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GOTHIC <GGW>*

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Abstract

The paper deals with the orthographic cluster <ggw> in Gothic and the question if it denoted both /ngw/ and /ggw/ or only the former. The paper concludes that internal evidence only points to /ngw/ and that external evidence cannot be used to support double pronunciation of the cluster.

1. Introduction

In Gothic a sound change occurred that is generally called 'Verschärfung' but is sometimes also referred to as 'Holtzmann's Law'. Some scholars believe that this change also occurred in other East-Germanic languages (e.g. Braune 1884:546–547, Streitberg 1943:61), but only Gothic provides reliable examples. A similar change occurred (later?) in Old Norse.

The sound change in question meant that a geminate (or long) semivowel changed into a stop and a semivowel: *-jj-* > Go. *-ddj-*, *-waddjus* 'wall' (OI *-ggj-*, *veggr*, gen. *veggjar*) and *-ww-* > Go. *-ggw-*, *triggws* 'faithful' (OI *-ggv-*, *tryggr*, acc. *tryggvan*). Gothic shows some exceptions to these changes, i.e. they are not found everywhere they might be expected, e.g. Go. *prije* (gen. of *preis** 'three') vs. OI *priggja* (cf. Krause 1968:110). These exceptions are, actually, irrelevant in the present context, as the nature of the 'Verschärfung' is not the issue here. The present paper will concentrate on what is behind (transliterated) orthographic <ggw> although <ddj> will also be treated briefly.

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2. Orthography

It is well known that Gothic orthography followed a Greek model in writing a velar nasal preceding a velar stop with a ⟨g⟩, i.e. the sound combinations [ŋg, ŋk, ŋkʷ] are written ⟨gg, gk, gq⟩. Often a double ⟨gg⟩ is used before ⟨k⟩ and ⟨q⟩, and ⟨ggg⟩ occurs once in Mt 9:15, *atgaggand* ‘(they) come to’, and once in the deed from Arezzo, *killiggans* (for *skilliggans* (acc. pl.) ‘solidi’). The nasal quality of the first ⟨g⟩ in these clusters is confirmed by scribal errors when it is replaced by an ⟨n⟩. There are five examples in the Codex Argenteus, more precisely in the latter part of Luke. These variants are shown in (1) in comparison with the regular forms:

- (1) **regular forms : variant forms**
briggip, briggandans : *bringip* (Lk 15:22), *bringandans* (Lk 15:23)
þagkeip : *þankeip* (Lk 14:31), *þank* (Lk 17:9)
igqis : *inqis* (Lk 19:31)

The form *unkjane* (gen. pl. of *unkja** < Lat. *uncia*) in the deed from Arezzo should also be mentioned although it may be considered unreliable as the original no longer exists. Nevertheless, it is interesting in comparison with the form ⟨s⟩*killiggans* found in the same document as mentioned above. Neither should the form *skillignans* in the last subscription of the deed from Naples be forgotten.

The Gothic praxis in writing the velar nasal deviates from the Greek model in that a final nasal of a prefix is never assimilated to the first consonant of the base. We have *in-g-* (11×), *inn-g-* (27×), *un-g-* (83×). Then, an infix *þan* ‘but, then’ does not assimilate to a following velar, *atuhþangaf* ‘but then (he) gave’ (1×), *atuhþangagand* ‘but then (they) come to’ (1×), *bihþangitanda* ‘but (we) are also found’ (1×), nor does the final ⟨n⟩ of the first parts of the following compounds, *þiudangardi* ‘kingdom’ (69×) and *midjungards** ‘inhabited earth’ (4×). Here there are 197 occurrences of orthographic ⟨ng⟩, in addition to the two mentioned in (1) above, so this graphic combination is far from unknown. In addition to the occurrences mentioned in (1) we find a further 17 occurrences of ⟨nk⟩, *in-k-* (4×), *un-k-* (13×), and three occurrences of ⟨nq⟩, in *un-q-*. Therefore, in total there are 217+6 examples of an ⟨n⟩ written in front of a ⟨g⟩, ⟨k⟩, or ⟨q⟩. This practice in writing the prefixes perhaps influenced the scribe of Luke when he wrote ⟨bringip⟩, etc.

