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Cuthberti: Middle English 'lomes' and Middle Low
German/Old Frisian 'eires'**

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Citation

Bremmer Jr., R. H. (1990). Two Early Vernacular Names for the Aves Beati Cuthberti: Middle English 'lomes' and Middle Low German/Old Frisian 'eires'. *English Studies*, 71(6), 486-495.
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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



TWO EARLY VERNACULAR NAMES FOR THE *AVES BEATI CUTHBERTI*:

Middle English *lomes* and Middle Low German/Old Frisian *eires*

In his life of St Cuthbert, Bede relates more than one encounter between the saint and animals.¹ In all cases these encounters serve to make manifest Cuthbert's saintly virtues.² Sometimes he unmasked the scheming Devil behind the actions of animals, as when he sent away the birds that were plundering his ripening barley, which he grew near his hermitage on the Farne (Ch. 19). On another occasion he scolded some ravens that had defied his request to stop pulling straw from the roof of the visitors' house. A few days later one of the ravens returned and through its behaviour made it quite clear to St Cuthbert that it repented of its impertinence. The holy man then allowed the ravens to return. To show him their appreciation the birds presented him with a special gift: a lump of pig's lard, with which visitors could grease their shoes (Ch. 20). In his role of bishop, Cuthbert was once on a preaching tour with a boy servant. Long before they had reached their destination, he asked the boy what they would eat. The boy had been wondering about the same thing, having noticed that they had not brought along any food. Cuthbert, however, put his trust in the Lord and in an eagle flying high above in the sky. As it happened, the latter dropped a big fish right in front of the boy's feet, and he took it straight away to St Cuthbert. 'What about the servant?' asked the bishop, with reference to the bird. 'Quick, bring the eagle half of the fish!' (Ch. 12). For Cuthbert the commandment of neighbourly love did not exclude animals. He himself lived up to this commandment, as when, on another trip without food, he gave his horse half of a loaf of bread, which had miraculously been imparted to him (Ch. 5).

Cuthbert's reputation as a friend of animals lived on long after his holy death. A significant anecdote in this respect is related about 1175 by Reginald of Coldingham, prior of Durham, in his *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus*, a collection of miracles recently performed through St Cuthbert.³

¹ Bertram Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives of St Cuthbert* (Cambridge, 1940); D.H. Farmer and J.F. Webb, ed. and transl., *The Age of Bede* (Harmondsworth, 1983).

² Cf. C.G. Loomis, *White Magic. An Introduction to the Folklore of Christian Legend* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), ch. 4, esp. pp. 66-9. Intended for a wider reading public is a collection of stories culled from saints' lives by Helen Waddell, transl., *Beasts and Saints* (London, 1934).

³ James Raine, ed., *Reginaldi Monachi Dunelmensis Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus quae Novellis Patratae sunt Temporibus*, Surtees Society 1 (London, 1835). Reginald's book has survived in two manuscripts. The oldest, dating from the second half of the 12th century and probably his autograph, is Durham Cathedral, MS Hunter 101, described in R.A.B. Mynors, *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1939), item 123. This manuscript served for the printed edition. The other manuscript, likewise written at Durham but dating from the second half of the 14th century, is Bodley MS Fairfax 6.

For example: among its inhabitants Farne Island counts a species of bird which has become very tame. So tame are these birds, that they can be stroked, taken on one's lap or even under one's vestment near one's bosom. They even will make their nests under one's bed. With croaking hisses they beat their wings to show their subservience to the monks. However, tame as they are, they still hasten to the sea to swim, because they naturally live on fish. It was St Cuthbert himself who had promised them immunity in this sanctuary (in both senses of the word!), saying that no one would escape unharmed who would dare to kill them.

Not long ago, Reginald continues, Æilric was in charge of the hermitage there. One day he had to leave the island on urgent business, leaving his servant, Leving, behind. With nobody else around, Leving finally saw an opportunity to fulfil one of his deepest wishes and have a taste of one of these birds. In order to conceal his trespass he scattered the feathers and bones all along the waterside. After much time has passed, Æilric returns and goes to the chapel first thing in the morning. To his great astonishment he finds a ball of feathers and bones there. Truth will out, and, when confronted with the evidence, Leving confesses his deed, and recognizes the greatness of the Saint who after fifteen days could collect the remains of the bird the servant had eaten.

So far, Reginald has not mentioned the birds by name. He merely calls them *aves Beati Cuthberti* 'St Cuthbert's birds'. But, having come to the end of this anecdote he says:

Aves illae Beati Cuthberti specialiter nominantur; ab Anglis vero lomex vocantur; ab Saxonibus autem et qui Frisiam incolunt eires dicuntur.

