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Gothic Nominal Inflection and Problems of Relative Chronology

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Introduction

- Today's paper is part of an ongoing project investigating "Variation and change in Gothic" (NCN nr. 023/51/B/HS2/01168).
- It takes as its starting point a well-known but often overlooked problem in Gothic nominal inflection, the reflexes of the Proto-Germanic *ja*-stems (< PIE *-yo- stems),
- and proposes to explain the attested forms in terms of a precise relative chronology of prehistoric sound changes as well as maximally well-motivated morphological change.

Outline

1. The Proto-Germanic *ja*-stems in Gothic
2. The mystery of the missing *-j-*
3. Relative chronology and the *ja*-stems
4. A new proposal and its consequences
5. An important caveat
6. Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems
7. Conclusion

The Proto-Germanic *ja*-stems in Gothic

- As in the other older Germanic languages, the reflexes of Proto-Germanic *ja*-stems in Gothic follows two inflectional patterns, with “light” and “heavy” stems.
- The split is the result of Sievers’s Law, by which a pre-PG sequence **-jV-* became **-ijV-* after a syllable of two moras, i.e.
 - **-V̄CjV-* > **-V̄CijV-* and
 - **-VCCjV-* > **-VCCijV-*.

See Sievers 1878, Ringe 2017:143–47. Kiparsky (1998) analyzes Sievers’s Law in terms of “prosodic optimization.” For analyses of syllabic structure in Gothic (more accurately, pre-Gothic), see Calabrese 1994 and Pierce 2006; for a prosodic account of Sievers’s Law in Gothic in terms of “duple timing”, see Miller 2019:47–49. Sandell (forthc.) provides an excellent overview of theoretical treatments of Sievers’s Law in Gothic, with a focus on the *ja*-stems.

The Proto-Germanic *ja*-stems in Gothic

- The effects of Sievers's Law were followed by two relevant changes:
 1. **-Cji-* > **-Ci-*; and
 2. **-iji-* > **-ī-*.
- The first must follow **i* < **e* in posttonic syllables, which in turn presupposes that stress had become fixed on the first syllable.
- The second is part of the more general loss of intervocalic **j*, on which see Þórhallsdóttir (1993).

Change 2 apparently followed **i* < **e* before **i* in a following (unstressed) syllable, i.e. it also affected **jji*, although the only probative form is PIE **tréyes* > **prijiz* > PG **prīz* > Go. *preis**, ON *prír*, OHG *drī* 'three' (Ringe 2017:147–53, pace Fulk 2018:61).

The Proto-Germanic *ja*-stems in Gothic

- Finally, “reverse Sievers’s Law” changed the sequence **-ijV-* into **-jV-* after light syllables, thereby leveling the contrast between
 - **-VCjV-* ~ **-V̄CijV-*, **-VCCijV-* (< **-jV-*) and
 - **-VCijV-* ~ **-V̄CijV-*, **-VCCijV-* (< **-ijV-*).
-
- This innovation did not affect *ja*-stem nouns, but was crucial in the evolution of the Class 1 weak presents, whose suffix **-i/ja-* reflects denominative PIE **-y^e/o-* as well as iterative PIE **-ey^e/o-*.

Cf. PIE **wos-éye/o-* ‘clothe’ (Ved. *vāsáyati*, Hitt. *waššezi*) > **waziji/a-* → **wazji/a-* > PG **waz-i/ja-* > Go. *wasjan*, OE *werian*, etc.

The Proto-Germanic *ja*-stems in Gothic



- The result of these changes was the following paradigms for light and heavy *ja*-stems, illustrated by PG **harja-* ‘army’ and **herdija-* ‘shepherd’.

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|----------------------|
| nom.sg. | <i>*harjaz</i> | <i>*herdijaz</i> |
| acc. | <i>*harjā</i> | <i>*herdijā</i> |
| gen. | <i>*harjas</i> | <i>*herdijas</i> |
| dat. | <i>*harjai</i> | <i>*herdijai</i> |
| nom.pl | <i>*harjōz</i> | <i>*herdijōz</i> |
| acc. | <i>*harjanz</i> | <i>*herdijananz</i> |
| gen. | <i>*harjō̅</i> | <i>*herdijō̅</i> |
| dat. | <i>*harjama/iz</i> | <i>*herdijama/iz</i> |

The Proto-Germanic *ja*-stems in Gothic



- These should have developed in Gothic by sound change and well-known morphological innovations (*a*-stem gen.sg. *-is*, m./n. gen. pl. *-ē*) as below.