2.1 Holtzmann and Scherer

The orthographic cluster ⟨ggw⟩ is not confined to words showing Holtzmann’s Law, however. It is also found in words such as *aggwus** ‘narrow’ and *siggwan* ‘read, sing’. There is no reason to doubt that in these cases the ⟨gg⟩ also denoted [ŋg] so here the cluster stood for [ŋgw] although there is no occurrence of graphic ⟨ngw⟩ to confirm it. The question is whether ⟨gg⟩ also denoted [ŋg] in the words affected by Holtzmann’s Law, i.e. did the Goths write ⟨triggws⟩ but pronounce it [triŋgws]? In the oldest Gothic grammars and until ca 1870 it was not doubted that they did.

Holtzmann (1835:862–863) himself was convinced that <gg> in the cluster <ggw> always stood for a nasal as he was of the opinion that the change later named after him had also occurred in *siggwan* which he compared to OHG *siuwan* ‘sew’. Therefore, apparently, he thought that <ggw> was always produced by the law. Actually, he also thought that the <dd> in <ddj> was completely parallel; it represented a palatal or a retroflex nasal ([ɲ] or [ɲ̥]). Holtzmann was led to this conclusion about <ddj> to preserve the consistency between the two changes even though there is nothing in particular pointing to a nasal in that cluster nor that <dd> could be used to represent a nasal. Apparently, Holtzmann thought that no stops were in these clusters as he writes:

Das doppelte gg in ggv bezeichnet ohne Zweifel einen Nasal, und zwar den gutturalen; auch dd in dd[j] wird daher einen Nasal ausdrücken sollen, für den Ulfila eine Bezeichnungsart erfinden mußte ...

Although the authors of Gothic grammars (after 1835) did not necessarily accept Holtzmann’s conclusions about <ddj>, they did accept that it represented a new sound combination (presumably [d:j]) as it was graphically distinct from both <ndj> and <dj> but, on the other hand, that the new <ggw> denoted the same sounds as the old one, i.e. [ɲgw]. For example, von der Gabelentz and Löbe (1846:43, 52) do not mention any problem in connection with these clusters and – as their grammar is synchronic rather than historical – they do not mention Holtzmann’s Law at all.

Subsequently Scherer (1868:854–855) rediscovered Holtzmann’s Law: he appears to be unaware of Holtzmann’s paper; at least, he does not mention it at all. Scherer is also the first to insist that Gothic orthographic <ggw> had a double pronunciation according to origin, i.e. presumably, an old [ɲgw] and a new [g:w] although he is not particularly specific about the pronunciation. His evidence appears to be that there is no explanation of the nasal in the new combination, or, in Scherer’s (1868:855) words: ‘Für die Nasalierung, die nach der gangbaren Meinung in den genannten Wörtern eingetreten wäre, wüsste ich absolut keine Erklärung.’

Nevertheless, the explanation of the alleged nasal in *triggws*, etc. could be that the outcome of the change was influenced by a sound combination that already existed in the language, i.e. [ɲgw]. If we look briefly at Old Icelandic, it is of course not certain, despite the spelling, that the stop that resulted from the change in *tryggr*, etc. was necessarily long from the beginning. It is noteworthy that in Old Icelandic there was already a -gg- of a different origin but no short -g- as a stop (only as a fricative). Therefore, it is not impossible that the result involves an accommodation to what already existed.

3. <ddj>

Although not certain, it is generally assumed that in Gothic the phoneme /d/ had two variants: initially and medially after a consonant it was a stop, [d], but medially after a vowel it was a fricative, [ð] (cf. Braune/Heidermanns 2004:75). Then it is assumed that the <dd> in <ddj> denoted a stop but not necessarily a long one

(cf. Braune 1884:546, fn. 3). The difference between *bidja* '(I) pray/ask' and *iddja* '(I) went' then was [biðja] vs. [id(:)ja]. Braune (1884:546) suggested that Gothic *ddj* had developed from original *ggj* (as in Old Norse), i.e. presumably, [jj] > [dʒ] > [dj].

