

Frisian Family and Place Names

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FRISIAN SPEECH, in which these name types took shape, is historically more akin to English than to Dutch and German. Today 400,000 or 96 per cent of the speakers of Frisian in Europe live in the Netherlandish Province of Friesland (Mid-Friesland). The remainder lives in Germany, in roughly the northern half of North Friesland, on Helgoland, and in the tiny speech island of the Saterland in western Oldenburg. These are the only Frisian lands which have not been won away from Frisian speech by Low German, Dutch, and German.

The Frieslands, the Lands of the Frisians, are never more than fifty miles out of sight of the North Sea. Lengthwise, they follow the coastal trend of that sea from north of the Hague, Haarlem and Amsterdam eastward to north of Groningen, Oldenburg and Bremen. The Elbe estuary country forms a break in the continuity of the Frisian Lands, but once the Eider is reached, North Friesland is found to make up the islands and coastal strip of German Schleswig as far north as slightly over the German border into Denmark.

Place name suffixes that evolved in Frisian bestow a toponymic character upon a portion of the earth's surface that never was and never will be duplicated. I shall proceed to consider such name types for the Frieslands as a whole. Four specifically Frisian toponym suffix types that enjoy more than a local distribution are:

I. *-each* or *-oog*. From west to east the *eagen* of the Frieslands run as follows:

1. Callantsoog, today on the west coast of West Friesland in the north of the Province of North Holland, but during the Early Middle Ages the fishing village of Callinghe on an *oech* or island. Through Frisian palatalization Callinghe became Callens. The "Callensoogers" were the descendants and the workers of the descendants of an ancestor named Calle.

2. Schiermonnikoog (Mid-Frisian Skiermûntseach)

3. Rottumeroog (Groningen, Netherlands)
4. Langeoog (East Friesland, Germany)
5. Spiekeroog (East Friesland)
6. Wangeroog (Oldenburg)
7. Süderoog (the Halligen, North Friesland)
8. Norderoog (the Halligen)

Inland reminders of former islands are Edenserloog, south of Spiekeroog, and Middoge, to the southeast of the latter, and just across the border of the Harlinger Land in the Jeverland of Oldenburg.

II. *-ens*. This is the specifically Frisian *-ing* toponymic suffix. Places that end in it had their start as clan villages. Such are not met with everywhere in the Frieslands as *-ens*, not even sporadically, on the right bank of the Weser and in North Friesland. Clusters of them are found in Mid-Friesland just southwest of Leeuwarden (Mid-Frisian *Ljouwert*), and in the East Friesland-Oldenburg border country north of the Jadebusen, and then on across to Butjadingen, still in Oldenburg, to the Weser. Examples of *-ens* toponyms are Harns (Mid-Frisian for Harlingen), Esens in the Harlinger Land of northern, coastal East Friesland, and Tettens on the Weser estuary in Butjadingen.

III. *-um*, the equivalent of English *-ham*, 'home', German *-heim* and Flemish *-em* place names. It is both spatially and historically distinct from the *-um* toponyms of the Rhenish-Weser country at the latitude of Westphalia; from those of the Saxon Lower Weser country; and from those of Jutland, which come as near the (North) Frisian *-um* complex as western North (Danish) Schleswig. *-um* is the most universal of all the toponym suffixes of the Frieslands. It is only missing altogether between the Jade and the Weser. A four fold example of a Frisian *-um* name is Midlum, found from east to west on Föhr (local Frisian *Fear*), in Land Wursten (east of the Weser Estuary) as Gross Midlum in the Krumme Hörn peninsula of westernmost East Friesland, and in Mid-Friesland straightway northeast of Harns. An interesting island of *-um* names lies east of Amsterdam in the Gooi or Gooiland of North Holland. In a personal communication of January 10, 1955, from Amsterdam, G. Karsten expressed his belief to the writer that Bussum, Blaricum and Hilversum, all in the Gooi, as well as Castricum, north of Haarlem and the North Sea Canal in Kennemerland, were apparently Frisian *-um* toponyms.