| | | |
|---------|----------------|------------------|
| nom.sg. | <i>haris</i> | <i>hairdeis</i> |
| acc. | <i>hari</i> | <i>hairdi</i> |
| gen. | <i>harjis</i> | <i>hairdeis</i> |
| dat. | <i>harja</i> | <i>hairdja</i> |
| nom.pl | <i>harjōs</i> | <i>hairdjōs</i> |
| acc. | <i>harjans</i> | <i>hairdjans</i> |
| gen. | <i>harjē</i> | <i>hairdjē</i> |
| dat. | <i>harjam</i> | <i>hairdjam</i> |

The Proto-Germanic *ja*-stems in Gothic



- However, the light *ja*-stems have an ending *-jis* for †-*is* in the nom.sg.
- The acc. sg. is *-i*, as expected.

| | | |
|---------|----------------|------------------|
| nom.sg. | <i>harjis</i> | <i>hairdeis</i> |
| acc. | <i>hari</i> | <i>hairdi</i> |
| gen. | <i>harjis</i> | <i>hairdeis</i> |
| dat. | <i>harja</i> | <i>hairdja</i> |
| nom.pl | <i>harjōs</i> | <i>hairdjōs</i> |
| acc. | <i>harjans</i> | <i>hairdjans</i> |
| gen. | <i>harjē</i> | <i>hairdjē</i> |
| dat. | <i>harjam</i> | <i>hairdjam</i> |

The mystery of the missing *-j-*

- The mystery of the light *ja*-stem inflection may be understood in one of two ways:
 - why did nom.sg. **-is*, but not acc.sg. **-i*, introduce (or in historical terms, restore) *-j-* from the remaining forms?
 - why did the acc.sg. fail to restore *-j-*, whereas the nom.sg. did?

The mystery of the missing *-j-*



- The problem has been most recently addressed by Schuhmann (2011), who offers a useful overview of previous research.
- Three main approaches may be identified, one phonological and two morphological (analogical).

The mystery of the missing *-j-*

- Sievers himself (1878:129) proposed a rule raising **a* in **-ja-* > **-je-* > **-ji-*, hence PG **harjaz*, **herdijaz* > **harjiz*, **herdijiz* > *harjis*, *hairdeis*.
- But as pointed out by Schuhmann (2011:510), other sequences of **-ja-* are not so affected.
- Barrack (1998:104) specified the conditioning more precisely as PG **-jaz*.

Schuhmann (ibid.) argues that whether raised or not, the thematic vowel would have been lost in any case as in PG **dagaz*, **gastiz* > Go. *dags*, *gasts*. We will return to this point below.

The mystery of the missing *-j-*

- Kieckers (1928:110) and Krause (1968:152) proposed that the light *ja*-stem nom.sg. was remodeled after the gen.sg., since the two forms were identical for heavy *ja*-stems, e.g.
 - gen.sg. *hairdeis* : nom.sg. *hairdeis* ::
 - gen.sg. *harjis* : nom.sg. X, X = *harjis*.

See also Boutkan 1995:207 (“*-j-* was introduced from the Gs after the pattern of the long stems, where Ns and Gs had fallen together as a result of a regular phonological development”).

- This would however be the marked direction of analogical influence (see Schuhmann *ibid.*).
- Note furthermore that aside from a handful of residual consonant stems (e.g. *baurgs* ‘city’), **no** other noun classes have identical nom.sg. and gen.sg.!

The mystery of the missing *-j-*

- It is therefore more attractive to explain *harjis* by innerparadigmatic remodeling, namely spread of *-j-* from the gen. and dat.sg. and the plural forms:

nom.sg. **haris* → *har***j***is*

acc. *hari*

gen. *har***j***is*

dat. *har***j***a*

nom.pl *har***j***ōs*

acc. *har***j***ans*

gen. *har***j***ē*

dat. *har***j***am*

The mystery of the missing *-j-*

- This explanation, which goes back to Wright (1910:88), is eminently plausible even in the absence of a precise proportional analogy, and is the most widely held today.
- Jellinek 1926:104 §117 (“N. M. *-jis* statt eines lautgesetzlichen *-is* aus *-jaz* umgebildet nach den übrigen Kasus, insbes. dem G. Sing.”)
- Lambdin 2006:245 (“PG masc. nom. **haryaz* should have become **haris*...but **haris* was replaced at some period with **harjis**, where the *-j-* was extended analogically from the remaining forms of the paradigm”)
- Ringe 2017:251 (“**-Cjaz* > **-Ciz* > **-Cis* (→ *-Cjis*)”, 252 (“PIE **médʰyos* ‘middle’, stem **médʰyo-* > PGmc **midjaz*, **midja-* > pre-Goth. **midiz*, **midja-* → **midjiz*, **midja-* > Goth. *midjis*, *midja-*”)
- Fulk 2018:150 (“...original **haris* acquired the stem *harj-* by analogy to the rest of the paradigm”)
- Schaffner 2024:10 (“nom. sg. **harjis** (with *-j-* from the oblique cases) for **haris* < PGrm. **χarjaz* < PIE **korjos*”)
- Interestingly, Schuhmann (forthc.:45 §3.1.2.2) returns to a combination of these last two analogical sources.

