The Old Frisian MASC.SG. form of the proximal demonstrative pronoun this

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[1622] The Old Frisian **MASC.SG.** form of the proximal demonstrative pronoun *this*

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**Abstract.** The **ACC.SG.MASC.** form of the Old Frisian proximal pronoun ‘*this*’, thissen, does not appear in the earliest Old Frisian texts. Ms. B₂ contains five instances of the pronoun with a proximal meaning, alongside the form *then* as form of the definite article in the same fragment. This rare form of the proximal pronoun, which resembles Old Norse þennan, is corroborated by 19th c. Wangerooge Frisian din ‘*this (MASC.)*’. The form *then* is frequent in Old West Frisian in the Unia version of the Old Skelta-law, where it appears as an archaic equivalent to the article *thine*; the latter is the default in younger Unia texts. It is hypothesised that incipient, incidental weakening of the geminate realisation in unstressed pronouns in pre-Old West Frisian, together with the existence of analogical patterns in the **ACC.SG.MASC.** forms *minne*, *thinne*, *sinne*, *enna/anne* ‘my, thy, his, one’, provoked a merger of the proximal form *then* with the much more frequent article *thine*. Eventually, when geminates were lost in unstressed syllables in the early 14th c., *then* disappeared and *thine* – independently developed from older *then* or (re)created by analogy with the anaphoric pronoun *hine* – became the sole form of the **ACC.SG.MASC.** article in late Old West Frisian. A new analogical form of the proximal pronoun *thissen* was created in the 14th c.

1. Introduction
The **ACC.SG.MASC.** form of the Old Frisian proximal demonstrative pronoun *this* ‘*this*’ appears in younger, Old West Frisian texts from the 15th and early 16th centuries as *dissen* (van Helten 1890: 194; cf. Bremmer Jr 2009: 55). The oldest attestation of such a formation seems *thissen* in ‘Processus Judicii’ (PrJ) in Codex Unia (U) (Sytsema 2012), a text that can linguistically be dated to ca. 1400 (Versloot 2008: 74). The form is, however, notoriously absent from the oldest Frisian sources. In the spirit of Sjölin’s (1966) distinction between classical and post-classical Old Frisian, I base my analysis of ‘Old Frisian’ on the texts representing the most archaic form of the language; the Old East Frisian mss. R₁₂, E₁₂, H₂, B₁₂ as well as the
Old West Frisian texts the ‘Old Skeltariucht’ (Skr\textsuperscript{a}-U) and ‘Haet is riucht’ (HRt-U) in codex Unia.\footnote{The abbreviations refer to the following manuscripts: R\textsubscript{1,2} = Rüstringen (Buma 1961), (1954), E\textsubscript{1,2} = Emsingo (Sipma 1943, Fokkema 1953), H\textsubscript{1,2} = Hunsingo (Hoekstra 1950), B\textsubscript{1,2} = Brokmer (Buma 1949); U = Unia (Sytsma 2012). E\textsubscript{2} is definitely ‘classical Old Frisian’, although not as archaic as E\textsubscript{1}. I include it here because of one relevant attestation. This research has generously profited from the lemmatised corpus of Old Frisian by Rita van de Poel: https://corpora.ato.ivdnt.org/corpus-frontend/OFR/search/.
}

This article discusses a particular paradigm form of the ‘proximal demonstrative pronoun’, English \textit{this}, West Frisian \textit{dizze, dit}, etc., henceforth briefly ‘proximal pronoun’. It contrasts with the general demonstrative pronoun, English \textit{that}, West Frisian \textit{dy, dat}, etc., sometimes referred to as ‘distal’, henceforth simply ‘demonstrative pronoun’. The demonstrative pronoun is the source of the modern definite article, English \textit{the}, West Frisian \textit{de, it}, which was still on its way to be fully grammaticalized in the Old Germanic languages.\footnote{There is no form distinction between the two in Old Frisian, except for the DAT.SG.\textit{MASC.} and DAT.PL. which are \textit{tha} when functioning as an attributive article, but \textit{tham} when used in non-attributive position or with an explicit demonstrative meaning, as in Bru-R\textsubscript{1}: 11e \textit{Thruc-sketen thet kleene thes maga . eider mutha en skilling wicht-goldis . \textit{For tham} twam muthon thet minre lond to metande .} “Wird jemand durch den schmalen Teil des Magens geschossen, jede Wundöffnung mit einem Schilling gewogener Goldes (zu büßen). Zwischen \textbf{den} beiden Wundöffnungen die kürzere Entfernung zu messen.” (Buma & Ebel 1963: 75).} Focussing on formal aspects, I will not distinguish between demonstrative pronoun and definite article.

