[0601]   OLD ENGLISH *FEOH AND FEORH*, OLD NORSE *FÉ OK FJǪR*, ERGO: OLD FRISIAN *FIĀ AND FERECH* 'MONEY AND LIFE'

The Fivelgo Manuscript (= F) is the latest of the Old East Frisian or Classical Frisian codices and the last one, moreover, to have received a modern edition.[1] Its editor, Bo Sjöllin, has presented not only invaluable information on such subjects as graphemics and accidence, but has also devoted a good deal of attention to the vocabulary of the texts contained in F. In an economical and commonsensical style he discusses words hitherto unrecorded or which had received different interpretations (often erroneous). Sjölin manages to detect some forty-five words which are not contained in F. Holthausen's *Altfriesisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1925). These will certainly be incorporated in the new and completely revised edition of Holthausen's dictionary which Professor Dietrich Hofmann is in the process of compiling.[2]

   One of the words which Sjölin adds to the Old Frisian word-hoard is *ferech* 'life' (p. 188) and his comment on this entry is as short as possible: ‚Durch De Haan Hettema [the previous editor of F] irregeführt las van Helten (...) *fereth* für das übergelieferte *ferech*. Dies gehört zu ae. *feorh* as. *fer(a)h* ‚Leben'.' Upon checking Holthausen, I found that the word indeed was not there, but on p. 25 he entered a compound *ferch-rēde* 'fürs Seelenheil zu vermachendes'. However much I tried to trace this word by means of the concordantic glossaries in the editions of *Oudfries(ch)e Taal- en Rechtsbronnen,* I was unable to find it. A letter to Prof. Hofmann solved the problem. It appears that *ferchrēde* was one of Van Helten's less fortunate emendations. In the *Fia-eth,* an oath which was sworn to prove that one was the legal owner of one's property, one of the provisions for swearing justly reads:[3]

> *Nu hald thu alsa wit and sketfia and alle thine f o r t h r e d e, alsa thu thine eth elle riuchte swere and navit menis.* E2 I, 45-6 (Now hold in this way (your) wits and cattle and all your further equipment, if you swear your oath entirely rightly and not at all falsely).

Instead of *forthrede* Van Helten proposed to read *ferchrede* on the analogy of MHG *sēl(e)geraete* 'was man zum seelenheil für seelenmessen etc. einer geistlichen anstalt vermacht'. However, with Von Richthofen and Fokkema, the latest editors of the *Fia-eth* chose to retain the manuscript reading, an otherwise unparalleled word for Old Frisian, but which can be best explained, according to Prof. Hofmann in his letter, as a kind of *ad hoc* compound from *forth* adv. 'further' and *rēde* sb. 'equipment'. So much for the spurious **ferchrēde*.

   Now, when it comes to comparing Ofris *ferech* to OE

feorh and OS *fer(a)h* Sjölin is certainly right. One could add to these forms Goth *fairhwus* 'world', OHG *fer(e)ch* 'life' and ON fjǫr 'id.', which all go back to Gmc **ferhwa-*[4]   Contrary to his custom with the many other entries in his section on the vocabulary, Sjölin here fails to draw attention to the fact that *ferech* also occurs in other Old Frisian manuscripts. With the latter ones, however, editors have opted for emendation of *ferech* into *fereth.* The difficulty here is that the graphs for <c> and <t> in these manuscripts show great resemblance, and this has led to scribal and editorial confusion. Inspection of the manuscripts involved reveals that *ferech* occurs more often than editors would like us to believe.[5]

With respect to the justification of OFris *fereth, ferth* and *feret* (but from now on I will only use *fereth),* both Van Helten and Holthausen compare the word with OE *fer(h)þ.* If one turns to F. Holthausen's *Altenglisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1963[2]*)* under *ferhþ,* one finds that he refers to *fierhþ* and, quite logically, does not fail to mention OFris *fereth* as its only Germanic cognate. The entry *fierhþ* is in fact somewhat misleading, because the word has not been recorded in this West Saxon form. It appears as *ferhþ, ferht, ferþ, fyrhþ* and, with metathesis, *frið.*[6] According to Holthausen, *fierhþ* is related to *feorh* 'life'. The fact that he writes *fierhþ* betrays his opinion that *i*-mutation must have operated in it. He apparently takes *fierhþ* as an abstract noun to go with *feorh*, this latter form having arisen through 'breaking' from **ferh.* This would imply for *fierhþ* the following development: **ferhiþo ->* **feorhiþo -> fierhþ.* Since the word is limited to poetry only, the vocalism of *ferhþ,* *ferþ* and *ferht* must be explained as a result of Anglian smoothing[7] *Fyrhþ* and *frið* will be late West Saxon forms with *ie -> y* and unrounding of *y -> i.*[8] Finally, the loss of *h* in *ferþ* is an example of reduction of a group of three unlikely consonants to two.[9] The only thing which is hard to explain is the gender of *ferþ.* Abstract nouns formed with the suffix **-iþō* are generally feminine.[10] Possibly the gender of *ferhþ* was adapted to that of *feorh*, which, like it, is masculine/neuter.