The mystery of the missing *-j-*

- But as Schuhmann asks, why then was acc.sg. *hari* not likewise remodeled as †*harji*?
- Although no Gothic word forms end in *-ji*, there is no evidence that this sequence was ill-formed or phonotactically illicit in absolute word-final position.

Sandell (forthc.:§5.1) and Sandell & Goering (forthc.) set up underlying forms /har-j-s/ ‘army’ and /sipōn-j-s/ ‘disciple’, with *i*-epenthesis and Sievers’s Law producing attested *harjis* and *sipōneis*. The acc.sg. forms would presumably then be /har-j/ and /sipōn-j/. But even if this is the correct synchronic analysis, it does not tell us how these endings arose from PG **-jaz*, **-ja* and **-ijaz*, **-ija*.

The mystery of the missing *-j-*

- The selective restoration of *-j-* in *harjis*, but not in acc. *hari* (light) or *hairdi* (heavy) — or neuter *ja-* stems such as *kuni* ‘people, generation’, on which see below — contrasts with the systematic leveling of *-j-* in
 - *jan*-stems (e.g. *gudja* ‘priest’, gen. *gudjins*; *gudjinassus** ‘priesthood’) and
 - Class I weak presents (e.g. *ganasjan* ‘save’, pres. 3sg. *ganasjip*).

The mystery of the missing *-j-*

- The “missing” *-j-* of acc.sg. *-i* could in theory be ascribed to generalization of PG voc.sg. **-i* < PIE **(i)ye*, since acc.sg. and voc.sg. are identical for all masculine vocalic stems.
- However, it is highly improbable that the voc.sg. of nouns such as *harjis* ‘army’ would have occurred often enough in speech to influence the acc.sg.
- Furthermore, this would not account for neuter *ja*-stems in *-i* such as *kuni* < PG **kunja*.

The mystery of the missing *-j-*

- Schuhmann (2011:513–14) offers a new account of the *ja*-stem nom. and acc.sg. endings.
- In the heavy stems, PG **χerdījaz* first became **χerdīiz* (cf. **đagaz* > *dags*).
- This was then resyllabified as **χerdīiz* and remade as **χerdīiz* after the other case forms (acc.sg. **χerdīiaⁿ*, gen.sg. **χerdīies/z^a*, dat.sg. **χerdīiē*).

I do not understand Schuhmann's point about the forms other than nom. and acc.sg. being explained "am einfachsten" by loss of **i* in an internal sequence **-ijV-*, a long since recognized pre-Gothic sound change found inter alia in the Class 1 weak presents (e.g. PG **sōkijanā* 'seek', 1sg. **sōkijō* > Go. *sōkjan*, *sōkja*).

The mystery of the missing -j-

- In the light stems, Schuhmann argues for the contrast of nom.sg. *harjis* and acc.sg. *hari* that
- “[d]ie einfachste Lösung...ist, dass die Einführung des -j- in die Nominativ-Singular-Form zu einer Zeit stattgefunden hat, als im Akkusativ Singular noch ein -j- vorhanden gewesen ist.”
- The singular forms thus developed as follows:

| | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| nom.sg. | * <i>χari_̇az</i> | * <i>χariz</i> | * <i>χari_̇iiz</i> | <i>harjis</i> |
| acc. | * <i>χari_̇an</i> | * <i>χari_̇^a</i> | * <i>χari_̇^a</i> | <i>hari</i> |
| gen. | * <i>χari_̇es/z^a</i> | * <i>χari_̇is/z</i> | * <i>χari_̇is/z</i> | <i>harjis</i> |
| dat. | * <i>χari_̇ē</i> | * <i>χari_̇ǣ</i> | * <i>χari_̇ǣ</i> | <i>harja</i> |

(Reconstructions follow the author's notation.)

Relative chronology and the *ja*-stems



- That the opposition of *harjis* vs. *hari* must reflect a contrast in their preforms at some prehistoric stage is surely correct.
- However, the proposed evolution of heavy and light *ja*-stems involves some problems of relative chronology.