[These birds of St Cuthbert have a special name. By the English they are called *lomex*; by the Saxons, however, and those that live in Frisia they are called *eires*].

It is remarkable that Reginald takes care to specify the bird's name, not only in English, but also in the language of two continental peoples. Vernacular words in his *Libellus* are few and far between, so he must have had some purpose in mentioning two words from different languages. Was he merely showing off his knowledge for the benefit of his essentially Durham reading public? Or was he trying to make sure that no doubt should remain as to the identification of the bird?

Surprisingly, the *Middle English Dictionary* does not record a *lome* with reference to seabirds. Yet it seems safe to link this word to ModE *loom*. According to the *OED* (s.v. *loom*, sb. 2) the latter word is a fairly recent Scandinavian loan. Its first attested usage, dating from 1678, explicitly indicates this: '[The bird] is common among the Norwegians and Islanders who in their own Language call it *Lumme*'.⁴ The name is given in Northern seas to species of the guillemot and

see F. Madan, H.H.E. Craster and N. Denholm-Young, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, Vol. 2, ii (Oxford, 1937), nr. 3886. On Reginald, see e.g. Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 530 to c. 1307* (London, 1974), p. 308.

⁴ John Ray, *The Ornithology of Francis Willughby* (London, 1678), p. 343. In the margin Ray added: 'I suppose our English name *loom* is borrowed of them'.

the diver, especially the red-throated diver. A variant form of this word is *loon*, which likewise designates a sub-species of the divers, to wit the great northern diver. In this form and sense the word has been recorded from 1634 onwards. Moreover, *loon* is also a name used for both the great crested grebe and the little grebe or dabchick (*OED* s.v. *loon*²). This latter sense is first recorded, as was *loom*, in Ray's ornithological handbook of 1678.⁵ W. B. Lockwood, in his attractive etymological dictionary of bird names,⁶ adds that the name is chiefly northern and East Anglian. This information with respect to the geographical distribution of the name is an indication that the word was brought to England with the Scandinavian settlers as *lómur*. Its first attestation can be found in Reginald's report, quoted above, and thus antedates the *OED* information by as much as five centuries! ModE *loom* is not a direct descendant, however, of early ME *lōme*, but was reintroduced in the seventeenth century.⁷

The second vernacular name which Reginald mentions presents further difficulties. Saxons and Frisians, on his evidence, would call these birds *eires*. In itself it is quite curious that Reginald should know how these birds were called on the other side of the North Sea. This information might have been given him by sailors. Elsewhere he tells how English sailors were about to founder on the rocks (!) of the Frisian shore, where a crowd of raving Frisians was waiting for the plunder. By means of the miraculous intercession of St Cuthbert the sailors were rescued, and so the story reached Reginald.⁸ The problem is that neither the Old Frisian dictionaries, nor the Old Saxon and Middle Low German ones, enter an *eire*, or any like form. James Raine, the editor of the *Libellus*, was of the opinion that the birds in question were eider-ducks.⁹ His ornithological

⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 339.

⁶ *The Oxford Book of British Bird Names* (Oxford, 1984), p. 97. Sir William Craigie and Jack Aitken, *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* do not record *loom* 'diver'. William Grant and David D. Murison, *The Scottish National Dictionary*, s.v. *loom* (2) give 'red-throated diver or raingoose, *Colymbus stellatus*', or 'great northern diver, *Colymbus immer*'; also 'common guillemot, *Uria aalge*'. First attestation 1862.

⁷ Similarly, the now obsolete Dutch *lom(me)*, according to the *Woordenboek der Nederlands(ch)e Taal*, was borrowed in the seventeenth century. Its first occurrence can be found in the journals of the arctic explorer, Jan May: 'Hier in't landt sijn veel voogels, die men *lommen* noemt', see S. Muller Fzn, *De Reis van Jan Cornelisz. May naar de IJszee en de Amerikaansche Kust 1611-1612* ('s-Gravenhage, 1909), p. 72. German likewise borrowed the word, see e.g. Helmut Carl, *Die deutschen Pflanzen- und Tiernamen. Deutung und sprachliche Ordnung* (Heidelberg, 1957), p. 214. I have not been able to trace the first attestation, but cf. Ulrich Tolksdorf, *Preussisches Wörterbuch* (Neumünster, 1987), s.v. *Lumme* f. Meeresvogel 'Gryllteiste (Cephus grylle)' (= black guillemot), recorded in 1846.