The ACC.SG.MASC. of the proximal pronoun is not the only form in the paradigm that is not attested in the oldest sources; a few other forms of the paradigm are missing as well: the GEN. and DAT.SG.FEM. and GEN.PL. are unattested (see the Appendix for the full paradigm attestations). Exact counting from Codex Fivelgo (F) shows that the proximal pronoun is not very frequent in the genre of law texts and appears next to the demonstrative pronouns/article in a proportion of 1:33 (Sjölin 1970: 141-143). The gaps in the paradigm of ‘this’ can therefore be coincidental. It is the presence of another, remarkable form, that forms the basis for a potential new interpretation of the form of the ACC.SG.MASC. of the Old Frisian proximal pronoun.

The ACC.SG.MASC. of the definite article is \textit{thene} in Old East Frisian. A minority form in some of these texts is \textit{thine}, which is the default in the Old West Frisian texts in Unia and Jus (Buma 1996). It is particularly in the text of the Old Skeltariucht in Unia (Skr\textsuperscript{a}-U) that an even more frequent form
of what seems to be the article can be found: *thanē. The reconstructed PWGmc. form of the article is *þanā (Euler 2013: 113; Fulk 2018: 194), which, however, cannot be the regular source of thanē, because of the <nn> in the latter form. The practice of graphemic consonant doubling to mark the shortness of the preceding vowel is only of later date in Frisian and cannot be the reason for the spelling with <nn> (Hofmann 1969; Versloot 2008: 90). The adverb thanē/thanē ‘then’ is consistently written with <nn>. It therefore seems justified to take the spelling thanē at face value for a form with a geminate consonant: *[ðɛnːə].

In this paper, I will consider a new interpretation of the pronominal forms with nn, including its geminated /nː/, namely as the ACC.SG.MASC. of the proximal pronoun ‘this’. A direct parallel is Old Norse þenna (Fulk 2018: 199-200), whose origin is obscure. Apart from the Old West Frisian attestations, the form thanē as a pronoun appears four times in B2 and thinne appears once in E2. Section 2 presents an evaluation of the grammatical function of these Old East Frisian forms, being either articles or proximal pronouns. The sections 3 and 4 will return to the SkrR^4-U and the oldest West Frisian charter, OFO I-1 from 1329 (Vries 2022) to see whether Old West Frisian thanē can be interpreted as a proximal pronoun. Crucial information comes from the forms in Wangerooge Frisian (Wang.), to be presented in Section 5. These pieces of information are woven together in Section 6.

2. The evidence from Old East Frisian
Manuscript B2 (Buma 1949) contains 4 instances of thanē. The parallel text of B1 has thenē for thanē. This could be taken as a sign, that thanē and thenē are entirely equivalent and thanē is a variant of the article. The choice between the two is, however, rather free in case of a fairly abstract text type as law texts, in the sense that instead of the proximal pronoun the simple article will nearly always do. A condition for the application of a proximal pronoun in written text is that the referent has been mentioned not too long before. The evidence in B2 is found in a narrow section of the whole text:

The referent is in bold, the assumed proximal pronoun in SMALL CAPITAL and the repeated topic underlined. Articles in the ACC.SG.MASC. are in

3. Compare ‘then’: Old Saxon thanna, Old English þonē, þennē, Old High German dannē, denne (Philippa et al. 2003: s.v. dan).
4. Fulk derives it from a reduplicated *þan-þan, which seems far-fetched to me.
itals. The numbers in [] refer to the sections in the diplomatic edition (Buma 1949), the lines have been numbered for this article.

24] 1 fon redie[na] bronde
2 Iof brocmen thes to rede warthat . thet hia tha rediewa bern . welle .
3 sa hebbe tha talemen tha wald . inna hoke fiardandele se THENNE 
bronde bi ienne .
[....]
31] 1 And hwasa tha redieua THENNE bron on stet . eta redieua suiue
33] 1 [fon] rediena [on] spreke
2 Vvelmar enne rediewa on spreca vmbe enne vndom . sa skelma hi- 
ne on spreca
3 thes selwa dei ther hi ret anda warwe . and wernia oppare stede in- 
na warue.
4 and thene thichtega to endgiande erma oftha warwe gunge. and thi 
rediewa
5 skelse halda ther him alra nest is . ther THENNE vndom edeled het .
and alsa dene
6 werna skelma nima. sama thenna het . ac fraiach tha tuene thene ena .
7 sa haliese tha werna eta huse . and binna fivwertene nachten te friai- 
ande mith
8 pennigum . sa skelin tha thre THENNE dom ahond nima. and 
skiriane hwerder
9 hi enne riuthne dom deled hebbe sa naut . vr winne hia hine sa 
skelen hia
10 thene tichtega elle riuth makia

A German translation is given in (Buma 1949: 14, 17-19) and Buma & Ebel 
1965: 33):