Relative chronology and the *ja*-stems

- According to Schuhmann, the heavy *ja*-stems would have passed through the following stages:

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| PG | <i>*herdijaz</i> | <i>*herdija</i> |
| 1a. <i>*-az</i> > <i>*-z</i> | <i>*herdijz</i> | |
| [1b. <i>*-ja</i> > <i>*-ja</i> ^a | | <i>*herdija</i> ^a |
| 2. resyllabification | <i>*herdjiz</i> | |
| 3. analogical <i>*i</i> | <i>*herdijiz</i> | |
| 4a. <i>*iji</i> > <i>*ī</i> | <i>*herdīz</i> | |
| 4b. apocope of <i>*-a</i> | | <i>*herdij</i> |
| Gothic | <i>hairdeis</i> | <i>hairdi</i> |

Relative chronology and the *ja*-stems

- In comparison, the light *ja*-stems would have evolved thus:

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| PG | <i>*harjaz</i> | <i>*harja</i> |
| 1a. <i>*-jaz</i> > <i>*-iz</i> | <i>*hariz</i> | |
| 1b. <i>*-ja</i> > <i>*-ja</i> ^a | | <i>*harja</i> ^a |
| 2. analogical <i>*j</i> | <i>*harjiz</i> | |
| 3. <i>*-ja</i> > <i>*-i</i> | | <i>*hari</i> |
| Gothic | <i>harjis</i> | <i>hari</i> |

Relative chronology and the *ja*-stems

- The survival of a vocalic reflex of PG **-ą* that far down into the prehistory of Gothic would be surprising, given that it otherwise disappears without trace in all older Gmc languages.
Only Older Runic preserves a reflex, e.g. Gallehus *hornā* < PG **hurną*.
- The light *ja*-stem acc.sg. preform **harj^a*, aside from its unclear phonetics, must have survived until the introduction of **j* in nom.sg. **hariz* → **harjiz*, otherwise it too would have been affected by leveling (**harj^a* → **hari* → †*harji*).

A new proposal and its consequences



- A simpler solution is at hand, one that allows us to dispense with both the complex analogical remodelings of the heavy *ja*-stem nom.sg. and the surprisingly late survival of PG **-a* in Gothic.
- I propose to modify the raising rule **-ja- > *-je- > *-ji-* of Sievers (1878:129), which was restricted to word-final **-jaz* by Barrack (1998:104).
- Rather than raising, what we have is a weakening of **a* to [ə] in this environment — phonetically most natural in unstressed position.

Hence not in stressed = initial position, e.g. PG **h^waz* > Go. *hwas* 'who'.

A new proposal and its consequences

- The inflection of *a*- and *ja*-stems in Gothic may be explained in a maximally economical manner under two additional assumptions:
 1. PG **-a* (perhaps raised or centralized to [*ǣ*]) as lost earlier than [*ə*] < **a* in PGmc. **-az*; and
 2. **[ə]* was lost in **[-Cəz]* > *-Cs* (C ≠ *j*), but not in **[-jəz]* > *-jis*.

I assume that final devoicing took place relatively late, but its ordering with respect to these changes is indeterminate. One can substitute **-aS*, etc. (*S* = **s* or **z*) in changes 1 and 2a in the following tables.

A new proposal and its consequences

- The inflection of both light and heavy *ja*-stems falls out automatically under this account.
- Light *ja*-stems:

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| PG | <i>*harjaz</i> | <i>*harja</i> | <i>*harjōz</i> |
| 1a. <i>*-az</i> > <i>*[-əz]</i> | <i>*[harjəz]</i> | | |
| 1b. apocope of <i>*a</i> | | <i>*hari</i> | |
| 2. <i>*[-jəz]</i> > <i>*[-jiz]</i> | <i>*[harjiz]</i> | | |
| 3. final devoicing | <i>*[harjis]</i> | | <i>*[harjōs]</i> |
| Gothic | <i>harjis</i> | <i>hari</i> | <i>harjōs</i> |

A new proposal and its consequences

- Heavy *ja*-stems:

PG **herdijaz* **herdija* **herdijōz*

1a. **-az* > **[-əz]* **[herdijəz]*

1b. apocope of **a* **herdij*

2. **[-jəz]* > **[-jiz]* **[hardijiz]*

3. **iji* > **ī* **[herdīz]*

4a. **ijV* > **jV* **[herdjōz]*

4b. final devoicing **[herdijis]* **[herdjōs]*

Gothic *hairdeis* *hairdi* *hairdjōs*

Acc.sg. **herdija* may have given **herdī*, which was then shortened to **herdi* (cf. Ringe 2017:251). The Class 1 weak imp. 2sg. forms *nasei* 'save!', *sōkei* 'seek!' ← PG **nazja*, **sōkija* must be analogical under any account.

