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Fæhða Gemyndig: Hostile Acts Versus Enmity

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Abstract This article systematically examines all sixty-seven instances of the word *fæhþ* in the Old English corpus and proposes that instead of the traditional definition of "feud, hostility, enmity," the word more usually means (1) a specific hostile act or offense, especially homicide, (2) the punishment inflicted for such an offense, or (3) general violence or mayhem. It also examines the lexicographic history of the word and why the traditional definition has lingered despite being problematic. The analysis begins with the word's use in Anglo-Saxon law codes, where it has a more concrete and precise definition than in poetry and because in poetic works *fæhþ* is often used with verbs commonly found in legal usage, such as *stælan* (to accuse, charge with a crime). From the legal codes the analysis moves on to other prose and poetic works, where the word is often used more figuratively, encompassing concepts such as sin—offenses against God—and other unsavory acts. This re-examination of *fæhþ's* meaning usefully checks the impulse to translate it as "feud" in contexts that do not support the idea of perpetual or ongoing hostility, while still allowing translators to deliberately choose to use "feud" or "enmity" where the context justifies it. Recognition that *fæhþ* usually means "hostile act" also opens new interpretations of its poetic uses, such as how a connotation of crime affects the view of characters who commit it, the emphasis on injury it introduces, and the legal associations the word brings into the poems.

In 1970 Fred C. Robinson warned of uncritical acceptance of dictionary definitions, asserting that definitions, if assigned incorrectly, "can fix the critical interpretation

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of a passage in a permanent course of error" (1970: 99–100). Just such a course of error has happened with the Old English word *fǣhþ*, commonly defined as "feud, state of feuding, enmity, hostility; hostile act" (DOE 2007: s.v. fǣhþ, fǣhþu). This traditional definition of *fǣhþ* is fraught with anachronistic connotations and unquestioned assumptions that unduly influence modern readings of Old English texts. In some instances these connotations and assumptions have only a subtle effect on our readings of a text, but in others they can significantly alter how we read the passages in which the word appears.

A systematic examination of how *fǣhþ* is used in context shows that the word more commonly refers to the final element in Toronto's *Dictionary of Old English's* definition: a "hostile act" or crime, especially homicide. In poetry, the word is used more expansively, encompassing a spectrum of injuries and bad behaviors, from original sin to boastful boorishness. Yet even in poetry the word is most often used to reference a killing. A second sense of *fǣhþ* that emerges is the retribution inflicted for such an offense, often collocated with verbs meaning 'to carry,' like *beran* or *wegan*. While this sense is often contextually related to retaliatory justice and feud, *fǣhþ* itself usually denotes retribution for a specific act and not generalized feuding or continuing hostility. Finally, a third sense that emerges is the more general 'violence, war.' In only about a quarter of the word's appearances in the corpus can *fǣhþ* be plausibly translated as 'feud,' and in each, a sense of hostile act, retribution, or violence is also applicable. Furthermore, the word always refers to actions, never relationships or states of mind, such as hostility or enmity. The sense of 'feud,' therefore, is the exceptional one, and care should be taken when using this sense lest the translator or reader insert twenty-first century connotations into the medieval texts.

Fǣhþ and compounds derived from it appear sixty-seven times in the extant Old English corpus in some twenty-five different works.[1] Nineteen of these uses are in law codes and four are in other prose works, leaving about two-thirds of the uses of the word to poetry. *Beowulf*, with twenty-three instances of the word and its compounds, accounts for over a third of the word's uses. So, an accurate definition of *fǣhþ* is important in understanding how these poems, especially *Beowulf*, might have been received by Anglo-Saxon audiences.

The problem with the definition of 'feud, hostility, enmity' is perhaps best illustrated by lines 899–902 of *Genesis A*, where Eve speaks of eating the forbidden fruit:

>   oðþæt ic fracoðlice
> feondræs gefremede,   fæhðe geworhte,
> and þa reafode,   swa hit riht ne wæs,
> beam on bearwe   and þa blæda æt.[2]

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[1] *DOE Corpus*. See the "Appendix" for a complete list.

[2] All citations from *Beowulf* are from Klaeber's fourth (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles), and those from the *Exeter Book* are from Muir. All other poetic citations are from the *ASPR* editions, and all citations from Anglo-Saxon law codes and the *Quadripartitus* are from Liebermann. Unless indicated otherwise, all translations into modern English are my own.

(Until I shamefully effected the fiend's counsel, wrought *fæhðe*, and then robbed the tree in the forest and ate the fruit, as it was not right.)

A sense of 'feud' makes no sense here; the word references a singular act, not an ongoing cycle of acts or continuing hostility. *Fæhðe* here seems to be denoting sin, a poetic variation on the word's primary meaning of 'hostile act.' The placement of *fæhðe* in apposition to the hapax legomenon *feondræs* (fiend's counsel), and use of *reafian* (to plunder, rob), reinforces the sinful and criminal connotation.[3] Additionally, the translation of *fæhðe* as *sin* brings to bear the sense of *gewohrte* meaning 'made, created,' transforming the clunky "performed a deed of enmity" into a concise reference to the creation of original sin—in eating the apple Eve not only performs a sinful act, she creates sin itself.

In contrast, the modern word *feud* has two primary meanings. In general discourse it is "a state of bitter and lasting mutual hostility" and "a state of perpetual hostility between two families, tribes, or individuals, marked by murderous assaults in revenge for some previous insult or injury" (OED 1989: s.v. feud, n.^{1}). The association that most likely springs to mind upon hearing *feud* is that of the Hatfields and the McCoys or perhaps *Huckleberry Finn's* Shepherdsons and Grangerfords, inapt models of Anglo-Saxon justice. In contrast, a *fǣhþ* may be the spark that ignites a cycle of feud, but it is not the feud itself.

Legal historians and sociologists define *feud* differently than the popular sense, using it to refer to a regularized system of retaliatory justice; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill gives a representative definition:

> first, the threat of hostility between kins; then, the state of hostility between them; and finally, the satisfaction of their differences and a settlement on terms acceptable to them both. The threat, the state, and the settlement of that hostility constitute feud but do not necessarily mean bloodshed. […] In brief, it is a way for the settlement of differences, whether through violence or negotiation or both (1982: 122).

While each scholar seems to have their own definition of what exactly *feud* is, most are similar to Wallace-Hadrill's (Miller 1990: 179–181; Day 1999: 78). Yet, even while arguing for the existence of just such a system of retaliatory justice in early Germanic societies, Wallace-Hadrill cautions against translating *fǣhþ's* Frankish cognate and similar Latin terms as 'feud': "the Frankish *faithu*, latinized as *faidus*, may mean what we are after, or it may mean something different; feud may lurk behind *inimicus, hostis, vindicta, intentio, altercatio, bella civilia*, or it may not" (1982: 122–123). A systematic examination of the use of *fǣhþ* in the corpus bears out Wallace-Hadrill's caution in regard to the Old English word.