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IV. *-wierde*. The first settlers of the North Sea marshes built their villages on top of mounds as protection against high tidal floods. This was not only true in the Frisian Lands, but in the Elbe estuary country and *Didmarschen*, separating the *Frieslands*, as well. With the erection of dikes around 1000 A.D. the practice was eventually to come to an end, but *-wierde*, 'island,' names dot the landscape to remind us of it. Where these toponyms are found in such forms as *-wurt*, *-wort* or *-wörden* they are Low German. In the *Eiderstedt* peninsula of southern North Friesland there occur place names like *Oldenswort* and *Witzwort*. There are no *-wierde* toponyms at all in the remainder of North Friesland, where mounds are smaller and evidently more recent. The character of the Frisian *-wierde* names is readily seen from the following examples, given from west to east: perhaps *Waarder* (earlier *Werthere*), immediately south of West Friesland proper; *Birdaard* (Mid-Frisian *Birdaerd*, with *ae* a long "a"), *Abbingawier* (*-wer* in 1379) and *Kimswerd* (Mid-Frisian *Kimswert* and *Kimsert*) in Mid-Friesland; *Feerwerd* and *Holwierde* in "Little Friesland," the so-called *Ommelanden* that are around or *om* the city of *Groningen* (Mid-Frisian *Grins*) on three sides; *Loquard* and *Upleward* ('upon low *wierde*') west of *Gross Midlum*, and *Toquard* in northeastern East Friesland; *Waddewarden* and *Wiarden* (pronounced *Wehrden*) in the *Jeverland* of Northwestern *Oldenburg*; *Kirchhammelwarden* on the left bank of the *Weser*, midway between *Bremen* and *Bremerhaven*, and *Aschwarden* and *Offenwarden* on the other side; and in *Land Wursten* *Weddewarden* and *Wierde* (*Mulsumer Wieren*, reminding one of *DeWierren* in Mid-Friesland). The plural *Wieren* may be a reproduction of the local Frisian form, for Frisian speech did not die out in *Land Wursten* until near the end of the first half of the eighteenth century.

In the Netherlands southwest of Mid-Friesland, names of places and (especially) areas that have endings like *-waard*, almost invariably hark back in origin to designations for polder. Contrast this with the name of *Land Wursten* (Old Frisian *Wurtsetenalond*), literally the 'land of mounds.' The basic meaning of 'island' has not been lost in these polder toponyms, but, qualitatively speaking, they cannot be said to be specifically Frisian.

Aside from suffix types, Frisian place names can be recognized

and uncovered by another means. In the province of North Holland, for example, the historical phonetic development of many a place name betrays its underlying Frisianness. An application of the principle that proto-Germanic *au* is found in Old Frisian as *a*, makes known as Frisian the place names of Beemster (Bamstera even before 989) and of Oosthuizen (*Asthusa* in 1200), both between Amsterdam and southeastern West Friesland, and the Zaan toponym complex (from Old Frisian *sâtha* 'sod' north of the North Sea Canal in its middle course.

Family naming as the rule in the Frieslands became fixed in Land Wursten in the sixteenth century, in North Friesland after 1771, and elsewhere after 1811. The typical Frisian family name is derived from a patronym. Most of such names in North Friesland, reflecting Danish influence, end in *-sen*, 'son', as in Boysen and Brodersen. In southern North Friesland (Eiderstedt) and on Helgoland, however, they generally end in a genitive "s." Family names put together with given names like Bow ('Boy') and Broder ('Brother') take on manifold forms and are compounded in sundry ways in the Frieslands, some of which are: *Boy*—Boeyens (double genitive *-en + s*) on Helgoland; Boyungs in the Frisian Weser country (strong genitive "s" added after original meaning of *-ing* forgotten; see I below); Boyingsna, Bojunga, Bogena, etc. in East Friesland; and Boyenga and Bogema in Mid-Friesland. Broder-Braren (weak genitive singular *-en*) on Föhr, *Broders* on Helgoland, Brörkens in East Friesland, Broersema in Little Friesland and Broersma and Broers in Mid-Friesland. *Siebs* in Land Wursten; Siebsen in Butjadingen and Stadeland, to the south; Seeba, Siebena, etc. in East Friesland; Siebma, Syben, etc. in Mid-Friesland; and Siebesz in North Holland.

