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## The Gothic Genitive Plural in /-ee/ Yet Again: A Sarmatian Solution

### 1. Introduction

The origin of the Gothic GPL in /-ee/ remains one of the classic unsolved problems of Germanic linguistics. A recent overview of more notable theories is provided by Fulk (2018:148). At least four observers, Morgenroth (1965:333-336), Lehmann (1967:109-111), Kuryłowicz (1968:2.87, Anm. 8), and Fullerton (1983:119-127), have posited that GPL /-ee/ is somehow connected with desire to have a M form showing gender opposition with F /-oo/. This seems vaguely reasonable, especially given that Gothic, being the only Germanic language that employs a distinct F interrogative, does indeed provide independent evidence of having had a greater concern for gender contrast than is found in other Germanic. But “the devil is in the details”, and as long as it remains unclear exactly how such a scenario could work, no plausible solution has really been presented. The only declensional class where F /ɔ/ might possibly be opposed to M /ε/ was the /n/-stems, on the assumption that 1) the F had NSG /-ɔ/, which was only later replaced by /ɔɔ/ > /oo/ from other forms, and 2) the M had developed NSG /-ε/, much as in (pre-attested) Norse (Prokosch 1939:251). But fortunately both of these propositions are completely plausible. Under such circumstances, M NSG /-ε/ might well become regarded as implying M GP /-(εε)nεε/, by analogy with the relation between F NSG /ɔ/ and F GPL /-(ɔɔ)nɔɔ/. If a new M GPL form was modeled on F /-ɔɔnɔɔ/, it is difficult to believe that the first V of the M GPL would not be long /εε/, since otherwise the F and M forms would not be parallel. Using /tung-/ ‘tongue’ and /hɔn-/ ‘rooster’ as examples, the analogy in question would be as follows:

	NSG	GPL
F	/tung-ɔ/	/tung-ɔɔnɔɔ/
M	/hɔn-ε/	/hɔn-εεnεε/

Once a distinctly M GPL ending in /-εε/ developed in the /n/-stems, desire to have gender contrast, or at least opportunity to create gender contrast, would motivate extension of M /-εε/ to other M forms, replacing F-looking /-ɔɔ/. This would happen in Ns too, in accordance with the usual rule of older IE languages.<sup>1</sup> The popularity of M /-εε/ was evidently so great that in time it came to be employed even in Fs that were not distinctly marked as such, like /anst-/ ‘favor’ (Wright 1954[1910]:92). GPL /-ɔɔ/ > /-oo/ would wind up existing only in distinctly marked Fs: 1) F /ɔɔn/-stems, 2) F /ɔɔ/-stems, 3) F /iin/-stems, and 4) verbal abstracts in /-iin/, which were understandably regarded as connected with case 3. But once /-εε/ spread from its original home in the M /n/-stems to M thematics, such as /dɔgeε/ > /dagee/ (‘day-GPL’), the first /-εε-/ in cases like /hɔnεnεε/ would no longer have any clear basis, and so would be replaced by /-ɔɔ-/ from other forms, resulting in /-ɔnεε/ > /-aneε/.

At this point, the argument must be interrupted by some “stray notes”. First, the scenario just given does not work unless Gothic still had, at the time in question, the “square” V-system of Early Germanic, since otherwise the short and long Vs in the F would not belong to a single V. Second, as it is very inconvenient not to have a cover term connecting the F /ɔɔ/-stems with the M /ɔɔ/-stems, F /ɔɔ/-stems in Germanic (and their analogues in other IE languages) will from here on be called, with mild impropriety, “F thematics”. Third, it seems clear that F thematics adopted GPL /-ɔɔɔɔ/, which then spread, due to the high prestige of the Goths, from Gothic into West Germanic, most notably Pre-OHG. The result was GPLs of the type seen in OHG /giboono/ < /gibɔɔɔɔ/ ‘gift-GPL’. One reason that GPL /-ɔɔɔɔ/ might spread from F /ɔɔn/-stems to F thematics is fully comprehensible at this point. This is that both types had NSG /-ɔɔ/, which in the F /n/-stems could be seen as being connected, through a rule of copying and lengthening, with GPL /-ɔɔɔɔ/. If so, then obviously GPL /-ɔɔɔɔ/ in the F thematics of Gothic was at some later point analogically eliminated. But this is hardly surprising, either as a matter of principle or as a matter of fact, given that the same change happened during the transition from OHG to MHG. A second reason, involving Iranian influence, that /-ɔɔɔɔ/ might spread from F /n/-stems to F thematics will be given soon below.

Though the solution presented above works technically, the idea that F GPL /-ɔɔɔɔ/ became regarded as involving two lengthened copies of

<sup>1</sup> Since using “non-F” or “M and N” would be somewhat awkward, from here on all references to M GPL forms will be regarded as including N GPL forms.

NSG /-ɔ/ may well seem bizarre, and indeed it is hardly surprising that this possibility has not (apparently) been considered before now. But further examination (laid out below) reveals what “the missing link” is: Iranian influence. Gothic, as it spread into the western steppes, entered into prolonged and intimate contact with the form of Iranian known as Sarmatian. Some background on matters involving Sarmatian will be provided soon below. For the moment, it suffices to know that Sarmatian almost certainly had a common M/F GPL /-aanaam/ in its thematics. Three points are of interest here, and taken together must arouse considerable suspicion. These are that GPL /-aanaam/ in Iranian 1) had as its first V a long V of the same quality as the V of the NSG, 2) had as its second V a long V that could be seen as a copy its first V, and 3) had /-n-/ between its first and second Vs. All three of these propositions are also true of (undoubted) F /-ɔɔnɔɔ/ and (putative) M /-εεnεε/ in Gothic. How this extraordinary coincidence can be resolved will be seen below. For the moment, it is worth noting that intrusive /n/ did not occur in the same declensional type in Iranian as in Gothic: in Iranian, /-n-/ occurred in the thematics, whereas in Gothic /-n-/ occurred in the /n/-stems. Given that F /-aanaam/ in Iranian was obviously cognate with F /-ɔɔnɔɔ/ in Gothic, the declensional difference must have created considerable confusion as to why Gothic /-n-/ occurred in what was clearly, to Sarmatian minds, the wrong place. Intrusive /n/ might spread to F thematics simply because that was where it occurred in Iranian.