A hesitancy to translate *fǣhþ* as 'feud' does not deny that retaliation for offenses was a significant aspect of Anglo-Saxon law and society or that the theme of retaliatory violence is central to *Beowulf*. The questions at hand are more basic:

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[3] DOE 2007: s.v. fēond-rǣs. One may translate *feondræs* as *hostile attack* and then use a sense of *enmity* for *fæhðe*, but while poetic passages often support such polysemous readings, there is no other martial or hostile imagery in the vicinity of this passage to match it.

what does the word *fǣhþ* mean and how do we best translate it without inadvertently inserting anachronistic concepts and connotations into the text?

Scholars have been conflating *fǣhþ* and *feud* for centuries. Stefan Jurasinski outlines one such vein of conflation: the nineteenth-century trend of emphasizing the role of blood feud in Germanic societies that began with Wilhelm Wilda's 1842 *Strafrecht der Germanen* and moved into English-language scholarship with John Mitchell Kemble's 1846 *Saxons in England* (Jurasinski 2004: 649–652). Given a scholarly environment that held blood feud to be a central organizing principle of Germanic society, it is only natural that nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century editors like Klaeber and lexicographers like Bosworth and Toller would see feud in places where it may not have existed. Nor is Jurasinski the only one seeing an overreliance on the concept of feud in Germanic societies. Peter Sawyer opines that "emphasis on the role of bloodfeud" is "misleading" and "the solidarity of kin-groups […] has been exaggerated" (1987: 27). Paul Hyams, while arguing for the importance of feud in Anglo-Saxon culture and in *Beowulf*, warns that, "feud […] is a much overused term, a notion in real peril of collapsing and losing all precision and utility" (2010: 152). Writing about feud in saga-era Iceland, William Ian Miller cautions against equating feud with mere vengeance killing, as doing so invites "analytical confusion" between an act by an individual and a complex set of reciprocal relationships between groups (1990: 181). Translating *fǣhþ* as *feud* can perpetuate this exaggeration, even in contexts where a system of retaliatory justice may be relevant, as in *Beowulf*.

The conflation of *fǣhþ* and *feud*, however, did not begin with the nineteenth-century philologists. It may have started with the twelfth-century *Quadripartitus* and other Latin translations of Anglo-Saxon laws. While the *Quadripartitus* is far from the most accurate of translations, it can, when used carefully and in conjunction with other evidence, yield hermeneutic value. On multiple occasions the twelfth-century translator uses *factio* to translate *fǣhþ*. In classical Latin, *factio* means 'faction, family, company,' and the *Quadripartitus's* use of the Latin word could lead one to think the Old English *fǣhþ* meant 'feud' (Lewis and Short 1879: s.v. factio). Indeed, *The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (*DML*) defines *factio's* use in medieval Anglo-Latin as 'feud,' but it bases this definition on citations from these same Anglo-Saxon law codes. So we have a circular chain of evidence, with definitions in Latin dictionaries being used to define the Old English word, and the Latin dictionary using the Old English word to define the Latin one (DML 1997: s.v. factio). There is, however, another definition of *factio* in the *DML*, with a single citation from an 855 C. E. English charter, where the word is used in the sense of 'satisfaction, fine or other penalty':

> …coram Christo judice et celesti exercitu rationem redditurum esse nisi prius digna satisque placavili factione Deo et hominibus emendare voluerit (Birch 1887: 2:61).
> (…before Christ, the judge, and the celestial host [that] reckoning will be delivered unless earlier he would have wished to emend to God and men by a worthy and adequately pacifying *factione*.)

A definition of *factio* meaning 'feud' or 'partisanship' makes no sense here; the word is referring to some kind of penalty or propitiation. So when the *Quadripartitus* scribe translates "gif hwa heonanforð ænige man ofslea, þæt he wege sylf ða fæhðe" (if henceforth anyone slays a man, he himself is to bear the *fæhðe*) as "si quis posthac hominem occidat, ipse sibi portet inimicitie factionem" in 2 Edmund § 1, he may be equating *fæhðe* to feud, or he may be referring to bearing the penalty for a crime. In either case, later translators and lexicographers seem to have relied on the classical definition of the Latin word and accepted *feud* as a definition for *fæhþ*. Moreover, note the context of 2 Edmund § 1 is a singular act of homicide, not an ongoing cycle of violence.

Laurence Nowell's c. 1565 *Vocabularium Saxonicum* continues to associate *fæhþ* and *factio*, but Nowell also inserts the idea of hostility or enmity, defining the Old English word as "factio, inimicitia; enmitie, fede or deadly fede" (1952: 66). A century later William Somner provides a similar definition, "factio, inimicitia, grandis simultas. posterioribus, *faida*, *feida*, faction, feud, enmity," and under his definition for *fæhþ-bote*, Somner ties the word to the concept of Germanic blood-feud, commenting, "it being the custome of those times for all the kinred to ingage in their kinsmans quarrel, according to that of *Tacitus*." He defines *fæhþ-bote* as, "recompence for engaging in a feud or faction and the damages consequent," explicitly associating *factio* with *faction* and partisanship (1659: 101). Nathan Bailey, in his 1730 *Dictionarium Britannicum*, goes farther, incorrectly deriving the modern *feud* from *fæhþ*, defining *feud* as "an inveterate or old grudge, enmity, deadly hatred, malice." Bailey also derives *feud bote* from *fæhðbote*, and repeats Somner's definition for that word almost verbatim.[4]. Furthermore, Bailey restricts the sense of *feud* meaning "a combination of kindred to revenge the death of any of their blood upon the killer, and all his race" to the north of England, indicating that the sense we use today was then a regional one and not in general use. In support of this last, Samuel Johnson's 1755 dictionary makes no mention of familial vendetta or retaliation in the definition of *feud*, defining it as "quarrel; contention; opposition; war."[5] Two different strains of analysis come together in these early modern dictionaries. In one, *fæhð* is associated with partisanship through the classical definition of *factio*. In the other, the modern *feud* starts to acquire the sense of familial vendetta, where previously it had simply meant a dispute or quarrel. Later translators would perpetuate the association of *fæhþ* with *feud* without taking into account the subtleties of the words' lexicographic histories and the modern word's evolving definition.

The etymological fallacy, the notion that the etymology determines meaning, also seems to have played a role in the continued association of the two words. While later philologists and lexicographers did not repeat Bailey's mistake of deriving *feud* from *fæhþ*, they did rely on etymology to determine the Old English word's meaning. *Fæhþ* is etymologically related to the adjective *fāh*, meaning 'hostile, in a state of enmity,' and to its substantive *(ge)fā*, meaning 'foe' (DOE 2007: s.v. fāh[1], fāg[1]), and nineteenth-century lexicographers seem to have simply assigned the Old English word a general sense associated with its etymological root.