Besides patronymic family names like Siebesz, Douwes ('Dove') and Sieuwerts or Sievertsz ('Siegfried') the province of North Holland has a very distinctive type of anthroponym. It too is so largely made up of familiar Frisian given names, with the difference that these are all reduced to one syllable, yielding family names like Bek, Lol, Mens, Nan, Rob and Wit. Right across from the West Frisian Lands of North Holland, the Mid-Frisians of the so-called South Hook have a predilection for reducing given names in this manner. Hence Lol is a shortened form of Lolle; Rob, of the re-

gional Robyn; etc. This, however, has no effect upon conventional family names like Lolles, Lollinga, Lollema; Robyn, Robyns, Robynsma, the Frisian "Robinsons"; etc.

The most readily recognizable as Frisian of Frisian family names end in "a". They make up one half of the family names of Mid-Friesland and one fourth of those of Little Friesland. The *-a* family name bloc thus formed extends across the German border into East Friesland and the so-called Frisian or Friesische Wehde west of Varel. It is a particularly numerous vestigial element among more typical *-sen* family names, best represented in northern East Friesland. Farther east, in the Weser estuary country, such names had centuries past lost their Frisian character under Low German influence. A man whose name was recorded in Land Wursten as Peke ('Peter') Tetilda in 1365, was recorded four years later as Peke Thedele. The name Inungha, also recorded in the latter year, seems a rare bird indeed among such Wurster family names stripped of their final "a," as Loving (Luvinghes 1369) and Witting (Wittig 1365). On the other side of the Weser estuary in Butjadingen two documents of 1424 and 1427 bear good Frisian family names like Hammerga, Ywalda and Howesna (1424), and Pekinga and Uffana (1427).

The classification below of Frisian family names that end in "a" is adapted chiefly from Sipma (1952). The examples following the suffixes given, except in V and VI, represent about one third of the family names of the category concerned, found in the Membership List of the Frisian Academy in Ljouwert, as of September 1, 1954. Oldest of the suffixes of Frisian family names is

I. *-inga*. Cleveringa (Little Friesland), Heidinga, Kruizinga, Piebenga, Runia, Siebinga, Tjessinga, Tuininga. This is the Old Frisian genitive plural, and denotes clansmen, and their serfs and servants (see under *-ens* toponyms above). It was customary to speak of the "Piebenga" folk, for example, meaning the descendants, along with their serfs and servants, of a man who bore the nickname of Pibe for Sibren ('victory' and 'forest land cleared by burning'). *-inga* names can also hark back to toponyms (Heide?); to spatially unspecified locations like a garden (Mid-Frisian *tún*); and to things, like a cross (Mid-Frisian *krús*). *-ega* as in Mennega (East Frisian Mennenga) is a variant of *-inga*. *-inga*, *-enga* and

-unga are all pronounced the same. The latter spelling, characteristically East Frisian, as in *Hajunga*, may well be due to the influence of High German (Mid-Frisian *rekkening*, but German *Rechnung*, cognates of English 'reckoning').

II. *-a*. *Hyma*, *Roorda*. This is the old Frisian weak genitive singular, and was used:

1. to indicate sonship: *Roorda* was the son of 'glory' (*hrod*) + 'protector' (*ward*); *Rörden* is an indigenous family name of *Föhr*.

2. After place names to indicate precise locational provenience. The '*a*' after *-um* toponyms, as in *Bierma* and *Hallema* (*Bierum*, *Hallum*), may have given rise by analogy to forms of

III. *-ma*. *Bierma*, *Buma*, *Douma*, *Fokkema*, *Galama*, *Hallema*, *Miedema*, *Kalma*, used to indicate sonship, as in the given name *Gala + ma*, the family name *Roorda + ma* (like East Frisian *Seba + na*) the given name *Kalle + ma* (see I, 1, *Callantsoog* above), etc.

IV. *-sma* (*-s + ma*). *Folkertsma*, *Fridsma*, *Glazema*, *Koksma*, *Reitsma*, *Tolsma*. This compound suffix is used:

1. to indicate sonship where the *-s* ending does this by itself, as in *Folkerts*, *Fridses*, *Reits*, etc.

2. to indicate precise locational provenience as a contraction of *-uma* family names like *Tolsma* (*Tolsuma*) and perhaps *Reitsma* (*Reitsuma*).

3. to indicate occupation, as in *Glazema* ('glazier') and perhaps *Koksma* ('cook').