It seems best to provide at this point some background on Sarmatian and Iranian. Both are traditionally regarded as belonging to a rather hazily defined “East Iranian”, which included all forms of Iranian except Persian and Median. As West Iranian does not come up here, all references to “Iranian” will mean “East Iranian”. Though Sarmatian is not well-attested, it was apparently still fairly similar to Avestan, which is well-attested. Due to “corrections” introduced over time, Avestan also qualifies as “problematically attested”. Avestan occurs in older and younger forms. According to Sihler (1995:3) the older Avestan dates to around 800 B.C., and younger Avestan to about 400 B.C. The similarity between Sarmatian and Avestan was close enough that the various Avestan cognates given by Zgusta (1955:209-237) in explicating Sarmatian names are almost always easily recognizable as being in some sense “the same word” as their Sarmatian equivalents. Avestan in turn was still fairly similar to Sanskrit, as is demonstrated by the fact that considerable stretches of Sanskrit hymns can be mechanically “translated” into Avestan merely by making regular phonological changes (Baldi 1983:63). Sarmatian is attested almost en-

tirely in inscriptions (consisting of personal names only) that were made in Greek (or formerly Greek) cities along the northern coast of the Black Sea, mostly from about 100 to 300 A.D. (Harmatta 1970:58, n.), mostly more toward the beginning of this period (Rostoftzeff 1922:144). Note that this means that the inscriptions represent an earlier stage of the language than was encountered by the Goths. The nature of these inscriptions is such that they can neither be entirely ignored nor confidently interpreted, which certainly creates problems for an author, especially a non-specialist. It is worth noting that the inscriptions show clear (though fairly minor) differences of dialect from west to east. Only westerly forms (specifically those from Tyras and Olbia) are directly relevant to Gothic. Apart from the inscriptions, other attestations of Sarmatian are limited to stray words, which are even less informative than the inscriptions. For propriety it should be noted that Ossetian is descended from some form of Sarmatian. But Ossetian, having entered the Caucasus, was heavily Caucasianized, so that it has little value for reconstructing the morphology of an older IE language probably retaining nominal morphology of the type seen in Avestan (Fortson 2010:242). Finally, it should be noted that (as often happens with religious languages) the spelling of Avestan is to a significant extent phonetic rather than phonemic. Though obviously this is helpful with correspondingly regard to phonetics, it is correspondingly unhelpful with regard to “phonemics”, by mis-representing how speakers perceived their language.<sup>2</sup> The overall situation is that 1) Gothic shows fairly numerous “Iranianisms”, and 2) Sarmatian is the only possible source for these. Accordingly, it seems reasonable to posit that Sarmatian had the features in question, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

In order to avoid demanding too much “suspension of disbelief” as to whether significant Sarmatian influence in Gothic is plausible, it seems best to provide supporting evidence regarding 1) non-grammatical evidence, and 2) grammatical evidence outside of the GPL, before proceeding to the case of the GPL.

## **2. Historical and Lexical Evidence**

In order to establish that positing Sarmatian grammatical influences in Gothic is plausible, it is necessary to adduce non-grammatical evidence of two types: historical and lexical.

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<sup>2</sup> Beekes (1997) generally comments on what was phonemic and what was not.

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When the Goths arrived on the NW margins of the western steppes around 200, the area had for many centuries been dominated by speakers of East Iranian languages, first Scythians and then Sarmatians.<sup>3</sup> How the Goths wound up in control of the area by about 250 is quite unclear. Simple conquest seems improbable, for two reasons. First, infantry forces would have had a great deal of difficulty dealing with the heavy cavalry of the Sarmatians. Second, there is no conclusive evidence that the two groups were hostile, and considerable evidence that they were friendly. They seem to have regarded each other as having entered into an eternal alliance against Rome (Rostovtzeff 1922:118-119). The tactical reason for this is clear: cavalry is useful only “in the field”. For purposes other than battles “in the field” (such as petty sieges and keeping horses from being driven off), infantry is much more useful than cavalry, and Sarmatian nobles were probably (like their later analogues in medieval Europe) too proud to serve in this capacity. By working together, pairing cavalry and infantry in optimal proportions, the Sarmatians and the Goths would increase both the quantity and the quality of their military forces, dramatically increasing the benefits that could be expected to be gained in attacking Rome. We should have no illusions about the Goths somehow inventing their own heavy cavalry just out of expediency: over time the Goths must have (in effect) adopted Sarmatian heavy cavalry. Relations were friendly enough, and the heavy cavalry of the Sarmatians was valuable enough, that the Goths wound up significantly Iranianized in culture. Or rather it is convenient, in an article about linguistics, to regard the Goths as culturally Iranianized Germans. But it might be just as accurate to regard the Goths as linguistically Germanized Iranians.

Yet the popular image of the Goths, still apparently held by a fair number of Germanicists who might reasonably be expected to know better, remains more or less Tolkien’s “Riders of Rohan”, with nary an Iranian in sight. But this image is a considerable distortion. Among observers (including one Germanicist) whose concerns do not involve the grammar of Gothic, the effects of the friendly pairing between Goths and Sarmatians have long been recognized. Almost exactly one hundred years ago, Rostovtzeff (1922:119) spoke of “the extreme importance of the Iranian element in the conquering armies of the Goths”, adding that the Sarmatians “formed a very important factor in the governing class” of the Goths.

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<sup>3</sup> The Sarmatians of the most westerly steppes are most probably to be identified more specifically as Roxolani (Harmatta 1970:49). The Roxolani were also known as “White Alans” (Rostovtzeff 1922:115), probably because they were (more or less) the ancestors of modern Ukrainians.

Much more recently, Green (1998:167), speaking of the Goths' move to the Black Sea, observes that "Of particular importance was their encounter in southern Russia with a number of Iranian peoples". As Kendrick (2013[1930]:54) puts it, "... the Goths lived side by side in south Russia with the Sarmatians". According to Harmatta (1970:49), "The Goths in South Russia stood under a strong Iranian influence that affected almost all sections of their civilization". The same point has been made more recently by Brzezinski and Mielczarek (2002:10-11). From Sarmatian culture, the Goths adopted "polychrome" jewelry and "returned foot" brooches (Kendrick 2013:54-55). Due to the high prestige of the Goths during the period when they were having considerable success against mighty Rome, both of these spread widely to other Germans. The Goths also adopted the strikingly un-Germanic *djerid* ("artistic lance-ride of the steppe nomads"), performed by Totila before the battle of Busta Gallorum (Wolfram 1988:360). None of this is consistent with the idea that the Goths, in taking control of the western steppes, drove off its previous masters. Thus significant Sarmatian influence in Gothic is indeed historically plausible.

As for direct lexical influences, according to Green (1998:177-180) some Sarmatian words of military meaning that entered other Germanic by way of Gothic are *horse*, *mece* ('saber'), and *paida* ('breastplate'). Sarmatian loan words of non-military meaning that followed the same path into other Germanic are (appropriately enough) *path*, *hemp*, and *sour* (Green 1998:165, 179). Reasons have been given above to think that the same path was also followed (to a lesser extent) by F thematic GPLs with intrusive /n/. Indirect lexical influences are seen in the fact that the Goths created loan-translations for "commander of a hundred" and "commander of a thousand" (Green 1998:180), on the model of the decimal system of military organization employed by steppe-nomads.<sup>4</sup> Words of military meaning are of course classically superstratal, as is seen in cases like *armor* and *cavalry* in English. If we know nothing about the history of the Goths, we might well conclude, on the basis of lexical evidence alone, that they had been conquered by Iranians. Yet further reflection would reveal that the overall haul of superstratal words seems to be rather on the low side, and from this we might well conclude that the Goths did indeed live "side by side" with the Sarmatians. In such a situation, we would expect to find 1) less lexical influence than typically occurs with superstratal influence, and 2) less grammatical influence than typically occurs with sub-

<sup>4</sup> Among steppe nomads, the tradition of decimal organization persisted long enough that it was employed by the Mongols.

stratal influence. It will be seen below (when the grammatical half of the picture is filled in) that this is indeed what we find.