A new proposal and its consequences

- The relative chronology is furthermore entirely compatible with the inflection of ordinary *a*-stems.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| PG | <i>*dagaz</i> | <i>*daga</i> | <i>*dagōz</i> |
| 1a. <i>*-az</i> > <i>*[-əz]</i> | <i>*[dayəz]</i> | | |
| 1b. apocope of <i>*a</i> | | <i>*dag</i> | |
| 2. <i>*[-əz]</i> > <i>*[-z]</i> | <i>*[dayz]</i> | | |
| 3. final devoicing | <i>*[daxs]</i> | | <i>*[dayōs]</i> |
| Gothic | <i>dags</i> | <i>dag</i> | <i>dagōs</i> |

A new proposal and its consequences

- This proposal thus allows us to make sense of the attested endings of both light and heavy *ja*-stems in an elegant manner,
- one that is moreover consistent with the development of the *a*- and *i*-stems and final syllables in general.

A new proposal and its consequences

- Two consequences follow for the relative chronology of sound changes from PG to Gothic.
- First, apocope of **a* preceded loss of the vowel in **[-əz]* (< **-az*),
- an ordering that could not have been determined on the basis of the *a*-stems alone.

The raising of **[-jəz]* > **[-jiz]* might be dated after the apocope of **i* in *i*-stem nom.sg. **-iz*, acc.sg. **-i*; but since none of the latter involve an environment [ji], it cannot be excluded that the raising took place first, and **[-jiz]* failed to undergo apocope, whereas **gastiz* 'guest', **k^wēniz* 'woman', etc. did.

A new proposal and its consequences

- Second, the syncope of **i* in sequences **ijV* > **jV* is confirmed to be a late pre-Gothic change.
- This finding is consistent with
 - the exceptionlessness of the rule in attested Gothic (no synchronic sequences <ijV> in native words) and
 - the still mostly transparent conditioning of Sievers's Law variants (*harjis* vs. *hairdeis*; Cl. 1 weak pres. *nasjip* 'saves' vs. *sōkeip* 'seeks').

Contrast the shortening of word-final PG **-ī* in pres.3sg. *wili* 'wants' < PG **wilī* (vs. 2sg. *wileis*, etc.), after which new *-ī* arose in feminine *īn*-stems (e.g. *diupei* 'depth') and Cl. 1 weak imp. 2sg. (e.g. *nasei*, *sōkei*).

An important caveat!

- Although slide 28 above referred to “the attested endings of both light and heavy *ja*-stems,” the fact is often overlooked there are **no** secure examples of the type of acc.sg. *hari*!
- In fact, the handbooks list only the following light masculine *ja*-stem nouns:
 - *andastapjis** ‘adversary’ (dat.sg., nom.pl. [1+1×], dat.pl.);
 - *ganipjis** ‘kinsman’ (nom.pl., dat.pl. [2×]);
 - *harjis* ‘host, legion’ (nom.sg., gen.sg.); and
 - *nipjis* ‘kinsman’ (nom.sg., nom.pl., acc.pl.).

An important caveat!

- The situation is no different for light *ja*-stem adjectives, of which just 13 are listed at *wulfila.be*.
 - *aljjs** ‘other’
 - *freis* ‘free’
 - *fullatōjjs* ‘perfect’
 - *gawiljjs** ‘of one mind’
 - *grindafrapjjs** ‘feebleminded’
 - *hvarjjs* ‘who, which’
 - *midjjs** ‘middle’
 - *niujjs* ‘new’
 - *samafrapjjs** ‘of the same mind’
 - *silbawiljjs** ‘willing of oneself’
 - *sunjjs** ‘true’
 - *ubiltōjjs* ‘evil-doing; evil-doer’
 - *unsibjjs** ‘iniquitous, ungodly’

An important caveat!

- The light *ja*-stem acc.sg. (and voc.sg.) *-i*, repeated in grammars of Gothic without asterisk for well over a century, is thus a **reconstructed** ending.

See Schuhmann (forthc.:45 §3.1.2.2): “Der unbelegte Akk.Sg. sowie der Vok.Sg. der kurzsilbigen *ja*-Stämme sind als *hari** anzusetzen.”

