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Abstract

Rolf Bremmer (2007) concludes that the language of the Old Frisian Riustring manuscripts shows traces of copying from texts written in other Old Frisian dialects, notably from the Ems region. The strongest indication for his hypothesis comes from the masculine plural ending *-ar*, which is the rule in Ems Old Frisian but the exception in R1 and absent from other Riustring manuscripts. In this contribution, Bremmer's hypothesis is partly confirmed, but augmented with the reconstruction of an indigenous Riustring plural ending *-ar* in masculine *a*-stem nouns denoting an animate subject, which appear substantially more often in the nominative. Nouns with a higher frequency of occurrence in the accusative take the plural ending *-a*. This is taken to reflect a former Proto-Frisian situation, with the ending *-ar* in the nom. pl. of masculine *a*-stem nouns against *-a* in the acc. pl., similar to Old Norse. The earlier distribution had become lexicalised by the time of Riustring Old Frisian. Some of the attested instances, however, are better explained as remnants of a copying process from Ems Old Frisian.

Keywords

Old Frisian – morphology – text filiation –Riustring – *ar*-plural

1   Introduction

In his article "Language and Contents of the Old Frisian Manuscripts from Rüstringen", Rolf Bremmer (2007) carefully scrutinizes the language of the Old Frisian Riustring manuscripts (known as R1 and R2) and arrives at a number of intriguing conclusions. First of all, he concludes that the language in the

manuscripts is not as "'archaic' with respect to its phonological system", nor, "older than that contained in contemporary non-Riustring manuscripts—it only is different, that is all." (Bremmer 2007: 62). These views represent a valuable correction to opinions expressed by Buma and Boutkan (see Bremmer 2007: 33) about the archaic character of the language of R1, especially the view that it represents a much older linguistic stage than the attestation date of the manuscript, ca. 1300.[1] However, when we take 'archaic' not to mean 'old', but as "having the characteristics of the language of the past" (Merriam-Webster s.v. "archaic"), where 'archaic' in fact incorporates the notion of synchronicity, the term does not seem wholly inappropriate. In other words, the fact that many traces of the language of R1 are innovative, rather than archaic (Bremmer 2007: 36), does not contest the observation that some of the Riustring features continue an earlier stage of Frisian that is no longer attested in other, contemporaneous manuscripts. Chief among these archaisms would then be the preservation of three vowel qualities in unstressed syllables, instead of two, and a more limited amount of analogical levelling in the nominal paradigms (Adamczyk 2017). As another example of a synchronically archaic language, one may think of Modern Icelandic, which is old-fashioned in many respects, but innovative in terms of various phonological features. Similarly, the Swedish dialect of Älvdalen, which is still spoken to a limited degree, exhibits both archaic and innovative traces (Dahl 2005: 50–53).

The other point which Bremmer makes, is that the language of R1 and R2 exhibits various traces of mixing from other dialects and that, "[i]n the case of R1 and R2, it has been demonstrated that their text language is not as pure as has hitherto been assumed." (Bremmer 2007: 62). He mentions a wide range of deviant spellings, such as *aga*, for the more common Riustring form *haga* 'to owe', or the frequent lack of *h-* in the historical initial cluster *hr-*. In both cases, the dominant forms in the texts represent innovations in the language of R1 and R2. Bremmer concludes that the minority forms are "relics of a non-Riustring dialect, [and] testament to the complicated process that was involved in textual transmission" (Bremmer 2007: 56). Bremmer's conclusion is triggered by his observation that the exceptional—hence non-Riustring—forms cluster in specific texts, as he goes on to explain (Bremmer 2007: 56).

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1   "Door zijn ouderdom verschilt dit handschrift in linguistisch opzicht aanmerkelijk van de bronnen, die ons uit andere Oudfriese gebieden zijn overgeleverd" ['Because of its old age the manuscript differs linguistically from other sources that have come down to us from other Old Frisian areas'] (Buma 1961: 47).