There is no question that the orthographic cluster <ggj> had a single value in Gothic. It occurs nine times in the corpus and is confined to two closely related words: *fauragaggi* 'stewardship' and *fauragaggja* 'steward'. Two scribal errors, *fauragagjan* (Lk 16:1) and *fauragagjins* (Lk 8:3), would increase the occurrences to eleven if corrected. Durante (1974:42) assumed that this cluster denoted [ŋgj]. On the other hand <ddj> denoted [jj]. It should be noted that the pronunciation [dʒ] is excluded for <ddj>. That is shown by the loans *laiktsjo* (beside *laiktio* < Lat. *lectio*) and *kawtsjo** (< Lat. *cautio*). If <tsj> here denoted [tsj] or [tʃ] it becomes less likely that <ddj> denoted [dʒj] or [dʒ], or any other kind of sibilant sound, as then graphic <dʒj> (or perhaps <dsj>) would have been expected. The question remains why it was not possible to use <ggj> in both cases as it is likely that the nasal cluster was somewhat palatalised, i.e. [ŋgj] or [ɲjj]. Apparently, a double value of <ggj> would not have done more harm than the alleged double value of <ggw>.

In the inherited vocabulary of Gothic there was no long or geminated /d/. Holtzmann's Law created a new sound or sound combination denoted in script by <ddj>. Only four bases showing this change are attested in the extant Gothic corpus. Of course it is likely that some more forms existed. Thus, Crimean Gothic *ada* 'egg' is sometimes cited as corresponding to Biblical Gothic **addi* (cf. Braune 1884:545, Stearns 1978:127). If this tells us anything it is that <ddj> denoted some kind of a /d/. Therefore, <ddj> probably denoted [d(:)j] – although a long fricative, [ð(:)j], cannot be excluded – and the new sound was tolerated in the language, perhaps because it was somewhat similar to the initial sounds in *diups** 'deep' and *dius** 'animal'. Marchand (1973:89–90) ascribes this to the relative frequency of *iddj*- occurring more than 130 times in the Gothic corpus (mostly in the Gospels). The statistic is shown in (2):

- (2) 1 *daddjandeim* (from *daddjan** 'suckle')
 132 *iddj*- (in the pret. of *gaggan* 'go')
 5 *twaddje* (gen. of *twai* 'two')
 11 *-waddj*- (in various forms of *-waddjus* 'wall')

These amount to 149 occurrences and if two scribal errors are added, *atideddun* (Mk 16:2) and *twadje* (1TimA 5:19), there are 151 occurrences of <ddj> in the Gothic corpus. In comparison there are 129 occurrences of <ndj>. If the parallel occurrences in the Pauline Epistles are counted once there are 144 <ddj> and 101 <ndj>. In the Gospels there are 121 occurrences of *iddj*- but only 12 (or seven) in the Epistles.

4. <ggw>

It is assumed that in Gothic the phoneme /g/ had similar allophones to /d/, i.e. that it was a stop, [g], initially and medially after a consonant but a fricative, [ɣ], after

a vowel (cf. Braune/Heidermanns 2004:71). Therefore, if Holtzmann's Law produced a stop, [g:w], it found no support in Gothic phonology. There is no <gw> initially, and medially it is only found in *bidagwa* 'beggar' (John 9:8). If the form is genuine the pronunciation was presumably [ɣw]. Possibly, it is a scribal error for **bidaga* or **bidaqa* (cf. Lehmann 1986:67, B46). The outcome of the change was, nevertheless, similar enough to one existing cluster, i.e. [ŋgw], and the two coalesced. In fact, this is a kind of analogy (cf. Marchand 1973:89–90), and it is important that within Gothic there is no evidence for a double pronunciation of <ggw>. Therefore the pronunciation was formerly assumed to be always the same.