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[4] Bailey 1730: s.v. feud, feud bote. *Feud* and *fæhþ* are cognate, but *feud* comes into English from Old High German via Old French, rather than directly from Old English. See *OED* 1989: s.v. feud, n.[1]

[5] Johnson 2005. Johnson makes no mention of *fæhþ*.

Indeed, Kemble explicitly uses the etymology to determine its meaning, and not the word's usage in the corpus, saying, "this right is technically named fǣhðe, *feud*, from fā, *inimicus*," and that "it is the state or condition of being fā [a foe] with any one" (1876: 1:133, 267n1).[6] Such an assignment of meaning may have also relied on the older, but even by the nineteenth century, obsolescent, meaning of the modern English *feud* as "hostility, enmity" (OED 1989: s.v. feud, n.[1]). Finally, another reason for perpetuating the association between the two words, one not relevant to lexicographers but which appeals to translators of verse, is prosody; *fǣhþ* and *feud* make a nice metrical match.

Bosworth's dictionary continues in the same vein, defining *fǣhþ* as, "feud, vengeance, enmity, hostility, deadly feud, that enmity with the relations of the deceased waged against the kindred of the murderer" (Bosworth and Toller 1898, s.v. fæhþ). Holthausen's (1933) etymological dictionary defines it as "Feindschaft; Gewalt; Rache; Fehde" (hostility; violence; revenge; feud) [Holthausen 1974, s.v. fæhð(u)]. It is not until Toronto's *Dictionary of Old English* that we start to see a corrective in the lexicography. That dictionary's primary definition is similar to the earlier ones, but it includes two important variations. First, it carves out a distinct legal sense: "feud (requiring reparation determined by law)." Second, the *DOE* adds "hostile act" to the primary definition of "feud, state of feuding, enmity, hostility; hostile act," albeit placing it last and not categorizing its citations by these sub-senses (DOE 2007: s.v. fǣhþ, fǣhþu).

Fǣhþ as Hostile Act/Offense

Rather than being a secondary definition, however, this sense of 'hostile act, offense' can be found in over half of *fǣhþ's* appearances in the Old English corpus. I start my analysis by looking at the word's use in law codes, where the word can be expected to have a somewhat more concrete and precise definition than in poetry. In some codes the context explicitly indicates that *fǣhþ* means homicide; in others the precise nature of the offense cannot be determined, but the word still clearly refers to a specific crime. The legal foundation is also germane because in poetry *fǣhþ* is often used with verbs commonly found in legal usage, such as *stǣlan* (to accuse, charge with a crime).[7] While we cannot expect a poet to adhere strictly to a legal definition, the word's use in the law codes can inform us of the term's non-poetic range of meanings and how the word might have been received by a poem's contemporary audience.

From the legal codes I move on to other prose and poetic works, where the word is often used more figuratively, expanding the sense of 'hostile act' to encompass sin—offenses against God—and other unsavory acts. To avoid the problem that Robinson

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[6] Kemble probably took the addition of the thorn to *fāh*, creating *fǣhþ*, to indicate the creation of an abstract noun indicating hostility. The addition of a dental consonant to adjectives frequently creates abstract nouns, such as *strang/strengðu* (*strong/strength*) (OED 1989: s.v. -th, suffix[1], -t, suffix[3]). When added to a substantive, however, the dental forms the action of an agent, as in *þeofþ/theft*. So *fǣhþ* is the action of one who is *fāh*.

[7] For a discussion of legal terms in *Beowulf*, see Jurasinski (2004: 646).

cautions against, I do not proliferate senses for the word. Where a well-established definition, for example from the law codes, fits a particular passage, I opt for the established sense rather than another that may also fit the context. When it comes to poetry, this approach risks being over literal and discouraging polysemous and ambiguous readings, but it is preferable to start with a literal interpretation and then expand on it to fit the context, deliberately admitting polysemy and ambiguity when warranted, than it is to proceed from an incorrect foundation.

Ine's code, the oldest extant law code containing a form of the word, thrice uses the compound *werfǣhð*, a word which appears nowhere else in the corpus. Ine § 54 uses it twice, once in the rubric and again in the main text, which reads, "se þe bið werfæhðe betogen ᚴ he onsacan wille þæs sleges mid aðe, þonne sceal…" (he who is accused of *werfæhðe* and wishes to deny this slaying with an oath must…) and then proceeds to outline the amount that must be paid in surety. The verbs *betēon* (to accuse) and *onsacan* (to refute, deny), indicate that *werfæhðe* here refers to a specific criminal act, and *þæs sleges* (this slaying) shows that *werfæhðe* refers to a single homicide. Indeed, Liebermann defines *werfæhðe* as "Menschen-Tötung, Totschlags" (homicide, manslaughter) (1903: 2:241). There are two other pieces of evidence, albeit more dubious ones, that support the sense of 'homicide.' First, the section's rubric reads, "be werfæhðe tyhtlan" (concerning the charge of *werfæhðe*), but the rubrication of Alfred's and Ine's codes is problematic and not to be relied upon.[8] The second is the *Quadripartitus*, which in this instance only transcribes the word, but adds the note "id est de homicidio." Like the rubrication, the *Quadripartitus* is usually not to be relied upon, but would seem to be correct here.

The other instance of *werfæhðe* in Ine's code also refers to a specific crime, but here the crime in question is uncertain and may be theft rather than homicide. Ine § 46.2 reads, "Ælc mon mot onsacen frymþe ᚴ werfæhþe" (Every man must refuse the harboring of wrongdoers and *werfæhþe*).[9] Once more we have the word used in the context of a particular crime, and the obvious assumption would be that this is another reference to homicide, except the rest of section forty-six addresses cases of theft and consequent actions, and the surrounding sections address such heinous felonies as the improper felling of trees or letting swine loose in a pasture. Perhaps a reference to homicide was incongruously dropped into this passage because the obligation to deny a false accusation applies to both theft and homicide, but it could also be that *werfæhðe* carries a more general sense of crime or offense. Regardless, the uses of *werfæhð* in Ine's code refer to singular crimes, and not to ongoing hostility or a system of retaliatory justice and compensation.

Werfæhð also provides us with what may be the most egregious example of scholars twisting the definition to fit the preconception that *fǣhþ* refers to feud. Bosworth–Toller inserts feud into its definition of *werfǣhþ*, despite it having little to

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[8] Liebermann calls the rubrication of these codes "fehlerhaft, unfrei und unvollständig" (error-prone, awkward, and incomplete); see Liebermann (1903: 3:40) and Wormald (1999: 1:268–269). *Fǣhþ* appears again in the rubric for Alfred § 42 where its meaning is opaque, perhaps meaning generalized violence, or perhaps not.