But though the historical and lexical evidence is clear enough, it seems that “some news travels slowly.” Perhaps the idea that the Goths were to a considerable extent Iranianized in overall culture, including language, is just too jarring to traditional conceptions. Though Wolfram (1988:42-43) mentions the Goths encountering Sarmatians on their “trek to the Black Sea”, he gives no indication of regarding such encounters as being more significant than encounters with other groups (including two supposedly comprised of “Germano-Celts”) that he seems to regard as lightly brushed aside in a triumphant all-conquering march. Bennett (1980:18-19) mentions only what may be called a “side-swipe” with Baltic, and Robinson (1992:44-45) does not mention the Goths encountering any speakers of non-Germanic languages at all, though perhaps the matter was no concern of his. The 2004 edition of Braune’s Gothic Grammar (Braune and Heidermanns) also says nothing about the Goths having had any contact with Iranian. Miller (2019:2-3) seems to regard the Goths as moving through a linguistic vacuum until they encountered Greek and Latin, though perhaps he was not interested in getting into what might be considered “mere speculation” about influences from languages that are not well-attested.<sup>5</sup> The treatment given by Rauch (2003:1) mentions Finns, Balts, Slavs, and even Thracians as non-Germanic groups that the Goths might have had significant contact with, but not Iranians, which is absurd. Though it is notoriously difficult to prove a negative (especially in Germanic scholarship), it appears that Germanicists have not yet given serious consideration to the question of whether Gothic was grammatically influenced by Iranian.

### **3. Some Other Odd Grammatical Resemblances Between Gothic and Iranian**

In a situation where there is one case of grammatical influence, it is to be expected that there should be more than one: the mechanism that produces one case should produce more than one. Another important consideration is that the fewer suspicious cases there are, the more probable it is that mere coincidence is the explanation. As it happens, there are several other cases where Gothic shows unusual grammatical innovations that can plau-

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<sup>5</sup> Sarmatian was close enough to Avestan, as has been noted, that investigating Sarmatian lexical influences in Gothic would not qualify as “mere speculation”.

sibly be seen as motivated by Iranian influence. Since the present article cannot become a work that would better be titled “Iranian Influences in Gothic”, the various cases will receive only brief treatment here.

### 3.1. Distinct F Interrogatives

Gothic and Indo-Iranian are the only IE languages that show the peculiarity of having developed distinct F (nominal) interrogatives (Prokosch 1939:279; Burrow 1955:273; Beekes 1988:141). This is to say that distinct F interrogatives occur only in 1) Indo-Iranian, and 2) the only other IE language that is known to have been imposed (at least over a significant area) on Iranian. Since 1) Gothic and Indo-Iranian are famous for preserving “precious archaisms”, and 2) Gothic has traditionally been regarded as not having had any significant contact with Iranian, it is predictable that the distinct F interrogatives of Indo-Iranian and Gothic have been seen as archaisms having nothing to do with each other. But as Sihler (1995:397-398) observes, grammatical gender in interrogative pronouns is “a positive nuisance”, since it is in the nature of things that the grammatical genders of entities that are not known will often not be known. In reality, the distinction made by interrogatives traditionally referred to as “masculine/feminine” and “neuter”, e.g. Latin *quis* and *quid* is “human” vs. “non-human”. Though PIE clearly had thematic interrogatives, the purpose of these must have been to permit gender concord with inanimate nouns, which could be of any gender, since the nature of non-human entities is so various (e.g. *tree, fish, running, age, water*) that *what* alone would often be annoyingly vague. Thus it seems quite clear that the thematic interrogatives in PIE were (as Sihler says) adjectival, not nominal. When we see that in Indo-Iranian and Gothic the adjectival type appears in place of the nominal type, this is to be regarded as an innovation, not an archaism, regardless of the vague “associational” argument that Gothic and Indo-Iranian often preserve archaisms. The reason that Gothic has a distinct F interrogative is clear: Sarmatian, like other Indo-Iranian, had retained only the thematic type.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Distinct F interrogatives are pragmatically viable only in cultures with strong gender segregation. Since gender segregation is associated with nomadism, which is in turn associated with aridity, it makes sense to think that Indo-Iranian developed a distinct F interrogative during its sojourn north of Iran. It is worth noting that only one other IE language, Tocharian, passed through a similarly

### 3.2. /uu/ Non-Nominative Forms of the 2SG Pronoun

It is quite common in IE languages for the 2SG pronoun to show variation between a nominative form with (or pointing back to) /uu/ and oblique forms with (or pointing back to) /e(e)/. Such a state of affairs is, according to Sihler (1995:371) seen in Latin, Greek, Old Church Slavonic, and is also plausibly reconstructed for Tocharian (Adams 1988:150-151) and Baltic (Mažiulis 2004:78-79). In Sabellian (Oscan and Umbrian), the two types have evidently become confused and blended (Buck 1904:139). In Celtic, the original unstressed non-nominative forms have become so worn down that their vocalism is no longer recoverable. For what it is worth, the stressed nominative shows /uu/ (Thurneysen 1946:253), and the general similarity between Celtic and Italic makes it probable that the worn-down ASG was once /te/. The only clear and major exceptions to the predominant pattern are Anatolian, which split off early enough that finding aberrant forms (Sihler 1995:375) is not terribly surprising, and Indo-Iranian, where /w/ was evidently restored in the unstressed form on the basis of the stressed form (Sihler 1995:378), due to the fact that the unstressed 2SG (and 1SG) had developed a long V, as in the stressed 2SG (and 1SG).

The typical situation seen in older IE languages is of course seen in all of Germanic except Gothic. But Gothic has extended /u/ into non-nominatives, creating accusative /Θuk/ and dative /Θus/ (Miller 2019:82). Note that this breaks the usual, and evidently ancient, parallelism between the 2SG pronoun and the reflexive pronoun (Sihler 1995:373), a fact that itself demands (but under traditional assumptions cannot receive) some explanation. The current conventional wisdom, as represented by Fulk (2018:186), assures us that one of following two scenarios, each pretty clearly not true, somehow must be true. The first is that the non-nominative forms are, by an analogy not otherwise known to occur in IE languages, by analogy to the nominative. The second is that non-nominatives with /u(u)/ are archaisms, strong supporting evidence for this supposedly being found (predictably enough) in Indo-Iranian. The second scenario implies that the 2SG forms with /e(e)/ found in other older Germanic languages must be innovations due to analogy with the 1SG, just coincidentally pointing back the

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arid area, and it too developed a novel gender distinction, this time in the 1SG pronoun (Adams 1988:153). The correlation between aridity and novel gender in pronouns, limited as it is, is therefore perfect.

same /e(e)/ that is traditionally reconstructed for the 2SG in PIE. The fact that traditional assumptions force us into such a game of “name your poison” must force us to question whether traditional assumptions are warranted.