[24]: Vom Abbrennen (der Häuser) der Richter. Wenn die Brokmer das 
beschließen, daß sie die (Häuser der) Richter (als Strafe) niederbrennen 
wollen, so sollen die Talemen das Recht haben zu bestimmen, in 
welchem Gauviertel sie mit der Niederbrennung beginnen.
[31] Und wer dem Richter bei der Wüstung (der Häuser) der Richter den 
Brand anzündet …
[33] (1) Vom Verklagen der Richter. (2) Will man einen Richter wegen 
eines ungerechten Urteils verklagen, so soll man ihn (3) an demselben 
Tage, wo er das Urteil im Gerichte spricht, verklagen und auf der Stelle 
Pfänder hinterlegen im Gerichte, (4) und die Klage soll man zum 
Abschuß bringen, bevor man aus dem Gerichte geht; und derjenige
Richter (5) soll sie (die Pfänder) aufbewahren, der dem am nächsten ist, welcher das Fehlurteil gefunden hat. Und solche (6) Pfänder soll man nehmen, wie man (sie) dann hat. Sprechen aber zwei (von den drei) den einen frei, (7) so sollen sie die Pfänder aus dem Hause (wo sie aufbewahrt wurde) holen und binnen vierzehn Tagen sind sie (die Pfänder) für (8) Geld einzulösen. Darauf sollen die drei (übrigen Bezirksrichter) das Urteil vornehmen und prüfend entscheiden, ob (9) er ein gerechtes Urteil gefällt hat oder nicht; überführen sie ihn, so sollen sie (10) den Prozeß völlig rechtsgemäß erledigen.

The text contains the following relevant tokens of *thenne* and *thene*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>referent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24.3</td>
<td><em>thenne brond</em> 24.1: <em>bronde</em> – [24.2: <em>berna</em> (v.)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.1</td>
<td><em>thenne brond</em> ⇒24.1/2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>thene thichtega --</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.5</td>
<td><em>thenne vndom</em> 33.2: <em>enne vndom</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>thene ena --</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.8</td>
<td><em>thenne dom</em> 33.2: <em>enne vndom</em> – 33.5: <em>thenne vndom</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.10</td>
<td>thene tichtega 33.4: <em>thene thichtega</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: instances of *thenne* and *thene* in manuscript B₂

In [24], the phrase *thenne brond* can be read as ‘this fire’, referring back to the same word in the title and the action of ‘burning’ (*berna*) in the same sentence. The topic stays on the table in the following law articles and in [31], one can accept another translation with ‘this fire’. It can be seen that in all cases a translation with ‘the’ instead of ‘this’ works as well.

In [33] an *vndom* ‘wrong sentence’ is introduced and a few lines later, *thenne vndom* ‘this wrong sentence’ can directly refer to this topic. The issue of the ‘wrong sentence’ is still discussed and referred back to with *thenne dom* in 33.8

In the same article [33], the normal form of the article *thene* is used three times. Twice, a potential reference to an already introduced topic is missing. The last time, the *tichtega* ‘accusation’ is mentioned, that was mentioned in
the very beginning of the article. The distance in the text seems to have triggered a distal, demonstrative pronoun, instead of a proximal pronoun.

One may conclude that in this specific part of B₂, an interpretation with thene as article and thenne as the form of the proximal pronoun holds gallantly. Curious is that B₁ does not show the need to use this form, nor does it appear anywhere else in B₂. I do not have an obvious explanation for that.

E₂ 1:1 offers the formulation of an oath to provide help from God, Mary and the Saints, closing with the sentence: ... sa thu thinne eth elle riuchte swere, which can be translated by ‘...if you swear this oath all right/properly’, where thinne eth ‘this oath’ refers back to the wording just laid-out before. The common form of the definite article/demonstrative pronoun is thene in this manuscript. The form thinne can, however, also represent the ACC.SG.MASC. form of possessive pronoun thin ‘your’, joining the preceding second person pronoun thu ‘you’. Both interpretations seem possible here.

These instances provide potential evidence for the existence of an ACC.SG.MASC. form thenne of the proximal pronoun in Old East Frisian. With only 5% forms (out of all the then(n)e-tokens) in the long text B₂, it is not necessarily surprising that other, shorter texts do not show any examples. As a way of comparison one can reiterate the evidence from ms. F, containing 2100 articles and only 62 proximal pronouns (= 3%) (Sjölin 1970: 141-143).

Manuscript B₂ contains 1013 articles/demonstratives pronouns and 17 (+ 4 x thenne) proximal pronouns. Remarkable is the consistent use of thene in the parallel sentences in B₁ and the concentration of the use of thenne in B₂ in only this specific section of the text.