⁸ For a discussion of this anecdote, see my 'Friesland and its Inhabitants in Middle English Literature' in: Nils Århammar et al., eds., *Miscellanea Frisica. A New Collection of Frisian Studies* (Assen, 1984), pp. 357-70, at p. 360. Pilgrims also could have been his informants, *ibid.*, p. 367, note 16. In his *Life of St Cuthbert* (Ch. 44), Bede mentions the stay at Lindisfarne of one of the clergy of St Willibrord's, the bishop of the Frisians. A Flemish female pilgrim to Farne Island is mentioned by Geoffrey of Coldingham, *Vita S. Bartholomaei*, § 16, in: Th. Arnold, ed., *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, vol. I. Rolls Series 26 (London, 1882).

⁹ See his summary of the contents to ch. XXVII which is said to contain 'A minute description of the Eider duck'. Likewise in the glossary on p. 332, he remarks: 'Eires, (...) the name given by the Saxons and Frieslanders to the Eider ducks.' And s.v. *lomes*, it says 'the name given by the English to the Eider ducks'.

identification is in all probability correct. Eider-ducks are known to have made their home on Farne Island for centuries,¹⁰ and this was in fact the only eider colony in England until late in the nineteenth century.¹¹ Its Northumbrian name 'Cuthbert duck' is reported by John Ray in 1674.¹² and is an indication of the early link between the saint and the seabird.

According to the *OED*, *eider* in its present spelling has probably been adapted from Swedish, after 1780. Ultimately, the word is an adaptation of Icelandic *æðar*, the genitival form of *æðr*,¹³ as it occurred in such compounds as *æðarfugl* 'eider-bird' and *æðardún* 'eider-down'. Lockwood adds to this that the spelling <eider> was adopted from the Dane Ole Worm's description of the bird by the English ornithologist John Ray in 1678.¹⁴ Are we justified in taking Reginald's *eires* to be some (mutilated?) form of *eiders*? Lockwood seems to do so when he notes that Reginald 'refers to Eiders as being called, *in addition to their ordinary name* (italics mine), "*aves... Beati Cuthberti*".¹⁵ However, he does not give Reginald's form in his dictionary under *eider*, nor does he give *lome* under *loon* for that matter, so that it is not clear what he means by their 'ordinary' name. It should be borne in mind that Reginald does not say that the English call the bird *eires*, but that the Frisians and Saxons do. It is not likely that Middle English would have known a form like **eir(e)*, deriving from ON *æðr*. In such a case we might have expected a form like **ether*, or **eder*. This, in any event, is what we find in the Middle Scots form as it appears in a description of the Hebrides in 1549. Of the island Gighay we read that it is:¹⁶

6 myle lang, anc myle half mile breid with a Paroche-Kirk, gude fertile mane land, abundante of edderis in it.

The transition of Olcel *a / æ: / to / aI /* did not occur before the seventeenth century.¹⁷ Therefore we can see the variant form *edder* which the *OED* gives.

¹⁰ Geoffrey of Coldingham mentions the conspicuous presence of eider-ducks, without giving their name, in his *Vita S. Bartholomaei*, § 24. For a (partial) translation, see Waddell, *Beasts and Saints*, pp. 93-5.

¹¹ See J.H. Taverner, 'The Spread of the Eider in Great Britain', *British Birds* 52 (1959), 245-58, at 246. J.T.R. Sharrock, *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland* (British Trust for Ornithology/Irish Wildbird Conservancy, 1976), pp. 86-7. In Scotland the eider's presence is attested on the northern and western isles from the middle of the 16th century onwards. The first mainland report comes from East Lothian in 1807, see E.V. Baxter and L.J. Rintoul, *The Birds of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1953), p. 426. It is not yet attested for Roman Britain, see A.J. Parker, 'The Birds of Roman Britain', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 7 (1988), 197-226.

¹² Lockwood, *British Bird Names*, s.v. *Cuthbert Duck*.

¹³ Elias Wessén, *Isländsk Grammatik*, 2nd edn. (Stockholm, 1961), § 95.

¹⁴ Lockwood, *British Bird Names*, s.v. *eider*.

¹⁵ *British Bird Names*, p. 51, s.v. *Cuthbert Duck*.

¹⁶ R.W. Munro, ed., *Monro's Western Isles of Scotland and Genealogies of the Clans 1549* (Edinburgh and London, 1961), p. 49. The *DOST*, quoting from another manuscript, lists this word erroneously under its homonym *eddir* 'adder', but it is clear that here we are dealing with the bird. I am indebted to Dr Margaret Mackay of the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh, for this reference.