[9] Dorothy Whitelock translates this passage as "harbouring [of stolen goods?] and homicide," acknowledging the sense of homicide and assuming an omission that would tie the passage to the surrounding context. Whitelock (1979: 1:404).

do with the context of the word's appearances, defining the word as "slaying, in pursuing the feud, under circumstances that call for the payment of *wer*." While the context of at least one of the word's appearances is that of a slaying, *werfæhþ* is not a killing in pursuit of feud; rather it is the original crime that might, if not compensated for, give rise to retaliation. Furthermore, it seems more likely that the *wer*-, rather than referring to *wergild*, instead refers to *wer* (man), making the word a parallel construction to our modern *manslaughter*. *Werfæhð* is an offense against a person and more specifically a killing.

Wulfstan uses the root word *fæhþ* to mean a specific crime in 8 Æthelred § 23, a passage he repeats verbatim in 1 Cnut § 5.2b and nearly verbatim in *The Canons of Edgar* § 68i.[10] These passages use the word twice in two different senses:

> And gyf man gehadodne mid fæhþe belecge ⁊ secge, þæt he wære dædbana oððe rædbana, ladige mid his magu*m*, þe fæhðe moton mid beran oððe forebetan.
> (And if a clergyman is charged and accused with *fæhþe*, in that he was the actual slayer or the instigator, he shall exculpate himself with his kin, who must bear the *fæhðe* with him or pay compensation.)

I will address the passage's second use of *fæhðe* in the next section, but the first use again denotes a homicide, which is made clear by the use of the verb of accusation, *belecgan*, and the compounds *dædbana* (slayer-by-deed) and *rædbana* (slayer-by-counsel). As before, the *Quadripartitus* translates this first use of word as *homicidium*.[11]

2 Edmund § 1.7 provides a less obvious example from the law codes where *fæhþ* is used to refer to specific killings and not feuding, hostility, or generalized violence:

> Witan scylan fæhðe sectan: ærest æfter folcrihte slaga sceal his forspecan on hand syllan, ⁊ se forspeca magum, þæt se slaga wylle betan wið mægðe.
> (Wise men should settle *fæhðe*: first according to customary law the slayer shall promise his advocate, and the advocate [promise] the kinsmen, that he will pay compensation to the kin.)

Again the context, namely the use of *slaga* (slayer), indicates a single homicide. It is tempting to translate the opening phrase as "the wise shall settle feuds," or as A. J. Robertson translates it, "the authorities must put a stop to vendettas" (1925: 11), but the context indicates that the feud or vendetta has not yet occurred; it should only happen if compensation is not made. Feud is a threat lurking in the background of this passage, but it is not denoted by *fæhðe*. It seems more apt to translate the opening as "the wise should settle cases of homicide."

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[10] *The Canons of Edgar* omit the phrase "oððe rædbana". Fowler (1972: 19).

[11] Whitelock translates *fæhðe* here as "blood-feud," but such a translation appears to be another example an undue emphasis on an assumed Germanic custom, rather than a sense arising out of the word's use in context. Whitelock (1979: 1:412).

This sense of a singular hostile act or homicide is by no means restricted to the law codes. A poetic example is found in *Genesis A*, lines 1028–1030, when Cain says:

> hwonne me   gemitte manscyldigne,
> se me feor oððe neah   fæhðe gemonige,
> broðorcwealmes.
> (whenever someone meets me, the guilty one, who far and near reminds me of this *fæhðe*, of this fratricide.)

One might interpret *fæhðe* here as a reference to Cain's enmity or feud with God, but the word's apposition to *broðercwealmes* (fratricide) shows that it literally refers to the killing of Abel. The word is also used in *Beowulf* line 2465 to denote a fratricide, "Wihte ne meahte/on ðam feorhbonan fæghðe gebetan (in no way could he obtain compensation for the *fæghðe* from the life-slayer), a context where the poet explicitly acknowledges that the intrafamilial nature of the offense precludes a feud. The *Beowulf*-poet further evokes retaliatory justice with his use of *gebētan*, a verb frequently found in legal contexts (DOE 2007: s.v. gebētan). Again, feud lurks in the background, but *fæghðe* itself does not refer to it.

In his speech to Beowulf on the morning after Grendel's Mother's raid on Heorot, Hrothgar uses *fǣhþ* to unambiguously refer to specific killings. In line 1340 he uses it to refer to Beowulf's killing of Grendel, "wolde hyre mæg wrecan,/ge feor hafað fæhðe gestæled (she wished to avenge her kin and has greatly prosecuted that *fæhðe*). Note that the verb *gestælan*, "to accuse, prosecute," carries a legal connotation, another instance where the word refers to a specific killing within the larger context of a feud or ongoing cycle of violence.[12] Hrothgar uses *fæhðe* again in the same context in line 1333, and in line 1380 he uses it to refer to the prospective killing of Grendel's Mother.

In lines 2512–2514, Beowulf uses *fǣhþ* to refer to the killing of the dragon, like the killing of Grendel a specific act of violence:

> gyt ic wylle,
> frod folces weard   fæhðe secan,
> mærðu fremman.
> (Yet I, the old guardian of the people, wish to seek (a) *fæhðe*, perform a mighty deed.)

Fæhðe secan here can be read as "to seek retribution," but since it is in apposition to *mærðu fremman* (to perform a mighty deed), it literally refers to performing a singular act, that of slaying the dragon. Translating it as "to seek retribution," while a legitimate choice, subtly alters the text by making the desire for vengeance explicit, rather than allowing it to flow implicitly from the context.

Beowulf is not the only poem that stretches the meaning of the word beyond a strict sense of homicide. *Vainglory* line 36, for example, uses *fæhþe* to refer to

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[12] In Klaeber's fourth, Robert Fulk notes that "fæhðe stælen […] in all probability denotes 'avenge hostility,' 'retaliate' (in the prosecution of a feud)," yet in his later Dumbarton Oaks edition, Fulk translates it as "avenging the offense." On several occasions in the later edition Fulk translates *fǣhþ* as *offense*, but he also uses *feud*, *vendetta*, and *hostility* (Fulk et al. 2008: 199; Fulk 2010: 175).

excessive boasting, deceit, and lies, and other poetic uses extend the sense of crime or offense to encompass sin and offenses against God, such as Eve's aforementioned eating of the fruit in *Genesis A*. The same poem uses the hapax legomenon *manfæhðu* in line 1378 to refer to the sin and iniquity that causes God to bring about the flood. In line 186, the poet of *Guthlac A* uses the word with violent imagery to represent demonic temptation of the saint into sin: "þonne mengu cwom/feonda færscytum fæhðe ræran" (then a multitude of fiends came to rouse *fæhðe* with sudden darts). James Doubleday notes that the soul-as-fortress motif is common in patristic writings and that "arrows of sin" was a common image in early medieval writing, and it seems the *Guthlac A* poet is employing these motifs here. Given the martial imagery, a translation of *rouse violence* or perhaps even *rouse feud* could be justified, but the literal reading is that the demons are tempting the saint into sin (Doubleday 1970: 504n4).