3. The instances of thenne/thine in the Old Skeltenariucht (Unia; SkrR²-U)

In SkrR²-U, the form thenne (thanne 2x) appears 30 times, next to 24 instances of thine (thin 1x). Already the frequency proportions provide a clue that thenne cannot always be a proximal pronoun here. I checked all the forms for the presence or absence of a referent, which could justify the use of the proximal form. There is no correlation between the reference to an already introduced topic and the form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>new topic</th>
<th>current topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thenne (thanne)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thine (thin)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Fisher’s Exact Test: p = 0.6
The forms *thenne/thanne* are dominant in the first 36 law articles with 81% (n = 26), ‘capud’ 37 (n = 7) is almost 50-50% and in the rest of the text, *thine* is dominant with 73% (n = 22) (Figure 1). So, it seems that *thenne/thanne* is not a form of the proximal pronoun, but simply the more archaic form of the definite article. The younger form of the article *thine* is the common form in all the other classical Old Frisian texts in Unia, such as *Haet is riucht* (HRt-U), the Seventeen Statutes (K17-U) or the Legend of Charlemagne and Redbad (KaR-U). The article appears once as *thene* in HRt-U, alongside seven times *thine*. The form *thene* is the common form in the Old East Frisian sources and represents probably a more archaic form. The Old East Frisian forms *thene* ACC SG MASC. and *thes* GEN SG MASC./NTR. of the article/demonstrative pronoun appear as *thine* and *this* in most of the classical Old West Frisian sources in ms. Unia. The form *thes* is found in SkR, where it is the common form, and for the rest incidentally in HRt, West Frisian Synodal Law (SWl), Statutes of Magnus (Mgn) and the Statutes of the Five Districts (W5D) alongside more frequent *this*. The Old West Frisian texts attest to a shift from *e* to *i* in these forms of the article. However, *thine* cannot be directly derived from *thenne* but is the regular continuation of *thene*.

![Figure 1: The spread of thenne, thanne and thine across the Old Skeltalaw (U)](image)

The text of the SkR in Druk runs largely parallel with the version in U (Steller 1926). Druk uses two main variants of the ACC SG MASC. article:

5. The transition coincides with the end of various regulations, including the ‘kettle proof’ and where regulations concerning the invocation and organization of the ‘thing’ start; see also Vries (2007: 62).
**dine** (dyne) and **dyn** (den, diin). There is no correlation between the use of the variants in Druk and the two types in Unia (p = 0.20); at least the scribe of Druk, who linguistically modernized the text, did not perceive the two variants in Unia or, probably, a very similar manuscript, as meaningful, neither is there any correlation between the presence of a referent and the form in Druk (p = 0.38). Therefore, the variants in Druk do not provide any direct or indirect evidence of an earlier proximal pronoun *thenne* in Old Frisian.

It can thus be concluded that the text of SkR*a*-U provides no evidence for a semantic difference between *thenne* and *thine*. The distribution in the text suggests rather a chronological contrast in the form of the article, which is in a way remarkable, because *thenne* represents an innovation, considering the Old East Frisian and Proto-Germanic forms of the demonstrative pronoun (see § 5), whereas *thine* is best explained as the default West Frisian continuation of older, original *thene*.

4. **OFO I-1**

This early charter from 1329 contains two instances of an ACC.SG.MASC. article: *thine willa* ‘the will’ and *an thenne orne wey* ‘on the other side/part’. In both cases, there is no clear antecedent, but in the latter case, the parties in the agreement have already been mentioned explicitly and *thenne* could potentially be interpreted as a proximal form, rather than a bare article. Other ACC.SG.MASC. in the same text are once *sinne* from *sin* ‘his’ and there is once *hine* as ACC.SG.MASC. of the personal pronoun. The adverb ‘then’ appears once as *thanne* and perhaps another time in an enclitic position: *thet tene* ‘that then’. These forms will be further discussed in § 6.3.

5. **Wangerooge Frisian and the Proto-Frisian root vowel of the ACC.SG. MASC. forms**

Very little information is gained from the forms of the proximal pronoun in modern West Frisian dialects (*dizze, deze*), Sater Frisian (*dusse*, in Siebs: *dyse*) or North Frisian (Siebs 1901: 1356-1357). However, relevant forms are found in the dialect of Wangerooge (Ehrentraut 1849: 21-22):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>demonstrative pron. / stressed article</td>
<td>dan</td>
<td>djuu</td>
<td>dait</td>
<td>Daa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proximal pronoun</td>
<td>din</td>
<td>dis</td>
<td>dit</td>
<td>Díze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: pronominal forms in the dialect of Wangerooge.
The Wangerooge Frisian masculine forms are historical accusative forms, generalised as the single form in the process of loss of case distinctions in Wangerooge Frisian (compare Sater Frisian NOM. die, ACC. dän).

The /a/ in the Wangerooge article and the /ɛ/ in the Sater Frisian form most likely correspond to a Proto West Germanic */a/: *þanā (Ringe & Taylor 2014: 123,389; Fulk 2018: 194). The normal development of *a before *n was rounding to Proto-Frisian *â (> OEFri. o, OWFri. a/o as in mon/man ‘man’). In Old English, *pone is the common form.6 In unstressed syllables, rounding was less common in Frisian (Bremmer Jr 2009: 24) and */æ/ was fronted like most other short /a/. Before /n/ it remained a fairly open */æ/.7 This */æ/ developed into Wangergooge Fri. /a/ (in a similar vein already Siebs 1901: 1356). Considering such a proto-form, the form of the article in B2 (94 x thene, 1x thane) can be considered its regular continuation as well (Hoekstra & Tigchelaar 2014: 189, quoting van Helten 1890).