¹⁷ R. Cleasby and G. Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 2nd edn. with a supplement by Sir William A. Craigie (Oxford, 1957), s.v. *æ*.

and which also lives on in Scots, as the direct descendant of the Old Norse or, possibly, early Faroese form.

In how far is Reginald's information correct, that *eires* is the Frisian and Saxon word for the birds of the Blessed Cuthbert? If we are right in assuming that this bird is indeed the eider-duck, then he is in all probability wrong. It is very unlikely that eider-ducks would be found on the Frisian and Low German coast by the middle of the twelfth century. The southern expansion of the bird's breeding grounds dates from the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1800 it was found breeding for the first time on the North Frisian Island of Sylt, lying off the coast near the present German-Danish border. Its first attested breeding off the Frisian coast of The Netherlands is on the islands of Vlieland and Terschelling in 1906.¹⁸ As with English, in (High) German the word *Eider* was introduced in the eighteenth century (1750), preceded by *Eiderdaune* 'eider-down' by some thirty years (1717). In fact, the Scandinavian word spread with the trade in down.¹⁹ In other words, whatever birds were called *eires* in Frisian and Low German, they cannot have been eider-ducks.²⁰

What kind of birds are they then? If we should wish to consider Reginald's *eires* to be a genuine word — and I think we should — I would propose taking it as some (plural) form of Middle Dutch (*h*)*eiger*, 'heron'. As the historian and encyclopaedist Jacob van Maerlant wrote towards the end of the thirteenth century:²¹

Ardia in onse Latijn
mach in Dutsch een 'eygher' sijn
[*Ardia* in our Latin can be 'eygher' in the vernacular.]

MDu *heiger* derives, with dissimilation, from WGmc **hraigron*, cf. OE *hrūgra*. Dissimilation to **haigr-* is early, and attested in the Finnish loan *haikara* 'stork'

¹⁸ G.J. Oordt and Jan Verwey, *Voorkomen en Trek der in Nederland in het wild waargenomen vogelsoorten* (Leiden, 1925), p. 19, nr. 61. R.M. Teixeira, *Atlas van de Nederlandse broedvogels* (Vereniging tot Behoud van Natuurmonumenten, 1979), p. 83. The eider-duck is not yet considered a Dutch bird in J.A. Bennet and G. Van Olivier, 'Naamlijst van Nederlandsche viervoetige Dieren, Vogelen en Amphibien', *Natuurkundige Verhandelingen van de Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen te Haarlem*, vol. XI (Haarlem, 1822), 76-440.

¹⁹ See F. Kluge and W. Mitzka, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 20th ed. (Berlin, 1967), s.v. *Eider*. The oldest attested form I have found for Dutch is in the compound *eiderdunen* 'eider-down', in: Egbert Buys, *Nieuw en Volkomen Woordenboek van Konsten en Wetenschappen*, vol. III (Amsterdam, 1771), pp. 514-5. The oldest attested form in the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, s.v. *eider* is 1826. Jan de Vries, *Nederlands etymologisch woordenboek* (Leiden, 1971), s.v. *eider*, rightly remarks that the word has been in use since the 18th century, but he does not give evidence for this claim. The word was likewise adopted by the French in the 18th Century; see Ernst Gamillscheg, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der französischen Sprache*, 2nd edn. (Heidelberg, 1969), s.v. *eider*.

²⁰ The manuscript form *eires* is fairly certain, as it is also recorded in the other *Libellus* text, viz. in Bodley MS Fairfax 6, f. 62b, col. 2, (1/3d down). My thanks are due to Patrick Stiles for having checked this for me.

²¹ *Der Naturen Blierne*, in: M. Gysseling, ed., *Corpus van Middeel-nederlandse Teksten. Literaire Teksten* (s-Gravenhage, 1980-87), vol. II, 2, lines 4985-6.

(< Proto-ON **haigra*-),²² Old High German *heigaro*, OS *hēg(e)ro*, and OFrench (*h*)*ai(g)ron* (itself a Germanic loan), whence ME *heiroun*. The undissimilated form is present in OHG *reigaro*, MDu *reiger*. MLG *rēger* and, beside OE *hrāgra*, in early (12th c.) ME *rahere* (not recorded in *MED*).²³