Nevertheless, Scherer's conclusion mentioned above was generally accepted and handbooks postulate double pronunciation (cf. Krause 1968:111). It is grounded primarily in the double origin of <ggw> but some external support is also claimed to exist such as the personal name *Triggua*, *Triguilla* (believed to be derived from the adj. *triggws*) and the Italian noun *tregua* 'truce' (believed to be a loan from Gothic, i.e. *triggwa* 'covenant'). These will be dealt with in the following subsections. Presumably, this position was held until Marchand (1959:441–442, 1973:60, 77) expressed doubts and stressed that internal evidence pointed to a single pronunciation. This was during the fifties of the last century and it is likely that these doubts entered the handbooks when Ebbinghaus's first revision of Braune's *Gotische Grammatik* was published in 1961 (the sixteenth edition). The traditional view has been restored in the latest (twentieth) edition (Braune/Heidermanns 2004:73).

Marchand (1959:442) mentions three points in support of the opinion that <ggw> was always [ŋgw]. First, the verb *bliggwan** has moved from class II to class III (the class of *siggwan*) as shown by the pret. sg. *blaggw* (instead of the expected **blau*). Second, if there was a difference between /ngw/ and /ggw/ it was easily shown in the orthography with <ngw> and <ggw> respectively. As Wulfila knew Latin he could have followed a Latin model here. Third, the change of geminates to nasal and consonant is widespread enough to be accepted in this case also (here Marchand refers to Schwyzler 1934).

Bennett (1964:22) ignores Marchand's second point but takes up his first and third points. Then he adds that

... the original /ggw/ was confined to very few words, whereas /ngw/ was many times more frequent and so constituted a well ingrained habit of articulation that would provide the pattern for such a dissimilation.

The statistic for the clusters /ggw/ vs. /ngw/, shown in (3), does not support Bennett's last claim:

(3a) Number of occurrences of /ggw/	
14	<i>bliggw</i> - 'beat' (incl. <i>blaggw</i> , <i>bluggw</i> -)
3	<i>glaggw</i> - 'accurately'
1	<i>skuggw</i> - 'mirror'
44	<i>triggw</i> - 'faithful'
<u>62</u>	

(3b) Number of occurrences of /ngw/

13	<i>aggw</i> - ‘narrow’
2	<i>riggw</i> - ‘tamed’ (ITimB 3:3, Cod. A has <i>rigw</i> -)
20	<i>siggw</i> - ‘recite’ (incl. <i>saggw</i> -, <i>suggw</i> -)
1	<i>swaggw</i> - ‘swey’
<u>36</u>	

Here we have 62 instances of /ggw/ but 36 of /ngw/. If parallel occurrences in the Ambrosian Codices A and B are counted each as one the result is 52 instances of /ggw/ and 29 of /ngw/. Therefore, /ggw/ is almost twice as frequent as /ngw/ but of course the remaining /ngw/ could have strengthened the case against /ggw/.

Bennett’s points have all been rejected by Voyles (1968:720–721). He concludes that until we have evidence to the contrary, it seems more likely that ⟨ggw⟩ represented both /ggw/ and /ngw/. He does not explain why they were not kept distinct in the orthography, but, generally speaking, when our sources use a grapheme or a grapheme cluster consistently for a sound or sound combination that can be shown to be of more than one historical origin, we conclude that coalescence has occurred. We would demand proof for the opposite.

4.1 The case for It. *tregua*

Brosman (1971) tried to provide new evidence for the double pronunciation of ⟨ggw⟩. He asserted that Italian *tregua* ‘truce; delay’ was really a loan from Gothic *triggwa* ‘*διαθήκη*, covenant’. It is of course not impossible that a word meaning ‘covenant, agreement’ can change its meaning to ‘truce’ but there is no particular evidence for such a change of meaning in Go. *triggwa*. Actually, Brosman (1971:171) accepts that it is possible to explain It. *tregua* in a different way – that it is a loan from Franconian or some other Old High German dialect – but he concludes that it is expedient to consider it to be a loan word from Gothic. A simpler explanation, however, emerged.