Chief among these is the proposition that Iranian has no relevance to Gothic. As in the case of distinct F interrogatives, it is more sensible to posit that there is Iranian influence in Gothic than to posit that Indo-Iranian and Gothic just coincidentally preserve parallel archaisms. It has just been seen that Iranian wound up eliminating (or at least modifying) its inherited /u-e/ variation, and this must be the key to understanding what happened in Gothic.<sup>7</sup> It would be plausible for learners of Iranian to see ASG /tuum/, which existed in younger Avestan (Misra 1978:153), as /tuu + m/, where /-m/ was (unsurprisingly) an accusative marker. Another possibility (seemingly less probable) is that since, to judge by the evidence of /u(u)/-stems in both older and younger Avestan (Misra 1978:115-117), /u(u)/ before V-initial suffixes could be worn down to /w/, /twam/ (attested in older Avestan) was seen as going back to /tuu + am/, where /-am/ was also a plausible accusative marker. In Gothic, /-k/ was a special accusative marker employed in the 2SG and 1SG. To the Sarmatian mind, it would seem entirely reasonable that Gothic /-k/, apparently analogous to Iranian /-(a)m/, should be added to nominative /Θuu/, producing (stressed) /Θuuk/.<sup>8</sup> Due to the internal workings of Germanic, stressed /Θuuk/ would soon be paired with unstressed /Θuk/. In the dative, /u(u)/ in /Θu(u)s/ developed by analogy to /u(u)/ in /Θu(u)k/. Thus the spread of /u(u)/ from the nominative to the accusative and dative can be explained as a result of Iranian influence, and not (it appears) by anything else.

The next four cases, all involving somewhat surprising [h] (either alone or in combination with another articulation), are best treated together.

### 3.3. Breath [h] in Final Position

To judge by the evidence of non-Gothic Germanic, it seems probable that Germanic had a phoneme that was realized phonetically as [x]. Though it seems arbitrary to prefer either /x/ or /h/ over the other, using something

<sup>7</sup> Additional details, of little relevance here, on the development of 1SG and 2SG personal pronouns in Indo-Iranian are given by Sihler (1995:378).

<sup>8</sup> In Indo-Iranian, special accusative markers were characteristic of stressed forms (Sihler 1995:371).

like “h-x” would be intractable, and “h” has been preferred. The only thing that is certain about moraic /h/ in Gothic is that, unlike in other Germanic, it was not [x], for otherwise we would surely find final devoicing of /g/-[ɣ] to /h/-[x], parallel to what is seen with /d/-[ð] becoming /θ/ and /b/-[β] becoming /f/. Roberge (1984:27) argues for [h] in all positions. Against this, it is worth noting that uvular [χ] in medial position would quite easily explain lowering before /h/, whereas [h] would not. There appears to be no evidence that velar [x] (with or without [w]) existed in Gothic. Be that as it may, final [h] would be highly unusual. The only cases that present author is aware of are Malay/Indonesian and (more to the point here) Indo-Iranian. Final /-h/ certainly existed in Sanskrit (Gonda 1966:10). For Iranian, Misra (1978:84) reconstructs /-h/ for Proto-Iranian, and Beekes (1997:23) “supposes” that it still existed in older Avestan.<sup>9</sup> But final [h] would not be expected to appear in the Sarmatian inscriptions. Sarmatian names inscribed in Greek letters were routinely provided with Greek endings, especially /-os/. Extremely numerous examples of /-os/ are given by Zgusta (1955:174-184). But /-os/ is precisely the ending that, in its Iranian version, might be expected to appear as “-ah” or rather as “-ach”, since Greek spelling provided no way to spell final /h/. But if Roberge and Beekes are both right, which is not improbable about final /-h/ in Gothic and Avestan, then final [-h] is a striking shared peculiarity of Gothic and Iranian, which could hardly have any explanation other than that Gothic having been influenced by Iranian. And since Avestan had uvular /χ/ and Gothic shows signs of also having had uvular /χ/, it is probable that Gothic developed uvular /χ/ due to Sarmatian influence.

### 3.4. /hu/

Gothic is the only Germanic language that retains non-initial /hu/, as in /ahwa/ ‘water, river’ and /sahu/ ‘saw’ (Wright 1954:69, 78), though in final position /hu/ was perhaps analogically restored rather than retained. Avestan had /hu/ in initial and intervocalic positions (Beekes 1988:15; Beekes 1997:17; Misra 1978:83). Though /hu/ did not occur in final position, this could easily be seen (by speakers) as accidental. Quite oddly, the phonetic realization of /hu/ employed breath [h] in intervocalic position and fricative [x] or [χ] in initial position, which is the opposite of expectation.

<sup>9</sup> It may be of interest to note that there are some cases where /-s/ became /-z/, which then followed the development to /-u/ that is seen in Sanskrit and in *Caucasus*, which is the same word as *Kaska*.

An argument favoring uvular [χ] over velar [x] in the fricative realization of /hʷ/ (in both Gothic and Sarmatian) is that in similar cases uvular [χ] is known to have developed, probably for strengthening, in the implementation of /hʷ/. Some speakers of American English use uvular [χ] in words like *which*, and something similar must have happened, beginning with cases of former /hw/, in the change of velar /x/ to uvular /χ/ that is seen in Welsh (Thorne 1993:7). In this connection, it is worth noting that Gothic /hʷ/ causes lowering just like /h/ (Miller 2019:36), which is not expected unless both had uvular [χ]. Overall, it seems probable that the existence of /hʷ/ in Sarmatian both “broke the drift” toward loss of non-initial /hʷ/ in Gothic,<sup>10</sup> and caused the fricative component of /hʷ/ (when present) to be pronounced with uvular [χ].