In West Frisian, /e/ is the regular continuation of PFri. */æ/ before nasals, with incidental instances of /a/ (Hoekstra & Tigchelaar 2014: 196). In SkrR2-U, the article thanne (with <nn>!) is a side-form to thenne.8 So, all attested vowel variation can be properly explained when we assume a PFri. *þænæ as the ACC.SG.MASC. of the demonstrative pronoun/article.

The proximal pronoun Wang. *din ‘this’ must originate from an ACC.SG. MASC. *thinne, which is said to have developed from an earlier *pisne (Siebs 1901: 1357), the latter being exactly the form attested in Old English.9 The geminate in the Old Frisian form is secured by the short /i/ in Wang.Fri.10 It could be argued that din has been analogically built on the basis of dan and the short /i/ in all the other proximal forms. This seems less conceivable to me, because all the other pairs of pronouns in Table 3 are

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6. The form *thon for the article appears once in F (Sjölin 1970: 270) but is so isolated, that a copy/spelling error is not unlikely.
7. The article was not affected by i-mutation, but due to the Proto-Germanic vowel raising where PGmc. /e/ before nasals had been raised to /i/, and the Anglo-Frisian rounding of a before nasals, the combinations *en and *an did no longer exist in Proto-Frisian and the only existing combinations were *in, *en, *än and *un.
8. The adverb ‘then, than’, with the same vowel-consonant combination, appears once as thanne, once as thenne in SkrR2-U.
light suppletive and there is no general pattern of sole alternation between /a/ and /i/ to mark the contrast between the two pronouns.

Additional evidence for an Old Frisian proximal form *thinne may come from the 17th century Harlingerland dialect with the form duen mehn ‘this morning’ (König 1911: 165). While the main author of the Harlinger texts and second-language learner, Cadovius-Müller, uses forms such as tese, tis, disse, the short text written by Harry Jummers, who was probably a native speaker (Versloot 2018: 113-114), contains this single attestation of duen, in one of the existing manuscripts spelled dijenis. The vocalism differs from the one in the Wang.Fri. form, but reminds of the Sater Frisian forms dusse, dyse. These vowel qualities may be ascribed to Low German influence.¹¹

So, the Wangerooge (and Harlinger) Frisian forms provide evidence for the following interpretations:

- a PFri. ACC.SG.MASC. *þænæ in the demonstrative pronoun/article;
- a PFri. ACC.SG.MASC. form *þinne of the proximal pronoun with a geminate consonant /n: /

6. The ACC.SG.MASC. of Old Frisian this and thī

6.1 Root vowel quality

Both the forms of the article (demonstrative pronoun) and the proximal pronoun, including the quality of the root vowel, are strongly affected by analogical reshufflings in older Germanic languages (Euler 2013: 113-117; Ringe & Taylor 2014: 100-102; Fulk 2018: 194-200), which on the one hand can help to explain many forms, at the same time allows for multiple interpretation routes for some of the attested forms. The confusion can be illustrated in the following Table 4:

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¹¹ Siebs (1901: 1357) considers the entire Sater Frisian form as a Low German loan because of the vocalism. Bönig (1997: 38, 171) mentions disse, disse and dît, dût in the Low German of North and South Oldenburg. Proximal pronouns without /s/ are, however, also found in South-Westphalian dialects: diem (DAT.SG.MASC), diér (DAT. SG. FEM.) (Lindow et al.1998: 169), which seems the result of loss of the intervocalic /s/ (Old Saxon thesumu, thesare). Direct contact with the Harlinger Frisian dialect is unlikely, but it cannot be completely ruled out that duen, dijenis developed from earlier *dusen, *dysen.
Dominant forms | Gsm, Asm, NAsn ‘the’ | Nsm, Nsn ‘this’
--- | --- | ---
Old English | þæs, þone, þæt | þiss, þis
Old Saxon | thes/thas, thena/thana, that | thes, thit
R₁ | thes, thene, thet | thesse, -a – thit
B₂ | thes, thene, thet | thisse, -a – thith
E₁ | thes, thene, thet | thisse – thet/ thith
H₂ | thes, thene, thet | thisse – thet/thit
SkR²-U | thes, thine/thenne, thet/that | thesse – thit
K¹⁷-U | this, thine, that | this, thisse – thit

Table 4: The forms of the GEN.SG. and ACC.SG.MASC. and the NOM./ACC.SG.NTR of the article/demonstrative pronoun and the NOM.SG.MASC. and NTR. of the proximal pronoun in Old English, Old Saxon and various Old Frisian texts.

