

WHY OLD FRISIAN IS STILL QUITE OLD¹

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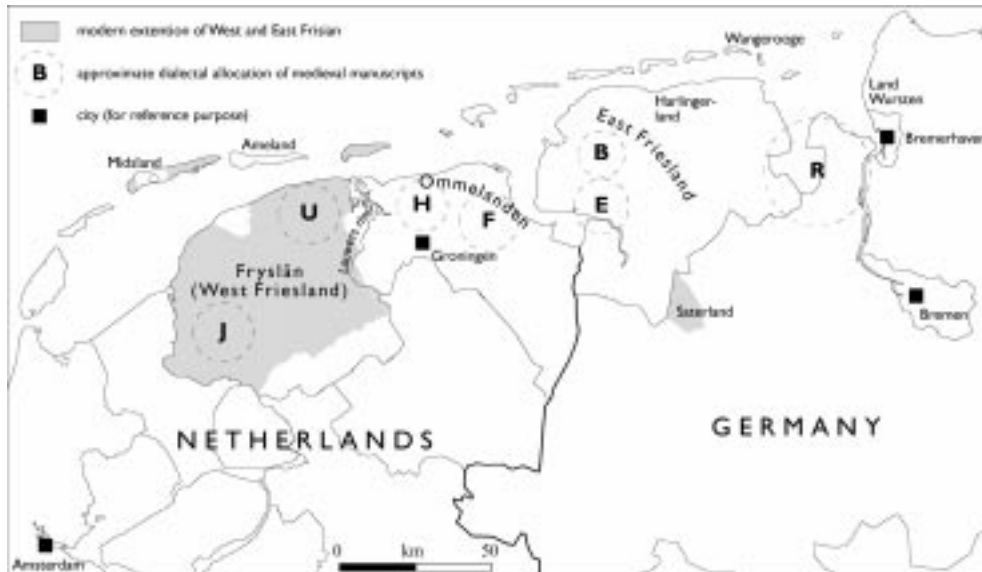
1. Introduction

The oldest mediaeval Frisian manuscript dates from ca. 1200. It contains the Interlinear Psalm glosses (Langbroek 1990: 256). Frisian manuscripts and charters written in the mediaeval tradition are found up until about ca. 1550. The traditional approach in Frisian philology is to call the language of these texts *Old Frisian* (OF). This is quite odd in comparison with contemporary language forms from surrounding areas, like *Middle Dutch*, *Middle Low Saxon*, *Middle High German* and *Middle English*. It suggests that Frisian was then more archaic than were its neighbours and that it was linguistically compatible with, for example, *Old English* (OE) and *Old High German*.

In a recent article in *Folia Linguistica Historica*, Germen de Haan (2001b) opposes the periodisation scheme used for Frisian. He evaluates the linguistic character of Old Frisian by comparing it with other Old and Middle Germanic languages. In this way he tries to determine whether Old Frisian should not instead be called *Middle Frisian*, which would seem quite logical from a comparison with the periodisation of related Germanic languages. From his linguistic comparison, de Haan (2001b: 201) concludes that what we so far call *Old Frisian* should indeed be relabelled *Middle Frisian*.

Up until now the term Middle Frisian has been applied to the language of West Frisian texts (i.e. texts from the present province *Fryslân* in the Netherlands, cf. the map on the next page) from the period 1550-1800. The limited post-mediaeval attestations of Frisian from East Friesland (Germany) are considered (*early*) *Modern East Frisian* (e.g. Versloot 2001a: 738). The term Middle Frisian suggests that this language form would be linguistically compatible with other *Middle* languages, such as the ones mentioned before. As de Haan concludes, also from the discussion of others (2001b: 181), there are no linguistic reasons for calling the West Frisian language form dating from 1550 until 1800 *Middle Frisian* and he therefore suggests calling all, from 1550 until today, *Modern Frisian*. I too can see no linguistic reason for subdivision at the year 1800. The same opinion has been recently affirmed by Hoekstra (2001: 722), who refers to Middle Frisian as “early Modern West Frisian”. This leaves us only with *Modern* and *Old Frisian*, where the latter is contemporary with many *Middle* Germanic languages.

1 This article is a tribute to Dirk Boutkan, my former colleague at the Fryske Akademy and profound specialist in Old Frisian, whose death sadly occurred in January 2002. I want to thank my colleagues Willem Visser, Sybren Dyk, Pieter Duijff, Han Nijdam and Anne Popkema for their critical reading of former versions of this article.



In this paper I want to re-evaluate de Haan's labelling of the mediaeval Frisian attestations as *Middle Frisian*. I will keep the term *Old Frisian* for the language from 1200-1550. De Haan leaves out the much older, scarce Frisian runic inscriptions. In his periodisation these might represent *Old Frisian*. I too will omit them from the present discussion.

Why is it important to define the label of these Frisian attestations? This might have something to do with the status of Frisian as a minority language. It is the believed age of a language that supports its status as 'language' for laymen and thus forms a psychological support for its existence and maintenance.² But this is no linguistic reason and is not thus valid in the context of a linguistic discussion. Moreover, language status would not profit from false claims. In linguistic studies of language source the label of the language object is quite unimportant; the methods will merely remain the same. But as soon as it comes to comparative studies it is important to know to what the object of study should be compared. In my eyes, this is the main use of a proper periodisation.

In this article, I will start defining the problem in section 2. Before the question can be answered as to whether or not so-called Old Frisian indeed deserves that label, the context of Frisian within the Germania has to be clarified and the criteria and their scope defined. Having properly defined the criteria and their scope, in section 3 I will treat a whole set of linguistic characteristics of Old Frisian and evaluate them for the defined criteria. Section 4 offers an overall conclusion from the discussion of individual linguistic features. At the very end I will present my own periodisation of Frisian.

2 On Iceland, with its lack of mediaeval buildings or other physical remnants from the remote past, the conservative language which gives Icelanders direct access to their rich mediaeval literary heritage forms, together with mediaeval literature and manuscripts, their most precious national treasure.

2. Definition of the problem

2.1. Periodisation of the West and North Germanic languages

I have already mentioned that Old Frisian is contemporary with many *Middle* languages. So let us first direct our attention to the transition from *Old* to *Middle* in other Germanic languages. I will also include the Scandinavian languages in this overview; de Haan leaves them out of his own. Their periodisation will appear to be very instructive in the case of *Old Frisian*.

The Old English writing tradition was dominated by West Saxon Old English, which acted as a kind of standard language (Brunner 1970: 1). It was abandoned as the main written language after the Norman Conquest in 1066 in favour of Norman-French. The Middle English language that we find after that time is clearly distinguished from the Old English tradition, both in linguistics and in sorts of text.

Old Dutch has come down to us only in a few scattered sources, the *Wachtendonk Psalms* being the main one (Quak 1992: 81). The mainstream of Dutch coming down to us from the early 12th century onward is Middle Dutch. We find similar cases for High German and Low German, where there is a time gap between *Old* and *Middle* in the production of texts (König 2001: 57, 73, 84). The new beginning in the 11th century also marks the start of a new language form, the *Middle* Germanic stage.

In Scandinavia we find the Proto Nordic Runic inscriptions, of which the oldest represent a language stage rather close to Gothic and Proto Germanic. The oldest manuscripts of a broader written tradition first originate from the 13th century. Compared to, for example, Old English and Old Saxon, that is quite late and it reminds us of the data of the Old Frisian recordings. In the periodisation of Norwegian, Swedish and Danish, the beginning of the *Modern* period is put at around 1525. The period between 1250 and 1525 may be divided into an earlier stage and a later stage (Haugen 1984: 115-119).³ Using some of the criteria described by de Haan to assign a language to the *Middle*-stage (for example, absence of full vowels in unstressed syllables, consonantal degemination and syncretism in the system of nominal inflection), the transition towards the modern language stage is in fact already underway in Danish in the oldest recordings (Hofmann 1979: 78, 79). The process in the Nordic languages is, however, gradual, from Danish, already in transition towards a modern language stage in the earliest texts, to Icelandic that, even in its modern form, could still linguistically be considered an *Old* language. The divergent speed of modernisation of the respective Scandinavian languages is reflected in denotations used in the language histories:

	Danish	Swedish	Norwegian
± 1350 – ± 1525	Younger Middle Danish	Younger Old Swedish	Middle Norwegian
before ± 1350	Early Middle Danish	Elder Old Swedish	Old Norwegian

3 Whether by coincidence or not, both in mainland Scandinavia and in Frisia an important proportion of early mediaeval written sources consist of law texts (Haugen 1984: 235-236).

So compared to the Scandinavian periodisation, the labelling of the language of the 13th and 14th century Frisian manuscripts is not as odd as it seemed from a comparison with the neighbouring West Germanic languages. In the following sections, linguistic arguments for the labelling of Old Frisian will be evaluated.

2.2. Variety in Old Frisian and its present assessment

In discussing the periodisation of Old Frisian some remarks have to be made in advance in order to make comprehensible the problem and the different approaches. I can refer to Bremmer (2001a) for a recent summary of the discussion. Essential in respect to the Old Frisian sources is that we are roughly dealing with three groups of manuscripts, each showing common linguistic features. One group of manuscripts dates mainly from the period 1300-1450 and was written in mediaeval Frisia, east of the river Lauwers, i.e. in the northern part of the present Dutch province of Groningen – the so-called Ommelanden – and in the German region of East Friesland. These show a rather archaic form of Old Frisian. The other group, originating from the present Dutch province of *Fryslân*, was mainly written in the period 1450-1525 and shows a less archaic language form. The Old Frisian charters, dating from 1329 (only one)/1379 until the late 16th century and all from Fryslân, are often considered independently but may also be included in the second group. Originally, (ever since the 19th century), linguistic differences were interpreted in a dialectological sense, i.e. *Old East Frisian* and *Old West Frisian*. Sjölin (1966) pleaded for a chronological interpretation of the differences, pointing to the fact that some early Old West Frisian texts showed similar archaic features to Old East Frisian texts and *vice versa*. He therefore suggested the labels *classical* and *post-classical* Old Frisian, the few archaic Old West Frisian texts being included as ‘classical’ and some late Old East Frisian texts as ‘post-classical’.

A systematic linguistic comparison explicitly including the scarce older Old West Frisian and the younger Old East Frisian sources, by reference to early Modern East Frisian evidence, has never been made. But it is obvious that some differences have to be interpreted in a chronological sense and some in a dialectological sense. When I am especially concerned with the chronology, I will use the chronological labels *classical* and *post-classical*. It should, however, be kept in mind that where other authors speak of *Old East* and *Old West Frisian* they are mainly referring to the same texts and language forms as those falling under the labels classical and post-classical. When dialectal differences are relevant I will use the latter labels.

2.3. Opinions regarding the periodisation of Old Frisian

De Haan (2001b: 186-187) is not the first to question the validity of the label *Old*. He refers to scholars like Siebs, Gosses and Bremer. Siebs (1901: 1173) concludes that the language of the West Frisian charters from the 15th and 16th century can be called *Middle Frisian* but explicitly rejects this label (1901: 1168) for the language of the Old East Frisian manuscripts (13th – first half of the 15th century). For the Old West Frisian manuscripts (mainly second half of the 15th century) he makes no explicit statement. Doubts expressed by Gosses concerning the validity of the label *Old* also involve Old *West* Frisian (cf. citation in de Haan 2001b: 186).

Judgement regarding the archaic character of Old Frisian seems to be influenced by the specific source with which scholars are dealing. One ‘ideological believer’ in archaic Old Frisian was W.J. Buma (cf. Sjölin 1984: 56). He edited both the oldest classical manuscripts R1 and B, which do show the most archaic stage of Old Frisian. Gosses, who worked on the late Old West Frisian charters, was not convinced of the *Old* character of that Old West Frisian. And Sjölin, who edited the manuscript F, initiated an intense discussion about periodisation and dialectal localisation of the language of the manuscripts; no wonder when you realise that F is both late and shows hybrid philiation (with texts both from the east and the west). Siebs (1901: 1168) had already stated explicitly that the language of F, the label of which is taken from the region of Fivelgo, does not represent the dialect of that particular region. His remark underlined the implicit assumption that there is a link between manuscript name – all classical manuscripts bear names referring to former Frisian regions – and the Old Frisian dialect of that region.

Sjölin was the one who introduced periodisation as an item into discussions regarding the Old Frisian manuscripts. De Haan neglects Sjölin’s approach, saying that it is mainly based on non-linguistic features like spelling and style. Indeed, Sjölin pays quite some attention to these features but he adds in one line also phonological and morphological innovations (Sjölin 1966: 30). According to Sjölin (1969: 17, 18), the younger sources show mainly <e> (= /schwa/) in endings instead of full vowels and coalescence and mixture of historical flectional classes, linguistic arguments that de Haan also considers to be essential criteria for a division between *Old* and *Middle*.