### 3.5. Voiceless /r/

Gothic shows indirect evidence of having had voiceless /r/ phonetically, as follows. If Gothic had voiceless /r/, that would explain why we find /h/ instead of expected /g/ in /huuhrus/ ‘hunger’ (Wright 1954:94), as if from \*/hunhr-/. Though ‘hunger’ was properly a /u/-stem, with NSG /hungrus/, where final devoicing would not occur, /u/-stems in Germanic fairly often had M thematic by-forms (Prokosch 1939:248), so that /hungrs/, which would have final devoicing in the NSG, is hardly improbable, and devoicing in the thematic version of the word would quite probably be extended to its /u/-stem equivalent. It seems that final devoicing ran right across /r/, and affected /g/. This implies that /r/ could be completely voiceless phonetically, which is odd. Indeed voiceless /r/ is so rare that “The Phonetic Symbol Guide” (Pullum and Ladusaw 1986), which provides symbols for all kinds of sounds that most linguists would never think of, provides no symbol for voiceless /r/. In any event, incidental phonetic devoicing would not spread right across an /r/ that was regarded as inherently voiced, and so the case of *hunger* Gothic seems to indicate that voiceless /r/ was regarded as a target in itself, which is to say a phoneme.

The difference between /hungrs/ ‘hunger-NSG’, which shows general devoicing, and cases like /hlaifs/ ‘loaf-NSG’ and /hlaiboos/ ‘loaf-NPL’,

<sup>10</sup> On secondary acquisition arguably causing persistence of features, when in theory the result in such cases should be nothing, readers may consult Jeffers and Lehiste (1979:144) on the persistence of long Vs in Czech and western Slovak, which appears to be due to influences from German and Hungarian. The concept of “breaking the drift” seems to be the only way that external influences could cause persistence.

which do not, can be regarded as due to the fact that *hunger*, being an abstract, had little or no use in the plural, whereas in non-abstract nouns the existence of forms like /hlaiboos/ would have provided good evidence against the proposition that voiceless variants were to be regarded as belonging to the “underlying” stem. This interpretation is supported by the fact that all of the words cited by Kortlandt (1978:292) as showing Gothic with an unexpected voiceless consonant, in words where other Germanic has a voiced consonant, are abstracts (*grip*, *slaying*, *flying*, *fall(ing)*, *accusing*, *descent*, *meeting*, *need*, *harvest*), which would (like *hunger*) have little use in the plural. It seems clear that the phenomenon is motivated fundamentally by meaning, and despite appearances has no connection with “de-Vernerization” (due to early stress-shift) in Gothic.

It should come as no surprise that Iranian at one point developed voiceless /r/ (Beekes 1988:17, 57; Beekes 1997:13; Misra 1978:82), due to the general change of /s/ to /h/, which occurred not only before /w/ but also before /r/. In the dialects ancestral to Avestan, voiceless /r/ was later largely eliminated (Misra 1978:82), due to the very odd development of intrusive /ŋ/ before /h/ or voiceless /r/ in certain environments. (This will become relevant, soon below.) It appears that the development of intrusive /ŋ/ in effect caused voiceless /r/ to be “re-voiced” in Avestan. But there is fairly good evidence (Zgusta 1955:237) that Sarmatian did not develop intrusive /ŋ/, so that Sarmatian would be expected to retain fairly numerous cases of voiceless /r/. Unfortunately it is not immediately apparent whether voiceless /r/ was at one point phonemic or was never more than just /hr/, which is in fact how its few remaining instances are spelled in Avestan (Beekes 1997:13). But it is plausible that voiceless /r/ was indeed phonemic in Iranian. It seems that voiceless /r/ existed in Sarmatian, and permitted devoicing to spread across voiceless /r/ to affect preceding /g/-[x] in Pre-Gothic (before velar [x] was generally replaced by uvular [χ]).

### 3.6. Interchange between /anh/ and /ãñh/, and Uvular [χ]

The change of /anh/ to /aah/ in Gothic (Wright 1954:22), as in all other Germanic, is not ordinarily considered anything odd or problematic. But if /h/ in Gothic was a breath [h], there would be no need to lower /n/ (producing a nasal V rather than a true nasal C) in order to avoid producing an excrescent plosive C between the nasal and the following fricative. This is to say that /nh/ in Gothic would not in fact be parallel to cases like /mensa/ > /mesa/ in Latin, where presumably /n/ was lowered in part to avoid seeming to produce /mentsa/. If /h/ in /nh/ was velar [x], making /-anh-/ in

Gothic more or less parallel to /-ens-/ in Latin, that would motivate lowering of /n/ to avoid excrescent /k/. But we have seen reasons to think that Gothic did not have velar [x] as a fricative allophone of /h/, having instead either uvular [χ] or nothing (which is to say [h]). The possibility of [h] was dismissed just above. Uvular [χ] is therefore the only remaining possibility, and fortunately it makes a fair amount of sense: /n/ in /nh/ (with /h/ realized as a uvular) might well be lowered to avoid producing excrescent uvular [q], which would have been jarring in a language that did not otherwise have [q]. Note that this would also explain what was unique about the case of /nh/, explaining why loss of /n/ in /nh/ occurred without loss of /n/ in /ns/ and /nθ/: excrescence in /nh/ would have produced an alien sound. Spread of an originally Gothic change to other Germanic could then be seen as due to the prestige of Gothic, following “the ‘path’ path”. But though this might seem to be a satisfactory internal solution, it would not explain why Gothic developed uvular [χ] in the first place.

At this point it would be nice to be able to say that in Avestan the entity transliterated as “x” (in both “x” and “x<sup>w</sup>”) certainly represented uvular [χ] rather than velar [x]. But though it is quite probable, given the phonetic nature of Avestan spelling, that “x” by itself represented the same sound as “x” in “x<sup>w</sup>”, where “x” surely represented a uvular, arguments that “x” in “x<sup>w</sup>” represented uvular [χ] are less than fully conclusive. Only another indirect argument could serve to make matters more conclusive.

Fortunately there is one. As has been noted, Avestan shows a very odd development of /ŋ/ before /h/ (Beekes 1997:17; Misra 1978:82-83, 91), most often between cases of /a(a)/. This case seems to involve more or less the same elements that are seen in the case of Gothic /nh/, moving in opposite directions. But though in such a situation the term “hypercorrection” immediately springs to mind, there is no evidence that the Avestan change also occurred in Sarmatian. Far from it, it has already been seen that there is fairly good evidence (Zgusta 1955:237) that the Avestan change did not occur in Sarmatian. But there is also evidence suggesting that nasalization of /a/ before /h/ had developed: “-ochos” (instead of expected “-achos”) in *Bagdochos* (Zgusta 1955:237). The last part of this (-ochos) contains the element that appears in Avestan as /vaŋhāv-/ < /vahāv-/ (‘good’), suggesting that /a/ had been “dampened” toward [o] due to the effects of nasalization.<sup>11</sup> But there is no nasal. The Sarmatian evidence seems to show a stage

<sup>11</sup> The fact that either /h/ or /x/ might have been spelled as “ch” makes the appearance of “ch” meaningless.

with nothing more than *ex nihilo* nasalization of preceding /a/. Since such a stage would have to precede development of intrusive /ŋ/, if this somehow had to occur, there is really nothing surprising here. This is to say that something like [ã(ã)x] or [ã(ã)χ] in Iranian is necessary to explain why the true nasal C that eventually developed before /h/ in Avestan appears as “ŋ”. The most straightforward explanation of the change of /anh/ to /aah/ in Gothic would be that Gothic [ãnx] or [ãnχ] was equated with Sarmatian [ããx] or [ããχ]. (Presumably the Gothic change spread from /a/ to other Vs, for reasons having no direct connection with Sarmatian.) But it has already been seen that the evidence of Gothic favors uvular [χ] over velar [x]. Therefore it appears that Pre-Gothic [ãnx] was re-interpreted by Sarmatians as [ããχ].