> There is little need for arguing the presence of relicts [from non-Riustring examples] in texts that are generally accepted as 'pan-Frisian', such as the *Prologue*, the *Seventeen Statutes*, the *Twenty-four Landlaws* and the *General Register of Compensations* […] The presence of non-Riustring relicts now makes sure that at least the recensions that we have in R1 are not ultimately original to Rüstringen but, especially on account of the *-ar* plural, to the Ems Frisian region."

The crucial point of the latter statement is that the ending *-ar* is generally the dominant ending of the nominative accusative plural of masculine *a*-stems in Old East Frisian texts. Exceptional, however, are the Riustring texts in R1, where *-ar* is represented in only 22 out of 91 instances, with the ending *-a* being otherwise prevalent. The ending *-ar* is entirely absent in R2 from 1327, a point that will be referred to in the conclusion.

Bremmer's analysis of the language of the Riustring manuscripts, where intra-textual variation is interpreted as relicts from non-Riustring originals, builds on his "creed: I believe, with the Neogrammarians, that each rule concerning phonological and/or morphological changes should in principle be without exception." (Bremmer 2007: 40). As much as this 'creed' has brought us the achievements of historical linguistics and the unraveling of the history of Indo-European and other language families, it has proven to be untenable in its extreme form by more than a century of dialect-geographical and socio-linguistic research. We therefore also have to consider the possibility of language internal variation. Instead of meaningless and random variation, the distribution of variants in a language very often match phonological, morphological, semantic or pragmatic sub-'rules' or at least tendencies, which may be considered a more realistic extension of the rigid claim of the *Ausnahmslosigkeit der Lautgesetze*. In this article, I want to propose an interpretation for the origin of the Riustring *-ar*-plurals of masculine *a*-stem nouns supplementary to Bremmer's, which will still be perfectly in line with the style and methods of the Neogrammarians so much favoured by Bremmer (and me).

2 The Origin of *-ar* and *-a*

The origin of the *-ar*-ending in the nom.acc. pl. of Old Frisian masculine *a*-stem nouns is *the* conundrum of historical Old Frisian morphology. Extensive discussions are found in Philippa (1989), Meijering (1989), Boutkan (1995: 187–191) and some new facts are offered in Versloot (2014: 93–97). The various theories boil down to basically two approaches:

1. Old Frisian -*ar* is the regular continuation of a fairly idiosyncratic Proto-Germanic nom. pl. masc. *a*-stem ending *-*ōzes*;
2. Old Frisian -*ar* is an idiosyncratic continuation of the regular Proto-Germanic nom. pl. masc. *a*-stem ending *-*ōz*.

Crucial is that in both theories -*ar* is originally the ending of the nominative plural. In the second theory, -*a* would be the regular continuation of Proto-Germanic *-*ōz* (Meijering 1989: 25). The same ending -*a* is also the regular continuation of the original acc. pl. ending, Proto-Germanic *-*ans* (Boutkan 1995: 191–92).[2] In most Old Frisian dialects, including Old West Frisian (Versloot 2014: 93–97), the nom. pl. ending ousted the acc. pl. ending. Given the fact that Riustring Old Frisian has both -*ar* and -*a*, I hypothesise that Proto-Old Frisian had a nom.-acc. pl. contrast in the masculine *a*-stems as in Old Norse: nom. pl. -*ar*, acc. pl. -*a*. It is true that all Old West Germanic languages (Old English, Old Saxon, Old Dutch, Old Frisian, Old High German) lack a systematic contrast between nom. pl. and acc. pl. in the inflexion of nouns, in contrast with Old Norse and Gothic. However, the levelling of both endings towards one common ending was not a common Proto-West Germanic innovation, since there are relics of a former nom.-acc. pl. contrast in West-Germanic languages.[3] In particular, the nom.acc. pl. of Old English feminine *ō*-stems exhibits an alternation in the endings -*a* and -*e*: the former being the original nom. pl. ending, the latter the acc. pl. Thus, the distribution of -*e* in early West Saxon still echoes the original nom.-acc. pl. contrast (Campbell 1977: 234). Otherwise, the choice of either -*a* or -*e* as the common ending in the nom.acc. pl. differed largely according to dialect in Old English.