Another reason for de Haan to neglect Sjölin’s periodisation of Old Frisian is that he is not convinced of the purely chronological foundation of the observed differences. As most of the post-classical manuscripts originate from Fryslân and most of the classical from East Friesland and The Ommelanden, the differences might just as well be dialectal, argues de Haan. And dialectal differences are ruled out by de Haan in the discussion over periodisation (2001b: 183-184). According to de Haan, a diachronic comparison is impossible because evenly aged material from both east and west would be missing. Given that it was Sjölin’s goal merely to overthrow the traditionally supposed dialectal division between Old West and Old East Frisian, it would appear rather cynical of de Haan explicitly to rely upon Sjölin to conclude that the observed differences could be interpreted as dialectal differences. It is, however, not true that there is no chronological overlap between material from the west and the east. And the point Sjölin is making is precisely that this scarce material underlies his chronological interpretation, because some early Old West Frisian texts show similar archaic features as do Old East Frisian texts and *vice versa* (Sjölin 1966: 30-31). Therefore I will interpret at least some of the differences in a chronological sense. The possible relevance of dialectal differences will be discussed in section 2.6.

2.4. Genetic compatibility of Old Frisian with other Old Germanic languages

In the discussion of the respective *Old* features, we will see that not every Old Germanic language is equally *Old*. Some traces are more profound in one language than in another. In order to come to a proper judgement of the linguistic character of

Old Frisian one has to define with what exactly Old Frisian should be compared. De Haan cites as an example of syncretism in Old Frisian morphology the paradigm of the past optative forms of the verb ‘to become’, Old Frisian *werda* (2001b: 194):

		Old High German	Old English	Old Frisian
Sg	1	wurti	wurde	wurde
	2	wurtis	wurde	wurde
	3	wurti	wurde	wurde
Pl	1	wurtim	wurden	wurde
	2	wurtit	wurden	wurde
	3	wurtin	wurden	wurde

It may be easily observed that Old High German shows the most conservative form of West Germanic in this respect. De Haan has cleverly selected this example because it indeed shows at a glance several reduction tendencies in Old Frisian. In his article de Haan mentions for Old English the plural endings *-an* and *-on* alongside *-en*. In the context of the discussion regarding reduction of unstressed vowels, the endings *-an* and *-on* may easily suggest an older stage. In this particular example this is not the case. These endings were, in fact, borrowed from the indicative and reflect a tendency towards analogy in the late Old English paradigm (Campbell 1977: 302). When we compare Old Frisian in the above paradigm with the oldest Old English forms, the only difference is the missing final *-n* in the plural in Old Frisian. This is the consequence of a general dropping of *-n*, a feature that Old Frisian shares with Old Nordic (ON) and with Northumbrian Old English (Campbell 1977: 302). The missing ending *-st* in de 2nd. sg. is in fact a conservative feature (cf. section 3.1.3.3.). So compared with Old English, and especially Northumbrian Old English, Old Frisian is not that odd.

This single example may be used as an illustration of a pattern observable even in the modern West Germanic languages. There is a clear decline in formal morphology from south-east (High German) to north-west (English). I can give some examples:

	High German	Dutch	Standard West Frisian	English
Nominal cases	4	0 ⁴	0	0
Nominal genders	3	2/3 ⁵	2	1
Main plural markers	4 (umlaut + <i>-e</i> , <i>-e</i> , <i>-en</i> , umlaut + <i>-er</i>) and few other groups	2 (<i>-en</i> , <i>-s</i>) and few other groups	2 (<i>-en</i> , <i>-s</i>) and few irregular forms	1 (<i>-s</i>) and few irregular forms
Distinct verbal forms in prs. Ind.	5	3	4	2
Number of modes	3	2 ⁶	2	2

4 Dutch, Frisian, English, the large Scandinavian languages and even High German all have an attributive genitive which differs in its use and morphology from the original genitive as found in Modern High German or Icelandic.

5 Most speakers of Dutch in the Netherlands distinguish only two genders: neuter and a common gender.

6 In practice, Dutch has only indicative and imperative; the optative has become limited to some petrified idiomatic expressions.

Already in the Old Germanic period may be observed a sharp division between North Sea Germanic on the one hand and Continental West Germanic on the other. Old English from the 9th century is in its formal morphology less *Old* than its contemporary Old High German. Continental West Germanic comprises in the first place High German. Old Saxon shows two faces: a more North Sea Germanic one and a Continental one, where the influence from the interior was gaining ground. The most striking North Sea Germanic features had been expelled from the language in the Middle Low Saxon stage (cf. Campbell 1977: 3). Dutch shows several North Sea Germanic features in its coastal forms but dialects of the interior belong definitively to the Continental branch of West Germanic. Quak's Old Dutch (1992), to which de Haan refers in his article, is based merely on the *Wachtendonck* psalms, a text originating from the northern Rhineland, an area in Germany lying beyond the borders of the present Dutch State. Following the observed general SE–NW tendency, the dialects of that region are also in the present time in a morphological sense more conservative than is standard Dutch (cf. Goossens 1987, especially the maps). Moreover, the *Wachtendonck* psalms show several traces of their original High German original (Quak 1992: 81). So we have to consider the Old Dutch of the *Wachtendonck* psalms as a Continental West Germanic language.

The point I want to make here is that it is not appropriate to compare Old Frisian with Old High German, Old Saxon and Old Dutch in the first place. De Haan takes most of his Old Germanic counter-examples from those languages, for example, in his discussion of the nominal inflection system, where he compares Old Frisian with Old Saxon and Old Dutch (2001b: 195-197). Comparative research into Old Germanic languages demonstrates that it is Old English and Old Frisian that are most closely related (Nielsen 1981: 256-257). Especially in the older language stages, relations between Old Frisian and Old Nordic may also be observed (Markey 1976: 52ff., 71). So we should concentrate on a comparison between Old Frisian and Old English, among the Germanic languages the branch genetically most closely related to Frisian, and in some respects too to Old Nordic. Comparison with the Continental West Germanic languages of Old Dutch, Old High German and to some extent also Old Saxon is less relevant.

Yet another aspect is variation within the Old Germanic languages. The Old Germanic grammars mainly present a fairly standardised morphology based on the more archaic stages of the language. In practice, the situation is much more diffuse. De Haan, however, frankly cites the standardised schemes (e.g. of nominal inflection, 2001b: 194ff.) of Old Saxon and Old Dutch. On the other hand, he presents a global overview of Old Frisian nominal inflection by Sjölin (1969: 31-32) and even simplifies it somewhat to stress the inflectional syncretism in Old Frisian. This would not seem to be a fair comparison. The other Old Germanic languages had their respective 'classical' and 'late' stages. From the discussion concerning periodisation in sections 2.1. and 2.2. it may be assumed that if there is any form of Old Frisian that deserves the label *Old* it is the so-called 'classical' Old Frisian. In addition, classical Old Frisian is still at least 250 years younger than *late* Old English! If classical Old Frisian were compatible with, let's say, late Old English, it would still be remarkably archaic.

2.5. Criteria for periodisation

In order to decide upon the periodisation of Old Frisian it is essential to have a clear understanding of the criteria. De Haan cites various authors and their arguments for applying the label *Old* to the mediaeval Frisian attestations. I summarise them here (2001b: 185-186):

1. great age of content of the Old Frisian texts (to be distinguished from the age of the actual manuscripts containing the texts)
2. vowel system of the stressed syllables and consonantal features, such as retention of /b/ and /hw/
3. archaic style and vocabulary
4. conservative orthography
5. full vowel quality in unstressed syllables
6. little syncretism in the case system

Most of these criteria de Haan neglects because of their “non-linguistic” character (2001b: 187). I can agree with him in terms of age of the texts and orthography but cannot see why vocabulary should be described as a non-linguistic feature. Vocabulary is a container term for the lexicon and includes also morphological features of word-forming processes that are, in my opinion, definitely linguistic. From the periodisation of other West Germanic languages de Haan concludes (2001b: 187) that “phenomena related to changes in syllable structure” are “the most important linguistic criterions” in the discussion. He refers to the fixation of stress to the root syllable in Germanic, which leads to reduction of vowels and even complete syllables in following subsequently unstressed syllables, e.g. Old English *settan* > Modern English *to set*. Alongside this process we see a reshuffling of quantity features in the stressed syllables. This results in most modern Germanic languages in vowel lengthening in open syllable and consonant degemination. For example, Old English *macian* (with short *a* > Modern English *to make* with [ei]; Old English *betera* (with short *e* and short *t*) > Modern English *better*, with the shortness of the *e* marked by the digraph <tt>, with a phonetically single pronunciation.

The reduction of distinctions in unstressed syllables, or even their apocope, led to syncretism in the nominal inflection and verbal conjugation systems and a shift in syntactic function marking from ending towards word order position. This implies a transition from an inflectional language towards an analytical language, with wide-ranging consequences for morphology and syntax. Modern English, with its strict word order and lack of any case or gender in the nominal system, is a very good example of this development.

De Haan therefore focuses on the following issues:

1. vowels in unstressed syllables: an *Old* language distinguishes between several vowel qualities in unstressed syllables.

2. vowel lengthening and consonant degemination: an *Old* language has no vowel lengthening in open syllables and retention of geminate consonants.
3. verbal conjugation: an *Old* language shows extensive formal distinctions between number and persons in different modes.
4. nominal inflection: an *Old* language distinguishes formally between gender, number and case, based upon historical inflectional classes.

De Haan further touches briefly upon the following features, although I can't see why exactly these have been selected:

5. deletion of /j/ and /w/
6. contracted verbs
7. negation system

I will follow de Haan and general opinion concerning characteristics of *Old* Germanic languages in focusing on the phenomena relating to syllable structure and their consequences for the morphological system. But I will also try to widen the scope in an effort more systematically to cover the Old Frisian grammar, although this article still does not represent a complete comparative grammar of Old Frisian. In fact, I have looked through several Old Germanic grammars and tried to find features that both cover a wider range of grammar and could provide material for distinction between *Old* and *Middle*, where comparative material was relatively easy to access.

Apart from the four main points previously defined I will look into:

8. some other phonological features
9. the object forms of the personal pronoun 3rd sg. masculine *him/hine*
10. the cardinal numbers 'one, two, three'
11. word-forming processes
12. lexicology
13. several syntactic aspects

Before discussing these items, I will in the coming section outline the relevance of the proposed criteria from a contemporary point of view.

2.6. Validity of mentioned criteria and dialectal variation in the discussion concerning periodisation

In section 2.5. I defined the main criteria for applying the label *Old* to a language form. I repeat them here. An *Old* language:

1. distinguishes between several vowel qualities in unstressed syllables.
2. has no vowel lengthening in open syllable and retention of geminate consonants

3. shows extensive formal distinction between number and persons in the verbal paradigm
4. distinguishes formally between gender and case, based upon historical declension classes.

Even in the 21st century we find in several places one or more of these features in Germanic languages. Modern Icelandic is a very typical example. Of course, there are several differences in phonology, morphology, lexicon and syntax between the Icelandic of the 12th and the 21st century but these are insignificant compared with the differences between, for example, Old and Middle, not to mention Modern, English. And there are other languages that show very archaic features. Faroese is slightly more modern but shows great similarities with Icelandic. At the southern edge of Germania, in some Welshian dialects in Switzerland and northern Italy, we still find three classes of weak verbs and conservation of nominal inflection in several classes (König 2001: 161).⁷ In the Swedish dialect of *Dalarna* we find full vowels in unstressed syllables, four cases, three genders and several classes of inflection (Levander 1909), as was also the case in the 19th century Swedish dialect of the isle of Fårö (Gotland) (Gustavson 1991: xlvii, xlviii). So should we still call these dialects *Old High German* and *Old Swedish*? Even Modern Swedish, which is beyond any doubt a *Modern* language, has different vowels (/a/, /e/, /o/) in unstressed syllables and geminate consonants, two criteria that we formerly proposed for identifying *Old* language stages. So some of these criteria are not as straightforward as they would seem to be from comparison of the different stages of, for example, English, High German and Danish. When such characteristics appear in more recent language stages, de Haan disqualifies them to serve as an argument for the stage of the language (2001a: 183). He states this especially in relation to the archaic language of the Riustring manuscripts, which preserves more full vowels in unstressed syllables than does any other Old Frisian dialect. In the language of the even somewhat older Old Frisian manuscript B, this feature is missing. Because the modern descendants of Riustring Old Frisian, the 19th century Frisian dialect of the island Wangerooge and the 18th century Frisian dialect of the region of Land Wursten (north of Bremerhaven), also preserve some of these vowels de Haan concludes that this feature is not valid for determining the chronological stage of the language. He considers it rather to be dialectal variation and this, as such, seems to de Haan reason enough to rule it out as an argument in discussions over periodisation (2001a: 183-184). In the particular case of archaisms in Riustring Old Frisian and the later East Frisian dialects of Wangerooge and Land Wursten de Haan neglects the fact that the full end vowels in Riustring Old Frisian had an entirely different function in the morphological system than in later East Frisian dialects. Riustring Old Frisian had four cases, to some extent marked by different endings. The dialects of Wangerooge and most likely also of Land Wursten (Versloot

7 The number of speakers of these dialects are nowadays very limited and some variants have become extinct over recent decades.

2001a: 738) did not have different cases and the retained full vowels had in several cases been incorporated in the root. Compare the forms of the word ‘son’ in Old English, Riustring and Brokmer Old Frisian and their respective ‘descendants’ Wangeroogish and Sater-Frisian:

	Old English	Old Frisian (R)	Wangeroogish	Old Frisian (B)	Sater-Frisian
nom. Sg.	sunu	sunu	suunuu	sune	suun
dat. Sg.	sunā	*sunā	–	sunā	–
nom. Pl.	sunā	sunā	suunuus	*sunā(r)	suune
dat. Pl.	sunum	*sunun	–	*sunum	–

Forms marked with * are based on attested other words and case forms from the same class.

