

In Two-Stemmed West Germanic Given Names

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THE NAME OF A TRIBAL OR ETHNIC GROUP can be found used as a personal-name stem in Germanic and other branches of Indo-European; e.g., in the West Germanic personal-name stem Proto-Gmc. *Frīs-, alternating in ablaut-relationship with Proto-Gmc. *Frē²s-, there exists the tribal or ethnic name of the West Germanic Frisians. When not used as a personal-name stem, this tribal or ethnic name shows the same ablaut alternation of the stem vowel.

It is not now my intention to consider in any detail the etymology of the name stem. The very latest attempt at this, to my knowledge, was made by Willy Krogmann of Hamburg in three recent numbers of *Us Wurk* 'Our Work,' which is made up of 'Communications of the Frisian Institute at the [Netherlands'] State University of Groningen,' or, as the Frisian title reads, *Meidielingen fan it Frysk Ynstitut oan de Ryksuniversiteit to Grins*.¹ Professor Krogmann discusses the etymologies that have been put forth for the stem, and comes out in favor of one partly developed by himself. He traces the Frisian tribal or ethnic name back to the Indo-European root *prei- 'to cut,' citing evidence that the spade had been used to "cut" ditches along the southern shores of the North Sea as early as the time of Christ. The Frisians, he believes, derive their name from this activity, and it is only among the Continental West Germanic Swiss, because these Alemannic High Germans lived far enough away from the North Sea West Germanic Frisians, that the original word *Fries* survived as such with the meaning 'ditch digger, builder of dams, earthworker.' (See below in text after footnote 20.)

¹ The Krogmann article came out in three parts in *jiergong* or volume 13 (1964): "Der Name der Friesen (I)," pp. 18-24; "Der Name der Friesen (II)," pp. 25-42; and "Nachtrag," pp. 70-72.

As a monothematic or one-stemmed personal name, likewise too as a short form of dithematic or two-stemmed given names, Proto-Gmc. **Frīs-/Frē²s-* is widely found among Old West Germanic anthroponyms. As the first stem of Old West Germanic two-stemmed given names (never found to occur as the second) it is, however, not everywhere even demonstrably indigenous.

In Old Frisian lands **Frē²s-* is found combined with Proto-Gmc. **berhtaz* 'bright' in the tenth-century place-name entry *Fresbrahtteshem*, which toponym has since come to assume the form *Freepsum*, the name of a hamlet northwest of Emden, in East Friesland (G *Ostfriesland*, makes up the northwestern nook of the West German *Land* of Lower Saxony).² The strong genitive *-s* is still recognizable in the garbled form *Freeps-*.

Earlier, among Old Saxon two-stemmed given names, we find *Fresger*, with Proto-Gmc. **gaizaz* m. 'spear.' This name compound is already recorded twice at Korvey Abbey, on the Old Engrian Weser, as early as about 825. The bearer of the name seems to have been the same person represented by a Korvey entry of 840, *Fresgarius*, which name belonged to a kinsman of *Liudolf*, paternal grandfather of Henry the Fowler (876–936). Two witnesses at Korvey around the year 875 were also named *Fresger*.³ Later Old Saxon name entries are *Fresemer*, with Proto-Gmc. **mē¹raz* 'famous,' Hamburg, 1091;⁴ and, from Lüneburg, *Freswue*, a feminine anthroponym⁵ with Proto-Norse/Proto-WGmc. **wihō* showing (what in German is called) *Movierung* 'change of gender' with masculine **wihaz* 'battle' or 'that which is holy.'⁶

² Maurits Gysseling, *Toponymisch Woordenboek van België, Nederland, Luxemburg, Noord-Frankrijk en West-Duitsland (vóór 1226)* ([Brussel], 1960), I, 375. An earlier dating for the place-name entry than the tenth century, as given by Gysseling, is put at 890 in column 950 of the 3rd edn. (ed. Hermann Jellinghaus) of Ernst Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, II, 1: *Orts- und sonstige geographische Namen* (Bonn, 1913).

³ Wilhelm Schlaug, *Die altsächsischen Personennamen vor dem Jahre 1000* (Lund-Kopenhagen, 1962), pp. 87, 127; mother abbey: Frk. *Corbic* on Flemish side of Somme.

⁴ Ernst Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, I: *Personennamen*, 2nd edn. (Bonn 1900), col. 526. See footnote 20.

⁵ Wilhelm Schlaug, *Studien zu den altsächsischen Personennamen des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts* (diss. Lund; Lund-Kopenhagen, 1955), p. 94.

⁶ Gottfried Schramm, *Namenschatz und Dichtersprache...* (Göttingen, 1957), pp. 61, 71, 132, 168.