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2   Boutkan (1995: 190, 191) is somewhat ambiguous about the possibility that -*a* may represent the regular development of both the nom. pl. and the acc. pl. When discussing the nom. pl. -*ar*, he mentions "the by-form in -*a*", but on the next page he writes: "only one of the endings -*ar* and -*a* can regularly represent the old nom. pl.". Theoretically, there could be a dialectal difference between one form of Proto-Frisian with nom. pl. -*ar*, acc. pl. -*a* and another variety with -*a* in both cases.

3   It is doubtful whether there ever was a distinctive West Germanic branch, which only later split into various dialects, such as Proto-Old English and Proto-Old High German. It rather seems that various innovations spread throughout the Germanic linguistic area. Some of them included a region that we now identify as West Germanic, but other, equally old innovations, comprised, e.g., North Germanic and North Sea Germanic but excluded Old High German (see e.g. Nielsen 1985, 2000).

TABLE 1   *Plurals in* -ar *or* -a *in nom. pl. and acc. pl. in Riustring Old Frisian*

	Nom. pl.	Acc. pl.
-a	50	19
-ar	17	5
% *-ar*	25%	21%
	p-2T= 0.78	
	φ = 0.05	

Note: 'p-2T' stands for the probability in a two-tail Fisher's Exact Test. A probability of 0.05 or less is generally considered to mark a significant contrast; 'φ' expresses the skewness of the distribution, ranging from 0 for no bias to 1 for a categorical contrast.

The distribution of the endings in Table 1 makes clear that Riustring Old Frisian did not have any significant case bias in the application of the endings -*ar* and -*a*. This means that if the hypothesis of the origin of -*ar* < nom. pl. and -*a* < acc. pl. is correct, it was certainly no longer a synchronic morphological feature of Riustring Old Frisian.

3   The Textual and Lexical Distribution of the -*ar*-Plurals in R1

Bremmer's clinching argument in the identification of the -*ar* plurals in R1 not as Riustring but as Ems Frisian origin is the distribution of the ending over the various texts within the manuscript. He observes that the supposedly non-Riustring forms cluster in a selection of texts which are of pan-Frisian origin (see above) and are therefore likely to be copies of originals that were written outside the Riustring region. He considers the possibility that the frequent appearance of non-Riustring forms in these texts might correlate with their length, but he does not explore this line systematically (Bremmer 2007: 53). Consequently, *all* traces of deviating (minority) forms are taken as evidence of copying from non-Riustring sources (Bremmer 2007: 57), which ultimately makes the idea of relative proportions within one text (group) as an indication for the texts' different filiations unfalsifiable.

Therefore, I want to return to Bremmer's initial observation that especially the pan-Frisian texts of the *Prologue* (two versions), the *Seventeen Statutes*, the *Twenty-four Landlaws* and the *General Register of Compensations* (in two

TABLE 2   *Pan-Frisian texts and the appearance of* -ar

	I–V+XIV	Rest
-a	40	29
-ar	19	3
%-*ar*	32%	10%
	p-2T = 0.03	
	φ = 0.25	

fragments in the manuscript), with text numbers I, II, III, IV, V and XIV (Buma 1961: vii), show many deviant forms. In this article, I concentrate on the plural forms of masculine *a*-stem nouns in *-ar* and *-a* (Bremmer 2007: 44–46). The distribution of these inflections over the various text fragments is given in Table 2.