If my etymology for OE *ferhþ* is right, then certain difficulties must be overcome for OFris *fereth.* The easiest of these concerns the parasitic or *svarabhakti*-vowel after short vowel followed by *r.* Van Helten gives a few instances   of this phenomenon such as *erim* 'arm', besides *erm, erewe* 'heir', besides *erwe.*[11] For loss of *h* between consonants, Van Helten only presents the personal names *Albert* and *Bertold* which are both compounded with the adjective **berht* 'bright', a word not otherwise recorded for Old Frisian.[12] Personal names usually show much wear and tear, so it is doubtful whether these two names can be adduced in support for the loss of *h* in *fereth.* Furthermore, if we want to see *fereth* as an abstract noun from *ferech* plus **-iþō*, it would be an exceptional case. According to

Ahlsson, the suffix *-iþō* has resulted in Old Frisian as *–ithe, -(e)the, -de* and *– te*, never as *–th*. That is probably the reason why he does not discuss the word at all. As for gender, all these nouns are feminine, except for *mēnthe* 'community', which is both feminine and neuter.[13] Finally, with regard to the meaning, OE *ferhþ* has an abstract meaning 'mind, heart, spirit (*mens, anima*)', whereas Ofris *fereth* always concretely signifies 'life (*vita*)'. On the whole, equation of the two words appears to be unsatisfactory.

   If we want to solve this problem we must look in a different direction. As I have indicated it is often very difficult to decide whether the manuscripts read *ferech* or *fereth*. If we consider the word in its context, it is striking to find the word *fiā* 'money, wealth' close at hand. A review of these passages may appropriately open with the one in which Sjölin 'discovered' the word, and which occurs in the Fifth Landlaw:

> *Thet lond ther thu sokest to thisse monne, thet kapat hi et ena Rumfaranda. Hi lette invr berch s i n f e r e c h a n d s i n f i a, ther mithe hi nerethe bede lif ende sel.* F IV, 59-61. (The land which you contest to this man, (that) he bought from a pilgrim to Rome. He carried his life and his money across the mountain, through which he saved both life and soul.)

The Hunsingo redaction of this landlaw reads:[14]

> *Hi lette inur berg f i a a n d e f e r e t h end nerede mitha fia bethe lif and sele.* H2 III, 22-3; H1 XI, 44-5

The Latin translation of this sentence, which can also be found in the Hunsingo Codex, is:

> Ille duxit in ultra montem p e c u n i a m e t u i t a m et saluauit cum illa pecunia uitam et animam. H2 XVIII, 55-6; H1 IV, 37-8.

The Hunsingo Codex has come down to us in two manuscripts, which contain the same texts, though in a different order. Inspection of H2 reveals that in the above passages one could read *ferech* just as well as *fereth*. H$_1$ seems to have *fereth*, though the distinction is very subtle.

   The word *fereth* also occurs in a number of *Wenden* 'Exceptions' in the redactions of the First Emsingo Codex and the Hunsingo Codex. In these exceptions, the conditions are stipulated, according to which a crime could not be paid off with money but rather necessitated the sentencing to death of the culprit. In the Emsingo *Wenden* these severe trespasses are: robbery from churches, setting fire to churches, murderous raids, murdering or betraying

one's lord, and high treason. The Hunsingo *Wenden* lack the third and the fourth of these Emsingo trespasses. Yet, all conditions have in common that they end in a kind of refrain:[15]

(1) *and ne thor ma vmbe sinne f e r e c h nanne fia biada.* E1 VIII, 104 (and one is not allowed to offer money for his life.)

In other words, the familiar alternative 'your money or your life' was not available in these extreme cases. In the Emsingo text, the refrain appears each time in a slightly different version. Besides the one already mentioned, we find:

(2) *and ne thor ma vmbe sin f e r t h nenne fia biada,* E1 VIII, 109-10
(3) *and ne thor ma vmbe sin f e r e t h nanne* [*fia*] *biada.* 113
(4) *and ne thor ma vmbe sin f e r e t h nanne fia biada.* 115-16
(5) *and ne thor ma vmbe sin f e r e t nanne fia biada.* 121

A few remarks are in order here. In the first place we see that in (1) the gender of f e r e t h is masculine as is shown by the ending of the preceding possesive pronoun. In all other cases the word is neuter. In the second place, in (3) the word *fia* has dropped. In the third place, as the editors indicate in the footnotes to (3) and (4), the manuscript really has *f e r e c h.*[16] With regard to the three *Wenden* in the Hunsingo text, the picture is not really different. In the introduction to the exceptions here, it is stated about the culprit that for three crimes:

(1) *hi ne muge tha sende mith festa and thet f e r e t h mith fia gefelle.* H2 VI, 2-3; H1 XIV, 2-3 (He can not redeem his sins with fasting and his life with money.)