The phrase *fæhðe ond fyrene*, which places *fǣhþ* in apposition with a word meaning crime or sin, appears multiple times in the corpus. *Beowulf* 135–37 says of Grendel after his first attack on Heorot:

> eft gefremede
> morðbeala mare,   ond no mearn fore,
> fæhðe ond fyrene;   wæs to fæst on þam.
> (Again he committed more murders and did not trouble over those, the *fæhðe* and crimes; he was too resolute in that.)

Not only is *fæhðe* in apposition to *fyrene* here, but the poem also refers to *morðbeala mare*, "more murders," specific killings, not to general hostility or ongoing feuding.

There are a few instances in the corpus where *fǣhþ* is used in the context of old offenses being recalled, spurring the one remembering to violent action, but again in these passages the word does not refer to the feud itself. The Old English translation of Orosius's *Historiae adversum paganos* contains two such recollections. The first discusses how Themistocles rallied his troops prior to the battle of Salamis:

> Se Themestocles gemyndgade Ionas þære ealdan fæhþe þe Xersis him to geworht hæfde, hu he hie mid forhergiunge ⁊ mid heora mæga slihtum on his geweald geniedde (Bately 1980: 47, book 2, chap. 5, lines 20–23).
> (Then Themistocles reminded the Ionians of the old *fæhþe* that Xerxes had done to them, how he compelled them into his rule with devastation and with the slaughter of their kinsman.)

This passage differs from the Latin original, which makes no mention of Xerxes's earlier predations here. Where the Old English translation has "ealdan fæhþe," the Latin has "antiquorum iura" (oaths of the ancient ones) (Orosius 2013: 2.10). The Old English translator is deliberately creating a context of vengeance, but again *fæhþe* itself specifically refers to the originating offense, not retribution or continuing violence, which has yet to come. The second appearance of the word in the translation of Orosius is in the same sense, but in a context of forgiveness:

Ac mid þon þe hie þæs cristendomes onfengon, hie wæron swa geþwære ⁊ swa gesibsume þæt hie ealle forgeafon þæm casere þa fæhþe þe his mæg hæfde wið hie ær geworht (Bately 1980: 136, 6.4.16–19; the Latin original is in 7.6).

(But when they received the Christian faith, they were so peaceful and so pacific that they all forgave Caesar for the *fæhþe* that his kin had previously done against them.)

Again here the translator departs significantly from the original, in which Claudius grants clemency to the senators who had assassinated Caligula and attempted to abolish imperial rule, rather than Christians forgiving the emperor.

The recollected offenses that fall within the scope of *fæhþ* need not be old. Some may have been committed in the heat of battle only moments before, making the translation of *feud*, with that word's connotation of long-standing enmity, problematic. The death of Hæthcyn and the wounding of Wulf leads to the death of Ongentheow in line 2489 of *Beowulf*, when Eofor's "hond gemunde fæhðo genoge" (hand remembered (the) *fæhðo* sufficiently) and deals the fatal blow. Similarly in line 2689 of *Beowulf* the dragon rushes Beowulf "fæhða gemyndig" (mindful of the *fæhða*) after the hero shatters the sword Nægling on the beast's hide. Also, Ælfwine steps forward into the fray following the killing of Byrhtnoth in *The Battle of Maldon*, line 225, "Þa he forð eode, fæhðe gemunde" (Then he came forth, mindful of (that) *fæhðe*). In each of these, 'offense' would a more apt translation.

There are ambiguous cases where *fæhþ* can legitimately be read as referring to either a single hostile act or to a continuing feud. The head of the compound *fæhþ-bōt* is one, which the *DOE* acknowledges in its dual-natured definition, "compensation incurred as the result of a feud, compensation for manslaughter" (DOE 2007: s.v. fæhþ-bōt). But while the constituent elements are etymologically relevant, semantically it is the compensation denoted by the whole word that is important. A more significant example is in the context of Cain in *Beowulf*, lines 109–110, where not only is the meaning *fæhðe* ambiguous, but so is who commits it:

> ne gefeah he þære fæhðe,   ac he hine feor forwræc,
> metod for þy mane,   mancynne fram.
> (He did not rejoice in that *fæhðe*, but he, the Dispenser, banished him far from mankind for that crime.)

If the first *he* refers to Cain, *fæhðe* could refer to the killing of Abel, or if *he* refers to God it could refer to retribution God brings upon Cain for that crime.

Hrothgar uses *fæhþ* twice in reference to Ecgtheow's killing of Heatholaf. In both instances the word can be read either as 'feud' or as 'crime or offense.' In line 459 Hrothgar says, "gesloh þin fæder fæhðe mæste" (your father committed through slaying the greatest *fæhðe*). The line occasions an extended discussion in *Klaeber's*, but that discussion focuses on the meaning of *gesloh*, with *fæhþ* assumed to mean 'feud,'[13] and Fulk translates the line as, "your father caused the greatest vendetta" (2010: 117). The phrase *fæhðe mæste* appears in one other place in the corpus, in *Christ A*, line 616–18:

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[13] Although one reading renders *fæhþ* as 'fight' (Fulk et al. 2008: 145–46).

ond geþingade   þeodbuendum
wið fæder swæsne   fæhþa mæste,
cyning anboren.
(and the only begotten king reconciled humanity with his own Father for the
greatest of *fæhþa*).

While in both cases *fǣhþ* appears in the context of a feud, an ongoing dispute that is
resolved by an intercessor, Hrothgar or Christ, the word can also be read as 'offense,
crime, or sin,' with the "fæhþa mæste" in *Christ A* specifically referring to original
sin. Ecgtheow has "committed through slaying the greatest of crimes," and
humanity has committed "the greatest of sins." A few lines later in line 470,
Hrothgar says, "Siððan þa fæhðe feo þingode" (Afterward, I settled that *fæhðe* with
compensation), fulfilling the function allocated to the wise in 2 Edmund § 1.7. Both
feud and *crime* fit the context.