Pfister (1985:367, 1986:52) points to Lomb. **trewwa*-, in Latinised form *treuua*, that occurs in the Lombard laws with the meaning ‘giuramento di non riprendere le ostilità prima del giudizio definitivo del giudice’ (‘oath not to resume the hostilities before the definitive judgment of the judge’). The meaning development ‘time limit, delay’ in the It. *tregua* is easily compatible with this. Pfister considers such variant forms as It. *triegua/triega* to show an open *e*, which excludes the Ostrogothic origin of this word. The form *tregua* was in Italy a natural Romanisation of Lat. *treuua* that was a loan from Lomb. **trewwa*. In this case both form and content match, so it cannot be used to support double pronunciation of the Gothic combination ⟨ggw⟩. (That was of course not Pfister’s aim; he only wanted to find the origin of It. *tregua*.)

Both Brosman (1971:170) and Pfister (1985:365) consider Spanish *tregua* and similar forms in Provençal (*trega*, *tregua*) and Portuguese (*tregoa*) to be of Visigothic origin, but it is hardly likely that the word is taken as a loan many times from different dialects or languages into different dialects or languages and always has the same meaning. It is more likely that the word was mediated through Latin. The main

variants found in Latin are the following, according to Niermeyer (1976:1041, **trewa**): *treua, treoa, triua, tria, traua, tregua, tregia, trega, treva, trevia, treba, trebua*. Apparently, these forms are best explained as originating in a West-Germanic dialect (not affected by Holtzmann's Law) and that the -g- is a part of the Romanisation; cf. Meyer-Lübke (1911:678 [nr. 8927 **triuwa**]): "Es ist möglich, daß alle romanischen Formen auf got. *triggwo* [sic] zurückgehen, aber ebensowohl kann das romanische -g- aus germ. -w- entstanden sein".

The chronology should also be borne in mind as the forms in question are first attested in the eleventh century or later (cf. Pfister 1985:367, 1986:52) and even though they were all originally taken from some kind of Gothic it would be risky to draw from them conclusions about the pronunciation of Biblical Gothic.

4.2 The case for the PN *Triggwa*

Wrede (1891:79) was presumably the first to point to the name *Trigguila, Triggua, Trivvila, Trivva* and its possible connection with the Gothic adj. *triggws* and the ON name *Tryggvi*. The Gothic name is found in six texts and apparently it always refers to the same person (cf. Amory 1997:423–424, Francovich Onesti 2007:99–101) and there is no particular reason to doubt that this person was an Ostrogoth. In (4) the main forms of the name occurring in the data are listed (cf. Reichert 1987:722, 713); first comes the author, then the alleged Gothic nom. sg. form, the normalised, inflectional form in Latin, and the manuscript variants:

(4)	Author	nom. sg.	Inflectional form / Manuscript variants
	Cassiodorus (III.20; p. 89)	<i>Triwila</i> *	<i>Triwilae</i> (gen. sg.) triuuil(a)e, triullile, triuile, triuiul(a)e, triuule, triuili, gri-
	Anon. Valesianus (82; p. 326)	<i>Triwa</i> *	<i>Triwane</i> (abl. sg.) triuuane
	Ennodius (ep. 9.21; p. 306)	<i>Triggwa</i> *	<i>Triggwa</i> (abl. sg.) triggua
	Boethius (I.4.10; p. 100)	<i>Triggwila</i> *	<i>Triggwillam</i> (acc. sg.) triguillam, trigguilam, tringuillam
	Gregor of Tours (III.31; p. 126)	<i>Traggwila</i> *	<i>Traggwilanem</i> (acc. sg.) traguillanem (2), trauuilanem, tranguilanem,
	Fredegar (III.43; p. 105)	<i>Traggwila</i> *	<i>Traggwila</i> (nom. sg.), <i>Traggwilane</i> (abl. sg.) traquila, traquilani, tranquillani