Table 2 shows the distribution of plurals in *-a* and *-ar* in the mentioned pan-Frisian texts compared to their appearance in the rest of the manuscript. The distribution is indeed significantly skewed. This implies that if the ending *-ar* is the result of copying, then the pan-Frisian texts show more frequent and stronger traces of non-Riustring originals than other texts, which may rather be autochthonous. A pair such as *neilar—nila* 'nails' with the ending *-ar* and the root vocalism *-ei-* in one of the two attestations—the latter feature definitely being not typical for Riustring Old Frisian (compare Wangerooge Frisian *niil*, Harlingerland *nihel*)—is a piece of individual evidence that neatly supports Bremmer's hypothesis. That means that I adhere to Bremmer's general claim that various forms in the Riustring texts, including some of the plural forms in *-ar*, may be the result of copying from documents written in other Old Frisian dialects.

However, there are reasons to entertain another additional explanation. Further analysis of the textual and lexical distribution of the two endings shows that an interpretation which considers the ending as a lexical feature of the *a*-stem nouns explains some anomalies in the lexical distribution of *-ar* forms that cannot be explained by the copying hypothesis. For this lexical bias in the distribution, a historical-semantic explanation can be offered.

If *-ar*-plurals are overrepresented in the pan-Frisian texts because they are supposedly relicts from non-Riustring originals, one can formulate the following hypothesis: lemmas that appear with *-ar*-plurals in the pan-Frisian texts (which are supposedly more prone to the appearance of copy relicts) should

be accompanied by more genuine Riustring forms in the non-pan-Frisian texts. This, however, is not the case, as can be seen in Table 3.

It turns out that lemmas with a plural in *-ar* are only incidentally accompanied by plurals in *-a* (such as *kininga* 4 times next to *kiningar* 12 times) in a very similar proportion in both groups of texts, i.e. in the pan-Frisian texts and the non-pan-Frisian texts. In other words, the ending *-ar* has a strong lexical bias, which is consistent throughout the manuscript. This lexical bias is further demonstrated in Table 4.

While the overall percentage of *-ar* endings (in tokens) is 24%, the lemmas for which *-ar* is actually attested show the ending in 76% of all their tokens. This lexical bias is clearly visible in the endings of the three most frequently attested nouns: *kining* 'king', *panning* 'penny' and *ēth* 'oath'. For these three words, the number of attestations is high enough to show relevant lemma-specific distributions. To avoid any bias as a result of text groups, Table 5 shows only tokens from the pan-Frisian texts. The 'text group' or 'copy relicts hypothesis' starts from the assumption that all three words in Table 5 had *-ar*-plurals in Ems Old Frisian but *-a*-plurals in genuine Riustring Old Frisian. But why would the word *kining* be so much more prone to copy relicts with *-ar* than

TABLE 3   *Plurals in* -ar *or* -a *for lemmas that show* (also) -ar

	I–V+XIV	Rest
-a	6	1
-ar	19	3
%-*ar*	76%	75%
	p-2T = 1	
	φ = 0.01	

TABLE 4   *Lexical bias of the ending* -ar (1)

	lemmas with also -ar (N = 10)	lemmas with only -a (N = 19)
-a	7	62
-ar	22	0
%-*ar*	76%	0%

TABLE 5   *Lexical bias of the ending* -ar *(2)*

I-V+XIV	kining	panning	ēth
-a	4	19	10
-ar	12	0	0
%-*ar*	75%	0%	0%

panning and *ēth*. This contrast poses a serious problem for the 'text group hypothesis'. Even when this hypothesis explains 19 out the 22 *-ar*-plurals (or 21 out of 22 when text XI is taken to be an Ems Old Frisian copy, see Bremmer 2007: 57), it cannot account for the fact that the alleged copy relicts appear with such a strong lexical bias.

To conclude, even when some impact of copying practices is taken into account—visible in a contrast between pan-Frisian texts (32% *-ar*) and regional/local texts (10% *-ar*)—there appears to be a much stronger contrasting factor which follows the lines of the individual lemmas, where lemmas that (also) show a plural in *-ar* do so in 76% of their tokens. This contrast cannot be ascribed to the different pools of texts as was shown in Table 5, which only contains examples from the pan-Frisian texts. In the next section, I investigate the possible source of this lexical contrast. Later on, I address the question whether there is a textual bias independent of a lemma specific preference for *-ar* or *-a*.