Though the argumentation in this case is necessarily quite indirect, it does seem that we have here another case of Sarmatian influence in Gothic: nasalization (before a back C) without a true nasal C. Furthermore, this case has provided additional support for a proposition that has repeatedly come up above: that Gothic had uvular [χ] but not velar [x]. Both developments appear to have no plausible source other than Sarmatian influence. The following two cases involve mid Vs.

### 3.7. Short Mid Vs

The case for Iranian influence in the short-V system of Gothic is almost disappointingly simple. Gothic is the only Germanic language that (at one point) developed a complete loss of short mid vowels. Original /ε, ɔ/ were redistributed among /i, a, u/. In general, /ε, ɔ/ became /i, u/, though final /-ε, -ɔ/ (shortened from /-εε, -ɔɔ/) became /-a/ (Fulk 2018:82). It is not controversial that the re-development of short /ε, ɔ/ (vel sim.) is a re-development, as is indeed suggested by the unexpected and linguistically inappropriate spelling of these as *ai, au*. The short-V system that developed in Gothic was the same as the short-V system that existed in early Iranian (Misra 1978:16; Beekes 1997:19). It is plausible then to posit that, in Sarmatian-accented Gothic, the 4-V short system of Early Germanic was “mapped onto” the 3-V short system of Iranian.

### 3.8. Long Mid Vs

The obvious question at this point is what the long-V system of Gothic might show about Iranian influence. Unfortunately this question is beset

with serious problems. Though what we need to know is what the long-V system of Sarmatian was, the evidence of Sarmatian is less than clear. And though the evidence of Avestan is much more clear, the evidence of Avestan is not necessarily informative about Sarmatian. Furthermore, it seems clear that Gothic, as long as /ai, au/ still existed, had a 5-V system for long Vs, as in other (older) Germanic, so that there is (at least on superficial examination) nothing for Iranian influence to explain. But it is worth noting that Iranians secondarily acquiring Germanic would find it very difficult to distinguish between /εε/ and /εi/ (< /εεi/), since it is difficult to see how any similar distinction could have existed in any form of Iranian at the relevant time. Thus one of the more salient characteristics of the Gothic V-system, collapse of /εε/ and /εi/, could be seen as due to Iranian influence.

As for other questions, first it must be observed that, to judge by the fuller evidence of Avestan, it would seem that the long-V system of Iranian was not, by the relevant time, a 3-V system. The evidence adduced by Misra (1978:26-28, 32-35) shows that Avestan had, unsurprisingly, developed new /ee/ and /oo/, in at least some cases, from /ai, au/. In fact a change of /ai, au/ to /ee, oo/ is characteristic of East Iranian languages of the Middle period. A similar development occurred in Sanskrit. Unfortunately it is not entirely clear whether /aai, aau/ had fallen together with /ai, au/: Beekes (1997:18) says, or rather implies, that they did, whereas Misra (1978:26-28, 32-35) gives apparently good evidence that they did not. In such a situation, it is very difficult for a non-specialist to know what to think. In the majority of cases older /ai, au/ appear as diphthongs in Avestan (Beekes 1997:18), but despite appearances these may be the result of later developments of /ee, oo/, if these were pronounced as [ei, ou] (much as in PDE), rather than directly continuing /ai, au/. Note that pronunciation of /ee/ as [ei] would tie in well with what was said just above about collapse of /εε/ and /εi/ in Gothic.

The fact that some observers (e.g. d'Alquen 1974) believe that there was not a general change of /ai, /au/ to /εε, ɔɔ/ in Gothic, whereas most (e.g. Miller 2019:42) reject this, is itself enough to suggest, however vaguely, that 1) there was no early change of /ai, /au/ to /εε, ɔɔ/, and 2) there was quite probably a late change /ai, /au/ to /εε, ɔɔ/. Likewise, as was hinted above in the case short *ai, au*, the very use of diphthongal *ai, au* to spell monophthongal Vs (in the majority view) also points to a relatively late change of /ai, au/ to /εε, ɔɔ/. Such a change, occurring perhaps around 275-300, would present (to later spellers of Runic) the impression that

earlier Runic *ai*, *au* (as seen in cases like *hailag* ‘holy’) were spellings for /εε, ɔɔ/, and this usage might well be, in effect, transliterated into the spelling system of Gothic. Accordingly it seems probable that the early Gothic, as of around 200-225, had five long Vs, and that development of two additional long Vs from /ai, au/ occurred at “the last minute” before textual attestation began. The evidence of Sarmatian vaguely hints that /au/ was retained in the westerly part of Black Sea coast, but had become /oo/ in the easterly part of the Black Sea coast. Harmatta unhelpfully says absolutely nothing about /ai/, but Zgusta (1955:213) concludes that /ai/ had become /ee/ as far west as Olbia, which was in the area later taken over by the Goths. What we seem to be looking at is “change in progress”, spreading from east to west (or more precisely from southeast to northwest), within the Iranian-speaking area. If so, it is quite possible that an ongoing change of /ai, au/ to /εε, ɔɔ/ in westerly Sarmatian was in effect picked up by Gothic, and this would explain a change that was, unlike the earlier development of a 5-V system for long Vs, not usual in other older Germanic.

Overall, the evidence of mid long Vs in Gothic provides no negative evidence with regard to Iranian influence, and may well provide some positive evidence.

### 3.9. Conclusion

The cases that have been laid out in this section are more than enough to counter any “isolated case” charge that might be raised against Iranian influence in the case of GPL /-ee/. Far from it, taken together they indicate that there is significant unrecognized Iranian influence in Gothic.

### 4. The Core Case: GPL /-ee/ in Gothic

In thinking about how Sarmatian perhaps influenced Gothic, it is useful to distinguish among three types of Gothic, as follows. 1) First-generation Sarmatian-accented Gothic: Gothic so heavily modeled on Sarmatian as to be in effect “Sarmatian with Gothic morphemes”. 2) Second-generation Sarmatian-accented Gothic, Gothic influenced by Sarmatian but benefiting from substantial childhood exposure to Gothic (of various types). 3) Native Gothic: Gothic not directly influenced by living Sarmatian. Two points are worth stressing: 1) that intermediate types must have existed, and 2) that dialect mixture must have occurred.