The table shows that the different vowels in Old Frisian function as case markers. Insofar as they have been preserved in Wangeroogish they simply form part of the root, considering the fact that *suunuu* gets the plural marker *-s* behind it, without altering the vowel quality.

In fact, we are dealing here with two aspects:

- (1) the question of whether an archaic feature is still present in later, more modern language stages,
- (2) the question of whether an archaic feature seems to stand in geographical (i.e. dialectal) contrast to more modern forms in contemporary, related dialects.

If the presence of an archaic feature in later language stages disqualifies that feature as a criterion for periodisation, as de Haan (2001b: 186⁸) suggests, very odd situations arise. Could the language of the mediaeval Icelandic manuscripts not then be called Modern Icelandic because it hardly differs from Modern Icelandic? And would the almost identical language of the mediaeval Norwegian texts indeed be Old Norwegian because it differs clearly from Modern Norwegian? This would seem not to be a workable evaluation of archaic linguistic features. In the evaluation of archaic criteria it may be useful to examine to what extent modern descendants of a given language also show certain characteristics. But this should not influence their evaluation for the considered language stage itself. Following on the former example of the full end vowels in Riustring Old Frisian and Wangeroogish, we have to evaluate not only the continuing existence of a feature at a given language stage but also its phonological or morphological relevance.⁹ The question of dialectal relationships seems to me also to

8 “And this property [= the presence of full vowels in unstressed syllables] does not count [...] since Old Frisian dialects which show full vowels in final syllables, still have them in the Modern Frisian period.”

9 In this respect we should mention that Modern Icelandic is, however, somewhat less *Old* than it would at first glance appear. In Modern Icelandic, vowel lengthening or shortening has taken place according to the quantity of the following consonant. The spelling still reflects the Old Icelandic situation from before the quantity shift but, from a point of view of synchrony, it is enough to distinguish between long and short consonants and take the vowel length as redundant.

be irrelevant to the discussion concerning periodisation. De Haan (2001b: 184¹⁰) suggests that the existence of contemporary, more modern dialects of an archaic language form render such archaic features irrelevant for purposes of periodisation. In my view, it is in the end impossible to define what is a dialect of what and to what degree. And what degree of relationship should be valid in this discussion? Should the characteristics of Modern High German be taken into account in defining period assignment of the mentioned archaic Walesian dialects simply because they are considered dialects of High German? How big may, or must, be the difference between two dialects to allow the character of the one to influence period assignment of the other? These are rhetorical questions and the only solution that I can see is to evaluate every language form individually. From the variation observed within Germania – e.g. archaic Dalarna Swedish alongside Modern Standard Swedish, or the continuity in Icelandic over nine hundred years – it would appear impossible to arrive at a uniform chronology for the whole of Germania taking into account the actual characteristics of a language.¹¹ As we are focusing here on linguistic analysis of the language, the solution to this dilemma lies in taking the label *Old* as a typological one, rather than as a purely temporal indication of derivation. If we do so neither observed continuity of archaic features in some languages nor contemporary dialectal variation produce methodological contradictions.

2.7. Methodological conclusions

Following on the previous discussion, I will in the coming section distinguish three approaches. In the first place, I have concluded that any labelling of Germanic languages should be understood as *typological* judgements. What we normally call an *Old* language can be defined as an inflectional language in a typological sense: a language marking syntactic functions by endings. Most *Modern* Germanic languages may be described as mainly analytical languages: syntactic functions may to some degree be marked by highly simplified endings (for number, person and tense); the remaining functions are marked by word order and lexical description (e.g. auxiliary verbs instead of modes). The *Middle* languages are transitional types, on their way from being inflectional to becoming analytical. In this linguistic evaluation of mediaeval Frisian I will consider the subject from this aspect.

The second aspect is that of geographical patterns within Germania. In section 2.4. I signalled a south-east – north-west decline in formal morphology. In section 2.6. I

10 “The linguistic differences between Classical and Post-Classical Old Frisian may be dialectal and cannot be used to underpin a linguistic periodisation of Old Frisian”.

11 Of course, one could simply state that every language form AD 2003 is *Modern* and every language form AD 1000 is *Old*, simply by definition. This, naturally, is the way these labels came into being and also the way in which I apply names such as *Modern Icelandic* and *Modern High German* in this article. But then it must be accepted that there are no uniform linguistic criteria for differences between *Old* and *Modern*, which range from some minor phonological changes and morphological adjustments from *Old* to *Modern Icelandic* to a complete typological reconstruction of, for example, English. In such a case, discussion concerning periodisation loses its overall linguistic relevance.

added some more geographical and dialectal considerations. Discussing the typological interpretation of mediaeval Frisian I will take account of geographical patterns within Germania of the item concerned. In the third place, this article is a reply to de Haan's statement in his article about the periodisation of Frisian. I will also compare his judgement of the linguistic facts with mine. These three areas of scope will be followed during the whole of section 3. Finally, I will try to convert all this into conclusions concerning the questions:

1. Is Old Frisian typologically compatible with the other *Old* Germanic inflectional languages or is it rather a *Middle* language?
2. Is there any logical embedding of the features of Old Frisian in the wider context of Germanic languages?
3. What should, as a reply to de Haan, constitute a proper periodisation of Frisian?

I will begin the discussion of each item with a description of the facts concerning the relevant Old Germanic languages, especially Old English. I will then sketch the general picture in related Middle Germanic languages. When appropriate, I will point to the retention of archaic linguistic features in contemporary languages and dialects. After drawing the linguistic context I will place the mediaeval Frisian attestations within it. After discussion of the four main criteria I will evaluate the other features in the same way. If one or more of the distinguished mediaeval Frisian variants complies with all four main criteria listed at the beginning of section 2.6. – at least to the same extent as do 'recognised' *Old* languages like (late) Old English and contrasting with *Middle* languages – it would deserve the typological label *Old*. We can then decide whether, linguistically speaking, *Old* Frisian exists and which variants it should comprise.

3. Linguistic characteristics of mediaeval Frisian

3.1. The four main criteria of 'Old' languages

In this section I will discuss the different forms of Old Frisian according to the four criteria mentioned at the beginning of section 2.6. Following on the discussion in section 2.1. and 2.2., I will work with at least two and sometimes four different forms of Old Frisian. They are classical Old Frisian, in some cases to be divided into Riustring Old Frisian and the rest and, secondly, post-classical Old Frisian, within which especially the later charters sometimes occupy a distinct position. The language of some manuscripts has been studied in more detail, which facilitates an easy description of grammatical features. I will briefly describe the main different sources that I will regularly be referring to. A detailed description of the Old Frisian manuscripts can be found at Johnston (2001: 571ff.). The reference labels (like R, B) which have been derived from the manuscript labels refer to language forms (dialects) of Old Frisian at any given time (cf. the map on page xxx).

- R The language of the manuscript R1¹² (\pm 1300) represents the easternmost classical Old Frisian dialect of Riustringen and has been described by Boutkan (1996). The Modern East Frisian dialect of Wangerooge (Versloot 2001c; now extinct) is its closest descendant.
- B The East Frisian classical Brokmer manuscript (B1) was written somewhat before 1300. Its text edition (Buma 1949) contains a complete dictionary on the text.
- H The East Frisian (Ommelanden) classical Hunsingo manuscript (H2) was written somewhat after 1300. Its text edition (Hoekstra 1950) contains a complete dictionary on the text.
- F The East Frisian manuscript (F) has a hybrid philology, although most texts come from the Ommelanden. It dates from the first half of the 15th century and its language is rather post-classical than classical. Its language has been extensively analysed by Sjölin (1970).
- U The West Frisian manuscript Unia (U), originally from about 1475 but now only available in a 17th century copy, is poorly accessible. It shows the most archaic form of Old West Frisian. I was able to use a preliminary transcription of the text available at the *Fryske Akademy* and the glossary of Steller's edition of the text of the *Skeltena riucht* (Steller 1926). The language of U is generally believed to represent a north-eastern form of West Frisian.
- J The West Frisian post-classical manuscript J was written somewhere around 1530, from an original dating from 1464. Buma (1996) has published a complete dictionary on the text. The manuscript can be linked to the south-western part of Fryslân.

3.1.1. Full vowels in unstressed syllables in Old Frisian

The earliest Old English sources show a four-position vowel system in unstressed syllables (Nielsen 2001: 518). Classical Old English knew three different qualities: /e/, /a/, /u/. In late Old English we find several neutralisations and syncretism in protected position (cf. Campbell 1977: 156-160). Old Saxon had four qualities and Old High German, five (Nielsen 2001: 518). Classical Old Nordic knew three qualities in unstressed syllables: /i/, /a/, /u/. In Old Swedish and Old Norwegian we find an alternation /i~e/ and /o~u/ according to synchronic rules; in Old Norwegian it is merely due to vowel harmony, in Old Swedish there are both vowel balance and vowel harmony (Hofmann 1979: 72, 74). All the *Middle* languages, Middle English (Brunner 1970: 31), Middle Dutch (Pijnenburg 1997: 80), Middle Low German (Lasch 1914:

12 There are two manuscripts and two fragments, all from the Riustring area. R1 is the biggest and Boutkan's grammar is based only on this manuscript.

116), Middle High German (Boor – Wisniewski 1973: 51) and younger Middle Danish (Hofmann – Ranke 1979: 78) show only /ə/.¹³

Nowadays we still find full vowels in unstressed syllables in most of the Scandinavian languages and in some High German Dialects in Switzerland and northern Italy. As mentioned before, the extinct Modern East Frisian dialects of Wangerooge and Land Wursten also knew this feature. Both Modern Icelandic and Modern Swedish, for example, have three different qualities (/I, /a/, /ö/ and /ə/, /a/, /u/) but in Swedish that has only two genders (common gender and neuter) and no case system, the functional loading of the different vowels in the formal morphology is much lower than in Icelandic. New Norwegian, with its two vowel system (/ə/, /a/), no case system but three genders, takes an intermediate position when it comes to the morphological loading of the vowel oppositions (Hellevik 1994: 12-21).

The most archaic form of Old Frisian in this respect is the Old Frisian Riustring dialect (cf. Boutkan 1996: esp. 32). The Riustring dialect had a three positional system in absolute finality: /i~e/, /a/, /o~u/, where both /i/ and /e/ as /o/ and /u/ changed according to synchronic rules of vowel balance and vowel harmony. In protected position we find several neutralisations, as in late Old English. De Haan considers the vowel balance and vowel harmony as “weakening of the quality of the corresponding full final vowels in Proto-Frisian” (2001b: 190) and thus pointing away from the label *Old*. But these features are common in Old Swedish and absent in any Middle West Germanic language. That the vowel system of unstressed syllables in the classical Old Frisian texts, especially the language of R, resembles the one of late Old English is admitted by de Haan (2001b: 189). And he also observes that the distribution of these vowels in R rely upon strict phonological rules and are thus not alternative spellings. So de Haan’s comparison with the divergent writings of [ə] (sic!) in Middle Dutch as <i>, <a>, <o> and <u> (Pijnenburg 1997: 80) is not valid. The feature of syncope of vowels in intermediate position, especially after long syllables, is also mentioned by de Haan (2001b: 190) as a sign of vowel weakening. But that is the rule in Old English and Old Nordic, e.g. OF (B) *fingrar*, OE *fingras* ‘fingers’, ON *engill*, *englar* ‘angel(s)’. So the conclusion must be that the late 13th century Old Frisian language from Riustringen resembles contemporary Old Swedish and the even older (late) Old English.

All other Old Frisian dialects but R show a further reduced system of unstressed vowels, with basically only /e/ (= [ə]?) and /a/. The spelling <u> is only found in the dative plural ending <um>, where even in the oldest form of B it is quite often found alongside , <im> and even <en>. Also, already in B, <e> and <i> can alternate in the ending of the genitive sg. M and N, but not in absolute finality, e.g. dative sg. M and N where only <e> is found. The characters <a> and <e> are found alternating sporadically in B, but increasingly in the later, especially post-classical manuscripts, (cf. Sjölin 1969: 22). Free alternation of <a> and <i> is, however, not found. An exhaustive analysis dealing with a phonological interpretation of the spelling <i>, <e>

13 This yields merely for the final positions and endings. In pre- and suffixes we find different situations in all languages, including Modern Frisian.

and <a> in a post-classical manuscript is lacking. In the later development of the modern dialects there is a diverging development of Old Frisian final /e/ and /a/. So we have to conclude that the distinction /e/ – /a/ was phonologically relevant in Old Frisian (cf. Siebs 1901: 1244; Versloot 2002: 66-68). Complete coalescence never occurred and <e> and <a> cannot be considered, as by de Haan (2001b: 189), to be purely divergent writings. The phonetic realisation of the underlying opposing phonemes will have shifted from [a] ~ [e/ə] towards [ə] ~ Ø somewhere during the post-classical period.