The quality of the root vowel in the Old English forms of the article (demonstrative pronoun) can all be derived from PGmc. *a. The proximal pronoun, which was a product of a complicated reorganisation in Proto-Germanic (see references above), generalised i in Old English as the dominant root vowel.12

The Old Saxon forms are more complicated: there is evidence for the forms with PGmc. *a in the article, but given the lack of Anglo-Frisian fronting in (most of) Old Saxon, the alternative form thes continues a PGmc. *e, which eventually also spread to the ACC.SG. by analogy (Schuhmann 2011: 53-54). The root vowel of the proximal pronoun is e, with i only in the NOM./ACC.SG.NTR.

Given the Old English and Old Saxon forms and the evidence discussed in § 5, *a was the source of the vowel in the article in Frisian as well. The instances with <i> in Old West Frisian are a later development, which was

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12. Originally being the demonstrative pronoun, followed by a proximal suffix *s, the whole paradigm was restructured, where the s was incorporated into the stem, which was subsequently followed by regular pronominal case and gender markers. It is this latter type, that forms the starting point of the deliberations on the Old Frisian forms. A few rare instances of thius NOM.SG.FEM (B, H) echo the original formation of the pronoun.
part of a more overall raising of short e, such as *scel > *scil ‘shall’ (Bremmer Jr 2009: 42).

The Proto-Frisian neuter form of the proximal pronoun was most likely *þit, in line with Old Saxon and Old English. The original root vowel of the other forms is difficult to establish and both e and i are possible. However, in Old West Frisian, the *thisse-forms in the later texts can be part of the general raising of e, as in the article, implying that *thess-, found in SkR³-U, was the earlier form in Old West Frisian. The alternation between Weser Old Frisian *thiss- and Ems Old Frisian *thiss- must have older roots. Based on the comparative evidence from Old English and Old Saxon, combined with the interpretation of Wang. *dan, we can reconstruct the following set of forms for Proto-Frisian:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proto-Frisian</th>
<th>Gsm, Asm, NAsn ‘the’</th>
<th>Nsm, NAsn ‘this’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*þæs, *þænæ, *þæt</td>
<td>*þissæ / *þessæ, *þit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Reconstructed Proto-Frisian demonstrative and proximal pronouns

6.2 Old East Frisian thenne

The Old East Frisian instances of thenne/thinne (§ 2) are semantically conceivable as proximal pronouns, the vowel alternation is in line with the variation otherwise found in the proximal pronoun (Table 4 & 5) and confirmed by the Wangerooge Frisian form *din and Harlinger Frisian *duen if both are considered to be historical forms. The early modern forms are crucial in the light of the few attestations for this particular form of the proximal pronoun in Old East Frisian. Eventually, one can reconstruct an ACC.SG.MASC. form of the proximal pronoun in Proto-Frisian *þennæ (i) < Anglo-Frisian *þesna (i), which corresponds to the Old Norse form *þenna.

6.3 Old West Frisian thenne and thine

The form thenne as an ACC.SG.MASC. article is particularly prominent in SkR³-U, but its appearance in OFO I-1 and as thinne in the Statutes of the Five Counties (W³D-U) confirms its wider existence beyond this single text. SkR³-U shows everything but a semantic contrast between thenne and thine, rather a chronological one, where thenne appears in the earlier sections of the text and thine later on. The two instances of thine and thenne in OFO I-1 are inconclusive in terms of semantics. The chronological perspective is confirmed by the rest of the Unia-texts, where all the other archaic texts have only thine. The archaic variant thene appears only once in Unia,
namely in HRt, which is also in other respects a fairly archaic text (Versloot 2014: 98), next to normal thine. Given the spread of thenne in SkR^a^-U, the appearance in OFO I-1 and incidental in W^D, one may assume that thenne and thine were equivalent in the late-13th and early-14th centuries with a gradual transition towards thine, which itself may have developed from an earlier, scantily attested thene (cf. Table 4).

Apparently, the form of the proximal pronoun, thenne, reconstructable for East Frisian, and the form of the article, thene, which differed only in the gemination of the /n(:)/, got confused in Old West Frisian. We can identify two sources for this confusion:

1. other lexical forms that suggested an interpretation of thenne as a typical ACC.SG.MASC. variant of a root the(n);
2. loss of the distinctive gemination in the mostly unstressed position of the determiner.