Leaving Old Saxon, we find in Old West Netherlandish a ninth-century payer of rent or tribute by the name of *Fresbertus* (< *berhtaz 'bright') in what was in Old West Dutch times called *Hadingehem*, and what in modern standard Dutch has become, in evolved form, the toponym *Aaigem*. Lying just south west of Aalst, *Aaigem*, like Aalst, is situated in the Southeast of the Belgian Province of East Flanders (Du. *Oost-Vlaanderen*).⁷ Across from Flanders in Kent around the year 1030 we find recorded, as the name of a monk, *Fresnotus*.⁸ Compare the second name stem here to OWN *hnjóða* (eu-grade) 'to push, to strike'; -nōt- may thus be derived from an aspect of battle.⁹

So far only *Frē²s- forms have been brought forward or named, and these from lands lying adjacent to or near the shores of the North Sea, called the *Mare Frisicum* roughly from A.D. 700 to some time after 1050.¹⁰ A *Frīs- form, compounded with an Old Upper German *-kaer* (with shifted *-g-*) for Proto-Gmc. *gaizaz, comes to us, however, in the ninth century, far from the 'Frisian Sea' in Old Bavarian Salzburg (Austria). Another compound with *Frīs-, *Frisbolt*, with Proto-Gmc. *baldaz 'bold,' is not located as to time and place among Old German two-stemmed given names. The same is true of *Freswine*, compounded with the Proto-Germanic personal name stems *Frē²s- and *-winiz m. 'friend.'¹¹

In 1916 the Swedish Anglicist Forssner took a stand against *Frē²s- being deemed an indigenous Old English given-name stem.¹² It is certainly both late and singularly unique in England. In spite of the restricted number of Old West Germanic names we are dealing with, it can in truth be said that Old Saxons were more inclined to use the name stem than were Anglo-Saxons. If *Frē²s-/*Frīs- can be said to have flourished at all, it did so among the Old Saxons of the Continent.

⁷ M. Gysseling and A. C. F. Koch, *Diplomata Belgica* . . . ([Brussel] 1950), I, 128. J. Mansion, *Oud-Gentsche naamkunde* . . . ('s-Gravenhage, 1924), p. 40.

⁸ William George Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum* . . . (Cambridge, 1897), p. 246.

⁹ Schramm, p. 61; Jan de Vries, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2nd edn. (Leiden, 1962), p. 244: expect *d* in English, as *nod*.

¹⁰ *Encyclopedie van Friesland* (Amsterdam-Brussel, 1957), p. 461.

¹¹ Förstemann, . . . *Personennamen*, cols. 525–526.

¹² Karl Thorvald Forssner, *Continental-Germanic Personal Names in England* . . . (Diss. Uppsala, 1916), pp. 94–95.

Later medieval evidence of the stem **Frē²s-/*Frīs-* includes the same dithematic combination of the name borne by the monk in Kent. It is now, ca. 1220, rather likely borne by an East Fleming, as was ninth-century *Fresbert-*, for the source of the name entry *Frisnoth* is St. Bavo's Abbey (Du. Sint-Baafs Abdij) of Ghent in East Flanders.¹³ The source of the older entry *Fresbert-* is St. Peter's Abbey (Du. Sint-Pieters Abdij), likewise of Ghent (see footnote 7).

Among the Frisians the rich development of hypocoristic and short (plus contracted) forms from Germanic two-stemmed given names has resulted in its often being difficult to recognize the displaced latter in the former. Piter Sipma recommends bringing back to the Frisian language the lost wealth of Germanic dithematic forms by reconstructing such names from their anthroponymic products.¹⁴ Speakers of Frisian in the Netherlands have a masculine given name *Frisger*.¹⁵ Is *Frisger* a surviving two-stemmed given name in Frisian that has its counterpart in the *Fresger* – of the Old Saxons – discussed above? Winkler in 1898 compares *Frisger* with *Fritsger*.¹⁶ This could imply a blending of **Frē²s-/*Frīs-* and the Proto-Germanic name stem **Frijū-* (cf. 'G *Friede*, Du. *vrede*, Frs. *frede*'). The North Netherlandish anthroponymist J. van der Schaar holds the Frisian masculine name *Frisger* to be, as he puts it, either 1) the same [name] as the Frisian masculine name *Fridser*, *Fridsert*, a two-stemmed Germanic name composed of *Frid-*, *Frede-* = 'Peace, protection,' and *-hard* = 'Strong, hardy,' or 2) a [name] compound made up of *Fries-* and *-ger* 'spear.'¹⁷

It would lead us too far afield, and beyond the purpose of this paper, to delve into the subject of the first alternate etymology given by Dr. v. d. Schaar. Suffice it to say that it is, at best, forced and inconclusive. Not so the other etymology, which will now be accorded a word or two of discussion.

In the year 1507, according to late Middle or early Modern Dutch (not Old Frisian) entries made in the town of Snits (Du. Sneek) in

¹³ Mansion, p. 168, 8.

¹⁴ P. Sipma, *Fryske Nammekunde, I: Foar- en Skaeinammen* (Drachten, 1952), pp. 114–115.

¹⁵ *List fan Fryske foarnammen* (Ljouwert, [1951]), p. 5.

¹⁶ Johan Winkler, *Friesche Naamlijst . . .* (Leeuwarden, 1898), p. 112.

¹⁷ J. van der Schaar, *Woordenboek van voornamen . . .* (Utrecht-Antwerpen, 1964), p. 95; see also W. de Vries, *Friese persoonsnamen* (Assen, 1952), pp. 127–128.