For *eires* we must first assume loss of initial /h/. Because this is a not uncommon feature for the dialects spoken on either side of the North Sea, the absence of *h*- need not present any problem.²⁴ Secondly, we must explain the loss, or rather palatalization, of intervocalic /ɣ/. With respect to the Low Countries, this is typically a coastal phenomenon. For Middle Dutch, it applies particularly to the sequence *-*egi*-, as in *seil* 'sail' (cf. ModHG *Segel*), *brein* 'brain' (cf. ModLG *bregen*), *reil* 'rail' (< L *regula*). But the sequence *-*aig*- is also affected. cf. *steil* 'steep' (< **stēgel* < WGmc **staigila*-, cf. OE *stāgel*).²⁵ For Old Frisian, the picture is slightly different. Palatalization of intervocalic /ɣ/ is fairly common between front-vowels.²⁶ Since i-mutation in Frisian caused all back-vowels to become *e* or *ē*,²⁷ a situation arose which created abundant opportunities for palatalization. For example, *beia* 'bend' (cf. OE *bīegan*, WGmc **baugjan*-), *hei* 'mind' (cf. OE *hyge*, WGmc **hugi*), *slein/slain* 'slain, pp.' (cf. OE *slegēn*, WGmc **gaslagin*-),²⁸ and the doublet *ēgen*, *ein* 'own, adj.' (cf. OE *āgen*, *āgen*, WGmc **aigan*, **aigin*). Old Saxon palatalization of /ɣ/ is restricted mainly to *-*egi*- and *-*agi*-, and is attested particularly in personal names, e.g. *Reinhard* (cf. OE *rēgn*- 'great' and *Reginald* < WGmc **ragin*-), but also *sleibrawa* 'eyelid' (< **slagi*-).²⁹ This tendency became more common in Middle Low

²² Tette Hofstra, *Ostseefinnisch und Germanisch. Frühe Lehnbeziehungen im nördlichen Ostseeraum in Lichte der Forschung seit 1961* (= diss. Groningen) (Groningen, 1985), pp. 71, 137-8, 324.

²³ See H. Suolahti, *Die deutschen Vogelnamen* (Strassburg, 1909), pp. 377-9; Kluge-Mitzka, s.v. *Reiher*; Jan de Vries, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1962), s.v. *begri*; Jan de Vries, *Nederlands etymologisch woordenboek* (Leiden, 1971), s.v. *reiger*; C.T. Onions, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford, 1966), s.v. *heron*. The early Middle English form can be found as a nickname in *Gesta Herwardi Incliti Exulis et Militis*, in: Thomas D. Hardy and Charles T. Martin, eds., *Lestoire des Engles solum la Translacion Maistre Geffrei Gaimar*, I, Rolls Series 91 (London, 1888), pp. 339-404, at p. 372: 'Et istius socius fuit quidam Wlricus *Rahere*, id est "Ardea"'; cf. M. Swanton (transl.), *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*. Garland Library of Medieval Literature. Series B, vol. 10 (New York & London, 1984), p. 67. Another, 11th c., form is OE *rahgre*, found in BL Harley 107, see J. Zupitza, 'Altenglische Glossen [III]', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 33 (1889), 240/30.

²⁴ For Middle English, see R. Jordan, *Handbook of Middle English Grammar: Phonology*, transl. and rev. by E.J. Crook (The Hague & Paris, 1974), § 195; for (Middle) Dutch, A. van Loey, *Schönfeld's Historische Grammatika van het Nederlands*, 8th edn. (Zutphen, 1970), § 81 and p. 284; for Old Saxon, J.H. Gallée, *Altsächsische Grammatik*, 2nd edn. (Halle & Leiden, 1910), § 258; for Old Frisian, W.H. van Helten, *Altofriesische Grammatik* (Leeuwarden, 1890), § 145a.

²⁵ See Van Loey, *Schönfeld's Historische Grammatika*, § 64.

²⁶ See W.L. van Helten, *Altofriesische Grammatik* (Leeuwarden, 1890), § 143; W. Steller, *Abriss der altfriesischen Grammatik* (Halle (Saale), 1928), § 44, Anm. 2 and, recently, Hans F. Nielsen, 'Old Frisian and the Old English Dialects', *Us Wurk* 30 (1981), 49-66, at 57-8.

²⁷ On this phenomenon, which is unique for the Old Germanic dialects, see most recently F. van der Rhee, 'De i-umlaut in het Oudfries', *Taal en Tongval* 25 (1973), 127-30 and 'Opnieuw: de i-umlaut in het Oudfries', *Taal en Tongval* 31 (1979), 62-3.

²⁸ See also A. Campbell, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford, 1961), § 736.m.

²⁹ See Gallée, *Altsächsische Grammatik*, §§ 62, 94, 251.3.

