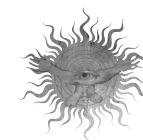


Linguistica e Filologia

45

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On a problematic passage in the Gothica Bononiensia

Abstract

The article proposes a new interpretation of a hitherto relatively overlooked passage from the recently discovered Gothic fragment from Bologna, or Gothica Bononiensia (2r, 15-17), and in particular of the expression faurasuggwan liuþ, a hapax legomenon that does not seem to have found a satisfactory rendering yet. Various possible ways of analyzing the expression are illustrated and, on the basis of what appears to be the most likely one, a translation of the page's content is proposed.

Keywords: Gothic, Gothica Bononiensia, hapax legomenon

The discovery of the so-called *Fragmentum Bononiense* or *Gothica Bononiensia* (from now on *GB*) in 2013 probably marked the most relevant advance in Gothic studies since the addition of the *Fragmentum Spirensis* to the Wulfilian corpus in 1971 (on which see Scardigli 1971). The *GB* consists of two 6th-century parchment leaves containing fragments of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (Antonelli 2009) written over what later proved to be an earlier text in Gothic script and language (Aimi-Modesti-Zuffrano 2013).

The palimpsest immediately drew scholarly attention and, since 2013, many valuable contributions have been published to shed light on the *GB*'s palaeographic, linguistic, and stylistic features (see especially Finazzi-Tornaghi 2013 for an early attempt at interpreting the Gothic text; Schumann 2016 for an in-depth linguistic analysis of it; Falluomini 2014 and 2017 for a more thorough philological description of the fragment).

What makes the *GB* particularly interesting is the fact that it is probably not a Wulfilian work and, most importantly, it does not appear to be a translation from Greek, although it contains many quotations from the Gothic Bible, most of which are previously unattested Old Testament passages. It has been proposed that the text is of a homiletic character,

mainly on the basis of its apparent stylistic features (Falluomini 2017; Pagliarulo 2016); this is also suggested by internal evidence, namely, the author's apparent direct address to an audience in f2r:17:

swe allai hausidedub
as you all heard.

From a linguistic point of view, the *GB* quite closely follows the Wulfilian model as represented by the extant manuscripts of the Gothic Bible (Falluomini 2014: 298).

Of course, great attention has been paid to the “new” lexical items found in the *GB* but unattested in the previously known Gothic corpus. Schumann (2016) lists a few of these, namely those appearing in simple, non-compound form: *agisleiks* “frightful”; *dagands* “enlightening”; *fairjan* “to move away”; *jiuhts* “draft animal”; *skaps* “creator”; *liuþ* “chant”¹. The text, however, also contains a considerable number of compounds whose single members are in fact well attested in the Wulfilian corpus but here appear prefixed or combined in unprecedented ways (e.g. *ga-witan* “to keep”; *us-pinsan* “to take away”). Most of these are analyzed by Falluomini in her aforementioned works.

One particular *hapax legomenon* that has so far eluded in-depth analysis belongs to the latter category. In f2r:15-17 we read:

15 *in þam*
16 *ma faurasuggwanin liuþa þa(n) qap þatei ni sijai*
17 *g(u)þ²*

where *faurasuggwanin* is obviously the preterite participle of the hitherto unattested compound verb *faura-siggwan*. Miller does not offer any interpretation of it in his partial translation and commentary of the *GB* (Miller 2019: 485-496), which does not cover the f2 portion of the *bifolium*. The only extant attempt at a rendering, to my knowledge, can be found in Falluomini's edition of the text, where *faurasiggwan* is

¹ Schumann also suggests *leiks* “similar”, but, in its two detectable occurrences, the adjective is preceded by *swa* in *scriptio continua*, so these are almost certainly instances of the already attested adjective *swaleiks* “such”.

² Here and in what follows I quote the *GB* text as established by Falluomini 2017a: 289.

translated into German as *vorsingen* or possibly *vorlesen* and placed in parallel with the Old High German *forasingan* “to lead a choir; to sing beforehand; to predict” (Falluomini 2017: 292).

Indeed, the simple Gothic form *siggwan* may translate the Greek ᾄδειν “to sing” (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16) as well as the Greek ἀναγινώσκειν “to read (aloud)” (Lk 4:16; 2Kor 3:15; Eph 3:4), while the prefix *faura-*, when added to a verb, may denote “publicity” of an action, as in *faura-meljan* “to display publicly” (Gal 3:1). Falluomini’s interpretation therefore seems justified. In what follows, I will try to show that, however, it is not the only possible one and, in fact, it may not even be the most likely one.

Old High German *forasingan* is indeed structurally analogous to Gothic *faurasiggwan*, but a direct etymological connection between the two forms is by no means warranted. In fact, *forasingan* may well be an independently coined calque on Latin *praecino* (Köbler 1993: *s.v.*; AHDW: *s.v.*). *Faurasiggwan*, on the other hand, apparently finds structurally equivalent forms in classical Greek προᾄδειν and προαναγινώσκειν; however, neither is attested in the Septuagint or in the Greek New Testament, so the Gothic verb seems unlikely to be a Wulfilian calque. It cannot even be assumed to be a calque at all.