Fæhðe mæste in *Beowulf* 459 is an excellent example of Robinson's contention
that a definition can influence and fix a critical interpretation of a text. Translating it
as 'greatest of crimes' emphasizes that Ecgtheow's act is the cause of his troubles
and that he is a killer on the lam. Whereas translating it as 'feud' deemphasizes the
criminality of Ecgtheow's act, depicts him as a respected warrior who has defended
his family's honor, and inserts into the poem the idea of a continued cycle of
violence that flowed from that act—a cycle of violence for which we have no
evidence.[14] With the translation of *fæhðe* as 'crime, offense,' Beowulf's lineage
becomes less respectable, and the reading provides reasons for Unferth's flyting, for
Beowulf not being respected as a young man in Hygelac's court, and, to make up for
a less-than-respectable parentage, a psychological motivation for Beowulf's being
lofgeornost in the poem's final line. Note also that while the narrator continually
associates the hero with his father, Beowulf only identifies himself as the
Ecgtheow's son to the coast guard; he does not do so when he arrives in Hrothgar's
court. Instead, in lines 342–43 he describes his band as "Higelaces beodgeneatas"
(Hygelac's hearth-companions) and in 407–08 himself as "Higelaces mæg ond
magoðegn" (Hygelac's kinsman and young retainer). Perhaps Beowulf can boast
about his father's deeds to the coast guard, but not to Hrothgar, who knows better.

The use of the phrase *fyrene ond fæhðe* in *Beowulf* line 153 can also be casually
read as supporting a definition of feud:

              þætte Grendel wan
hwile wið Hroþgar,   heteniðas wæg,
fyrene ond fæhðe   fela missera,
singale sæce;   sibbe ne wolde
wið manna hwone   mægenes Deniga,
feorhbealo feorran,   fea þingian,
ne þær nænig witena   wenan þorfte
beorhtre bote   to banan folmum

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[14] In line 462, the poem only states that Ecgtheow was forced to flee out of *herebrogan* (fear of war), not
that any retaliatory violence had actually occurred.

(That Grendel had fought for a while with Hrothgar, waged hateful deeds, crimes and *fæhðe*, for many seasons, continually fighting; he wished no peace with any of the men of the host of the Danes, to stop the violent killing, to offer settlement, nor did any of the counselors need to expect bright compensation at the killer's hands.)

The context of the passage is that of a classic feud, ongoing and irresolvable, and the phrase appears in apposition to *heteniðas*, which Bosworth and Toller define as 'enmity, hostility.' However, the root *nið* does not necessarily mean 'hostility'; it can also refer to actions that arise from hostility and strife. Since *fyrene* can only refer to specific acts, it seems fitting to translate *fæhðe* and *heteniðas* as acts as well, leaving the notion of continuing and irresolvable violence to arise out of the passage as a whole, rather than being resident and explicit in a single word.

Additionally, although the verbatim construction *fæhðe ond fyrene* is not used, *fæhðo* appears in the same line as *firen* twice in *Solomon and Saturn* in reference to *wyrd* or fate, in line 445, "eallra fyrena fruma, fæhðo modor" (origin of all crimes, mother of *fæhðo*), and a few lines later in 450, "ðæt heo ðurh fyrena geflitu fæhðo ne tydre" (so that she through the discord of crimes does not propagate *fæhðo*). The lines can be interpreted as offenses or crimes engendering hostility and hatred, but they just as easily can be read as killings begetting more killings. *Geflit* also has a legal sense, so this last might be read as 'she through the litigation/disputation of crimes does not bring forth killings (i.e., retaliation)' (DOE 2007: s.v. (ge)flit, sense 3.a.iii)

In each of these ambiguous cases, *fǣhþ* can be legitimately read as 'offense, hostile act,' and note that these ambiguous cases are poetic, and the poets may have intended this polysemy. However, given that the majority of the word's uses are unambiguously in the sense of 'hostile act,' this sense should be the primary one. Choosing to translate *fæhðe* as 'feud' in these poetic passages is an interpretive act, and should be done deliberately, with cognizance of the translation's impact on the reading of the text.

The uses of *fǣhþ* recounted above and others like them, which comprise over half the uses of the word in the corpus, all refer to specific hostile acts or sins, most often killings. In a few cases, *fǣhþ* is used in the context of what may be termed 'feud,' but the word itself refers to the act that precipitates the feud, not the feud itself. Yet there is another sense of the word that may be the source of even more conflation with feud, where *fǣhþ* is used to refer to the consequences suffered for committing a crime or offense.

Fǣhþ as Retribution

This sense of *fǣhþ* is often found with verbs meaning to carry, such as *beran* or *wegan*, and such constructions can be read as 'to bear (the consequences of) the *fǣhþ*.' In many of these instances the punishment is retribution by the victim's family, but such instances can seldom be classified as *feud* in the modern sense, and when they can, again, it is the surrounding context, not the word *fǣhþ* itself, that permits this classification. This sense of penalty can be seen in the second use in the passage from 8 Æthelred § 23 examined earlier, which references a singular homicide:

And gyf man gehadodne mid fæhþe belecge ⁊ secge, þæt he wære dædbana
oððe rædbana, ladige mid his magum, þe fæhðe moton mid beran oððe
forebetan.
(And if a clergyman is charged and accused with *fæhþe*, in that he was the actual
slayer or the instigator, he shall exculpate himself with his kin, who must bear the
fæhðe with him or pay compensation.)

The same construction is found in 2 Edmund § 1 and 1.2, but using *wegan* (to bear,
submit to consequences). Moreover, Ine § 74.2 refers to a master *of aceapian* (buying a
servant out) of a *fæhðe* the servant has committed. Again, these uses are in the context
of a single homicide and not a continuing cycle of violence. Nor does the word itself
represent general hostility; it is the penalty for a specific crime.

The sense of consequences, retribution, or penalty is also used poetically. In *The
Wife's Lament*, line 25, the woman must "mines felaleofan fæhðu dreogan" (endure the
fæhðu of my beloved). In *Genesis A*, lines 1351–52, the word is used to refer to the
flood brought about by humanity's sins, "feowertig daga fæhðe ic wille/on weras
stælan" (for 40 days I will prosecute the *fæhðe* against men). Again, the use of the verb
stælan evokes legal usage and punishment for particular crimes, offenses, or sins.

A difficult term in the law codes is the hapax legomenon *unfæhðа* in Ine § 28:

Se ðeof gefehð, ah X scill., ⁊ se cyning ðone ðeof; ⁊ þa mægas him swerian
aðas unfæhða.
(He [who] apprehends a thief, receives ten shillings and the king [has
jurisdiction over] the thief, and the kinsmen [are] to swear oaths of *unfæhða*
against him [i.e., the captor].)

The usual reading of *aðas unfæhða* is 'oaths of non-hostility,' but given that in every
other instance *fǣhþ* refers to an action and not a relationship or emotional state, the
idea that the thief's family forswears retaliation seems more to the point.

There are poetic passages where *fǣhþ* as 'feud' makes sense contextually, but in
each of these instances the word may be better understood as retribution or
punishment for a singular crime, rather than an ongoing cycle of violence. For
example, *The Husband's Message* says in line 19, "hine fæhþo adraf" (*fæhþo* drove
him away). The line could be read as 'feud/hostility drove him away,' but this
translation reduces the exile's culpability for whatever offense has been committed
and makes explicit the hostility that is implicit in the context. Polysemy may be at
work here, and both translations can be justified, but the translator should consider
the implications of each before making a choice.