The beginning of the story (more or less) is Brugmann's Law in Indo-Iranian: short /o/ was lengthened to /oo/ > /aa/ in open syllables. Though Brugman's Law is not universally accepted, it was accepted by Beekes (1997:25), who until his death in 2017 was the world's leading authority on Iranian. In accordance with Brugmann's Law, the M thematic GPL /-onoom/, which had already developed 1) /-oom/ by reanalysis of /-o-om/ in M thematics, and 2) /-n-/ by reanalysis of /-n-/ in /n/-stems, became /-oonoom/ > /-aanaam/. Thus the M thematic GPL became the same as the F thematic GPL. The common M/F thematic GPL /-aanaam/ 1) had as its first V a long V of the same quality as the V of its stem, 2) had as its second V a long V that was the same as its first V, and 3) had medial /n/ between its first and second Vs. This should sound familiar: the same was said above about (undoubted) /-ōōnōō/ and (putative) /-ēēnēē/ in Gothic. In Iranian, GPL /-aanaam/ in could be interpreted as produced by lengthening the stem V (vacuously in the case of F /aa/), inserting /-n-/, and adding /-aam/, which itself could conceivably be regarded as involving a second lengthened copy of the stem V. Though there is no evidence confirming that the second part of this interpretation ever developed in Indo-Iranian, there is in fact unequivocal evidence that the first part did: all V-stems in Sanskrit form the first part of their GPL with a long version of the stem-V (Gonda 1966:20-24). This even applies to vocalic /r/, which was an innovation of Indic, producing rather improbable-seeming /-rrnam/. (There appears to be no evidence on the GPLs of Sarmatian.) Though there is evidence suggesting that /aa/ before nasals had become /oo/ (vel sim.) in some Sarmatian (Zgusta 1955:212; Harmatta 1970:91-92), that evidence is from Tanais, at the far NE end of the Black Sea, too far east to be directly relevant to Gothic. Though there is of course evidence on the GPLs of Avestan, that evidence is somewhat problematic, due to the tendency of Avestan to show apparently inexplicable deviations in the expected length of Vs (Misra 1978:29; Beekes 1997:19). In the present case, the M GPL generally shows a long first V, whereas the F GPL generally shows a short first V (Misra 1978:108, 110). Since the short V of the F clearly must be some kind of (odd) innovation, it will be assumed here that Sarmatian had /-aanaam/ in both the M and F. For propriety it should be noted that the second V in the thematic GPLs of Avetan is spelled as *q* indicating a nasal V.

As for how Sarmatians would regard /ōō/ in Gothic /-ōōnōō/, on purely phonetic grounds either /aa/ or /oo/ would be plausible. But on morphological grounds the roughly cognate status between GPL /-ōōnōō/ in Gothic and GPL /-aanaam/ in Sarmatian could hardly have escaped notice, and

this would have favored /-aanaa/ over /-oonoo/. The reason it is necessary to say “roughly cognate” rather than “cognate” is that Gothic /-ǫnǫw/ and Sarmatian /-aanaam/ belonged to different declensions (thematics, and /n/-stems). As has been noted, this must have created considerable confusion in the minds of Sarmatians secondarily acquiring Gothic.

The usual “explanation” for the appearance GPLs with /n/ in the F thematics in some West Germanic, most notably in OHG, is that they are “from the /n/-stems”. But this is much more a description than an explanation, as no reason is given as to why the GPL and only the GPL would spread from F /n/-stems to F thematics. What we need to know is what was special about the GPL of F /n/-stems, and Iranian influence provides the answer: /-aanaam/ occurred in the F thematics of Iranian. It has already been noted that in Gothic the F thematics and F /n/-stems quite probably had the same NSG: /-ǫ/ (to Goths) or /-a/ (to Sarmatians). To the Sarmatian mind, a GPL having /-n-/ flanked by two lengthened copies of the stem V (as judged by the NSG) could not have seemed warranted in the F /n/-stems of Gothic without also seeming warranted in the F thematics of Gothic. If /n/ in the F thematics of Gothic began to spread, due to the high prestige of the Goths, into neighboring forms of West Germanic, the first dialect that would be hit would be Pre-OHG (in the days when it still existed fairly far east). It is in any event well-known that OHG shows a fair number of other resemblances to Gothic, such as a 3rd person pronoun from /i-/ and preservation of long Vs in final syllables, and the present case would simply add one more. All in all, the fact that the GPL of F thematics in OHG is a form proper to the F /n/-stems provides indirect evidence supporting the idea that Gothic /-ǫnǫw/ was indeed identified with Sarmatian /-aanaam/. It is worth noting that a similar form in the GPL of M /n/-stems to M thematics would not occur, for a very simple reason: M thematics had no suffixal V in the NSG that lengthening or copying to be applied to. Thus the “Sarmatian Scenario” would explain not only why the GPL of F /n/-stems did spread to F thematics, but also why the GPL of M /n/-stems did not spread to M thematics. Overall, we would at last have an explanation for what gave GPL /-ǫnǫw/ a special status in southeasterly Germanic: its analogue in Iranian.

Among first-generation speakers of Sarmatian-accented Gothic, /-ǫ, -ε/ would surely be perceived, for reasons that have been seen, as /-a, -a/. Though the model of GPL /-aanaa/ would provide a secondary motivation for this perception, the primary motivation factor must have been that (as has been seen) Sarmatian had only three short Vs: /i, a, u/. But as language-shift proceeded, second-generation speakers of Sarmatian-

accented Gothic, exposed from birth to native Gothic, would be quite well able to regard Gothic /ɔ(ɔ)/ and /ɛ(ɛ)/ as what they were. Likewise it would be clear to second-generation speakers that Gothic had a gender-distinction in its most salient GPLs (the thematics and the /n/-stems). In theory, F /-aanaa/ might then be replaced by /-ɔɔnɔɔ/, and M /-aanaa/ by /-ɔnɔɔ/. But there is a difference between second-generation speakers and perfect native speakers. Among second-generation speakers, there must have been some desire both to “Gothicize” and to “genderize” earlier /-aanaa/. In the F /n/-stems and F thematics (both with NSG /-ɔ/), GPL /-aanaa/ could easily be “Gothicized” to /-ɔɔnɔɔ/, which would also qualify as “genderized”. But such developments would, by coincidence, end with a form that showed no evidence at all of any Iranian influence.