As for their semantics, the Gothic verb and the Old High German one seem to overlap only in part. On one hand, *fora* and *faura*, as adverbs/prepositions by themselves, roughly share the same functions, operating on the spatial (“in front of”, therefore “publicly”) as well as temporal (“before”, “beforehand”, “in advance”) axes (Lloyd-Lühr 2007: *s.v. fora*; AHDW: *s.v. fora*; Streitberg 2000: *s.v. faura*) and this duplicity is also detectable in their use as verbal prefixes: to limit ourselves to Gothic, it will be sufficient to mention *faura-qipan* “to say beforehand”, i. e. “to predict” alongside *faura-meljan*. On the other hand, *siggwan* seems somewhat more polysemic than *singan*. The latter usually translates the Latin *cano*, *psallo*, *concino*, *canto* and basically refers to the act of singing, chanting (AHDW: *s.v.*); the former, on the other hand, translates both the Greek ᾄδειν “to sing” and ἀναγινώσκειν “to read (aloud)”: the latter rendering is actually most frequent, with three cases (Lk 4:16; 2Kor 3:15; Eph 3:4) against two (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). Its perfective form *usiggwan* always renders ἀναγινώσκειν or (Lk 10:26, gloss) the Latin *lego* “to read” (Streitberg 1910: *s.v.*). The Old High German *forasingan* never refers to the act of reading. The AHDW lists its possible meanings as

“*etw. als Vorsänger (zum Nachsingen) vorsingen*”; “*etw. vorher singen, singend vorausschicken*”; “*vorn (an der Spitze einer Gruppe) singen*” with the prefix operating, as expected, both on the time and space axes.

In light of what has just been observed, it seems preferable to interpret the Gothic verb on the basis of intra-linguistic and intra-textual evidence.

The section of the *GB* in which *faurasiggwan* is found stands between two quotations from the Psalms: the verse *ni gabauþ in midjamma garda meinamma taujands hauh<h>airtein* (*GB* f2r:14-15) is from Psalm 100 (101):7, Septuagint οὐ κατόκει ἐν μέσῳ τῆς οἰκίας μου ποιῶν ὑπερηφανίαν “He who practices pride shall not dwell in the midst of my house”; the verse *qab unfrops in hairtin seinamma nist g(u)þ* (*GB* f2r:18-19) may be from Psalm 13 (14):1 or from Psalm 52 (53):2, Septuagint εἶπεν ἄφρων ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ· οὐκ ἔστι Θεός “The fool said in his heart: ‘There is no God’”. The text between these is the author’s original comment: *þa(n)nu in þamma faurasuggwanin liuþa þa(n) qab þatei ni sijai g(u)þ swe allai hausideduþ praufetu insakan jah qiþan* “so in that *furasuggwanin liuþa* he said that there is no God, as you all heard the prophet declare and say...”.

If we adopt Falluomini’s interpretation of *furasiggwan*, then the expression *furasuggwanin liuþa* would roughly translate as “publicly chanted verse”. *Liuþa* is itself a *hapax*, the dative singular of the hitherto unattested *a*-stem **liuþ*. Its meaning can be inferred from etymologically related words such as *liuþareis* ὠδός “singer”, *liuþon* ψάλλειν “to sing” (*Rm* 15:9 *namin þeinamma liuþo* “I sing unto thy name”), *awi-liuþ* χάρις; εὐχαριστία “thanks” and *awi-liudon* δοξάζειν; εὐχαριστεῖν “to give thanks”. Indeed, Falluomini herself (Falluomini 2017: 289) proposes “(*Lob*) *Gesang*” as a German rendering for *liuþ*.

As for *furasuggwanin*, a weak neuter dative singular, preterite participle of the strong verb **furasiggwan*, there seem to be two possibilities, on the grounds of what we have observed above:

- *Faura-* operates on the space axis: “publicly sung” (the rendering most harmonious with Falluomini’s interpretation); “publicly read, recited before (an audience)”.
- *Faura-* operates on the time axis: “sung beforehand”; “aforeread (aloud), previously recited”.

If we interpret *pata faurasuggwanin liuþa* as “that publicly chanted verse” we need to identify the verse referred to here. It would seem to be Ps 13 (14):1 or 52 (53):2, quoted immediately below and denouncing “the fool” who denies the existence of God. It appears that the author of the *GB* is here conflating this “fool” with Satan, mentioned a few lines above in a quotation from Luke 10:18 (f2r:11-12), and with “he who practices pride” from Ps 100 (101):7 (Wolfe 2017: 206).