Another retributive use of *fǣhþ* is in *Beowulf* lines 595–597 where the hero
returns Unferth's flyting, saying that Grendel:

ac he hafað onfunden   þæt he þa fæhðe ne þearf,
atole ecgþræce   eower leode
swiðe onsittan,   Sige-Scyldinga
(but he has found that he need not fear very much the *fæhðe*, the grim sword-
tumult of your people, the Victory-Scyldings.)

Again, one could translate *fæhðe* as 'feud,' but the sense of specific retributive acts is made clear by the word's apposition to *atole ecgþræce*, a use that blends into another poetic sense of *fæhþ*, that of general violence.

Fæhþ as Violence

This third sense of *fæhþ* is an extension of the sense of hostile act into unspecified violent acts, war, or general mayhem. The *Beowulf* poet uses this sense when he says of the death of Hygelac in lines 1205–1207:

> hyne wyrd fornam
> syþðan he for wlenco   wean ahsode,
> fæhðe to Frysum
> (fate carried him off when he, on account of pride, asked for trouble, *fæhðe* with the Frisians.)

'Vengeance' does not fit the context, which is unprovoked war. 'Feud' might work, but we have no knowledge of the conflict continuing after the disastrous raid, leaving us with 'violence' or 'war' as the choices. Similar instances are in *Beowulf* line 2948, which speaks of the Swedes and the Geats and "hu ða folc mid him fæhðe towehton" (how the people aroused *fæhðe* among them), and in line 2999 and its "fæhðo ond se feondscipe" (*fæhðo* and the enmity). We can plausibly read *fæhþ* as 'hostility' in both these instances, but given usual context of acts and deeds, not relationships or states of mind, *violence* would seem to be the better translation. The Swedes and Geats do not merely bear each other ill-will, they are at war.

Elsewhere in the poem, the poet says of Beowulf as he grapples with Grendel's Mother in line 1537–1538:

> Gefeng þa be eaxle   —nalas for fæhðe mearn—
> Guð-Geata leod   Grendles modor.
> (Then the man of the War-Geats seized Grendel's mother by the shoulder—he not at all regretted that *fæhðe*).

This passage can be read as saying that Beowulf did not regret or shrink from mayhem or violence, and indeed Fulk, et al. gloss it so (2008: 415). Another reading is available, however, if we accept Eric Stanley's emendation of *eaxle* to *feaxe* and Beowulf seizes Grendel's Mother by the hair (1976). With this reading the word strays back into the category of crime, i.e., hair-pulling, and shows us that Beowulf is not above disregarding Marquess of Queensbury rules when it suits him.

In *Christ and Satan* lines 401–404, the Harrowing of Hell is depicted as a battle:

> Þa com engla sweg,
> dyne on dægred;   hæfde drihton seolf
> feond oferfohten.   Wæs seo fæhðe þa gyt
> open on uhtan,   þa se egsa becom
> (Then came the voice of angels, a din at daybreak; the Lord himself had outfought the fiend. His *fæhðe* was then manifest on that dawn when his terror came.)

The sense of 'retribution' is possible here, but there is no other mention of God's wrath upon the demons of hell in the vicinity of this passage, which is immediately followed by a description of the freed souls ascending to heaven. Instead, battle imagery dominates the passage and the sense of 'violence' seems more apt.

There is one instance where a compound of *fǣhþ* is apparently used as 'feud,' or at least in the context of an ongoing conflict that must be settled. Beowulf himself uses the hapax *wælfæhða* in lines 2028–2029, when he tells of Hrothgar's reason for marrying Freawaru to Froda:

> ond þæt ræd talað
> þæt he mid ðy wife   wælfæhða dæl,
> sæcca gesette
> (and that he counts it advisable that with the woman he settle the conflicts, a portion of the *wælfæhða*.)

It is possible that *wælfæhþa* does indeed denote what we today would classify as *bloodfeud*, but since the word is a hapax legomenon, we cannot know. However, it seems more likely that it is a one-off coinage formed for alliteration and simply denotes an especially internecine *fǣhþ*. Given the context, a translation of 'blood feud' could be justified, but, again, the word itself seems to literally denote only violence, with only a contextual association with feud and ongoing conflict.

Finally, a few of the instances of *fǣhþ* are especially cryptic because the context is obscure or confused, sometimes deliberately so. One such instance is line 10–11 of *The Exeter Book* "Riddle 29," in which the subject of the riddle "gewat hyre west þonan/ fæhþum feran, forð onette" (took herself west from there, hastening forth with *fæhþum*). If we take the riddle as being about the sun and moon, represented as warriors, battling over the booty of the stars, then we may read *fæhþum* as "violence, hostile acts" perpetrated by the sun, a metaphor for its heat and energy, as it makes its way westward across the sky (Bitterli 2009: 165). Or if we take the dative plural to mean manner, *fæhþum* may be read as *violently* (Muir 2000: 2:631; Williamson 1977: 229).

Likewise, *Precepts* lines 54–56 is obscure, because its gnomic nature and lack of specific context make multiple readings possible:

> Seldan snottor guma   sorgleas blissað,
> swylce dol seldon   drymeð sorgful
> ymb his forðgesceaft,   nefne he fæhþe wite.
> (Seldom does the wise man rejoice without sorrow, in a like manner the fool seldom sings in sorrow about his future, unless he knows *fæhþe*.)

Clearly *fæhþe wite* here refers to experiencing some kind of adversity, but the precise nature is vague. It could refer to being the victim of a violent act or being the perpetrator of such an act who is subject to penalty or retribution.

So far, I have examined the meaning of *fǣhþ* synchronically. Since the word is primarily a poetic one and since dating Old English poetry is difficult, to say the least, there are limits to what can be done diachronically with the word. However, we can date the law codes and the handful of prose works with reasonable precision and confidence, and from this it would seem that the senses of hostile act and retribution existed throughout the word's lifespan, ranging from the late seventh-century Ine's

code to Cnut's code of 1014.[15] The early use of *werfǽhþ*, rather than the unmarked *fǽhþ,* might, however, reflect a shift in the word's meaning. *Werfǽhþ* may be an idiosyncratic compound, or it may carry a slightly different sense than plain *fǽhþ.* Perhaps the *wer-* element emphasizes the injury done to the victim or classifies it as a particular crime, manslaughter, while the unmarked *fǽhþ* denotes a more general crime or offense. Alternatively, perhaps the sense of retribution is the original one, with *werfǽhþ* denoting the offense that deserved it, but the available evidence is too scant for confidence in any hypothesis. As a poetic sense, *fǽhþ*'s sense of generalized violence resists diachronic analysis, but it seems likely that it is an extension of one or both of the other two senses. The most that can be said is that the meaning of the word in prose remained fairly stable throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.