Although we may also assume some form of phonemic opposition in unstressed syllables in post-classical Old Frisian, there are clear differences in the actual morphological application of this opposition between classical and post-classical Old Frisian in a sense as described for the modern Scandinavian languages. The morphological system of B, of nominal inflection, differs from that of R almost only in the application of a simple rule R: /i~e/ > B: /e/ and R: /u~o/ > B: /e/ (cf. the paradigms in Appendix 1). In later sources – in fact, this process has already begun in H – the simple opposition /e/ – /a/ is hardly felt enough to reflect differences in gender, case or number and new endings are introduced (Appendix 2 and 3). The conclusion must be that the most archaic form of Old Frisian, the language of R, keeps pace with the other (late) Old Germanic languages, especially Old Swedish and Old English (so also Nielsen 2001: 518). The rest of – also classical – Old Frisian shows an intermediate stage between the really *Old* languages and the Middle West Germanic languages, or at least a very *late Old* stage. In the case of post-classical Old Frisian a phonetic opposition between different vowels in unstressed syllables may be questioned.

3.1.2. Vowel Lengthening and Consonant Degemination

Lengthening of short vowels in open syllable and degemination of former geminate consonants are considered to be markers of *Middle* languages. None of the Old Germanic languages show vowel lengthening or degemination. In Middle Dutch, lengthening in open syllable is assumed in the 12th century (Pijenburg 1997: 84), in Middle English in the early 13th century (Brunner 1970: 17). Degemination is lacking in the modern Scandinavian languages (except for Danish) and in some High German dialects. Lengthening of vowels in open syllable is regularly missing in some Scandinavian dialects and in south-western High German (Haugen 1984: 329; König 2001: 148-153).

De Haan refers to Hofmann (1969) saying that Old Frisian completed these developments at about 1400. He could furthermore have cited Hofmann's statement concerning the language before 1400 (1969: 72), where Hofmann mentions that degemination had not taken place, even in the classical 15th century Old West Frisian sources. In the language database of Old Frisian currently being built at the Fryske Akademy I was able to check some typical examples of unetymological geminate spellings, which are an indication for the disappearance of phonological geminates. The selected words are: *breka* / *brekane* / *brekat*, forms of the verb 'to break'; *breke* 'breach'; *weter* 'water'.

manuscript	R1	H1	E1	F	J	Aysma
date according to Sjölin (1969: 11)	1300	14th c.	1400	1450	1464	1500
breka(-ne/t)	4	3	1	3	1	2
brecka(-ne)	–	–	–	–	1	–
breke	13	6	4	13	35	17
brekke (-ck-)	–	–	–	1	–	4
weter/-ir	6	4	3	9	1	–
wetter	–	–	–	–	14	9

From this sample I conclude that degemination took place in West Frisian in the first half of the 15th century. In the East Frisian dialects of Harlingerland and Wangerooge, degemination took place not at all (Versloot 2001b: 769). So de Haan's assertion that some spelling forms in R should be interpreted as signs of a beginning phonological degemination (de Haan 2001b: 192) can not be correct.

In Versloot (2001b: 769-770) I have sketched a picture of degemination and vowel lengthening in open syllable for all the Frisian dialect groups. In both Modern West and East Frisian, vowel lengthening in open syllable is not as widespread as it is in Modern Dutch, Low and High German, English and most of the Scandinavian languages. With respect to degemination and vowel lengthening in open syllable, classical Old Frisian is in line with the other Old Germanic languages. Late Old West Frisian from the 15th century has indeed abandoned the *Old* position but in the typological evaluation of Frisian it is interesting to observe that the process of quantity shift in the root syllable took a different direction than it did in the other West Germanic languages.

3.1.3. Verbal Inflexion

De Haan mentions three features in which Old Frisian should resemble Middle Germanic languages rather than Old Germanic: a distinction in the *jan*-verbs according to syllable quantity, the quality of the theme vowel of the *ian*-verbs and the conjugational endings.

3.1.3.1. *jan*-verbs

In the Old Germanic languages there is a distinction in the group of the original *jan*-verbs: the short-rooted verbs kept their original theme vowel and long-rooted verbs lost it, as in the Old English *ic werie – werede*, 'I defend / defended'; *ic hiere – hierde* 'I hear/heard'. This original grouping was lost in every Modern West Germanic language, but left several traces in most of them. For English compare the mentioned difference between *defendED* and *heard*. In Modern West Frisian irregular verbs like *skiede – skate* 'to divide', *liede – lette* 'to ring (a bell)' reflect an Old Frisian sub-class of long-rooted *jan*-verbs in dental. In High German we find the class of originally long-rooted verbs with so-called "Rückumlaut": *brennen – brannte* 'to burn, burned', which find a parallel in Modern English in *to sell – sold*. In most of the Old Germanic languages the patterns are already disturbed by levelling and syncretism; in Old English, Old Saxon as well as in Old High German (Campbell 1977: 352; Braune 1959: 61; also de Haan 2001b: 193).

Old Nordic is generally missing the theme vowel but regularly shows lack of umlaut in the short-rooted verbs and different endings in the present tense: *ég ver – varði* ‘I defend – defended’, *ég heyri – heyrði* ‘I hear – heard’.

Indeed, Old Frisian lacks the consistent difference between long and short-rooted *jan*-verbs. Siebs (1901: 1326) mentions one possible relic of a short-rooted verb without syncope in the past tense: *nerede*. The lack of the theme vowel in short-rooted verbs in Old Frisian is a feature shared with Old Nordic. The consistent carrying out of i-mutation in present and past tense is a feature shared with, for example, Old English. The original /j/ induced consonant gemination in most present tense forms of the paradigm in West Germanic, except of /r/, where /j/ is retained in Old English and in Old Saxon, for example, OE *swerian* ‘to swear’. Old Frisian also lacks that /j/: *swera*. The original change due to the alternation of /j/ and /i/ in the paradigm, which caused an alternation of geminated and non-geminated forms in the paradigm, is reflected in the mixed paradigm OF *libba* ‘to live’ in F: inf. *libba*, 3rd sg. prs. ind. *liuath*, 3rd sg. prs. opt. *libbe*. A similar scheme is found in J. In R is found the pl. prs. ind. *leuath*, where **libbath* would be expected (other attested forms are according to the sound laws). Also the root change between inf. *sidza*, *lidza*, sg. prt. *seide*, *leide* ‘to say, lay’ is due to the alternation of geminated and non-geminated forms: < **seggjan*, **segiða*. Another reflex of the alternation of /j/ is alternation between 3rd sg. prs. opt. *biteszie* < **bitekji* and 3rd sg. prs. ind. *bitech* < **bitekib* (‘to claim’). Due to the limited number of examples in Old Frisian and the lack of a complete grammar of Old Frisian it is difficult to decide whether we are dealing here with some sole relics of this feature or with a consistently applied morphological alternation. In the last instance we would be dealing with a purely *Old* feature because geminated consonants do not exist in *Middle* West Germanic languages.

The reshuffling of verb paradigms continued in the various languages during their *Middle* stages, leaving divergent patterns even in several modern languages. So Old Frisian is fairly compatible with other *Middle* languages in this aspect of alternation between short and long-rooted *jan*-verbs, although the distinction is not as sharp between *Old* and *Middle*, c.q. Old Frisian and the rest of the Old Germanic languages as suggested by de Haan.

3.1.3.2. *ōian*-verbs

The *ian*-verbs show an inf. ending *-ian* in Old English and Old Saxon and a theme vowel in the 2nd and 3rd sg. prs. ind. and in the entire past tense: Old High German /ō/, Old Saxon /o/, Old English has /a/ but only West-Saxon /o/ in the past tense (Campbell 1977: 332-333, §757). Old Nordic has the theme vowel /a/:

		3rd sg.prs.	3rd sg.prt.	
OE	<i>lofian</i>	<i>lofaþ</i>	<i>lofode/lofode</i>	‘to prays’
ON	<i>lofa</i>	<i>lofar</i>	<i>lofaði</i>	‘to promise’

In both Middle High German and Middle Dutch the former weak verb classes coalesced and new distinctions were developed (Boor – Wisniewski 1973: 120-121; Le

Roux 1973: 169: 173). In Middle English, a distinction between the old *jan*-verbs and *ōian*-verbs persisted into the 14th century (Brunner 1970: 80) in the south. None of the Middle Germanic languages show quality of the theme vowel other than that of /ə/.

Forms corresponding to the aforementioned Old English and Old Nordic examples in Old Frisian are: *lowia* ‘to promise’, *lowath*, *lowade*. De Haan considers the quality /a/ of the theme vowel, in contrast with Old High German /ō/ and Old Saxon /o/ as a sign of reduction. But the more genuine comparison with Old English and Old Nordic show this argument to be invalid.

Nowadays almost all, modern Frisian dialects – including the West Frisian standard language – are quite unique among the West Germanic languages in having two historically motivated but still quite productive weak verb classes.¹⁴ One has to look to the Nordic languages to find parallels for this, e.g. in New Norwegian with three weak classes, where the short and long-rooted *jan*-verbs and the *ōian*-verbs are still distinguished (Hellevik 1994: 19). So the conclusion must be that the flexion of the *ōian*-verbs in Old Frisian is as *Old* as it is in the other Old Germanic languages.

3.1.3.3. Conjugational endings

De Haan suggests that the inflection and conjugation system of Old Frisian “is the result of a form of syncretism that is characteristic for the Middle Germanic period” (2001b: 194). He therefore cites the paradigm of the past optative. In my discussion of this in section 2.4. I concluded that Old Frisian should in the first place be compared with Old English. The following table contains a comparison of the endings of strong verbs in the present and past indicative in Old English (Campbell 1977: 296), Old Frisian according to the archaic classical dialect of R (Boutkan 1996: 116) and the later text F (Sjölin 1970: 149-150), Middle English (the conservative southern dialects, Brunner 1970: 70-72), Middle Dutch (Le Roux 1973: 147-152) and Modern East Frisian (Wangerooze, Versloot 2001c, 428). Note: ‘n.d.’ means ‘no data’:

	Old English		Old Frisian (R)		Old Frisian (F)		Early Middle English		Middle Dutch		Wange-roogish	
	prs.	prt.	prs.	prt.	prs.	prt.	prs.	prt.	prs.	prt.	prs.	prt.
1st sg	-e	–	n.d.	n.d.	-e	n.d.	-e	–	-e	–	-(e)	–
2nd sg	-st	-e	-st	n.d.	-est	n.d.	-(e)st	-e	-(e)s(t)	-(e)s(t)	-st	-st
3rd sg	-þ	–	-th	–	-t	–	-eþ	–	-(e)t	–	-t	–
1st pl	-aþ	-on	-ath	-on	-at	-en	-eþ	-en	-en	-en	-et	-en
2nd pl	-aþ	-on	-ath	-on	-at	-en	-eþ	-en	-(e)t	-(e)t	-et	-en
3rd pl	-aþ	-on	-ath	-on	-at	-en	-eþ	-en	-en	-en	-et	-en

This overview makes clear that Riustring Old Frisian entirely resembles Old English. The other Old Frisian dialects show *-en* in the past plural and *-ath* appears more and more as *-at* and even *-et*. De Haan makes a special point about the ending of

14 Another West Germanic exception form the in section 2.6. mentioned Walesian High German dialects.

the 2nd sg. prt. ind. (2001b: 194, 198). He claims that the ending should be *-e but appears as -st. De Haan seems to overlook the fact that the ending -e (as, for example, in Old English) was reserved for strong verbs. Weak verbs show -st (-æs in the oldest sources, Campbell 1977: 322), also in Old English. No 2nd sg. prt. ind. of a strong verb has been recorded in Old Frisian in the classical sources.¹⁵ In the post-classical period an analogue ending -est appears, as in Middle Dutch.

Two other aspects concerned with the ending of the 2nd sg. can be mentioned in this context. In the optative, both in present and past tense, it shows -e in Old Frisian, in line with the situation in Old English; e.g. *thu libbe* (U). In Middle Dutch (Le Roux 1973: 147, 151) we find -es, in Middle Low Saxon -est (Lasch 1941: 224). Middle English had -e, which was dropped soon in the Middle English period (Brunner 1970: 71-72). Old Frisian is on the conservative side here.

The preterite-present verb *shall* showed the ending -t in the 2nd sg. prs. ind. in Old Germanic: OE *scealt*, OS *scalt*, OF *skelt/skalt*. In Middle Dutch and Middle Low Saxon the endings -t and -s(t) appear alongside one another (Le Roux 1973: 176; Lasch 1941: 244). Middle and Modern English still have -t (Brunner 1970: 83). Old Frisian is on the conservative side here. Early Modern West Frisian also has *si(l)t(e)*. Nowadays it is *silst* [sIst].

We have to conclude that Riustring Old Frisian keeps pace with Old English. The later classical sources show an intermediate between *Old* and *Middle*. In the post-classical sources, where -ath appears more and more as -et, differences between this and, especially the archaic form of, Middle English are absent.

3.1.4. Nominal Inflection

With respect to the nominal inflectional system, de Haan claims that the “[...] system of Old Frisian deviates from Old Saxon (OS) and Old Dutch in that the system of gender-specific inflectional suffixes assigned to distinct stem declensions is no longer recognisable” (2001b: 196). De Haan makes the comparison with Old Dutch, claiming that there “the ‘old’ nominal system of inflection is retained to a significant extent [...]”. But de Haan is adjusting the data according to its goal when he leaves out a subdivision of the paradigms of Sjölin (1970: 197). For Old Dutch we could just as well cite Quak (1992: 82): “Nur in vereinzelt Formen läßt sich noch das alte System [...] erkennen”. This tends towards a discussion about whether the bottle is half-full or half-empty.