This translation is, as already noted, perfectly acceptable from a formal point of view, although it sounds somewhat redundant. If the *liuþ* referred to here is a verse from the psalms, or a specific psalm itself, then it is obviously meant for public singing in a liturgical context, so it sounds a little odd that the author of the *GB* felt the need to specify that. This could be justified by invoking extra-textual factors: e. g. if, as seems to be the case, the *GB* was a homily to be read in front of a religious gathering, it is certainly possible that it was preceded by recitation or singing of passages from the Bible and religious hymns. *Faurasuggwan liuþ* might then refer to a psalm sung on the same liturgical occasion on which the *GB* would have been read.

For the sake of economy, however, recourse to hypothetical extra-textual factors to make sense of a passage should be considered only after examining (and discarding) as many intra-textual ones as possible. I will now, therefore, explore other possible interpretations of the *hapax* based on internal evidence from the text itself.

As previously stated, one of the possible renderings of the participle *faurasuggwan* would be “aforeread (aloud), recited previously”. *Faurasuggwan liuþ*, in an intra-textual interpretation, might thus refer to the quote from Ps 13 (14):1 or 52 (53):2 as a passage already mentioned in a portion of the *GB*’s original text that is no longer preserved. This interpretation, though still formally plausible, and in harmony with the destination of the work to oral performance, nonetheless requires us to hypothesize some textual premise for which there is no actual evidence. A still formally viable but more parsimonious solution would be preferable.

Such might be the case with the rendering “sung beforehand” for *faurasuggwan*. As noted, the passage *þa(n)nu in þamma faurasuggwanin liuþa þa(n) qap þatei ni sijai g(u)þ swe allai hausideduþ praufetu insakan jah qipan* immediately follows a quote from Psalm 100 (101) and immediately precedes a quote from Psalm 13 (14) or 52 (53), the latter

undoubtedly being the *faurasuggwan liuþ* the author is referring to. As the passage introduces a quote from a psalm that in the Septuagint precedes the other psalm quoted immediately beforehand, it seems justifiable to interpret *in þamma faurasuggwanin liuþa* as “in that previously sung psalm”. Such a translation would be formally viable and it would also require no *ad hoc* extra-textual or intra-textual hypothesis, being wholly grounded on extant intra-textual evidence.

It is my suggestion, to sum up, that attributing a temporal function to *faura-* and the meaning “to sing” to *siggwan* in the compound verb is the most likely and succinct hypothesis. On this basis, I propose the following tentative translation of *GB f2r* to complement Miller’s:

- [hi]
- 6 *minis jah wairþa galeiks þamma hauhistin· a*
... of the sky and I will be similar to the Highest; “But
 - 7 *kei jainþro dalap atraga þuk þa(n) qap imma*
thence I will pull you down”, said then to him
 - 8 *f(rau)ja allwaldands· unte g(u)þ hauh<h>airtaim andstan*
the all-ruling Lord; for God stands against the proud
 - 9 *dip· ip haunidaim gibip anst; bi þammei gamelip*
but bestows grace upon the humble; about whom it is written:
 - 10 *ist· hvaiwa usdraus us himina auzandil sa in maur*
“How did Lucifer fall from the sky, he who
 - 11 *gin urrinnanda· bi þanei f(rau)ja qap· gasahv satanan*
rises in the morning?”. About whom the Lord said: “I saw Satan
 - 12 *swe lauhmunja dri[u]sandan us himina· in hviz·*
fall from the sky like a lightning bolt”. For what?
 - 13 *in hauh<h>airteins sein[a]izos; Inuh þis qipip prau*
For his pride; because of this the prophet says
 - 14 *fetus bi ina· ni gabauip in midjamma garda*
about him: “There shall not dwell in the midst of my house

- 15 *meinamma taujands hauh<h>airtein þan(n)u in þam*
one practicing pride”. Thus, in that
- 16 *ma faurasuggwanin liuþa þa(n) qap þatei ni sijai*
previously sung psalm, he said that there be no
- 17 *g(u)þ swe allai hausideduþ praufetu insakan*
God, as you all heard the prophet declare
- 18 *jah qipan· qap unfroþs in hairtin seinamma·*
and say: “The fool said in his heart:
- 19 *nist g(u)þ· sa sama ist jah unsibjis· bi þamma qiþa·*
“There is no God””. That is himself the disgraceful one, according to
the saying:
- 20 *nin· qap unsibjis ei frawaur<k>jai in sis silbin·*
“The disgraceful one said that he would sin against himself”.
- 21 *sa sama ist jah fijands· bi þamma gamelidin· fi*
That is himself the Enemy, according to the writing: “An
- 22 *jands manna þata gatawida· þin[s]an du diabau*
enemy did this”: bringing to the Devil.
- 23 *lu· jabai nist g(u)þ· huas gataih þus þata namo· huas*
If there is no God, who showed you that name? Who
- 24 *gakannida þus akei in þammei afaikip in þam*
made it known to you? But in what he abjures, in that he also
- 25 *ma sik afdomeiþ jah gawargeiþ; jabai nist g(u)þ*
condemns and bans himself; if there is no God
- 26 *bi huana [q]aþ airus· jah gatawida g(u)þ þana mannan*
about whom did the messenger say: “God made man...

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