
An Icelandic Proverb ("Thin End of the Wedge")

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found a modern form, probably contains the same word. The point of interest is that *gefyrhþe*, cf. O.E. *furh* 'fir tree,' O.H.G. *foraha*, is clearly from an earlier **furhþō*-, Idg. **prk^w-ita*, -*ito*. This suffix may certainly be related to the Latin -*etum* Idg. *-*ēitom* in *querc-etum*, *pīn-etum*, *pom-etum*, *arbor-etum*, etc., which implies a 'collection' of trees. In fact *quercētum* from **perk^w-ēitom* is almost precisely cognate with O.E. *gefyrhþe*, the only difference being that of the Ablaut of the first syllable. It would be interesting if there were other O.E. tree names with this suffix, though I know of none. Possibly some may exist in Place Names still to be unearthed.

This identity of the Latin and O.E. suffixes has not, so far as I know, been pointed out before.

The above explanation seems to me more convincing than that which identifies *frið* in *deorfrið* (Laud Chron. Ann. 1086, Plummer's Ed. p. 221) with the word meaning 'peace.' It is clear that the passage 'he sætte mycel deor frið' refers to William's afforestation schemes, possibly to the planting of the New Forest. It seems ridiculous to take the word as meaning a 'place where deer are at peace'! Yet that is what Bosworth-Toller and Plummer practically do. Skeat in the *Concise Etym. Dictionary* appears to identify Mod. *frith* with O.E. *frið* 'peace,' but assumes a different origin for M.E. *frith* 'wooded country.' The latter he rightly identifies with *gefyrhðe* in Birch, Ch. III, 120. This is our word, and the form agrees entirely with the views expressed above. Whether the German *einfriedigen* is cognate with O.E. *gefyrhðe* etc. is another matter. Doubtless the belief that this was derived from *friede* in the sense of 'peace' helped to build the mare's nest about the O.E. word.

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AN ICELANDIC PROVERB ('THIN END OF THE WEDGE').

In *Hrafn's Saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*, printed in *Biskupa Sögur*, I, pp. 639—676, and in the Oxford *Sturlunga Saga*, II, pp. 277—311, the two MSS. seem to give two misreadings of a proverb, which ought to be restored: (A) en fyrir því at 'Lítið er nef var en breiðar fjaðrar' (so in the Oxford edition, p. 282). (B) en fyrir því at lítið er nef vort en breiðar fjaðrar. B (*vort*) is a foolish attempt to correct A; A (*var*), which is nonsense, is nearer the original. Read: Lítið er nef örvar en breiðar fjaðrar; 'little is the arrow's neb and broad the feathers.'

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