- Its existence seems secure enough, given
 - the heavy *ja*-stem forms in *-i*, e.g. acc.sg. *sipōni*, voc.sg. *laisari* to *sipōneis* ‘disciple’, *laisareis* ‘teacher’ (N.B. *hairdī** is **not** attested), and
 - the uniform neuter *ja*-stem nom./acc.sg. ending *-i*, e.g. *kuni* ‘people, generation’, *gawairpi* ‘peace’.

An important caveat!

- The point is nevertheless worth keeping in mind when working on Gothic, which occupies a sort of uneasy middle ground among the older IE languages between *Kleincorpusssprachen* (viz. *Trümmersprachen*) like Lycian or Gaulish and *Großcorpusssprachen* like Vedic or Latin.

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- In contrast to the masculine *ja*-stems, where light and heavy stems are clearly distinguished in the nom.sg. and gen.sg. as respectively *-jis* (< PG **-jaz* per above) and *-eis* (< PG **-ijaz*),
- the neuter *ja*-stems all have nom./acc.sg. in *-i* (< PG **-ja*, **-ija*).
- The inherited light and heavy neuter *ja*-stem paradigms therefore differed only in the gen.sg. as *-jis* vs. *-eis*, just as in their masculine counterparts.

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- It has long been recognized that Gothic neuter *ja*-stems mostly generalized gen.sg. *-jis*, but that a few forms in *-eis* are attested.

See Streitberg 1920:104 §146 n. 4; Braune & Heidermanns 2004:94 §95 n. 1; Schuhmann forthc.:45 §3.1.2.2; also Miller 2019:48 on exceptions to Sievers's Law.

The details are typically glossed over in textbooks: cf. Bennett 1980:13 ("A few neuter *o*-declension nouns in *-i* have G sg. *-jis* or *-eis*, e.g. *waldufni* 'authority', G. sg. *waldufn-jis*, *-eis*"), Lambdin 2006:8 ("Occasionally, Gs forms in **-eis** are found with long stem-final syllables, e.g. **andbahteis**... beside the more common **andbahtjis**").

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- Schuhmann (2011:514) rejects the view of *-jis* as generalized from the light *ja*-stems and the variants in *-eis* as “altertümliche Reste”, preferring to take them as “sporadische Übernahme” from the heavy masculine *ja*-stems.
- But the rest of his argument appears to support the traditional view: *-jis* was favored by dat.sg. *-ja*, nom./acc.pl. *-ja*, etc., on the model of the (neuter) *a*-stems.

3.8. Bei den neutralen *ja*-Stämmen ist der analogische Prozess demgegenüber offensichtlich andere Wege gegangen. Hier finden sich lediglich ganz wenige Beispiele, nur vierzehn an der Zahl, für die Genitiv Singular-Endung *-eis* nach langer Silbe; die übliche Endung ist auch bei ihnen dieselbe wie bei den kurzsilbigen Stämmen, nämlich *-jis*.¹⁷ Die Formen mit *-eis* werden dabei als altertümliche Reste erklärt. Wie die Verteilung in der Überlieferung zeigt, findet sich nun eine Form – *andbahteis* – im Lukas-Evangelium, das nicht gerade für seine konservative Überlieferung bekannt ist. Jedoch wird man kaum mit der Annahme auskommen, dass sich bei den Neutra anders als bei den Maskulina die kurzsilbige Endung *-jis* auf Kosten der langsilbigen Endung durchgesetzt hat,¹⁸ da der Grund hierfür nicht ersichtlich ist. Vielmehr wird das gesamte Paradigma sich den reinen neutralen *a*-Stämmen angeglichen haben. Die Aufgabe der langsilbigen Endung *-eis* wird dabei sicher dadurch erleichtert worden sein, dass im Neutrum anders als im Maskulinum die Endung *-eis* nicht durch die Endung des Nominativs gestützt war. Die vereinzelt Endungen auf *-eis* bei den Neutra lassen sich dann aber einfacher als sporadische Übernahme der Endung der langsilbigen Maskulina erklären.

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- Do the attested gen.sg. forms reveal any potential conditioning factors for *-eis* vs. *-jis*?
- Answer: probably not.