According to section 2.4. we should in the first place make the comparison with Old English. Especially in the sources other than R, the limited number of vowels in unstressed syllables (/e/ and /a/), indeed reduces the number of possible endings. I have analysed the inflectional system in the language of B, the oldest source of Old Frisian, with only /e/ and /a/ in unstressed syllables, in the same way as did Boutkan (1996:

15 cf. Boutkan (1996: 116), Sjölin (1970: 149) and the registers of the text editions of the older sources B, H and E1. Sjölin marks the form *forest* (past tense of *fara*) in his grammatical overview (Sjölin 1969: 37) with a ‘*’, denoting that the form has not been attested. The forms *underfengest* and *kômost*, cited in Siebs (1901: 1337) come from post-classical Old Frisian sources.

52-75) for R. I subsequently made a reconstruction of the Old Frisian declension system according to the historical declension classes for the masculina in both R and B, as we find it in the classical grammars of Old Germanic languages, e.g. Campbell (1977), in comparison with Old English and Middle Dutch. These paradigms are found in Appendix 1.

Comparison of Old English, OF(R) and OF(B) reveals that Old Frisian shows, compared with Old English, some syncretism of sub-classes, e.g. *ja*-nouns with short-rooted *i*-nouns, *wa*-nouns with normal *a*-nouns, and the reduction of historically motivated root vowel change in paradigms, e.g. in the Ds of athematic nouns. Historically regular ending-less cases and numbers become increasingly replaced in B by analogue endings from the other classes. Many of these reduction tendencies are also found in late Old English. But in comparison with Middle Dutch it is obvious that Old Frisian still shows the basic pattern of the historically motivated declension groups as we find them in Old English. Especially the *u*-nouns are remarkably well preserved. In section 3.1. I have already mentioned the fact that the in B compared to R more limited vowel system in the unstressed syllable has no influence on the application of the vowels as distinct endings.

To get an impression of the further development in Old Frisian, I studied the plural markers of the masculine nouns in H (Appendix 2), U and J (Appendix 3). The first two are considered 'classical', the third 'post-classical'; both U and J are Old West Frisian, R, B and H Old East Frisian. In H the main groups, including *u*-stems and *nd*-stems, are well recognisable. But a new ending *-an*, probably arising from contamination of regular *-a* and borrowed Middle Low Saxon and Middle Dutch *-en*, was already emerging. In the first place in the *i*- and *ja*-stems, but also in the *a*- and *n*-stems and in some of the minor groups like root-stems (*tothan* in stead of **teeth*) and *u*-stems (*frethen* instead of **fretha*). In U the situation has changed even more, insofar as the limited basis material allows conclusions: *-an* has become the general ending for masculine plural. The old ending *-a* (*-e*) is found only in some old minor groups such as the *nd*- and root-stems, where it has replaced the former inflection with *i*-mutation and no ending. More or less the same applies to the post-classical language of J, where the ending *-an* appears rather as *-en*.

So we may conclude that the oldest classical Old Frisian, as we find it in R, B and to some extent also in H, is still an *Old* language in this respect. In the later sources there is indeed a strong syncretism of inflectional classes towards a system that resembles the systems of the *Middle* languages.

3.2. Phonological features

3.2.1. Deletion of /j/ and /w/ in certain environments

De Haan describes the deletion of West Germanic /w/ and /j/ in certain environments. Indeed, Old Frisian shows a stronger tendency towards deletion of /w/ and /j/ than does any other Old Germanic language. Old Nordic sometimes shows similar deletion, as in OE *spiwa*, OF *spia*, ON *spýja* 'to spit' (cf. Dutch *spuwen*), OE *eowu*, OF *ey*, ON *ær* 'ewe' (cf. Dutch *ooi*). One remarkable 'modern' feature of OF is the fact that the

deletion of /w/ and /j/ has been levelled throughout declension paradigms (cf. Appendix 1: *ja-* and *wa-*stems.)

3.2.2. Contracted verbs

De Haan considers forms of contracted verbs like OF *fā, siā, slā* ‘to catch, see, beat’ as signs of reduction and thus modernisation. These verbs find direct counterparts in ON *fá, sjá, slá* (id.). So the situation we find in Old Frisian is due rather to its place in the dialectal spectra of Old Germanic languages than to purely chronological developments (cf. Modern High German: *fangen, sehen, schlagen*). As such, we might say that in this respect the north is more innovative than the south.

3.2.3. Phonetic features

Old Frisian shows some archaic phonetic features partly absent from the neighbouring *Middle* languages. It may be wondered how anything can be said about the phonetic aspects of Old Frisian. Conclusions can be drawn from the combination of Old Frisian spelling and actual phonetic observations in recent Frisian dialects.

The sounds [p] and [ð] are nowadays present only in English and Icelandic. Dalarna Swedish has word internal and word final [ð] and the Modern Danish weak *d* is a reflection of this. In all the Nordic languages, including Danish, these were still present until at least 1300 (cf. Hofmann 1979: 159). On the continent, these phonemes disappeared centuries before: they are lacking in Middle Dutch, Middle Low Saxon and Middle High German. In High German this development was already underway in the 9th century, so in Old High German time (Boor 1973: 25).

The classical Old Frisian manuscripts consistently distinguish between <th>, <t> and <d>, where <th> shows a correct etymological distribution. Based on the pronunciation of <th> in English and the distribution of [p] and [ð] in 19th century Wangeroogish (Versloot 2001c: 425) we may assume that the Old Frisian <th> represents the sounds [p] and [ð] (Boutkan 1996: 37, 46; Sjölin 1970: 107). From an unpublished analysis by myself of Old West Frisian charters it emerges that at the very beginning of the 15th century spelling was at least etymologically consistent, which may be taken as an indication of actual phonetic practice. In Wangeroogish the phonemes survived (except for initial [ð] as in the article *dan, djuu, dait* ‘the’) until the end of the 19th century. In word internal position [ð] survived in several North-Frisian dialects until the 20th century. Initial [p] may have existed in the North Frisian dialect of Amrum until the beginning of the 19th century (implicitly Århammar 1964: 115; several 19th century authors from Amrum, such as Mechlenburg, Clement and Johansen, write <th> in word initial position). These indications lead me to conclude that [p] and [ð] were still present in 14th century classical Old Frisian and up until even later in some Frisian regions.

3.2.4. Final consonant devoicing

Another point concerns the lack of devoicing of final voiced stops and spirants. Final devoicing is common in Middle Dutch (Le Roux 1973: 79), Middle Low Saxon

(Lasch 1914: 131) and Middle High German (Boor 1973: 34). In the Nordic languages, final devoicing is already Proto-Nordic (Hofmann 1979: 39).¹⁶ Old Frisian shows no traces of systematic devoicing in the spelling (Boutkan 1996: 39; Sjölin 1970: 108), in contrast to Middle Dutch, where final devoicing is widely reflected in the spelling. Devoicing of final voiced consonants was not completed in West Frisian before 1900 (Hoekstra 2001: 731) and was lacking in 19th century Wangeroogish (Versloot 2001c: 425); it is still lacking in the dialect of Amrum and Föhr (Århammar 1964: 115). In the Frisian-Dutch dialects of Ameland and, especially, Midsland (Terschelling) voiced final consonants can still be observed amongst speakers of the oldest generation (Goeman et al. 2003). So there is no reason to suppose that Old Frisian had final devoicing of consonants.

3.2.5. /h/ + /l, r, n, w/

Another archaic phonetic feature is the possibility to have /h/ in front of /l, r, n, w/ as in OF *hlid* ‘eye-lid’, *hre* ‘dead corps’, *hnekka* ‘neck’ *hwa* ‘who’. In High German, combinations with the initial /h/ had already disappeared in the 9th century (Sonderegger 1974: 144). They were also already lacking in Old Dutch (Quak 1992: 81) and in Middle English as well, except for in the Kentish dialect, where they remained until the 14th century (Brunner 1970: 42). Of the Germanic languages, Modern Icelandic has retained this feature up until now and there it is phonetically realised as devoicing of /l, n, r/ and as /χ/ or /k/ in front of /v/: *hlið* [ʰli:ð], *hræ* [χræi], *hnakkur* [nəkkvʏr], *hver* [kve:r]/[χve:r]. The combinations /hj/ and /hw/ seem to exist also in North Jutic Danish dialects. In the West Scandinavian languages /hw/ has developed into /kv/ (Haugen 1984: 336).

Because of frequent spellings like <lh> and <rh> instead of <hl> and <hr> Boutkan (2001: 614) suggests a similar realisation in Old Frisian as in Modern Icelandic. Boutkan further states that Old Frisian was “[...] retaining the velar element in these clusters [...] until a fairly late date – it was lost in the other G[er]m[ani]c languages at a much earlier stage [...], but during the Old Frisian period it disappears also from Frisian.” Nijdam (1999: 94-97) traced the extinction of /hl/ and /hr/ in more detail, showing that /hr/ was already declining in the oldest sources but was not yet totally abandoned in the latest Old East Frisian sources dating from about 1450. During that whole period /hl/ remains intact. In the West Frisian sources, /hr/ is already obsolete in the first recordings dating from the beginning of the 15th century. In the Old West Frisian texts from about 1400 /hl/ is consistently applied, finally disappearing at the beginning of the 16th century. None of the modern Frisian dialects show any trace of it.

16 This devoicing was partly reversed later on (idem). In Levander (1909) may be found several voiced consonants in final position in Dalarna Swedish. In Modern Icelandic, the opposition between e.g. /d/ and /t/ or /k/ and /g/ is more in terms of aspiration than voice. In fact, from a perspective of Modern English or Modern West Frisian, Icelandic stops are all ‘devoiced’. Similar patterns of consonant strength with extensive reshuffling of strength characteristics are also found in many Modern High German dialects, where the oppositions are preferably described as ‘fortis’ (tense) – ‘lenis’ (lax) (König 2001, 148/149).

For all three features section 3.2.3.-3.2.5. illustrates that they still can be found in the otherwise strongly modernised English language or Nordic languages. And where they disappeared, this happened later in the north-western part of Germania than in the continental West Germanic languages. I have previously drawn attention to the more modern inflexion and declension in the north-western Germanic languages as compared to the south-eastern ones. In these phonetic features the innovations seem to come from the other side. Old Frisian was distinctly more conservative in all three features until 1450 than its contemporary *Middle* neighbours, and some dialects distinctly more conservative until much later.

3.2.6. Phonemic vowel system of the root syllables

At the end of the Middle Ages, most West Germanic languages underlay the so called Great Vowel Shift: diphthongisation of closed long vowel and rise of mid or open long vowels, e.g. in English: *ice* [a.ɪs] < /i:s/, *house* [ha.ʊz] < /hu:s/, *green* [grɛ:n] < /gre:n/ and *book* [buk] < /bo:k/. Diphthongisation and vowel rising might show a structural dependency but have in reality not always been linked, neither in time nor in space. Old High German, for example, already in the 9th century knew /uo/ and /ia/ < Wgerm. /o:/ and /e:/ (*puoch, hiar* ‘book, here’) but diphthongisation was not established before the 12th century (König 2001: 146-147). Rising of /e:/ and /o:/ is common in West Frisian but diphthongisation of /i:/ and /u:/ is a limited feature. The Great Vowel Shift did not have any influence upon Saxon dialects and most Scandinavian dialects; nor have Modern East Frisian dialects been so influenced. So the feature of the Great Vowel Shift is not very well suited to being used as a firm indication for the archaic characteristics of a language. However, the complete lack of any sign of the Great Vowel Shift in classical Old Frisian underlines its place on the *Old* side in this development. In post-classical Old West Frisian we find spellings like *gued* instead of *god* or *goed*, that indicate a beginning of the development (J, but also sometimes in U: Hoekstra 2001: 725-726).

There is another, indirect indication for the relatively old character of the classical Old Frisian vowel system. The North Frisian dialects had already branched off from the other Frisian dialects before the time of the first manuscripts: coastal North Frisian about 1050, Island North Frisian already about the year 800 (Panten 1995: 59-60). But classical Old Frisian from the 13th and 14th centuries forms a good basis for the reconstruction of Old North Frisian. So the vowel system of the language we find in the late mediaeval Frisian manuscripts is not as remote from 9th-century Proto Frisian as is suggested by de Haan’s *Middle* Frisian.

3.3. Pronominal inflection of the 3rd person masculine singular

In most modern Germanic languages, like Modern Low Saxon, Dutch, Frisian, English and Danish, we find only one object form for the personal pronoun singular masculine, which, in fact, is the old dative form: *em* / *hem* / *him* / *ham*. A formal distinction is still made in Modern High German (*ihm* – *ihn*; in the dialects only in the south-west, cf. König 2001: 154) and in Scandinavian languages with case systems, like Icelandic (*honum* – *hann*) and Dalarna Swedish (*onum* – *an*).

Although it might from its geographical distribution seem to be an old North Sea Germanic development, this was not the case in the Old Germanic period. Old English distinguished between *him* (dat.) and *hine* (acc.). In Middle English *hine* is only attested in 12th-century southern texts, everywhere else and later on it is always *him* (Brunner 1970: 59). In Middle Dutch, too, the old accusative form *hen/hin* is very rare (Le Roux 1973: 119). In Middle Low Saxon a distinction is sometimes made but mixing was already apparent (Lasch 1914: 216-217).