4   The Trigger for the Lexical Distribution of *-ar* and *-a*

In order to connect the two hypotheses 1) that *-ar* represents the former nom. pl. and *-a* the former acc. pl. ending and 2) that the synchronic distribution of *-ar* and *-a* in Riustring Old Frisian was a lexical feature, there must have been a trigger for the transition of case-specific to lemma-specific endings. To my mind, this trigger was frequency of use: nouns that were more often used in the nominative generalised the ending *-ar* from the nom. pl. into the acc. pl., while nouns that appear more often in the accusative levelled the ending *-a* from the acc. pl. into the nom. pl. The data from R1 do not, however, directly support this hypothesis: circa 75% of the tokens both of nouns that (also) take *-ar* in the plural and of nouns that have only plurals with *-a* are nom. pl. forms (76% and 73% respecitively). The expectation that words with a plural in *-a* would

appear more often in the accusative is not directly born out.[4] However, of the individual lemmas that appear in the nominative in less than 50% of their tokens, none has a plural in -*ar* (this count is based on both singular and plural tokens, and only on words attested at least twice in the manuscript: *brond, dī, hals, thiāf, wend*), which is in line with the expected association between accusative and plural in -*a*. For other nouns, the association between the nominative and plural in -*ar* do not hold: the nouns *ēth, fall, panning, prester, slēk* appear at least 7 times in the nom.acc. sg. or pl., and have a nominative proportion of over 50% but do *not* show -*ar* plurals. The nouns *ēth* and *panning* are the most numerous cases and, as noted earlier, appear in pan-Frisian texts. The words *ēth* and *panning* are somewhat suspicious in terms of their frequent appearance in the nominative; it might be an artefact of the text type of R1 as a set of judicial texts. In order to obtain a more realistic impression of the frequency profile of the word for 'oath', I checked the word *eið(u)r* in a corpus of Old Norse texts (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar). There, the acc. pl. is almost 20 times more numerous than the nom. pl. (55 against 3 attestations). Text type can also explain the low number of attestations of certain words, which may in its turn contribute to a distorted frequency profile. A case in point is the word 'finger', which appears twice in R1 as *fing(e)ra* in the nom. pl. only, but is attested in the nom. pl. in only 28% of the tokens in the much larger corpus of Old Norse. This implies that the frequency of case forms in R1 is not always a reliable reflection of the real use of the words, which makes these figures less suitable to test the hypothesis about the origin of the lexical distribution of -*ar* and -*a*.

There is, however, a feature of nouns that strongly correlates with their syntactic role, and hence their case: animacy. Human beings appear more often as agents of verbs and, therefore, nouns denoting animate entities appear more often in the nominative than inanimate entities. Animacy is not affected by the text type (as is token frequency and the number of attested case forms), so it can be taken as a proxy for dominant syntactic roles.

Table 6 shows that animacy of nouns is an excellent predictor of the plural ending type, with $\varphi = 0.53$. For the contrast based on text grouping, φ is only 0.25 (Table 2). To put it differently, 74 out of 91 tokens (= 81%) match the hypothesis that animacy, as a proxy for case preference, predicts the choice of a lemma for either of the two plural endings.[5] Additionally, I tested the 'case frequency' hypothesis by using the percentage of nominative forms of all at-

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4   Here and further on, the percentages are based on figures that only include nominative and
    accusative forms.

5   This figure cannot be compared to the 'text group hypothesis', because that hypothesis
    considers also -*a* plurals in pan-Frisian texts as correct, as they are supposed to represent

TABLE 6   *plurals in* -ar *or* -a *in animate and inanimate nouns*

	Animate	Inanimate
-a	11	58
-ar	16	6
%-ar	59%	9%
	p-2T < 0.001	
	φ = 0.53	

tested nom.acc.pl. forms of corresponding lemmas in Old Icelandic. This test shows that the percentage of nominative forms is a very strong predictor for the use of -*ar* plurals in R1.[6] The 'case frequency' hypothesis provides, more-over, a perfect explanation for the lexical bias of the plural endings in *kining* (75% -*ar*) as compared to *ēth* and *panning* (0% -*ar*), see Table 5. It leaves, how-ever, the instances of -*a* in *kininga* unexplained.