ad 1) The suffix of the ACC.SG.MASC. in pronominal and adjectival inflections was -ne, as in *ane nyene noma* ‘a new name’ (HRt-U). This suffix could be attached to the numeral ēn ‘one’, which also functioned as the indefinite article. This created a geminate /n:/, causing shortening of the stem vowel from PGmc. *ai*. The result was a PFri. *ænne_, OFri. *anne/enne_ with a short vowel. In a similar vein, the possessive pronouns mīn, thīn, sīn had a specific ACC.SG.MASC. form *minne, thinne, sinne_, with a short vowel. Examples from SkR^a^-U are: *Jef hia sinne eth ni wollat unfan,… ‘If they will not accept his oath’*, or the numeral / indefinite article *enne/anne_: *ther ach him thi asega enne frethe ti delane* ‘the lawsayer shall thereupon decree a truce for him’; *so thi asega anne man aschat* ‘when the lawsayer asks a man’. The regular continuations of these specific masculine forms are still present in North Frisian dialects and Sater Frisian; in the latter: MASC. *sin [s_i] < sinne, otherwise sien [s_i] < sīn_; numeral MASC. *aan < anne, FEM. een < ēn_ (Fort 2015: 780). So, there was ample evidence for a specific form with geminated /n:/ for the ACC.SG.MASC only. As a consequence of the grammaticalization of articles, it is well possible that the proximal form thenne was perceived as the ACC.SG.MASC form of the definite article, NOM.SG. thī_, building a pair with the indefinite article *enne/anne_.

ad 2) Possibly parallel to the previous development or following not much later, there is weakening of the phonemic status (including its phonetic realisation) of geminates in unstressed syllables. In SkR^a^-U, *sinne_ is used only twice, namely in cap. 30. From cap. 38 onwards, there are four in-

stances of *sine as ACC.SG.MASC. as in SkR²-U, e.g.: *thet hi sine sculte monia scel ‘that he shall notify his own magistrat’. This transition coincides with the one from dominant *thenne to dominant *thine in the article around cap. 36. Further on in the more archaic texts in Unia, such as HRt, K¹⁷, Mgn, SWI en W⁵D, forms such as sinne (or similar pronominal forms: minne, thinne, nenne ‘my, thy, no’) appear; otherwise the ACC.SG.MASC. form of *sīn is analogical *sine (*sīne). OFO I-1 has one relevant form: sinne with expected geminate. ¹⁴ Incipient decrease of phonetic contrast in geminate realizations would create an allophonic realisation *[ðena] of thenne, identical to the default pronunciation of the article thene. A phonological parallel to this degemination in unstressed syllables is the simplification of the form of the gerund ending -anne (2 x) to -ane (69 x) in SkR²-U, in later texts only -ane.¹⁵

These two scenarios may provide a reasonable explanation for the reinterpretation of thenne as the ACC.SG.MASC. of the article. In this interpretation, the use of thenne in SkR²-U and OFO I-1 as form of the article represents a stage of confusion, due to the weakening of the geminate and the formal overlap with other pronouns with a geminate nn in the ACC.SG. MASC. It is the root vowel of the Proto-Frisian demonstrative pronoun *þænæ that provides the source for the variant thanne in SkR²-U, a pure hybrid of PFri. *þænæ (demonstrative/article) and *þinnæ or *þennæ (proximal; see Table 4 & 5). Unclear is whether Old West Frisian thine is the regular continuation of older thene, or that it was remodelled on the basis of this and hine.¹⁶ The form thene is completely absent from SkR²-U and it appears only once in HRt-U, so it seems that thenne had – at least for some period – become the default form of the ACC.SG.MASC. article. Degemination would lead to *thene (again), but it is only thine in the sources. The sequence [ənæ] was probably no longer in line with the phonotactics of Frisian at that time, evinced by the wide spread raising of short /e/ in many words, and conse-

¹⁴. The form <nanne> in the Schotanus edition is emendated to *<natne> nāt ne ‘not’ (Vries 2022: 56).

¹⁵. In Old East Frisian, the long-consonant status in the gerund is reinforced by extending the suffix -ande from the present participle to the gerund, a form that incidentally also appears in SkR²-U: …in ti farane and thes bodles to namiande…. ‘go in and name the estate’ . The archaic form -anne appears only incidentally in Old East Frisian sources (van Helten 1890: 121, 218, 228, 236).

¹⁶. The form hine was lost by 1400, to be replaced by the dative form him/hem (Versloot 2008: 70–72).
quenty a degeminated *thenne could only be realised as *thine, skipping the intermediate stage of *thene. The analogy with *hine may have facilitated this process. But this is all fairly conjectural. Eventually, the proximal pronoun was analogically reformed by adding -en: thissen (PrJ-U).

7. Conclusion

The attestation gap in the ACC.SG.MASC. of the proximal pronoun thess, thiss in Old East Frisian – in 15th c. West Frisian sources found as thissen, dissen – could be due to the scarcity of the data, but it may as well be the result of looking in the wrong direction. Old East Frisian sources attest to a handful of instances of thenne/thinne with a geminate consonant, in contrast to the form of the definite article/demonstrative pronoun thene. The former instances can very well be translated with ‘this’, rather than ‘the’, although in the genre of the law texts ‘the’ will mostly do as well. This fairly scant evidence is, however, enforced by the attestation of 19th c. Wangerooge Frisian MASC. din ‘this’, contrasting with the MASC. article dan. Both Wangerooge Frisian forms represent historical accusative forms. Wang. din can be a direct continuation of Old Frisian thinne, while dan continues PWGmc. *þanā. The exact origin of the special proximal form of the accusative is unclear, but the form can be compared to the corresponding form in Old Norse, þenna (other cases þess-). Already Siebs (1901: 1357) suggested that the form may have developed from *þisne or *þesne (compare Old English þisne) by assimilation.