Wagner (2003) is the last to have discussed this name. He assumes that it was a Gothic name, *Triggwa*, and *Triggwila* with a diminutive suffix. He considers the origin to

be clear; the name is derived from the adj. *triggws* and finds a direct match in the Old Norse name *Tryggvi*.¹ Wagner accepts Jellinek's (1926:36) opinion that this is proof that there was no nasal in ⟨ggw⟩ in *triggws*. The double *l* in some of the attested forms is, he thinks, initiated by the Latin diminutive suffix *-ellus*. On the other hand, it is necessary to explain the ⟨g⟩-less forms found in Cassiodorus and the Anonymus Valesianus. Wagner's explanation is that learned men, as they were, understood that there was often a superfluous *-g-* written along with Germanic *-w-* and therefore they, wrongly, dropped the *g* in this case.

This argument should be turned upside down. Cassiodorus and the *Triwila* he mentions were both officials of King Theodoric. The name occurs in a letter Cassiodorus wrote to *Triwila* on behalf of the king. Therefore it is just as likely that Cassiodorus knew *Triwila*, who had the title *saiō* (some kind of messenger) and was a *praepositus sacri cubiculi* (Boethius as in (4), Moorhead 1992:73), and that he realised that there was no /g/ in *Triwila*'s name and accordingly he did not write a ⟨g⟩. Also, it is likely that Cassiodorus knew literate Goths who were able to help him with the orthography. The situation of the Anonymus Valesianus is somewhat similar.

Where should we look for the origin of this name? Wrede (1891:79) also considers it to derive from the adj. *triggws*. In a footnote he suggests that the forms *Triwa/Triwila* are folk etymologies; an attempt to connect the name with Gothic *triu**, that corresponds etymologically to ModE *tree*. Presumably this means that the 'folk' in question were in need of a new etymology as the relationship of *Triggwa/Triggwila* with the adj. *triggws* was no longer evident. In fact, all this is unnecessary. Probably the forms *Triwa/Triwila* are the original forms and the forms with *-g(g)w-* are the Romanisation of them. The name is simply derived from *triu**, as Wrede found possible. Now, 'tree' is infrequent or even unattested in Early Germanic personal names. Therefore, it is possible that originally this was a nickname. Gothic *triu** as a simplex is only found in the syntagma *miþ hairum jah triwam* (Mk 14:43,48) 'μετὰ μαχαίρων καὶ ξύλον, with swords and clubs'. The base is also found in the compound *weinatriu* 'ἄμπελος, grapevine' and in the derived adj. *triweins* 'ξύλινος, wooden'. Apparently, Go. *triu** meant 'branch, stick, club' whereas the word for 'tree' was *bagms* 'δένδρον'. Therefore, *Triwa* (and *Triwila* with the diminutive suffix) could have the individualising meaning: 'the one with the club/stick' or, possibly, it referred to the appearance of the name-bearer: 'the one who looks like a club or stick (in some sense)', etc.

5. Conclusions

As a matter of fact we cannot be sure that Go. *triu** had the same meaning in the language of the Ostrogoths in Italy as it had in the Gothic version of the New Testament. The translation was made in the fourth century among the Visigoths in the

¹ The name *Tryggvi* is very infrequent in Old Norse sources so one wonders if it was perhaps a nickname originally, not an inherited Proto-Germanic personal name.

Balkan Peninsula and the language must surely have been somewhat different from the language of the Ostrogoths in the sixth century, although they possibly left some marks of their own on the preserved text. The main thing is that we have to live with the fact that there is no reliable evidence that Gothic <ggw> was pronounced differently according to origin. Even though we accept that *tregua* and *Trigguila* show that there was no nasal in Gothic *triggwa* we cannot conclude that there was a nasal in *siggwan* for historical reasons. Really, the equation has changed. In that scenario it would be most likely that the combination <ggw> was always without a nasal although there was a nasal in the combination <gg> in other environments. Brosman (1971:173) admits this but considers the change /ŋgw/ > /ggw/ less likely than /ggw/ > /ŋgw/. Therefore, it should be said once more: there is no internal evidence for double pronunciation of <ggw> in Gothic, and the external evidence fails to support it.

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