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- Only three neuter *ja*-stem nouns have gen.sg. variants in both *-jis* and *-eis*.
 - *andbahti* ‘office, service’
 - *-jis* (3+1×): EphA 4.12, 2CorAB 8.4, 2CorB 9.13
 - *-eis* (1×): Lk 1.23
 - *gawairpi* ‘peace’
 - *-jis* (6+2×): Lk 1.79, 10.6, 14.32, 1ThAB 5.23, RomC 14.19, EphAB 6.15
 - *-eis* (4+3×): EphAB 4.3, 2ThAB 3.16, 2CorAB 13.11, PhilB4.9
 - *waldufni* ‘authority’
 - *-jis* (2+1×): 1CorA 15.24, EphAB 2.2
 - *-eis* (1×): Sk 7.1

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- It may or may not be significant that Lk has *andbahteis* (vs. 4× *-jis* in the Codices Ambrosiani) and Sk *waldufneis* (vs. 3× *-jis* in Ambrosiani).
- This would accord with other innovative features in the Ambrosian MSS, particularly Ambrosianus B.
- But Lk has 3× *gawairpjis*, whereas Ambrosiani is divided between *-jis* (4×) and *-eis* (7×).

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- The only other forms in *-eis* I have found so far are:
 - *fauramapli** ‘ruler, governor’
 - *-eis* (2×): Neh 5.14, 5.18
 - *praizbwtairi** ‘presbytery’ (← Gr. πρεσβυτέριον)
 - *-eis* (1×): 1ThB 4.14
 - *trausti** ‘covenant, pact’
 - *-eis* (1+1×): EphAB 2.12
- But *praizbwtaireis* may be for *-eĩs*, in which case it would be a form of f. *praizbwtairei** (gen.sg. *-eins* Tim1 4.14).

See Braune & Heidermanns 2004:94 §95 n. 1. Pimenova (2004) claims that f. *n*-stems in *-ei* designate “a characteristic of a specific subject,” whereas n. *ja*-stems in *-i* describe “the characteristic phenomenon as such” (Miller 2019:349), e.g. *barniskei** ‘childishness’ vs. *barniski** ‘childhood’; but the distinction in some cases is vanishingly subtle.

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- For its part, *fauramapleis* (no other forms!) could be gen.sg. of a masculine *ja*-stem *fauramapleis**, as its meaning would suggest (thus GED:247 §M37 s.v. *mapl*).
- Similarly, *trausteis* (no other forms!) could be to m. *trausteis** rather than n. *trausti** (to **trausts* ‘faithful, reliable’, cf. ON *traustr*; Miller 2019:351).

Recall that if a *ja*-stem (or *a*-stem) noun is attested only in the gen. and/or dat., or in the acc. sg. without a modifier, strictly speaking one **cannot** determine its gender. Neuter gender may be safely assumed for compounds such as *andaugi** ‘face’, *andawaurdi** ‘answer’, *gaskōhi** ‘sandals, shoes’, *unkunpi** ‘lack of knowledge’, or on other morphological grounds as for *barniski** ‘childhood’, *witubni** ‘knowledge’. In still other cases one must rely on etymology, e.g. acc.sg. *mēki* ‘sword’ is to m. *mēkeis** = OE *mēce*, ON *mækir* (Schuhmann forthc.:45 §3.1.2.2).

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- We are thus left with gen.sg. *-eis* to just three confirmed neuter *ja*-stem nouns: *andbahti* ‘office, service’, *gawairpi* ‘peace’, and *waldufni* ‘authority’.
- Synchronically, the contrast between light and heavy neuter *ja*-stems, which was visible only in gen.sg. *-jis* vs. *-eis*, has been almost entirely effaced in Gothic.

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- Note that this change has also nearly gone to completion in the masculine *n*-stems in *-ja*, which have generalized *-ji-* after heavy stems, e.g.
 - *nēhuundja* ‘neighbor’, dat. *-jin*, gen. *-jins*;
 - *bandja* ‘prisoner’, gen. *-jins*; or
 - *unhrains** ‘impure’, weak *unhrainja*, dat. *unhrainjin*.

See Streitberg 1920:111 §156; Braune & Heidemanns 2004:104 §108 n. 2, 121–22 §132 n. 1). Cf. however Eph 6.16 *pis unsēljins* (A) vs. *pis unsēleins* (B), weak gen.sg. of *unsēls* ‘evil, wicked’, and Rom 11.24 *us wistai...pis wilpei<n>s alēwabagmis* ‘of the wild by nature olive tree’, weak gen.sg. of *wilpeis* ‘wild’.

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- It follows that labeling such nouns as “*ja*-stems” or “*ia*-stems” is synchronically arbitrary, even meaningless, since it depends (almost) entirely on the stem shapes of the corresponding masculine *ja*-stems.