The form thenne is also frequent in the earliest Old West Frisian text, the Old Skeltlaw, from the 13th century, where it appears in semantically free variation with the definite article thine, without any sign of a proximal meaning, but predominantly in the first and oldest parts of the text. In the course of the 14th century, thenne disappears and is replaced by thine. It is hypothesised that the semantic shift of thenne from proximal pronoun to demonstrative pronoun/article was facilitated by analogy with other specific masculine accusative forms with nn: minne, thinne, sinne, ennelanne ‘my, thy, his, one/a’, from mīn, thīn, sīn, ēn. The lack of any sign of proximal semantics of thenne in the text SkR²-U implies that the merger was already complete and must have taken place earlier. During the late-13th and early-14th centuries, there is a loss of phonetic substance and phonological contrast of geminates in unstressed words. At the incipient stage of this loss, incidental allophonic allegro realisations of thenne as *[ðena] possibly contributed to its semantic reinterpretation as the article/demonstrative pronoun. Eventually, as a consequence of the complete loss of the unstressed
geminates, *sinne* was replaced by analogical *sīne* and *thenne* by *thine* in the early 14th century. The form *thine* itself may have been the regular continuation of earlier *thene*, most likely the original form of the article in pre-Old West Frisian, or was recreated by analogy with *hine* and other article forms: NOM.SG. *thī* and in particular the genitive *this*.

Eventually, one has to conclude that most of the individual evidence for an Old Frisian proximal pronoun *thenne* is either open for other interpretations or rather indirect. It is the cumulative evidence from various Frisian periods and sources and the comparative evidence from Old English and Old Norse that support the hypothesis of this paper.

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**REFERENCES**


Appendix: Old Germanic Paradigms

The following paradigms are based on van Helten (1890: 194) and Fulk (2018: 199). Additional attestations are taken from Codex Unia, in particular the archaic texts: SkR², HRt, K¹⁷, L²⁴, SWI, KaR, W²D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>neuter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>singular</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM.</td>
<td>Old English</td>
<td>Old Norse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>þēs</td>
<td>sjá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>þessa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>þissum</td>
<td>þessum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC.</td>
<td>þisne</td>
<td>þenna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                      | feminine       | plural          |
|                      | singular       |                |
| NOM.                 | Old English    | Old Norse       | Old Frisian    |
|                      | þēos            | sjá             | thius, thesse  |
| GEN.                 | þisse           | þessar          | þissa          |
|                      | þisse           | þessi           | þissum         |
| ACC.                 | þēs             | þessa           | þēs            |

The alternation between *thes*- and *this*- is found throughout the Old Frisian paradigms and texts. The forms with *e* are more frequent in R₁,₂ and SkR²-U and HRt-U, apart from the NOM.SG.MASC. and NOM./ACC.SG.NTR. which are nearly always *thi*, *thit*. The alternation between *thesse* and *thessa* has not been considered in full detail, but forms in *a* are mostly found in FEM.PL. noun phrases. These two alternations need further attention in view of the proto-forms.
a) The manuscript (HRt-U, Apografa 22r) has <thiʃ>, where the ‘long s’ indicates that it is not the word’s end. The next word is <mannis>, a GEN.SG.MASC. form. Instead of thisses it could also be read *thisse.

b) In all instances, the word can also be interpreted as a common GEN.SG. form of the article.

c) thissem/-um attested in E3, WNI-U and SwS-U, three classical Old Frisian texts that do not belong to the most archaic stock of texts. All instances are found in non-attributive position, similar to the alternation between the attributive article tha and non-attributive tham for the DAT.SG.MASC./NTR. and DAT.PL.

d) PrJ-U (ca. 1400) attests to DAT.SG.FEM. thisser, as well as to ACC.SG.MASC. thissen, probably younger forms, built on the basis of the adjectival inflection. The Frisian paradigm shares traces both with Old English and Old Norse. The Old Frisian form this (OE þís) in the NOM.ACC.SG.NTR. is attested several times in multiple texts and should in my view not be considered a scribal error. The form was not included in the Tables 4 and 5. The feminine form thius (OE þēos) is only attested in mss. B and H.

Considering the reduction of word final *i and *u to Old Frisian e, the loss of word final PGmc. *z (ON r) in West Germanic and the consistent lack of um (em) in Old Frisian in attributive pronominal and adjectival forms, most of the Old Frisian paradigm forms match their Old Norse cognate forms. The ACC.SG.MASC. form thenne fits in with that pattern.