It is tempting to ascribe a meaning of 'feud' to *fǽhþ*. The Old English word is from a Germanic root associated with hostility and enmity and most of its appearances are in texts, the law codes and *Beowulf*, that are thematically linked to cyclical violence between kin-groups. In some cases a translation of 'feud' makes sense in the passage's context. However, when all the word's appearances are examined, it is that in every instance the word can refer to a specific hostile act, retribution for a specific hostile act, or violence in general. In those instances where *fǽhþ* can plausibly be understood to mean 'feud,' this sense would seem to be an extension of these base meanings. 'Feud' is a secondary meaning of the Old English word, not its primary one, and reading *fǽhþ* to mean 'feud, hostility, enmity' can introduce connotations and implications that are not present in the text or make explicit connotations that are implicit. Such translations, while in some cases legitimate choices, should be recognized as interpretive, not definitive.

While this re-examination of *fǽhþ's* meaning in the corpus and a hesitancy to translate it as *feud* usefully checks the impulse to ascribe ongoing hostility to contexts where the word is used, it does not radically restructure our understanding of the role of retaliation in Anglo-Saxon legal culture. Familial retribution was indeed practiced, and despite attempts by law and custom to limit it, such retribution undoubtedly did from time to time erupt into a continuing cycle of violence. This re-examination of the meaning of *fǽhþ* is more valuable for how it can open up new interpretations of the poetic uses of the word, such as how a connotation of crime affects the reader's view of characters who commit it, the emphasis on injury to other parties it introduces, or the legal associations the word brings into the poems, for, as Robinson notes, the correct "definitions of words are necessarily the starting point for any critical explication" (1970: 99–100).

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[15] Ine's code survives only as an appendix to Alfred's code, raising questions as to its accuracy, but it seems to have come down to us without significant alteration; at least, Alfred seems to pass it on as he received it. Wormald (1999: 1:103, 278–280).

Appendix: Instances of FǢHÞ in the Corpus

Instance	Form and context	Definition
Legal		
Ine 28	**unfæhða**	**Retribution/feud (no cause)**
Ine 46.2	werfæhþe	Offense
Ine 54 (rubric)	be werfæhðe tyhtlan	Offense (homicide)
Ine 54	werfæhðe	Offense (homicide)
Ine 74.2	fæhðe	Retribution
Alfred 42 (rubric)	be fæhðe	Violence (?)
8 Æthelred 23/1 Cnut 5.2b/Canons of Edgar 68	fæhðe	Offense
8 Æthelred 23/1 Cnut 5.2b/Canons of Edgar 68	fæhðe (beran)	Retribution
8 Æthelred 25/1 Cnut 5.2d	**fæhðbote**	**Offense/feud (payment for)**
8 Æthelred 25/1 Cnut 5.2d	**fæhðbote**	**Offense/feud (payment for)**
2 Edmund 1	wege sylf ða fæhþe	Retribution
2 Edmund 1.2	wege ða fæhðe	Retribution
2 Edmund 1.7	fæhðe sectan	Offense
Other prose		
Ælfric *Catholic Homilies* 1.15	fæhðe	Retribution
Hom S 25	fæhðu	Retribution
Orosius 2.5	fæhþe	Offense
Orosius 6.4	fæhþe	Offense
Verse		
Andreas, 284	fægðe	Violence
Andreas, 1386	fæhðo wið God	Offense (sin)
Battle of Maldon, 225	fæhðe gemunde	Offense (homicide)
***Beowulf,* 109**	**fæhðe [Cain]**	**Offense (homicide)/feud**
Beowulf, 137	fæhðe ond fyrene	Offense (homicide)
***Beowulf,* 153**	**fyrene ond fæhðe**	**Offense (homicide)/feud**
***Beowulf,* 459**	**fæhðe mæste [Ecgtheow]**	**Offense (homicide)/feud**
***Beowulf,* 470**	**fæhðe feo þingode [Ecgtheow]**	**Offense (homicide)/feud**
***Beowulf,* 595**	**fæhðe [app. w/atole ecgþræce]**	**Retribution/violence/feud**
Beowulf, 879	fæhðe ond fyrena	Offense (crime, misdeed)
Beowulf, 1207	fæhðe to Frysum	Violence (war)
***Beowulf,* 1333**	**fæhðe wræc [Grendel's death]**	**Offense (homicide)/feud**
Beowulf, 1340	fæhðe gestæled [Grendel's death]	Offense (homicide)

Instance	Form and context	Definition
Beowulf, 1380	fæhðe	Offense (homicide)
Beowulf, 1537	nalas for fæhðe mearn	Violence/offense (hair pulling)
***Beowulf,* 2028**	**wælfæhða dæl**	**Violence/feud**
Beowulf, 2403	fæhð [in app. w/bealonið]	Offense/violence
Beowulf, 2465	fæghðe gebetan	Offense (homicide)
Beowulf, 2480	fæhðe ond fyrene	Offense
Beowulf, 2489	fæhðo	Offense
Beowulf, 2513	f̈æhðe secan, mærðu fremman	Offense (killing of the dragon)
Beowulf, 2618	fæhðe	Offense (homicide)
Beowulf, 2689	fæhða gemyndig	Offense
Beowulf, 2948	fæhðe towehton	Violence
Beowulf, 2999	fæhðo/feondscipe/wælnið	Violence
Beowulf, 3061	fæhð	Offense
Christ and Satan, 403	fæhðe	Violence (war)/retribution (?)
Christ and Satan, 639	stæleð feondas fæhðe and firne	Offense
Christ A, 368	fæhþo	Offense (sin)
***Christ B,* 617**	**fæhþa mæste**	**Offense/feud**
Christ C, 1440	fæhþe	Violence
Genesis A, 900	fæhðe geworhte	Offense (sin)
Genesis A, 1029	fæhðe	Offense (homicide)
Genesis A, 1351	fæhðe ic wille […] stælan	Retribution (flood)
Genesis A, 1378	manfæhðu	Offense
Guthlac A, 186	fæhðe ræran	Offense/violence (figurative)
***Husband's Message,* 19**	**hine fæhþo adraf**	**Retribution/feud**
Maxims I, 192	fæhþo	Offense (homicide)
Precepts, 56	nefne he fæhþe wite	Offense (?)/penalty (?)
Riddle 29, 11	fæhþum feran	Violence (?)
***Solomon and Saturn,* 445**	**fæhðo modor**	**Offense (sin)/feud**
***Solomon and Saturn,* 450**	**geflitu fæhðo ne tydre**	**Offense (sin)/feud**
Vainglory, 36	fæhþe	Offense (boasting)
Wife's Lament, 26	fæhðu dreogan	Retribution

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