(West-Middle) Friesland (Netherlands' Province), a newly admitted burgher of that year went under the name of *Otto fresigerzoon* [occupation:] *boeckbynder* ('bookbinder'), and some land on the North Side of town was bought from one *sasker fresigerssoen*.¹⁸ *-zoon/-soen* is 'son,' a means of indicating a patronymic.¹⁹ *Fresiger-/Freesiger-*, like *Frisger*, is undoubtedly made up of the same name stems as OS *Fresger*. But how are we to account for two important differences in the Frisian forms?

A composition vowel is lacking after *Fres-/Fris-* in the oldest recorded evidence, given above, of Old West Germanic dithematic personal names beginning with this stem. May it therefore rightly be assumed that the *-i-* of *Fresiger-* and *Freesiger-* is not a composition vowel,²⁰ but something else? If we follow Krogmann in his etymology of **Frē̄s-/Frīs-* (see the first paragraph of this article), then Swiss German *Fries* m. is **frīsja-*, a *nomen agentis*.²¹ An *-i-* is left as the composition vowel of substantive *ja-* stems in the earliest known examples of appropriate compounds in West Germanic.²² If the given-name stem **Frē̄s-/Frīs-* were a *ja-* stem, like Krogmann's simplex **frīsja*, our oldest Old Saxon examples cited above would be **Frēsī-*, not *Fres-* compounds. The *-i-* of *Fre(e)siger-* must therefore be something other than a composition vowel. My guess would be that it is a parasitic vowel the palatalized character of which, induced by a front *-g-* beginning the next syllable, is attested by the writing *-i-*;²³ cf., from Snits in 1474, the *-e-* (a true composition vowel weakened from an older *-u-*) of *frederick*, *fredericks* with, from Snits in 1507, the *-i-* of *freesigers-*, and (from the same town) in 1514, of *fresigers-*, *freesigers-*.²⁴

¹⁸ M. Oosterhout, *Snitser Recesboeken 1490–1517* (Assen, 1960) pp. 339–340, 522; M. Oosterhout, *Nammeregister op de Snitser Recesboeken 1490–1517* (Assen, 1964), pp. 74, 209, 241.

¹⁹ Sipma, pp. 89–90.

²⁰ Nor the *-e-* of the Hamburg anthroponym *Fresemer* of the year 1091. It is odd that this name entry is found in Förstemann . . . *Personennamen* – see footnote 4 – but is missing in Schlaug (1955). Both men utilized J. M. Lappenberg, *Hamburgisches Urkundenbuch* (Hamburg, 1842), given by Förstemann as the source of the name; see Schlaug (1955), p. [249].

²¹ Krogmann (II), p. 35.

²² C. T. Carr, *Nominal Compounds in Germanic* (London, 1939), pp. 286–287; for the oldest Germanic name evidence see p. 272.

²³ Carr, pp. 302 (contrast in sequence "... OHG. *Hruotgēr*, MHG. *Rüedegēr*, Mod. G. *Rüdiger* . . ." 'Roger') – 303, 281–282.

²⁴ Oosterhout, *Snitser Recesboeken*, pp. 322 (*Frederick[s]*); 512, 598, (two entries:) 599 (*Fre[e]s[s]iger[s]*); Oosterhout, *Register* . . . , pp. 72, 59, 270.

As we lastly turn to consider in *Frisger* the short stem vowel of *Fris-*, for which we should instead expect its long equivalent, there is called to mind the orthographic influence of both 1) Middle Latin forms like *Frisia* 'Friesland,'²⁵ and *Friso*,²⁶ the name of the legendary ancestor of the Frisians, and 2) Old Frisian forms like *Frislond*, *-lând* (= Modern Standard Frs. *Fryslân*), and *frisisk* (= Mod. Standard Frs. *Frysk*)²⁷ '(= †)Friesish,²⁵ Fri(e)sian.' A stressed *i* written in a closed syllable is, as a rule, pronounced short in Frisian, as it is in Dutch. Written in open stressed syllable such an *i* would be read long. The short stressed [*I*] of *Frisger* may therefore well be a spelling pronunciation.

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²⁵ Among Old English forerunners of 'Friesland' and 'Friesish' cf., as given by Henry Sweet, *The Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1928), p. 68: *Friesland*, *Friesisc* [-ie for -ie-]; *Friesisc*.

²⁶ *Friso*, also found as a family name, has been further Latinized to *Frisius* (Winkler, p. 112). Both *Frisius* and *Frisicus* are recorded, e.g., as last names in 1850 and 1856, respectively (R. S. Roarda, *Nammen út âlde Liiŕrinte-Registers yn Fryslân* (Ljouwert, [1954]), p. 67.

²⁷ F. Holthausen, *Altfriesisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1925), pp. 31–32; G. A. Nauta, *Oudfriesche woordenlijst* (Haarlem, 1926), p. 20. Forms showing ablaut with *ī* are also given, e.g., "*Frēs-lând*" (Holthausen, p. 31) and "*Frēsisk*" (Nauta).