5   The Origin of the Riustring Old Frisian -*ar* Plurals

In the previous section, ample evidence was supplied for the hypothesis that the lexical distribution of -*ar*-plurals in R1 cannot be sufficiently explained by the 'text group' hypothesis. The 'case frequency' hypothesis, where the

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the genuine Riustring Old Frisian form. For the 'text group hypothesis' only the -*ar*-plurals *bamar, fiskar* and *beilar* are problematic (but see Bremmer 2007: 57).

6   The following Old Frisian/Old Icelandic correspondences were used; primarily etymologi-cal cognates or otherwise obvious semantic cognates: *kining/konungur, biscop/biskup, bur/ bóndi, lēt/þrœll, bām/tré, fisk/fiskur, ēth/eiður, panning/peningur, prester/prestur, dī/dagur, thiāf/þjófur, brond/eldur, wāch/veggur, finger/fingur, etheling/höfðingi.* Only those words were used with more than 4 attestations in the nom.acc. pl. in the Icelandic corpus. I applied a logistic regression analysis with the nom. pl. percentage in Old Icelandic as the independent variable and the attestation of an -*ar*-plural (optionally next to an -*a*-plural) as a binary de-pendent variable (where every lemma appears only once in the dataset). The probability of the regression model is 0.03 and the Odds Ratio is very high with 225. The latter means that the chance for a lemma that would be only attested with nom. pl. forms in the Old Icelandic corpus to appear with an -*ar*-plural in R1 is 225 times that of a lemma that would be only attested with acc. pl. forms in the Old Icelandic corpus. When using the tokens from R1 to quantify the dependent variable, p < 0.001 and the Odds Ratio is even 1851.

historical nom. pl. ending -*ar* was lexicalized for words that appear more often in the nom. pl. than in the acc. pl., turned out to be a strong predictor of the observed distribution of plurals in either -*ar* or -*a*, even though it leaves forms such as *kininga, fiskar* and *neilar* unexplained.

The problem with the ultimate form of Bremmer's hypothesis, is that forms in -*ar* are in themselves taken as proof of copying from other dialects, which makes their distribution over specific texts unfalsifiable. Only the variant of the hypothesis can be tested, whereby texts are identified as being more likely to be the result of copying on the basis of other arguments (as was done in Table 1). I tested a combination of both hypotheses in a multiple logistic regression model, using animacy to substantiate the 'case frequency' hypothesis and identifying text numbers I–V, XIV and additionally also XI (Bremmer 2007: 57) as potentially prone to traces of copying from other dialects. Interestingly, both hypotheses contribute significantly to the observed distribution.[7]

Therefore, I assume that both aspects played a role in the shaping of the R1 text. I conclude that there was a lexical distribution of plurals in -*ar* or -*a*. The historical choice for either of the two depended on the semantically defined frequency of occurrence of either the nom. or the acc. pl. Words that tended to appear more often in the nom. pl. generalized the historical nom. pl.-ending -*ar*, while words that were more common in the acc. pl. adopted the historical acc. pl.-ending -*a* as the common plural form. This frequency-induced distribution can easily be associated with the semantic feature of human animate subjects. The ending -*a*, being the most common plural ending in the *a*-stems in terms of type frequency, and moreover the normal ending in masculine *u*-stems and *n*-stems, functioned as a kind of 'default' ending and could therefore also intrude into nouns that were most likely to take a plural in -*ar*, which is demonstrated by the four instances of *kininga* or the single form *thiaua*. In plural forms such as *prestera* 'priests' and *rumera* 'Romans', the ending -*a* may also have been favoured on phonological grounds, in order to avoid a double -r-: *presterar.[8] Forms such as *bāmar* and *fiskar* may be the result of semantic association with the words with -*ar*-plurals as being non-human animate subjects, but here the copying hypothesis comes into play as an alternative.[9]

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7   The statistical test results are presented in the appendix.

