wulf to wuda".[34] Such bands can also roam the woods: in *Úlfhams rímur* and *Úlfhams saga* the soldiers of *Vargstakkr* (whose son is *Úlfhamr*) hide out for periods in the woods; during these periods he not only bears the wolf name *Vargstakkr*, but actually becomes a wolf.[35]

The conclusions to be drawn from this study are twofold. The lesson for the honest citizen: that he should beware uninvited guests who cry "Wolf!" (or any other animal name) when their identity is inquired of. Such a guest is certain to be an outlaw (*vargr*), an avenger (*úlfr*), the pupil of a dangerous forest tutor (**viðólfr*), or an animal warrior bearing a young wolf initiate (*hwelp*) away to an island fortress. The lesson for the outlaw and criminal: that not even a riddle can disguise the hostile nature of a bestial name, and so to avoid suspicion during misdemeanours, he should take professional legal advice from the *Gulaþingslǫg* and "callasc hvarke ulfr. ne biorn nema sva heiti hann".

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[32] Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, I, 144 (VI. ii. 3).

[33] *Wulf and Eadwacer*, in *The Exeter Book*, ed. by G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (New York; Columbia University Press, 1936), pp. 179–80 (pp. 179–80, lines 4, 6, 9, 13).

[34] *Wulf and Eadwacer*, pp. 179–80, line 16. However, interpretations of this poem differ greatly.

[35] *Úlfhamsrímur: Vargstǫkkur*, in *Rímnasafn: Samling af de ældste islandske rímer*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, STUAGNL, 35, 2 vols (Copenhagen: STUAGNL, 1905–22), II, 133–69, (p. 135 (I. 15–20)); *Úlfhams saga* ('Hjer byrjar Søgu af Wlf-ham . . .'), Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliothek (Royal Library), Den Kallske Samling, Kall 613, 4to, fols 157^r–164^v (fols 157^r–157^v).

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