German from the thirteenth century onwards. Hence we find doublets like *steiger/steier* 'stair, ladder' (cf. OE *stæger*; < **stāigri-*). ModHG *Reiher* 'heron', from OHG *reigar*, shows palatalization under Low German influence.³⁰ Indeed, there are possibly Old Saxon forms of *heg(e)ro*, *heigro* 'heron' which show palatalization, namely *heiro*, in the glosses to Trier, Seminar-Bibliothek, Hs. R.III.13 (xi/xii s.) and Paris, BN Lat 9344 (xi s.).³¹ According to the Middle Low German dictionaries, the reflex of OSax *heigro* and the like did not survive in the later medieval period.³²

For Old Frisian, we find no references to the heron. In view of the predominantly legal character of the texts that survive, this is not very surprising. The oldest attested word for 'heron' in Frisian comes from the Swiss humanist Conrad Gesner in 1555:³³

De Ardea... Germanis quibusdam *ein heergansz*..., sed usitatius *ein reiger*, nostris *reigel*, alijs *reihier* uel *rayer*, Frysijs *rarg*, Flandris *riegher*.

In view of later forms, such as ModWFr *reager*, we may assume that Gesner here should have given something like **rag(e)r* (< OFris **hräger*).³⁴ For Modern East Frisian, the oldest form is *räger*.³⁵ Of the North Frisian insular dialects Helgolandic and Föhring-Amring have the (Low) German loan *reier*. The bird is rare there, and only known as a migrant. No word for 'heron' is given in the dictionary of the Sylt dialect.³⁶ In the mainland dialects of North Frisian, a cognate of MDu *heiger* has indeed been recorded, for example, Karrharde

³⁰ Suolahti, *Die deutsche Vogelnamen*, p. 379; Agathe Lasch, *Mittelniederdeutsche Grammatik* (Halle, 1914), § 342B.

³¹ E.E. Steinmeyer and E. Sievers, eds., *Die althochdeutschen Glossen* 5 vols. (Berlin, 1879-1922), III, 458, 44 and IV, 196, 48, respectively. J.H. Gallée, *Vorstudien zu einem altniederdeutschen Wörterbuch* (Leiden, 1903), p. 130 s.v. *hegro*. F. Holthausen, *Altsächsisches Wörterbuch* (Münster/Köln, 1954), p. 92. On the problem of these glosses being Old Saxon or Middle Frankish, see most recently Rolf Bergmann, *Mittelfränkische Glossen. Studien zu ihrer Ermittlung und sprachgeographischen Einordnung*, 2nd edn. Rheinisches Archiv 61 (Bonn, 1977), pp. 110-29 (Paris, Lat. 9344) and pp. 163-65 (Trier, R.III.13), who decides in favour of Middle Frankish. Thomas Klein, *Studien zur Wechselbeziehungen zwischen altsächsischen und althochdeutschen Schreibwesen und ihrer sprach- und kulturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung*, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 205 (Göppingen, 1977), pp. 224-40, cogently argues for an Old Saxon provenance.

³² I consulted K. Schiller and A. Lübben, *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch*, 6 vols. (Bremen, 1875-82), and A. Lasch and C. Borchling, *Mittelniederdeutsches Handwörterbuch* (Hamburg/Neumünster, 1928-...), I, 2 and II, 13, respectively. The forms *heger*, *heier*, etc., which they do give, refer to the jay (ModHG *Häher*, cf. OE *higera* 'jay, magpie, woodpecker'), an altogether different, if etymologically related, word.

³³ Conrad Gesner, *Historiae animalium. Liber III. De Avium Natura* (Zurich, 1555), p. 202. Quoted after F. Claes S.J., *Friese Woorden uit de Zestiende Eeuw*. Estrikken 57 (Grins [Groningen], 1979), p. 36/7.

³⁴ Cf. Teake Hoekema, 'Frysk út Hieronymus Mesigerus syn wurken út 1603', in: Nils Århammar and Teake Hoekema, eds., *Scripta Frisica. Tinkbondel foar Arne Spenter* (= *Us Wurk* 28 (1979)), pp. 101-08, at p. 104.

³⁵ Johann F. Minssen, *Mitteilungen aus dem Saterlande im Jahre 1846 gesammelt*, ed. by P. Kramer from the Aarhus MS. Fryske Akademy nr. 270 (Ljouwert, 1965), II, p. 148.