8   Forms such as *riuchterar* 'judges' or *fingerar* 'fingers' do appear in texts from the Ems region.

9   The 19th-century dialect of Wangerooge exhibits plurals in -*er* in various words. First of all, there are historical *s*-stems (e.g. *kalwer*, 'calves', *laumer* 'lambs') and other neuter nouns that developed -*er* plurals on the basis of the *s*-stem pattern on the analogy of High and Low German varieties (e.g. *bauker* 'books', High German *Bücher*). The plurals *kiier* 'cows' and *schaiper* 'sheep' may be the result of semantic association with historical *s*-stem nouns; the

The earlier mentioned pair of *nila—neilar* 'nails', a clearly inanimate subject, is another such example where the copying hypothesis offers a likely explanation, because the ending -*ar* goes along with the non-Riustring root vowel *ei*.

The competition of -*ar* and -*a* in the masculine also affected the neuter *s*-stems, which also ended in -*ar* in Old Frisian. Where *kiningar* could also become *kininga*, the neuter pl. **clāthar* could turn into *clātha* (R1), with replacement of -*ar* with -*a*, or alternatively the form *clāthera* (R2) is attested, with addition of an extra -*a*. R1 also attests the three acc. pl. forms *kindar ~ kinda ~ kindera*. Exactly the same competition between -*ar* and an alternative ending in both masculine *a*-stems and neuter stems can be observed in West Frisian; there the competing ending was -*an* (Versloot 2014: 102–105). The alternations show that the ending -*a* was on its way to becoming a default plural ending in Riustring Frisian. As a result of the reshuffling of endings in the masculine *a*-stems and neuter *s*-stems, the ending -*a* became a universal plural ending for most declensional classes: masculine *a*-stems, *i*-stems, *u*-stems, *n*-stems, feminine *ō*-stems, *i*-stems, *u*-stems, *n*-stems. In other Old Frisian dialects, including Old West Frisian, the ending -*ar* also appears in other declensional classes, such as the masculine *i*-stems and *u*-stems. In the Riustring texts, there is no evidence for it, which fits the observation that -*ar* was not even the dominant plural ending in the masculine *a*-stems, where it originates from.

The copying hypothesis is more likely when the plural ending -*ar* was already present in Riustring Old Frisian. On the basis of the 15th-century West Frisian charters, I have concluded that endings that (also) exist in the language of the copyist as secondary or archaic forms are more likely to be retained during copying than endings that are entirely alien to the copyist (Versloot 2008: 41–43). Given the thorough reworking of the texts into a version that reflects the language of the Riustring region pretty well, it seems less likely that copyists would include an ending -*ar* if it were completely unknown to them. Because the copyists had in their language masculine nouns with the plural ending -*ar*,

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masculine *hingster* 'horses' as well, but could also be an instance of an original *a*-stem with Old Frisian -*ar*. The nouns denoting human beings (*beener* 'children', *fauner* 'girls', *fenter* 'boys', *knechter* 'servants', *sjeeler* 'men', *wüüver* 'wives') may be the result of the semantic grouping as observed in the Old Frisian Riustring dialect, extended also to neuter and feminine nouns; but notice *beener*—German *Kinder*, *wüüver*—High German *Weiber*. This short listing leaves a lot of lemmas with -*er* in the Wangerooge dialect unexplained and further investigation and comparison with neighbouring Low German dialects is necessary (compare Philippa 1989: 14). Apart from these forms, the most dominant ending in Wangerooge Frisian—also in the masculine—is the Ø-ending, which evolved from earlier -*e* < -*a* through apocope in the 18th century (compare *pipe, pudde, refe/rehwe, rigge, titte* in Seetzen's wordlist from the late 18th century against *piip, pud, raiv, riɢ, tit*, 'pipe, toad, turnip, back, tit' (Versloot 1995).

they could more easily forget to replace it with their own form, possibly triggered by semantic associations as mentioned for *bāmar* and *fiskar*. The form *neilar*, being an inanimate subject and with a root vowel that is unlikely to be originally Riustring Old Frisian, as testified by the form *nīla* in the same text, is the most convincing example for the hypothesis that ascribes at least some of the *-ar*-plurals in R1 to copying from Ems Frisian originals.