The question is what happened in the GPL of M /n/-stems. The NSG of M /n/-stems, /-ɛ/, did of course offer a V that could conceivably be lengthened and copied to form a new GPL /-ɛɛnɛɛ/, and it seems probable, for reasons that were given at the outset, that such a form at one point existed. But opportunity is not motivation. One consideration is that speakers whose Gothic was intermediate between “first-generation” and “second-generation”, and who had limited exposure to native Gothic, might well think that M /-aanaa/ in the speech of first-generation speakers was simply a Sarmatian mis-hearing of intended /-ɛɛnɛɛ/, much as F /-aanaa/ was a mis-hearing of intended /-ɔɔnɔɔ/, and proceed to “correct” M /-aanaa/ to /-ɛɛnɛɛ/. Another is that, as first-generation F /-a, -aanaa/ began to be “Gothicized” and “genderized” as /-ɔ, -ɔɔnɔɔ/, it would seem “poetically appropriate” (for lack a better term) for M /-a, -aanaa/ to be “Gothicized” and “genderized”, in a parallel manner, as /-ɛ, -ɛɛnɛɛ/. But despite what Lehmann thought, the parallel was not purely abstract. It had two additional aspects that Lehmann missed. First, N-SG /-ɛ/ existed in the M /n/-stems. Second, there was hypercorrection against two characteristic errors of first-generation Sarmatian-accented Gothic: 1) over-generalizing /a(a)/, and 2) failing to understand that native Gothic had a gender-distinction in the GPL of /n/-stems. Thus it was that, as F /-aanaa/ was bettered by back/rounding and raising F /-aanaa/ to /-ɔɔnɔɔ/, M /-aanaa/ was bettered, in a parallel manner, by fronting and raising M /-aanaa/ to /-ɛɛnɛɛ/.

## 5. Conclusion

Historical, lexical, and grammatical evidence all support the proposition that, to repeat the assessment of Harmatta (1970:49), “The Goths in South

Russia stood under a strong Iranian influence that affected almost all sections of their civilization". By "civilization" Harmatta in effect meant "culture", and language is (as indicated by the recurrent use of linguistic terms to designate culture) an integral aspect of culture. Examination reveals that Iranian influence affected not only the lexicon of Gothic but also its grammar. Though the focus of the present article has been on the Gothic GPL in /-ee/, other evidence shows that GPL /-ee/ is quite far from being an "isolated case". What is surprising is that the grammatical part of the evidence has not (apparently) been investigated before now. For better or worse, this can only be attributed to the strong internalist prejudice that is, in effect, traditional among Germanicists. But though the demands of academic specialization are, all things being equal, quite sensible, it is hardly realistic to imagine that the various older Germanic languages developed in a series of linguistic vacuums. In settled agricultural areas (which would include the western steppes, where even today agriculture is quite productive), changes of language ordinarily proceed not by population replacement but rather by language shift. The linguistic implications of this should be acknowledged, not swept under the nearest rug on the grounds that they are not only a violation of hoary tradition but also (to put it bluntly) an annoyance. No doubt the typical Germanicist does not want to, in effect, "go back to school" in order to develop at least a nodding familiarity with non-Germanic languages that are quite probably relevant to the development of various Germanic languages. A good example of this sad syndrome is this: the fact that Middle English is the only Germanic language of its time to show "across the board" grammatical resemblances to Welsh (not to mention the other Brittonic languages) has not even been known among Germanicists and Anglicists. And of course what is not known cannot be explained.

It is in effect traditional for judgments about how improbable it is that grammatical resemblances between languages (as in the Balkans) are due to "mere misleading coincidence" to be entirely impressionistic. But it is possible to take things up a notch by using methods (admittedly quite crude) that make it possible to produce a specific number that may serve as a rough approximation for the undeterminable true number. What we need to judge how probable it is that 8 out of 8 cases of (unusual) grammatical resemblance between Germanic and Iranian would, by mere coincidence, be found in Gothic.<sup>12</sup> The number eight has been used, despite

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<sup>12</sup> Another odd grammatical resemblance, not treated here, is that the 1PL present subjunctive suffix in both Gothic and Indo-Iranian was /-ma/ (Wright 1954:135, 155; Misra 1978:207, 208).

that fact that ten cases were treated above (two in section 3.8.), because two of the cases that do not qualify as grammatical resemblances found in Gothic only: 1) the change of /anh/ occurs in all Germanic, and 2) the case of the GPL cannot be regarded as a simple grammatical resemblance. If we regard Germanic as having 4 major groups, represented by Gothic (East Germanic), Norse (North Germanic), German (southerly West Germanic), and English (northerly West Germanic), then the chance that, all things being equal, 8 out of the 8 cases that are limited to one of the four groups would, just coincidentally, occur in Gothic is  $1/65536$  (1 over 4 to the 8<sup>th</sup>) or about 0.00152%. This is no more 50%, than 65536 is 2. Even if about half of the cases given are invalid, perhaps because they imply each other or are simply “nicht wahr”, the chance of coincidence being the explanation would be about 4%. Though this may seem dramatic, it would amount to nothing more than the chance of non-coincidence being the explanation going down from nearly 100% to 96%, which is not dramatic. It is in the nature of probability that, if we roll 8 dice, it is possible that all 8 will show a number in the range of 1-3. But if we are trying to determine whether the dice in question are loaded, in a situation where this is quite possible, it would be much probable that the dice are loaded than that they are not. The fact that the math involved in this case is “fuzzy” does not mean that it is worthless, or that is no better than the non-math of traditional impressionistic assessments, which could only be even more “fuzzy”.

In the present case, the primary argument made is that the Gothic GPL in /-ee/ owes its origin to modeling on the Iranian GPL /-aanaam/. But significant secondary arguments have also been made, giving reasons to think that Iranian grammatical influences in Gothic were by no means limited to the case of the GPL. Regardless of whether the present author’s scenario for the GPL, which clearly qualifies as “out of the box”, is accepted, it is to be hoped that in the future the various possibilities for explaining striking oddities of Gothic Iranian by positing Iranian influence will no longer be ignored. There is very little in the present article that could not have been said about a hundred years ago by Joseph Wright or (J.R.R. Tolkien), and it is a fair question what, other than a *de facto* “mind bar”, has stood in the way. Why has it not long been common knowledge among Germanicists that Gothic shows a fair number of odd grammatical resemblances to Iranian?

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### The Gothic Genitive Plural in /-ee/ Yet Again: A Sarmatian Solution

Reasons are given to think that the Gothic GPL in /-ee/ (< /-εε/) developed in the M /n/-stems by analogy with GPL /-ωνων/ in F /n/-stems: NSG /-ων/ : GPL /-ωνων/ = NSG /-ε/ : GPL /-εεεε/. This analogy was externally motivated, due to various features of Iranian causing Gothic F /-ωνων/ and M /-ωνων/ to both be rendered as /-aanaa/ in Sarmatian-accented Gothic. As levels of competence increased, /-aanaa/ was “genderized” (and “Gothicized”) by replacing gender-neutral /-aanaa-/ with F /-ωνων/ (which spread to Pre-OHG) and M /-εεεε/. Historical and lexical evidence is given indicating that Gothic culture and language were significantly influenced by their Sarmatian analogues, and additional cases where Gothic shows unusual grammatical resemblances to Iranian are adduced.

**Keywords:** Genitive case, Gothic, Iranian, Old Germanic, Sarmatian, Sarmatian influence on Gothic.