³⁶ Boy P. Möller, *Söl'ring Uurterbok. Wörterbuch der Sylter Mundart*. Mitteilungen aus dem Deutschen Seminar zu Hamburg 2 (Hamburg, 1916).

skattheger 'shit-heron', Moring *skattheger*,³⁷ Wiedingharde *skithäzel*.³⁸ However, it is to be assumed that the mainland forms are adaptations of Danish *hejre*, older *hegre*.³⁹ These North Frisian dialects have been subject to especially strong lexical pressure from Danish.⁴⁰

Finally, some remarks are in order on the plural ending in Reginald's *eires*. Most probably, the plural *-s* must be seen as being either English or, possibly, Latin. For this conclusion the form *lomes* is of corroborative significance. For Middle Dutch, plural *-s* starts to be recorded in West Flanders in the first half of the thirteenth century, particularly in words ending in *-er*, e.g. *scnidens* 'tailors', *maders* 'mowers' in 1222, and *dienres* 'servants', *portres* 'burghers' in 1237, all from Ghent.⁴¹ By the end of the century plural *-s* is recorded as far north as Haarlem. The plural *-s* in *eires* could thus be Middle Dutch, but at the same time it would be one of the earliest attested cases. Plural *-s* is certainly out of the question for Old Frisian,⁴² even though Brunner claims the contrary.⁴³ Plural *-s* is well attested for Old Saxon, and is expansive in Middle Low German.⁴⁴ For Danish plural *-s* is impossible. If Reginald's plural form is not either English or Latin — which I think it is — then we would be left with either a Middle Dutch or Middle Low German origin.

Having discussed the phonological and morphological aspects of *lomes* and *eires*, something must be said finally of their semantic aspects; or perhaps rather of Reginald's qualities as an ornithologist. Despite the fact that, etymologically speaking, *lomes* and *eires* point to different birds, the conclusion we must draw

³⁷ Moritz Nissen, *Nordfriesisches Wörterbuch in mehreren Dialekten Nordfrieslands*, unpublished MS completed in 1889, University of Kiel, p. 876.

³⁸ P. Jensen, *Wörterbuch der nordfriesischen Sprache der Wiedingharde* (Neumünster, 1927), col. 178.

³⁹ For Danish, see O. Kalkar, *Ordbog til det Ældre Danske Sprog (1300-1700)*, II (København, 1886-1892), s.v. *hegre*. Palatalization in Danish started in the twelfth century, cf. J. Brøndum-Nielsen, *Gammeldansk Grammatik i Sproghistorisk Fremstilling. II. Konsonantisme* (København, 1932) § 309.1; Peter Skantrup, *Det Danske Sprogs Historie. I: Fra Guldhornene til Jyske Lov* (København, 1944), pp. 234-5.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Nils Århammar, 'Nordische Lehnwörter und lexikalische Stützung im Nordfriesischen', *Nordfriesisches Jahrbuch* N.F. 2 (1966), 302-16; also in: *Verhandlungen des zweiten internationalen Dialektologenkongresses*. Beihefte 3 and 4, *Zeitschrift für Mundartforschung* (Wiesbaden, 1967), 31-45.

⁴¹ See most recently [H.D. Meijering, ed.] *Aspeten van meervoudsvorming in het Noordzeegermaans (= Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik 28 (1989))*, especially W.J.J. Pijnenburg, 'De meervoudsvorming in het Vroegmiddelnederlands. Aspecten van het *-s*-en *-er*-meervoud', at pp. 57-76, and Rolf H. Bremmer Jr., 'Is de nederlandse meervouds *-s* van Engelse komaf?', at pp. 77-91.

⁴² For masculine *a*-stem nouns the ending is *-ar*, *-er*, *-a*, and, for late OFris., *-an*, *-en*. See Van Helten, *Altostfriesische Grammatik*, § 155; Steller, *Abriss*, § 49. For the origin and spread of *-ar*, see the contributions in *Aspeten van meervoudsvorming* by M.L.A.I. Philippa, 'Het meervoud op *-ar*- in het Oudfries. Stand van zaken', at pp. 5-20 and H.D. Meijering, 'Het Oudfries *-ar*-meervoud. Feiten en interpretaties', at pp. 21-41; for the rise of *-s* in late Old Frisian see my 'Nederlandse meervouds *-s*', pp. 78-9, fn. 3.

⁴³ Karl Brunner, *Altenglische Grammatik*, 3rd edn. (Tübingen, 1965), § 234, Anm. 4.

⁴⁴ See A. Quak, 'Meervoudsvorming in Oudsaksischen Middelnederduits', in: *Aspeten van meervoudsvorming*, pp. 43-54.

suggests that the *Aves Beati Cuthberti* in all probability designate the eider-duck (*Somateria mollissima mollissima* L.). How is it that Reginald can say that it is called *lome* by the English? In appearance the eider-duck is quite different from the diver. If a common characteristic must be found, it is to the diving aspect that we must look. This will explain why the same word could come to be used to refer to the red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata* L.), the great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus* L.), the little grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis* L.), and the guillemot (*Uria aalge* L.), or, in Prussian Low German, the black guillemot (*Uria grylle* L.). To Reginald, therefore, *lome* will have meant 'a diving (sea-)bird', and it is as such that the word must be entered in the Supplement to the *MED*, with the additional information that in the quotation the eider-duck is concerned.