The oldest Old Frisian manuscripts, including U, show two separated forms for the accusative and dative of the masculine personal pronoun: *hine* (acc., R. *hini*) and *him* (dat.), which are identical to the Old English forms. In the 15th-century Old West Frisian text J, in only 20% of the cases of an accusative of the masculine personal pronoun we find the original accusative form *hine*; the rest is *him*, a form that stems from the dative (Buma 1996). In the Old West Frisian charters we only find five attestations to the old accusative *hine* in three charters from the 14th century.¹⁷ As *hine* has also disappeared from the early Modern East Frisian dialects, we may conclude that the replacement of *hine* by *him* is a purely chronological development. The levelling of *him* to the accusative was at least later than in Middle English and Middle Dutch. Classical Old Frisian is entirely on the side of the Old Germanic languages.¹⁸

3.4. Gender specific numerals

The Old West Germanic languages show inflection for case and gender of the numerals *one*, *two*, *three*, Old Nordic also for *four*. Genitive and dative have common forms for all genders. This particular inflection must be separated from the general inflexion that cardinal numbers could carry in Old and Middle Germanic languages and that was unmarked for gender, e.g. in Middle Dutch (Le Roux 1973: 138-139) and Middle English (Brunner 1970: 55).

A differentiated inflection by gender is still found in contemporary archaic languages like Icelandic and Dalarna Swedish but has vanished from all large modern Germanic languages. In the Middle Germanic languages we still find it in Middle High German (Boor – Wisniewski 1973: 103) and Middle Low Saxon (Lasch 1914: 208). In the main dialects of Middle Dutch the feature has vanished; in the older eastern sources the masculine *twene*, *tween* is sometimes found (Pijnenburg 1997: 120). In Middle English, the older forms are mixed up and used interchangeably (Brunner 1970: 55).

In the Modern East and North Frisian dialects, which still show three genders, differentiated cardinal numbers are still in use but the case morphology has been abandoned. The language of classical and post-classical Old Frisian manuscripts show both gender and case morphology. A distinction between feminine and neuter is found only in the oldest East and West Frisian manuscripts. Such distinction is also missing in Old English. The conclusion is that the morphology of the first three cardinal numbers

17 Thanks are due to dr. O. Vries (University of Groningen) for providing the data: O I 1, l. 14 (1329), O II 2, l. 10, 13 and 20 (1379), O I 2, l. 14 (1386).

18 The limited attestation of Old Dutch already shows *imo* in the accusative (Quak 1992: 101)

in Old Frisian is according to the Old Germanic pattern and clearly distinct from neighbouring Middle Dutch and English.

3.5. Word-forming processes

The ways of word forming by composition, by suffixes or by umlaut and ablaut show a shift from the older times onwards. The composition shows a tendency from *root composition* towards *syntagm composition*, where the first element consists, for example, of a genitive attribute. The older Old Frisian sources show mainly root compositions, e.g. *landwêre* ‘land defence’. The younger type show examples such as: *brôthersbern* ‘nephew, brother’s child’, *godesthiânst* ‘church service’. This younger type appears mainly in younger sources (Munske 2001: 637).

The word forming by suffixes or umlaut and ablaut shows several archaic traces, like the productivity of *-ene* and *-ma* instead of modern *-inge*. At the same time, we can observe an increasing productivity of some suffixes and replacement of older forms by newer suffixes like *-nisse*, *-inge* and *-hêd* in the younger sources (Munske 2001: 640). The increasing appearance of these new word-forming models is probably due to the influence of the neighbouring languages of *Middle Dutch* and *Middle Low Saxon*. Altogether, the conclusion regarding word forming must be that there is an ongoing tendency towards modernisation throughout the Old Frisian period. The oldest sources show several traces that coincide with the ones in the other Old Germanic languages; later, the influence of Dutch and Low Saxon lead to fundamental changes (Munske 2001: 646; Bremmer 2001b: 649).

3.6. Lexicological aspects

Purely lexicological aspects, as distinct from word-forming processes, are difficult to evaluate in a chronological sense because a word, as such, can hardly be called old or new. The main exception to this is the feature of loanwords. In general, Old Frisian shows an increasing number of *Middle Dutch* and *Middle Low Saxon* loanwords as time goes on (Bremmer 2001b: 649). The limited attestation of Old Frisian, which is merely restricted to juridical prose, makes it difficult to evaluate developments in the lexicon as a whole.

The criminal lexicon has been subject to extensive research by Munske (1973). His conclusions concerning the chronological layering of the lexicon are based mostly on morphological word-forming processes (Munske 1973: 206; cf. §10). He is able to point to remarkable parallels between the terminology in the older East Frisian manuscripts and Old English. Differences between the Old East and Old West Frisian lexicon are to some extent chronological, but there are also dialectal differences (Munske 1973: 208-209). It should be mentioned here, however, that the study of Old Frisian criminal terminology by Munske was carried out explicitly in the context of Old Germanic languages. Similarities with neighbouring Middle Dutch and Middle Low German were considered rather to be ‘disturbance’ than the object of research (Munske 1973: 207). Implicitly implied from this research is frequent borrowing from Middle Dutch and Middle Low German criminal terminology into younger Old Frisian.

Some studies stress the common, from a Continental West Germanic point of view, somewhat archaic character of the Frisian lexicon and its close relations with English and the Nordic languages, like Löfstedt (1963-1969). But as this study was written from the starting point of lexicological contrast with Continental West Germanic, the conclusion follows straight on from the material selection. And that Frisian shares more words with the Nordic languages than does High German is hardly surprising. There are no overall lexicological studies offering any insight into the question of whether the Frisian lexicon was or still is more archaic than, for example, Middle English or Middle Dutch.

3.7. Syntactic aspects

It might be instructive to have at our disposal a comparative syntactic analysis, e.g. concerning word order phenomena in several Old and Middle Germanic languages, in order to be able to say something about syntactic patterns in Old Frisian within the perspective of the periodisation discussion. We are lacking in a good overview of syntactic aspects of Old Frisian (de Haan 2001a: 626), let alone a comparative study. As syntax is not my main field of research I'm not able to fill this gap by my own research. I am therefore forced to present some selected phenomena that allow a degree of comparison.

3.7.1. Negation system

De Haan (2001b, 199) describes the shift in several Germanic languages from a single negation system through a double negation system towards a new single negation system. He refers to Old English, with a predominantly single negation system, whereas in Middle English and also in Middle Dutch the double negation system is prevalent (cf. Le Roux 1973: 191ff.). In Old Frisian the transition may be observed from a single *ne*, via double negation *ne...nawet*, towards single *na(w)et*. The double negation system is already dominant (50%) in the older Old Frisian sources, although the older single system with *ne* is still also clearly present (25%). It seems to me that de Haan is pretty correct in concluding that in this respect Old Frisian shows a *Middle* characteristic.

3.7.2. Case government

Old Germanic languages are inflectional languages in which syntactic functions are expressed by the use of verbal inflectional and case endings. In most of the Germanic languages there is an ongoing tendency towards reduction of endings which results in analytical languages like Modern English, where word order and prepositions express the syntactic relations. In section 2.4. I pointed to the fact that Modern High German has come less far than Modern English on its way towards becoming an analytical language. But even in Modern High German the formal morphology is mostly redundant: syntactical relations are expressed by a rather fixed word order and by prepositions, which take traditionally defined cases. The accusative is an expression of

direct objects.²⁰ In Modern High German, the use of the genitive in the spoken language is diminishing and also the dative is losing ground (König 2001: 117-119).

Old Germanic languages had a system that may look less logical from our point of view, showing a complex distribution of functions of cases governed by verbs. What we would functionally describe as direct objects could appear in dative or genitive. Remnants of this system can still be found in Modern High German, especially in older Modern High German language. The Lutheran Bible shows many examples of it, e.g.: *jemandem* (dative) *folgen* ‘to follow someone’, *eines* (genitive) *schuldig sein* ‘to be guilty of something’. Objects could, in several cases, express adverbial relations. Examples of the latter are the Icelandic: *ég segi það aðeins einu sinni* ‘I say it only once (dative) and *hún er þriggja ára gömul* ‘she is three years (genitive) old’ and cf. as a relic in Mod. West Frisian: *hy komt jûns*²¹ ‘he is coming this evening (genitive)’. This type of complex case-government is the rule in Old Germanic languages and is still the normal situation in inflectional languages like Modern Icelandic and Dalarna-Swedish. But also, for example, Middle Dutch shows traces of it (Le Roux 1973: 207). Hanschke has investigated the syntactical application of the case system in the older Old East Frisian sources, especially in respect to the use of accusative, and he concludes that Old Frisian acts in most respects as one might expect of an Old Germanic language (Hanschke 1929: 47). Bor (1971: 88, 96) gives several examples that comply with the Old Germanic situation. For the younger sources no studies are available but considering the fact that the morphological inflection system was then being eroded it is easy to imagine that the whole system of case government was equally disappearing.

Although this aspect is not as strictly an *Old* feature, because it is also found in some neighbouring *Middle* languages, Old Frisian is at least on the side of the other *Old* languages in this respect.

3.7.3. Impersonal Verb-constructions

One feature closely related to the previous one is the impersonal verb-construction. In Old Germanic languages, some verbs take a logical subject in accusative or dative. This is still the case in Modern Icelandic, e.g. *mér* (dative) *sýnist...* ‘I believe...’, *mig* (accusative) *vantar* + acc.obj. ‘I am missing + obj.’. In Modern West Frisian we still find the sole remnant of this in the construction *my tinkt* ‘I believe’, which has its counterpart in Modern East Frisian Wangeroogish *mii thinkt* and Modern – though archaic – Dutch *mij dunkt* ‘it seems to me...’. Old Frisian knows a number of impersonal verbs and constructions. But in Old Frisian preference is given to the dative in all instances whereas other Old Germanic languages and also Middle Dutch show

20 The ultimate abandonment of the old case system is found, for example, in English, where also indirect objects (i.o.) may function as subject (s.) in a passive sentence. In other Germanic languages only direct objects (d.o.) can take that position.

English: I sent **him** (i.o.) a letter (d.o.) **he** (s.) was sent a letter (d.o.)

West Frisian: ik stjoerde **him** (i.o.) in brief (d.o.) **him** (i.o.) waard in brief (s.) stjoerd

Icelandic: *ég sendi honum* (i.o./dativ) *bréf* (d.o./accusative) *honum* (i.o./dativ) *var sent bréf* (s.)

21 From a synchronic point of view the ending *-s* is analysed as an adverbial ending.

both dative and accusative constructions (Bremmer 1986: 81).²² In this respect, Old Frisian was already quite *Middle*.

3.7.4. Relative pronouns

Old Germanic languages have no proper relative pronoun but use a relative particle, like Old English *þe*, Old Nordic *er* (later *sem*). The use of the demonstrative pronoun as a relative pronoun is the rule in Old and Middle High German (Boor 1973: 92) and in Old and Middle Dutch (Quak 1992: 102; Le Roux 1973: 129). In Old High German and Old English we may find the old relative particle in combination with the demonstrative pronoun (Sonderegger 1974: 205; Campbell 1977: 291). In Middle English *þe* was soon replaced by the demonstrative *þat*. Exceptions are found only in the 12th-century southern dialect (Brunner 1970: 64). The Scandinavian languages still use a particle in this function, e.g.: Icelandic *sem* (archaic *er*), Danish *der* (only subject) and *som* (every sens).

The word *ther* occurs in Old Frisian; in the Riustring dialect also *the*. Old Frisian uses the demonstrative pronoun for this in about 10% of cases. The relative particle is the rule (about 75%) in both early and late Old Frisian manuscripts, both East and West Frisian. The rest are adverbial constructions (Bor 1988a: 45; 1988b: 86).²³ In the later Old West Frisian charters *der / deer* is retained throughout the Old Frisian period. *Der / dier / dear* is found in early Modern West Frisian until the 18th century (digital database at the *Fryske Akademy*) and *dee(r)* was still the relative pronoun in the 19th century Wangeroogish. So that the relative particle survived much longer in Frisian than it did in the other West Germanic languages.

4. Conclusion

There follows a brief résumé of results of all the features treated in this article. ‘Diverging’ indicates the differing developmental directions followed by the various Frisian dialects since the late Old Frisian period, directions not entirely comparable with neighbouring Middle Dutch and Middle Low Saxon. ‘*Old > Middle*’ indicates that development towards the *Middle* stage took place gradually over the course of the period. *Modern* means that Old Frisian differs clearly from Proto-Germanic, in both cases concerned the *Modern* stage was not reached in every modern Germanic language. In the last column reference is made to modern languages that are still relatively archaic in respect of the feature under discussion, except for Icelandic,

22 This tendency was quite logical because most impersonal constructions already employed dative and a personal pronoun as logical subject. Because in Old Frisian (as in the other North Sea Germanic languages) the dative and accusative form of the personal pronoun soon coalesced, it was hard to keep the distinction between both cases. In Modern Icelandic the grammatically incorrect constructions *mér vantar* and *mér langar* ‘I miss / I long to’ are often heard instead of *mig vantar* and *mig langar*.