The 'refrain' takes the following forms:
(2) *thenne ne thor ma vmbe sin f e r e t h fia biada.* 6-7; 6
(3) *sa ne ach ma vmbe sin f e r e t h nen fia te biadane.* 11-12; 10-11
(4) *sa ach hi vmbe sin f e r e t h nenne fia biada.* 17-18; 17-18

Turning to the manuscripts, one will find the following picture:

	H₁	H₂
(1)	*ferech*	*fereth*
(2)	*fereth*	*ferech*
(3)	*ferech?*	*ferech*
(4)	*ferech*	*ferech*

When all these forms in E1 and HlH2 are properly considered, it will become clear that modern editors have been presented with the awkward decision, whether to opt for the one form or the other. The reason why they chose *fereth,* until Sjölin broke with the tradition, must lie in the authority of the lexical works of Von Richthofen, Van Helten and Holthausen. Even if we assume that the manuscripts present a stalemate - which in my opinion they do not - a decision must nevertheless be made, and here we can be assisted by comparative philology.

Old English, which naturally offers itself as a language with which to compare Old Frisian, also has the alliterative formula *feoh and feorh.* Probably the best example I can give is from the famous account of Cyneheard's rebellion against king Cynewulf of Wessex. This event is vividly described in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in the annal for the year 755 and included in practically every Old English reader. After having killed Cynewulf, who was spending the night with his mistress, Cyneheard is being attacked by members of Cynewulf's *comitatus.* In order to avoid a fatal fight he invites Cynewulf's loyal retainers to choose his side by offering them *feoh and feorh* 'money and life', an offer which they decline, with disastrous result.[17] In the Anglo-Saxon laws, too, the formula occurs a number of times,[18] but in poetry one looks for it in vain. On one occasion the two words appear in a single line, where they carry the alliteration:[19]

> *sibbe ne wolde*
> *wið manna hwone*   *mægenes Deniga,*
> *feorh-bealo*   *feorran,*   *fea þingian*   *Beow* 154ᵇ-56

(He (Grendel) did not wish for peace with any man of the host of the Danes, was not willing to cease from deadly evil, to settle (the feud) with money.)

Likewise, a form of *feorþ* is also met with once in Anglo-Saxon poetry in connection with *feoh:*[20]

> *Hyre weaxan ongon*
> *under gyrdelse*   *þæt oft gode men*
> *ferðþum freogað*   *ond mid feo bicgað. Riddle 52,*10-12

(Under her girdle started to grow what good men often love with their hearts and buy with their money.)

This example clearly shows the semantic difference between

Oe *feorh* and *ferhþ* and may serve to underscore the improbability of Ofris *fereth* 'life'

Old Norse also knew the formula, namely in the form *fé ok fjǫr*. For its occurence in legal texts, let it suffice here to refer to the work of Ehrhardt.[21] The following quotations from *Njál's Saga* may serve as an illustration of the formula from fictional prose:[22]

> *Vér skulum ok hafa handtak at því, at sá skal hafa fyrigǫrt fé o k f j ǫ r v i, er ór gengr þessu máli.* (We shall also pledge by hand-clasp that he shall forfeit property and life, who backs out of this agreement).

The two words are also combined in a kind of maxim:

> *Hverja vǫrn munu vér veita? Ok er f é f j ǫ r v i firra.*
> (What kind of defence can we put up? After all, life is worth more than money.)

On one occasion the word *fjǫr* has been replaced by *líf*:

> *…þá muntú bæði láta lífit ok féit*
> (… then you must lose both your life and your money.)

It is quite remarkable to notice that this substitution is also paralleled in Old Frisian, where we read in the Fivelgo redaction of the *Wenden*:

sa ach ma vmb sin lif nen fia to biaden. F XVII, 203-04

Considering the above, everything points to the conclusion that Ofris *fereth* is a ghost-word, which should be read as *ferech*. First, the allegedly cognate OE *ferhþ* is abstract (as well as poetical), whereas the Old Frisian word always is concrete. Second, both Old English and Old Norse have alliterative formulas derived from **fehu* and **ferhwa-* which would lead to the logical conclusion that the same must apply for Old Frisian. Third, the similarity between <c> and <t> has given rise to scribal confusion, which confusion has often been ignored by the various editors of Old Frisian texts, Sjölin excluded. Fourth, the fact that Old Norse shows variation of *fjǫr* and *líf* in exactly a similar context as where Old Frisian does the same, adds to the assumption that we must read *ferech*. I would consequently suggest having Ofris *fereth* deleted from the dictionaries. In one respect this is to be deplored: it will reduce Löfstedt's list[23] of unique Anglo-Frisian parallels by one. But certainly, the dismissal of Ofris *fereth* as a gost-word should not imply that from now on the study of Anglo-Frisian parallels will be lifeless.