A similar approach must be taken with respect to *eire*. Although it is clear that this word in its various forms in the majority of cases translates L *ardea* 'heron',⁴⁵ the early traditions are not so uniform. In Old High German glosses *hēgero* and its variants translate, for example, besides *ardea*, also *alcedo* 'king fisher, halcyon', *charadrius/caladrius* 'plover; stone curlew; lark', *pelicanus* 'pelican',⁴⁶ while in the Anglo-Saxon Corpus Glossary *tantalus*, which otherwise designates the heron, is glossed with *aelbitu*, that is, 'swan'.⁴⁷ It appears that most of these birds are in one way or another associated with the waterside, though none is easily confused with the (eider-)duck. Whatever Reginald may have thought (or been led to think), and written, one thing is clear: *eires* can never have been Frisian and Low German for 'eider-ducks'. If *eire* is to find its way into Old Frisian, Middle Low German and Middle Dutch dictionaries, I would suggest to enter it under the respective descendants of Gmc **haigr-*, with the addition that in Reginald's text the word is mistakenly seen as referring to eider-ducks.

⁴⁵ See R.L. Venezky and A. diPaolo Healey, *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English*, vol. I (Toronto, 1980). Exceptions are those instances where the nick-name (*die-*)*perdulum*, 'day-loser', is added, viz. in the Épinal-Erfurt Glossary (ed. J.D. Pfeifer, *Old English Glosses in the Épinal-Erfurt Glossary* (Oxford, 1974), item 42 and note), the Leiden Glossary (ed. J.H. Hessel, *A Late Eighth-Century Latin — Anglo-Saxon Glossary Preserved in the Library of the Leiden University* (Cambridge, 1906), p. 106) as well as in the Corpus Glossary (ed. J.H. Hessel, *An Eighth-Century Latin — Anglo-Saxon Glossary preserved in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1890), p. 19/729). On the relation between these Glossaries, cf. J.D. Pfeifer, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Glossaries and the School of Canterbury', *Anglo-Saxon England* 16 (1987), 17-44. Also *larus* 'mew, seagull' could be glossed with *hagra*, this on the authority of Abbot Hadrian of Canterbury, cf. Pfeifer, *Old English Glosses*, p. 99/610; H.D. Meritt, *Old English Glosses (A Collection)* (New York, 1945), nr. 36/16, and Pfeifer, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Glossaries', p. 25.

⁴⁶ See Steimeyer and Sievers, *Die althochdeutschen Glossen*, vol. III, 671, 34: *alcedo* | *ardea* uel *caladrius* [= *charadrius*]; *haigr*; vol. III, 459, 5-6: *pellicanus* | *a[1]cedo*: *regero, heigro*; vol. IV, 219, 8: *alcedo* | *ardea* | *tantalus*: *heigro*.

⁴⁷ Lindsay, *Corpus Glossary*, p. 189/325. According to Lindsay in a footnote, the Genoese Italian word for the glossy ibis is *tantalo*. For *tantalus*, cf. F. du C. du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis* vol. 8 (repr. Paris, 1938), s.v. *tantalus*: 'Ardea. Glossar. Lat. Gall. ex Cod. reg. 7692: *Tantalus*. Heron. Hinc *Tantalus*, libenter comedens, in alio Gall. Lat. ex Cod. reg. 7684'. All these glosses will go back to Isidore's *Etymologiae*, who says about the *ardea*: 'Hanc multi tantulum nominant', see Jacques André, ed., *Isidore de Séville. Etymologies Livre XII: Des Animaux* Paris, 1986), pp. 238-9: § 7, 21 and fn. 476.

In sum, our flight from Lindisfarne to Scandinavia and the Low Countries seems to have been slightly disappointing, since it has revealed Reginald's poor knowledge of bird names. Yet, our search for *aves rarae* has incidentally yielded new material for the dictionaries: ME *lōme* 'a diving bird', ME *rahere* 'heron', MSc *edder* 'eider-duck', and OFris and MLG/MDu *eire* 'heron (erroneously "eider-duck")'. This result is, after all, a feather in Reginald's cap!⁴⁸

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⁴⁸ I would like to thank Ingrid Tieken and Alasdair MacDonald for their comments on an earlier draft of this article, Jan J. Boersema for our discussions of some of the ornithological problems involved, and Nils Århammar for generously sharing with me his expertise in North Frisian.

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