23 If pronouns were equivalent to the particle and on their way to replacing them (as happened finally in Modern West Frisian), one would expect an increasing incidence of this as time went on. The fact that this is not the case during the Old Frisian period, leads me to the assumption that there is some syntactical or semantical difference.

Faroese, Dalarna Swedish and Welshian High German, which are (as good as) *Old* in almost every respect.

§	Feature	Classical	Post-classical	Modern parallels
3.1.1.	Vowels in unstressed Syllables	R <i>Old</i> : compatible with OE; the other OF sources <i>late Old</i> : two qualities instead of just one in the West Germanic <i>Middle</i> languages	Almost <i>Middle</i> ; a phonetic opposition between [a] en [ə] is questionable	Swedish, New Norwegian
3.1.2.	Vowel lengthening and Consonant degemination	Absent thus: <i>Old</i>	Diverging; younger sources show only traces of this development	Swedish and Norwegian
3.1.3.	verbal conjugation:			
	1. jan-verbs	like late-OE and <i>Middle</i> -languages		New Norwegian
	2. oian-verbs	<i>Old</i>		Swedish, New Norwegian
	3. endings	R <i>Old</i> ; other OF half-way <i>Old</i> > <i>Middle</i>	<i>Middle</i>	High German
3.1.4.	Nominal inflection	(<i>late</i> -) <i>Old</i> ; already some classical sources are shifting towards the <i>Middle</i> -scheme	<i>Middle</i>	High German
3.2.	Phonological features			
3.2.1.	deletion of /j/ and /w/		<i>Modern</i>	High German, Dutch
3.2.2.	contracted verbs	<i>Modern</i> but compatible with Old Nordic		High German, Dutch
3.2.3.	[b] and [ð]	<i>Old</i>	Diverging	English
3.2.4.	final cons. devoicing		<i>Old</i>	English
3.2.5.	/h/ + /l, r, n, w/	<i>Old</i>	<i>Old</i> > <i>Middle</i>	North Jutic Danish
3.2.6.	root vowel system	<i>Old</i>	<i>Old</i> > <i>Middle</i>	Low Saxon
3.2.7.	pronominal inflection	<i>Old</i>	<i>Middle</i>	High German
3.4.	numerals		<i>Old</i>	East and North Frisian dialects
3.5.	Word-forming processes	<i>Old</i>	<i>Middle</i>	–
3.7.	Syntactic aspects			
	1. negation system		<i>Middle</i>	Afrikaans
	2. case government	<i>Old</i>	<i>Middle</i>	High German
	3. impersonal verbs		<i>Middle</i>	–
	4. relative pronouns		<i>Old</i>	Nordic languages

So let us return to the questions I posed at the end of section 2.7.:

1. Is Old Frisian typologically compatible with the other Old Germanic inflectional languages or is it rather a *Middle* language?
2. Is there any logic and embedding of the features of Old Frisian in the wider context of Germanic languages?
3. What should, as a reply to de Haan, represent a proper periodisation of Frisian?

4.1. Does Old Frisian exist?

The language of R may be more modern in some respects than classical Old English; as a whole it is fairly compatible with even classical Old English. The language of the classical sources B and H can best be characterised as *late-Old* Frisian, but definitely not as *Middle*. The language of the post-classical Old Frisian sources is hardly any longer *Old*. From a typological point of view it is rather *Middle*, especially when compared to the classical *Middle* languages.

This post-classical Old West Frisian of the 15th century was more conservative than were Dutch, English and German counterparts of the same era. It showed some archaic features as compared to its direct neighbours on the continent, Middle Dutch and Middle Low Saxon. Examples of such features are some phonetic features, the relative particle, the two historically motivated weak verb classes and, until fairly late, two qualities in unstressed syllables instead of one. The existence of real Old Frisian together with the relatively archaic character also of the later sources, similarity of content in the Old Frisian manuscripts – they all deal almost exclusively with law and even have several texts in common, albeit in different editions – has probably led to the application of the term *Old* to the language of the entire mediaeval Frisian archive.

The West Frisian language of at least parts of U is more modern in respect of the nominal inflection but is in most other aspects as (*late-*)*Old* as are the other classical texts, as far as the poor availability of text editions allows any conclusion. Only based on a detailed study of the oldest Old West Frisian sources and the youngest Old East Frisian sources, together with the Modern East Frisian evidence, can we decide whether the differences between Old East and West Frisian are mainly dialectal or chronological. For things like case morphology, which is missing in Modern East Frisian, it is obvious that the difference must be mainly chronological between east and west. Considering the fact that Modern East Frisian Wangeroogish was in several aspects more archaic than is contemporary West Frisian, I tend toward the supposition that in Frisian the process of modernisation began in the west, to be followed after some delay in the east.

4.2. The embedding of Frisian typological characteristics in the Germania

Analysis of the parallels between archaic features in Old Frisian and other modern languages shows that most such features that were retained in Frisian until fairly late (some even into the modern era) have parallels in English or the Scandinavian languages; these concern mainly phonological and phonetic processes in the root. On

the other hand, we see that in cases where Frisian was fairly early embarked upon the modernisation process it is mostly in Modern High German that these features can still be found in some form; they are mainly concerned with matters of formal morphology and unaccented phonology. Frisia obviously lay at the crossroads of the two opposing waves of modernisation that swept across most of the Germania, stopping near its ultimate fringes (Iceland / northern Scandinavia / High Alps). The wave concerning root phonology came from the south and did not reach Frisian before the end of the Mid Ages; the other started in the North Sea region (England, Frisia, Scandinavia) and left its traces already in the first recordings of these languages. In fact, Frisian resisted both surges longer than did its direct neighbours in England, the Low Countries and Denmark, ultimately only to become, like them, a fairly modern language.

4.3. A new periodisation for Frisian

In section 4.1. I concluded that there are medieval texts the language of which represents an *Old* stage. I also concluded that the language form of several other texts definitely did not deserve that typological label and should be classified as *Middle*, despite the fact that they were sometimes more archaic than their contemporary neighbours. The whole spectrum of Old Frisian, from R to post-classical Old Frisian, resembles the variation within the Scandinavian sources. The oldest sources from the 13th century are clearly *Old* in both regions but tend to become more *Modern* soon after 1350 in Scandinavia and after 1400 in Frisia. Both regions show a set of closely related and probably even intelligible language forms, with two ends (Icelandic / R and Jutic Danish / post-classical Old West Frisian) that clearly belong to differing typological groups but between which it is difficult to decide where and when the exact border should be placed.

I wish therefore to propose the following linguistic periodisation for Frisian:

before 1100	Runic Frisian (not treated in this article)
ca. 1200 – ca.1400	Old Frisian: including the language of the manuscripts R1, R2, R4, H2 and H1, B1 and B2 and E1, some texts in U and the Psalm fragments.
ca. 1400 – 1550	Middle Frisian: all the other texts hitherto called Old Frisian; the status of the oldest West Frisian charters (before ca. 1410) has to be studied in more detail.
1550 – 1800 ²⁴	early Modern Frisian (not treated in detail in this article)
1800 – now	Modern Frisian (not treated in detail in this article)

In this proposal, I am stricter in my definition than is Sjölin in his definition of *classical* Old Frisian. It is obvious that several texts that I would call *Middle Frisian* still bear archaic traces. This is also only a rough suggestion. For several texts and (parts of) manuscripts like F and E2 and E3 the status will have to be studied in detail.

24 If the striking phonological feature of West Frisian ‘breaking’ is taken as a dividing criterion, then the limit would have to be set at some one hundred years earlier.

For others, like D and Aysma, there will be little dispute. I want to underline that this periodisation is linguistic. From a philological (text philiation) point of view it offers some complications. Several texts, such as the Seventeen Statues, the Twenty-four Land Laws and several Fine Registers, appear in differing editions in what have just been designated as *Old* and *Middle* Frisian. In spite of the general linguistic modernisation of the texts in the younger manuscripts, parts of the *Old Frisian* legal terminology have thus found their way by copying into *Middle Frisian* texts. Also spellings and phrases (syntactical constructions) may have been copied. This may offer some explanation for the archaic character of also (parts of) the younger sources. On the other hand, it is particularly this philological kinship of several of the texts and manuscripts that may have led so far to the accumulation of all mediaeval Frisian sources under one label: Old Frisian. Only detailed philological analysis of the texts will provide more insight into this complicating factor. Once such philological analysis has identified petrified archaic elements in the younger texts, renewed linguistic analysis will be capable of rendering a better description of *Middle Frisian*, which will probably then appear more modern.²⁵ The West Frisian charters and some other ‘new’ West Frisian texts, written independently of *Old (East) Frisian* examples and which can to some extent be dated and located, should actually form a benchmark for the linguistic analysis of the other West Frisian sources. But in fact some East Frisian texts, such as F, instead show mixture or copying from West Frisian ones.

Whatever periodisation scheme one prefers, the central conclusion is that the oldest Frisian attestations in the manuscripts represent a language that is fairly compatible with other Old Germanic languages and that Frisian does have written attestations to Old Frisian.

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25 A quick scan of the distribution of archaic Asg Masc *hine* ‘him’ instead of *him* in the post-classical source J failed, however, to show a clear division between specific (later) West Frisian texts and (older) Common Frisian texts.

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VMNW

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Masculine paradigms in B and R1 as compared with Old English, Middle Dutch and Middle Low Saxon.

For a-, ja- and i-nouns the paradigms are constructed based on several words from that class; for the minor groups, the actually attested forms have been marked. In B the dative plural ending has been generalised to *-um*. In the manuscript the distribution of *-um*: *-em*: *-en* = 2: 1,5: 1. The Middle Dutch paradigms are based on Le Roux (1973: 93-109) and VMNW (= early Middle Dutch). The Middle Low Saxon paradigms are based on Lasch (1914: 193-199).

Masculine

a-nouns	Old English	Old Frisian (R)	Old Frisian (B)	Middle Dutch	Middle Low Saxon
Ns	aþ 'oath'	eth fisk 'fish'	eth	eet	eet
Gs	aþes	ethes fiskes	ethes	eed(e)s	edes
Ds	aþe	ethe fiske	ethe	eede	ede
As	aþ	eth fisk	eth	eet	eet
Np	aþas	etha fiskar	ethar	eede	ede
Gp	aþa	etha fiska	etha	eede	ede
Dp	aþum	ethum fiskum	ethum	eeden	eden
Ap	aþas	ethar fiskar	ethar	eede	ede

1. OE shows vowel change due to a- or u-mutation, like *dæg – dagas* (M), *fæt – fatu* (N). This is absent in OF. Wangeroogish, that has a limited neuter plural in *-uu*, also shows no traces of it, e.g. *fät – fütuu* (< *fetu), *gläs – glüzuu* (< *glesu).

2. In OE nouns in *-h* lost this between voiced sounds. This *-h* has been preserved in several Frisian dialects, like Mod. West Frisian *skoech* 'shoe', *fliich* 'flie', Wangeroogish *siiliich* 'seal', Mod. North Frisian *tiich* 'thigh'. In the limited OF sources I have found no example of this change. A remnant of this change can be found in Mod. West Frisian sg. *skoech* (< OF *skōch), pl. *skuon* (< OF *skōn). The Mod. East Frisian dialects have generalised the plural form to the present, e.g. Wang. *schooler* (sg. and pl.).

3. Syncopated forms appear in roots on *-l*, *-r*, *-m*, *-n*: OE Ns *fīnger*, Np *fīngras*, OF (R) Ns *fīnger*, Np *fīngra*, OF (B) Ns *fīnger*, Np *fīngrar*.

Long-rooted ja-nouns	Old English	Old Frisian (R)	Old Frisian (B)	Middle Dutch	Middle Low Saxon
Ns	bocere 'scribe'	prestere 'priest'	prestere	priester	preester(e)
Gs	boceres	presteres	presteres	priesters	preester(e)s
Ds	bocere	prestere	prestere	priester(e)	preester(e)
As	bocere	prestere	prestere	priester	preester(e)
Np	boceras	prestera	prestrar	priestere/-s	preester(e)(s)
Gp	bocera	prestera	prestera	priestere(n)	preester(e)
Dp	boceram	presteron	prestrum	priesteren/-s	preester(e)n
Ap	boceras	prestera	prestrar	priestere/-s	preester(e)(s)

4. In some words in OE <g> (= /j/) appears in all cases but NAs. This is not found in OF.

5. In both OE and OF, short-rooted ja-nouns decline like the normal a-nouns. R sometimes shows a historically motivated ending *-i* in the short-rooted ja-nouns instead of *-e*, which through vowel harmony can cause a change in the root vowel: *hiri* 'army' < **heri*.

wa-nouns: there is only one masculine wa-noun in OE (Campbell 1977, 232). This shows *-u/-w-* as a root element throughout the paradigm, so that it does not differ in the actual endings. There are no OF attestations to similar cases (cf. §3.2.1.). Modern Frisian shows frequent drop of *-w*, c.f. West Frisian *skaad*, *klei* (besides *klau*), *swel*, cf. Dutch *schaduw*, *klauw*, *zwaluw* 'shadow, cloven hoof, swallow'. Middle Dutch, incidentally, shows the old pattern, e.g.: Ns *snee* 'snow', Gs *sneeuwes* (Le Roux 1973: 98).

i-nouns	Old English	Old Frisian (R)	Old Frisian (B)	Middle Dutch	Middle Low Saxon	
Ns	wine 'friend'	biti 'bite'	kere 'statute'	bite	bete (F)	bete
Gs	wines	bitis	keres	bites	beten	betes/-en
Ds	wine	biti	kere	bite	beten	bete(n)
As	wine	biti	kere	bite	bete	bete
Np	wine/-as	bita	kera	bitar	beten	bete(s)/-en
Gp	wina	bita	kera	bita	beten	bete(n)
Dp	winum	biton	keron	bitum	beten	beten
Ap	wine/-as	bita	kera	bitar	beten	bete(s)/-en

6. Several short-rooted i-nouns tend to become feminine because of the ending *-e*, like *kere*, that shows a feminine paradigm in B, but one case masculine Ap *kerar* alongside the feminine form Ap *kera*. This has a parallel in, for example, Middle Dutch, c.f. Van Loey (1976: 23). In R *kere* is masculine.