This is visible for instance in the GED, which classifies most historically heavy neuter *ja*-stems as “*ia*”, but a few without comment as “*ja*”, e.g. *fulhsni** ‘secret’ (acc. pl. *fulhsnja*), *kunpi* ‘knowledge’ (gen.sg. *kunpjis* 5+4×), *ufkunpi** ‘full knowledge’ (gen.sg. *ufkunpjis* 1×). See GED:115 §F49 s.v. *filhan*, 223 §K39 s.v. *kunpi*.

Variation in the neuter *ja*-stems

- I defer to another occasion the consequences for the synchronic grammar of Gothic,...
- but insist that any adequate description take into full account these instances of variation and not automatically assume that Sievers's Law was synchronically still active.

Pace Marchand (1973:73), the occurrence of neuter *ja*-stem gen.sg. *-jis* after heavy stems hardly "indicates a breakdown" of phonemic length. On the spread of *-ji-* as "conceptual analogy" and a morphological, not phonological change, see Vennemann 1985. Kiparsky (2003:18 and passim) argues against this position and for a "simplification" of the inherited PG system, but his analysis likewise operates with morphological constraint.

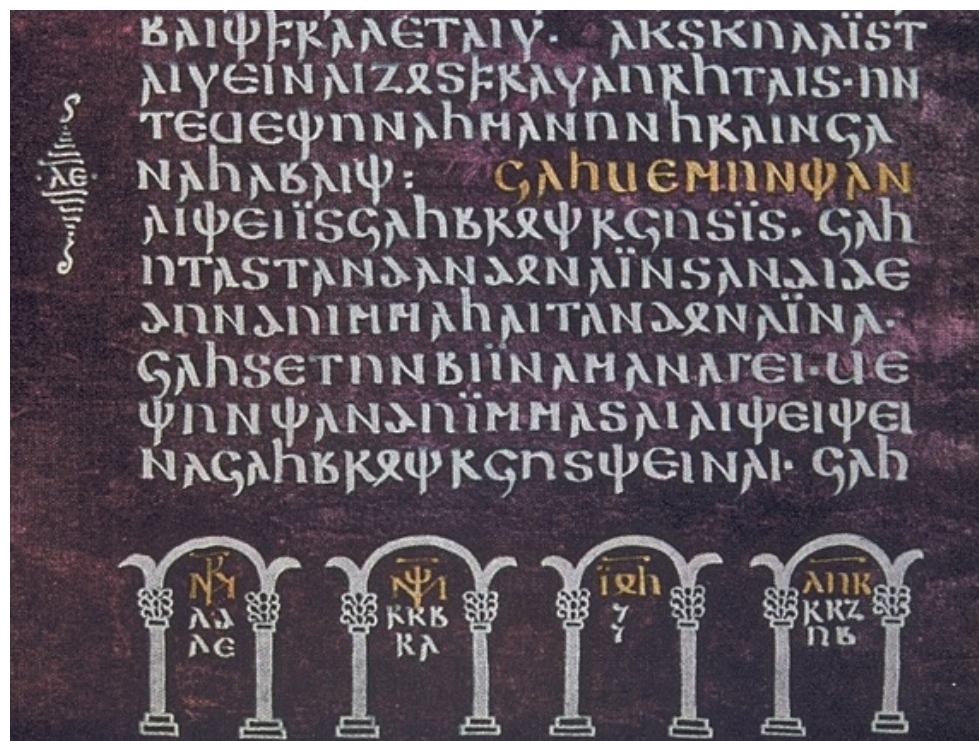
Conclusions

- The inflection of masculine *ja*-stems, namely light nom.sg. *harjis* ‘army’, acc.sg. *hari** and heavy *sipōneis* ‘disciple’, acc.sg. *sipōni*, can be explained without recourse to analogy by assuming the following relative chronology:
 1. weakening of PG **-az* > **[-əz]* and apocope of PG **-a*, followed by
 2. **[-jəz]* > **[-jiz]*, but elsewhere **[-əz]* > **[-z]*.
- In neuter *ja*-stems, where the nom./acc.sg. was *-i* for both light and heavy stems, the latter have mostly generalized *-jis*. The few variants in *-eis* do not offer sufficient indication of conditioning factors.

Conclusions

- This small study of one old problem of Gothic nominal inflection illustrates the insights to be gained even today from the application of
 - “traditional” methods of historical-comparative linguistics, including the establishment of relative chronologies, and
 - variationist studies of the Gothic corpus, including (not today) the tools of multivariate analysis.
- It is hoped that the results will contribute to a fuller understanding of the evolution of Gothic, its diachronic and synchronic variation, and its relationship to the other Germanic languages.

Thank you for your attention!
Danke für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!



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