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Notes:

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1. *Die 'Fivelgoer' Handschrift*, I-II, Oudfriese Taal- en Rechtsbronnen 12-13 ('s-Gravenhage 1970-75).
2. D. Hofmann, 'Die Erschließung des altfriesischen Wortschatzes,' *Philologia Frisica Anno 1969* (Grins-Groningen 1970), pp. 100-15.
3. K. Fokkema, ed., *De Tweede Emsinger Codex*, OTR 7 ('s-Gravenhage 1953); W.J. Buma, W. Ebel, *Das Emsiger Recht*, Altfriesische Rechtsquellen 3 (Göttingen 1967), p. 104, nr. 14. K. von Richthofen, *Altfriesisches Wörterbuch* (Göttingen 1840; repr. Aalen 1961), s.v. *forthrede.*W.L. van Helten discusses the word in his *Zur Lexicologie des Altostfriesischen* (Amsterdam 1907), p. 123.
4. J. de Vries, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Leiden 1962[2]), s.v. *fjǫr*. Doubtless owing to Holthausen's *ferchrēde* De Vries also lists Ofris *ferch* in this entry.
5. By manuscripts I mean the photostats of these at the Frisian Institute of the University of Groningen.
6. J. Bosworth, T.N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford 1898); T.N. Toller, *Supplement* (Oxford 1921); A. Campbell, *Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda* (Oxford 1972).
7. A. Campbell, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford 1961[2]), § 222.
8. Campbell, §§ 300, 317.
9. Campbell, § 477.6.
10. F. Kluge, *Nominale Stammbildungslehre der altgermanischen Dialekte* (Halle 1926[3]), § 122.
11. W.L. van Helten, 'Zur Lexicologie des Altostfriesischen,' *Beiträge zur Sprache und Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* 14 (1889), 247. See also W.L. van Helten, *Altostfriesische Grammatik* (Leeuwarden 1890; repr. Niederwalluf bei Wiesbaden 1971), § 83.
12. Van Helten, *Altostfr. Gramm.*, § 148a,
13. L.-E. Ahlsson, *Die altfriesischen Abstraktbildungen* (Uppsala 1960), p. 126.
14. For F, see Sjölin's edition. Cf. W.J. Buma, W. Ebel, *Das Fivelingoer Recht*, Afr. Rq. 5 (Göttingen, 1972), IV, 5, which adopts Sjölin's reading. For H1H2, see J. Hoekstra, ed., *De Eerste en de Tweede Hunsingoer Codex*, OTR 6 ('s-Gravenhage 1950). The Old Frisian passage is also to be found in W.J. Buma, W. Ebel, *Das Hunsingoer Recht*, Afr. Rq. 4 (Göttingen 1969), III,5.
15. P. Sipma, *De Eerste Emsinger Codex*, OTR 4 ('s-Gravenhage 1943); Buma, Ebel, *Das Emsiger Recht*, p. 92.
16. Buma, Ebel, *Das Emsiger Recht*, p. 92, notes 297 and 299.

17. C. Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, I (Oxford 1892; repr. 1952), p. 46 f.
18. F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, I-III (Halle 1903-16; repr. Aalen 1960). Vol. I: EGu 12, p. 134; VIII Atr 33, p. 267; II Cn 40, p. 340.
19. F. Klaeber, *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg* (Boston 1950³). I traced this reference, and the following one, with the help of J.B. Bessinger Jr, ed., *A Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (Cornell UP 1978).
20. C. Williamson, ed., *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Chapel Hill 1977), p. 100.
21. H. Ehrhardt, *Der Stabreim in altnordischen Rechtstexten* (Heidelberg 1977), p. 181.
22. E.O. Sveinsson, ed., *Brennu-Njáls Saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit 12 (Reykjavík 1954). The quotations can be found on pp. 315, 203 and 28, respectively. The translations, though sometimes slightly altered, are from M. Magnusson, H. Pálsson, *Njál's Saga* (Harmondsworth 1960), pp. 157, 180 and 54.
23. E. Löfstedt, 'Beiträge zur nordseegermanischen und nordseegermanisch- nordischen Lexicographie,' *Niederdeutsche Mitteilungen* 23 (1967), 25; 25 (1969), 27.