7. In both OE and OF, long-rooted i-nouns decline in the same way as the normal a-nouns.

8. Both in OE and OF, the group tends to coalesce with the a-nouns (apart from the remark in 6.) In fact there is no difference between the OF paradigms and the late-OE paradigm with plural in *-as* and the paradigm of the ja-nouns.

9. In Middle Dutch the masculine short i-nouns have become masculine, or even feminine, n-nouns, like *bete*.

Collective i-nouns	Old English	Old Frisian (R)	Old Frisian (B)	Middle Dutch	Middle Low Saxon
Np	leode 'people'	liode	liude	liede(n)	lüde
Gp	leoda	lioda	liuda	liede(n)	lüde
Dp	leodum	liodon	liudum	lieden	lüden
Ap	leode	liode	liude	liede(n)	lüde

This concerns a special group of predominantly national names, and a very few others, which appear in plural only. There are no examples of national names in OF (R: *frisa* is weak). However, the frequently attested form *liode/liude* shows the existence of this group in OF.

u-nouns short and long-rooted	Old English		Old Frisian (R)		Old Frisian (H)		Middle Dutch	Middle Low Saxon
Ns	sunu	feld	sunu	*feld	sune	*feld	sone	sone
	'son'	'field'						
Gs	sunu	felda	sunu	*felda	*sunu	*felda	soons/(sone)	sones
Ds	sunu	felda	sunu	felda	sunu	felda	sone	sone
As	sunu	feld	sunu	*feld	sune	feld	sone	sone
Np	sunu	felda	sunu		sunar		sone(n)	söne
Gp	sunu	felda	*sunu		*sunu		sonen	söne
Dp	sunum	feldum	sunon		sunum		sonen	sönen
Ap	sunu	felda	sunu		sunar		sone(n)	söne

10. The OF paradigms of the short-rooted u-stems are based on *sunu/-e* and *frethu/-e*; otherwise the forms are marked with *.

11. R shows two examples of short-rooted u-nouns with explicit retention of the ending *-u* (*-o*): *fretho* (with vowel harmony < **frethu*; B *frethe*), *sunu* (B *sune*).

12. The group includes several appellations of natural landscape features in Old English and Icelandic: OE *eard* earth, *lagu* lake, *flōd* flood, *ford* firth, *feld* field, Ic *ffjörður* firth, *völlur* plane. Two examples of this group are also to be found in OF: *feld*, long-rooted, and B shows Ns *fene*, Ds *fenna* (short-rooted).

13. B contains no examples of a long-rooted u-noun. This is due rather to limitations of the source than to reduction of the flexional groups. An example from H is therefore used.

Athem- atic nouns	Old English		Old Frisian (R)		Old Frisian (B)		Middle Dutch		Middle Low Saxon
Ns	fot	mann 'foot' 'man'	fot	mon	fot	mon	voet	man	voot
Gs	fotes	mannes	*fotes	monnes	*fotes	monnes	voets	man(ne)s	votes
Ds	fet	menn	fote	monne	*fote	monne	voete	man(ne)	vote
As	fot	mann	*fot	mon	*fot	mon	voet	man	voot
Np	fet	menn	*fet	man	fet	men	voet(e(n))	man(ne)	vöte
Gp	fota	manna	fota	monna	*fota	monna	voete	man(ne)	vöte
Dp	fotum	mannum	foton	monnon	fotum	monnum	voeten	mannen	vöten
Ap	fet	menn	*fet	man	fet	men	voet(e(n))	man(ne)	vöte

14. The OF paradigms are based on both *fot*, *toth* and *mon*; otherwise the forms are marked with *.

15. There are no attestations in OF to an i-mutated form of Ds.

nouns of relation- ship	Old English	Old Frisian (R)	Old Frisian (B)	Middle Dutch	Middle Low Saxon
Ns	broþor 'brother'	brother	brother	broeder	broder
Gs	broþor	brother/-es	brotheres	broeder(s)	broders
Ds	breþer	*brothere	brothere	broeder(e)	brodere
As	broþor	brother	brother	broeder	broder
Np	broþor	brother	brother/-e	broeder(e/s)	brödere
Gp	broþra	brothera	*brothera	broeder(e/s)	brödere
Dp	broþrum	*brotheron	*brotherum	broeder(e/s)	bröderen
Ap	broþor	*brother	*brother/-e	broeder(e/s)	brödere

16. The OF paradigms are based on both *feder* and *brother*; otherwise the forms are marked with *.

17. As in the athematic nouns, the i-mutation in Ds is missing in OF.

Nouns in -nd	Old English	Old Frisian (R)	Old Frisian (B)	Middle Dutch	Middle Low Saxon
Ns	freond 'friend'	friond	*friund	vrient	vrünt
Gs	freondes	*friondes	*friundes	vrients	vründes
Ds	friend, freonde	frionde	friunde	vrient/-de	vründe
As	freond	friond	*friund	vrient	vrünt
Np	friend	friond	friund	vrient/-de(n)	vrünt/-de(s)
Gp	freonda	frionda	*friunda	vriende(n)	vründe
Dp	freondum	friondon	friundum	vrienden	vründen
Ap	friend	friond	*friund	vrient/-de(n)	vrünt/-de(s)

18. The OF paradigms are based on both *friund* and *fiund*; otherwise the forms are marked with *.

19. As in the previous groups, the i-mutation is missing in OF, in Ds and in NAp.

Weak nouns	Old English	Old Frisian (R)	Old Frisian (B)	Middle Dutch	Middle Low Saxon
Ns	fresa 'frisian'	frisa	redieva 'judge'	grave 'count'	
Gs	fresan	frisa	redieva	graven	
Ds	fresan	frisa	redieva	grave	
As	fresan	frisa	redieva	grave	
Np	fresan	frisa	redieva	graven	
Gp	fres(e)na	frisona	redievena	graven	
Dp	fresum	frison	redievum	graven	
Ap	fresan	frisa	redieva	graven	

20. As in Old Nordic, a final *-n* is regularly dropped in OF.

Appendix 2: Plurals (Np en Ap) of masculine nouns in H. Less frequent forms are given in brackets. The new **an**-ending has been specially marked in bold type.

Singular	Plural	Ending	Stem
kapmon	capmen	>	–
fot	fet	>	–
mon	men	>	–
toth	tothan	an	–
*fiarder	fiarderan	an	?
*fogeth	fogethan	an	?
dei	degan	an	a
eth	ehtar (ethan)	ar/ an	a
kening	kenengar (keningan)	ar/ an	a
scilleng	scillengar (scillengan)	ar/ an	a
*bur / *umbe~	burar / umbe~	ar	a
*ecker	eckerar	ar	a
*erthkening	erthkenengar	ar	a
hals	halsar	ar	a
*husing	husengar	ar	a
penning	penningar	ar	a
*rikedom	rikedomar	ar	a
wend	wender (-ar)	ar	a
stec	stekar	ar	a (originally i)
*witherstek	witherstekar	ar	a (originally i)
breke	brekan	an	i
sinebreke	sinebrekan	an	i
ebbete	ebbetan	an	ja (?)
here	heran	an	ja
kere	keran	an	ja
prester	presteran	an	ja
ridder	ridderan	an	ja
*riuchtere	riuchteran	an	ja
*apostola	apostola	a	n
*efterkumande	efterkumanda	a	n (or ja?)
*einerva	einerua	a	n
knapa	knapa	a	n
laua	laua	a	n
*letslaga	letslaga	a	n
neua	neua	a	n
wetma	wethma	a	n
wielse	wielse	a	n
*wonnelsa	wonnelsa	a	n
fresa	fresa/fresan	a/ an	n
*balka	balkan	an	n
federia	ferderien	an	n

hera	heran	an	n
herefona	herefonan	an	n
*hertoga	hertogan	an	n
redgeua	redgeuan	an	n
friend	friend	–	nd
brother / ful~	brothere / ful~	e	r
brothersune	brothersuna	a	u
frethe	frethen	an	u

In the Old Frisian of the Ms. H the *-an* suffix as a plural marker shows a typical distribution. First it should be noted that the regular a-nouns show, with very few exceptions, *-ar*. The nouns from the minor groups like the root-nouns, r- and nd-nouns stick mainly to their original pattern. Although *-an* seems to be gaining ground in the n-nouns, it is dominant in the ja- and short-rooted i-nouns, both of which end in *-e* in the Ns. From there we find a spread to other groups: nouns from small (irregular) groups, like the u-nouns and athematic nouns could be made ‘regular’ by giving up their special endings and adopting the ending *-an*:

frethe – **fretha* (cf. *sune* – *suna*) *frethe* – *frethan*
toth – **teth* (cf. *fot* – *fet*) *toth* – *tothan*

Of the n-nouns, six (seven) of fourteen examples show *-an* instead of *-a*. Here it will have been the homonymy of Ns and Np that caused the introduction of *-an*. Short or long-rooted, it does not seem to make any difference here. Of the a-nouns, one shows *-an* and three show *-an* alongside the dominant *-ar* (and ten with only *-ar*). The one with only *-an* is *dei*, an originally irregular form in OF (*dei* – **degar*) that fits in with the mentioned examples of regulation of irregular forms by adding *-an*.

The origin of the ending *-an* is far more problematic. This overview suggests that it did not originate in the n-nouns but rather in the strong i- and ja-nouns. In the surrounding languages (Dutch and Low Saxon) *-en* was basically the ending of the weak nouns.

Appendix 3: Plurals (Np en Ap) of masculine nouns in the ‘Skeltena riucht’ in U (Steller 1926) and J (Buma 1996). The former source has been completely excerpted; where these words are attested in plural in J, they have been added in italicic type.

Singular	Plural	Ending in U	Stem
*fot	fota; <i>foeten (-an) / feet</i>	a	—
*husmann	husmanne; <i>huusmanne</i>	e	—
man	man; <i>ma(e)n (mannen)</i>	—	—
etker	ettekere; <i>etekere</i>	a	a
*thred	thredda	a	a
*bûr	buran; <i>buren (buran)</i>	an	a
dei	degan; <i>dagen (degan)</i>	an	a
eth	ethan; <i>ethan (eden)</i>	an	a
*finger	fingeran; <i>fingeran (fingeren)</i>	an	a
*kai	kaian; <i>kayen</i>	an	a
*meg	megan; <i>megan (meghen)</i>	an	a
*monath	monathan; <i>moenaden</i>	an	a
*skilling	skillingan; <i>scillingen</i>	an	a
stef	stevan; <i>stefuan</i>	an	a
wei	wegan; <i>wegan (weghen)</i>	an	a
*gretwerdere	gretwerderen; <i>gretwerderan</i>	an	ja
*orkende	orkendan; <i>orkunden</i>	an	ja
—	(ga)liude (-a); <i>gaeliode</i>	e	i
berend	berenda	a	nd
fresa	fresen; <i>fresen (fresan)</i>	an	n
hera	heran; <i>heren (heran)</i>	an	n
kempa	kempan; <i>kempan</i>	an	n
skelta	skeltan; <i>sceltan (scelten)</i>	an	n

The original Old Germanic patterns have already been widely disturbed in U by the introduction of the new ending *-an* (cf. the description of H). The material base is very small, but some tendencies are visible. No plural forms of former *-u* and *-r* stems are attested in Steller. I-mutation seems to have been ruled out as plural marker. In the *-a*-stems we find the remnants of a former plural in *-a*.

From the complete collocation of U we can deduce the paradigm of a former *-r*-stem like *brother*, which shows that little is left of the particular ending-less character of this group. In fact, there is no distinction with the normal *-a*-stems.

	sg	pl
N	<i>brother</i>	<i>brotheran</i>
G	<i>brotheris</i>	—
D	<i>brothere</i>	—
A	<i>brother</i>	—

Of the former u-stems *frethe* and *sone* no distinctive examples could be found. Of the long-rooted u-stem *feld* 'field' I found the historically correct form Ds [??] *felda* alongside *feld*.

In Jus some additional examples can be found from the smaller inflectional groups:

d-stems: *friond* (*fryonden*)
 r-stems: *bro(de)ren*
 u-stems: *zoenen* / *sennen*, *ferden*

So -en (-an) is almost sovereign in J within the whole masculine plural. Some isolated anomalies are found, like *man*, *feet* (only once as a length) and *friond*.