V. *-na* (*-ena*) like little Frisian *-ema*, reflecting the drawl of the East and Little Frisians). This suffix is usually regarded as derived from the Old Frisian weak genitive plural. Winkler saw no more than a difference in dialect between *-na* and *-ma*, and *-sna* and *-sma*. A few *-na* family names are indigenous to eastern Little Friesland (*Oldamt* and *Fivelgo*) but they are more at home in northern East Friesland. Here *Agena*, *Alena*, *Dekena* and *Popena* are all matched by the Mid-Frisian *Abema*, *Alema*, *Dekema* and *Poppema*. *Rykena* is a far-eastern example from *Moorhausen*, a northern suburb of *Varel* like Little Frisian *-sema*.

VI. *-sna* (*-sena*). This form is specifically East Frisian. Examples are the dynastic East Frisian house of *Cirksena* (Little Frisian *Sierksema*, on the 1954 membership list of the Frisian Academy), *Folkertsena*, and *Lyursna*, corresponding to the now extinct Mid-Frisian *Luyrtsma*, Frisian *Luthers* (folk or German *Leute + Heer*).

VII. *-stra*. *Boonstra*, *Dijkstra*, *Feenstra*, *Poelstra*, *Schootstra*,

Terpstra, Zijlstra. *-stra* was originally no suffix at all, but was derived from Old Frisian *sitta*, 'to sit, to live.' Thus the noun *sittera* (*-setra*, *-settra*), suffixed to a location, became *-stra*; those who live "there," those who are from "there" is what this suffix implies. In Mid-Frisian, a person from Boarn is called a Boarnster; one from Skoat, a Skoatster, etc. This is done where a toponym yields a *-stra* family name. *-ster* is in this case the modern version of the older *-stra*. One can also speak of Boarnster *skaeinammen* or family names of the burghers of Boarn. This calls to mind the title of one of the sources of this paper, *Die Wurster Geschlechter*, 'the families of the Wurster,' that is to say, 'of the inhabitants of Land Wursten.' *-stra* is the special Mid-Frisian family name suffix of locational provenience, and is used, as I see it, to indicate family origin from:

1. a natural place, like a peat bog (Mid-Frisian *fean*) or a small, shallow lake (Mid-Frisian *poel*; oe = oo in English 'pool').
2. a man-made place, also of spatially unspecified location, like a dike (Mid-Frisian *dyk*), a mound (Mid-Frisian *terp*, cognate of German Dorf and Dutch dorp, 'village'), or a drainage sluice (Mid-Frisian *syl*).
3. a man-made place of spatially specified location, like the settlements of Oldenboorn (Mid-Frisian Aldeboarn or simply Boarn) and Oudeschoot (Mid-Frisian Aldeskoat or Skoat), whence the family names Boonstra and Schootstra are taken.

Frisian place name suffix types that are chorographically distinctive of the Dutch and German Frieslands as a whole, are:

1. *each -oog*, a common addition to the names of the Frisian Islands from the one-time island of Callantsoog in West Friesland to Norderoog, a hallig of North Friesland;
2. *-ens*, the specifically Frisian form of the Germanic *-ing* toponym suffix, extending from Callants (*oog*) to the Weser;
3. *-um* ('home'), the most universal of Frisian toponym types; and
4. *-wierde* ('mound'), Low German in forms like *-wurt*, *-wort*, *-wörden*; but Frisian in forms like *-ward*, *-wert*, *-wierde*, *-warden*, stretching at least from Mid-Friesland to Land Wursten.

Frisian family names, mostly derived from patronyms, can be best distinguished by names ending in "a." Such family name suffixes of Mid-Friesland and Little Friesland (in Groningen) in the Netherlands, and East Friesland and the western half of Frisian Oldenburg in Germany, may be classified functionally as follows:

1. *-inga*, usually attached to the given name of a collective ancestor.
2. *-a*, *-ma*, *-sma*; East Frisian *-na*, *-sna*. All these forms are usually attached to the given name of a forebear in the sense of son.

3. *-stra*, the special Mid-Frisian family name suffix of locational provenience, like Duch and Flemish "van" ('from'). Some of this function is, however, assumed by the other forms.

4. *-sma*, the occupational family name suffix, as in Bykersma (Mid-Frisian *bijker*, 'beekeeper').

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