6 Conclusion

Closer scrutiny of the alternation between the endings *-ar* and *-a* in the masculine *a*-stem nouns in the Old Frisian R1 manuscript, including a statistical evaluation, has revealed that the distribution of the ending can be most comprehensively explained by assuming a lexical bias of the endings. Nouns that through their semantics appear more often in the nominative (plural)—very often animate subjects—have generalised the historical nom. pl. ending *-ar* to the acc. pl., while words that are more likely to appear in the accusative (plural) have the ending *-a* in both nom.acc. pl.

This distribution echoes an earlier stage of Proto-Old Frisian, when masculine *a*-stems had separate endings in the nom. pl. and the acc. pl., as in Old Norse. Together with the evidence from Old English *ō*-stems (and perhaps a remnant in the Old English *u*-stems as well, see Hogg/Fulk 2011: 48), this is another indication that (the completion in) the merger of nom. and acc. pl. endings in West Germanic took place in the individual Old Germanic languages and was not a common, and thus earlier, West Germanic development.

In the competition between the endings *-ar* and *-a* in thirteenth-century Riustring Old Frisian, the *-a* was on its way to becoming the dominant ending, proven by the fact that it also appears in words that have predominantly *-ar* (or could be expected to do so), such as *kininga* and *thiāva*. The competition also affected the neuter *s*-stems, as seen in the triplet *kindar* (original) against *kinda ~ kindera* (innovative). This trend continued in later time: the somewhat younger manuscript R2 contains no plurals in *-ar*, not even in words that denote an animate subject, such as *ethelinga* 'noble men' or *sitha* 'colleague judges'.

The existence of the ending *-ar* in some masculine nouns in the Riustring dialect was a prerequisite for the confusion that could arise when texts from other Frisian dialects were copied, not least texts emanating from the Ems region where *-ar* was the common plural ending in most masculine nouns. The outcome is a distribution that mainly reflects the dialect internal distribution of *-ar* plurals in the Riustring Old Frisian dialect, but various deviations from

the expected pattern can be interpreted as relicts from other Old Frisian dialects through the process of copying.

Rolf Bremmer notes in his 2007 article that his outcomes modify the conclusions reached by his esteemed predecessor Buma, but he acknowledges that these could only be achieved on the basis of Buma's outstanding work. By a similar token, the conclusions of this study should be perceived in the same way but now in relation to Bremmer's work.

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Appendix: Results of the Statistical Analysis

There are 91 cases in total. Of these, 69 cases have *-a*; 22 cases have *-ar*.

TABLE A1   *Overall model fit*

Variable	Average	SD
1. Text group	0.6813	0.4660
2. Animacy	0.2967	0.4568

$\chi^2 = 35.4786$; df = 2; p < 0.0001

TABLE A2   *Coefficients, standard errors, odds ratios, and 95% confidence limits*

Variable	Coeff.	StdErr	p	OddsRatio	Low	High
1. Text group	2.86	1.12	0.011	17.46	1.93	158.17
2. Animacy	2.77	0.64	<0.001	16.01	4.56	56.19

Calculations were carried out using a logistic regression analysis: http://statpages.org/logistic.html (last access 23 December, 2015).

In this test, both factors contribute to an almost equal extent. However, the assignment to the group of texts prone to relicts from other sources was based on reasoning in hindsight. When using the original defined set of pan-Frisian texts, I–V, XIV, *text group* is only marginally significant and the odds ratios are: text group: 4, animacy: 14.