

Greek ἀρχιερέως in Gothic translation: Linguistics and theology at a crossroads

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One of the most remarkable examples of variation in the Gothic Bible is the translation of the Greek compound ἀρχιερέως ‘chief priest’, accorded as many as seven different Gothic renderings. By examining the distribution of the Gothic examples and the contexts in which they occur, this paper challenges the traditional assumptions on the variation and argues that the variants are due to the exegetical and creative inputs of the translator. It is improbable that the variation was brought about under the influence of pre-Vulgate Latin and unlikely that the different renderings were introduced by putative post-Wulfilian revisers of the Gothic text. The findings call into question the traditional narrative of Wulfila’s single-handed translation of the Bible into Gothic.

1. Introduction¹

For all the care with which the Gothic Bible translation follows its Greek original, it contains surprising examples of indecision in the translation of some concepts. One such example is the Greek noun ἀρχιερέως ‘chief priest’ (< ἀρχι- ‘first, chief, supreme’ + ιερέως ‘priest’), afforded as many as seven different translations in Gothic, the majority of which are based on the noun *gudja*, a non-Christian word for ‘priest’ (Kind 1901: 20; Friedrichsen 1926: 169–171; Falluomini 2015: 83).² As suggested by Friedrichsen (1926: 169), the example is remarkable in that it concerns a technical term with very specific reference. As a result, in the interests of consistency and clarity one would expect some uniformity in the way it is rendered throughout the Gothic text.

In the only study dedicated to the problem known to me, Werth (1973) concludes that Wulfila – the original translator – and his later copyists employed synonyms for *(sa) auhumista gudja* ‘(the) chief priest’ partly for stylistic variation and partly under the influence of pre-Vulgate Latin (*Vetus Latina*) (cf. Groeper 1915: 15–19). Because I disagree with Werth’s conclusions and do not share the assumptions that underlie them, I am not going to engage in a step-by-step dismantling of his arguments. Instead, by appealing to what there is, as opposed to what there might be,

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² For a dedicated treatment of Gothic heathen vocabulary, including *gudja*, see Laird (1940) and Ganina (2001). An overview of Gothic religious vocabulary, with a Christian orientation, is given in Weinhold (1870).

and bringing together principles of philology, theology as well as linguistics, in this paper I offer a balanced approach to the translation of the compound *ἀρχιερέυς* and its components into Gothic in an effort to clarify the motives behind the variation.

2. The data³

2.1. With a total of 46 examples, the evidence from the Gothic Bible represents a little over a third of the attestations of *ἀρχιερέυς* in the presumed Greek original⁴ – for the rest, the surviving Gothic records are incomplete. The distribution of the Gothic material, confined to the four Gospels, is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Gothic renderings of *ἀρχιερέυς* in the Gospels

	Scribe 1		Scribe 2	
Matthew	John	Luke	Mark	
27:1 <i>gudjans</i>	7:32 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>	3:2 <i>auhmistam gudjam</i>	2:26 <i>gudjin</i>	
27:3 <i>gudjam</i>	7:45 <i>auhumistam gudjam</i>	9:22 <i>gudjam</i>	8:31 <i>auhumistam gudjam</i>	
27:6 <i>gudjans</i>	11:47 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>	19:47 <i>auhmistans gudjans</i>	10:33 <i>ufargudjam</i>	
27:12 <i>gudjam</i>	12:10 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>	20:19 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>	11:18 <i>gudjane auhumistans</i>	
27:62 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>	18:3 <i>gudjane</i>		11:27 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>	
	18:10 <i>auhumistins gudjins</i>		14:10 <i>gudjam</i>	
	18:13 <i>auhumists weiha</i>		14:43 <i>auhumistam gudjam</i>	
	18:15 <i>gudjin</i>		14:47 <i>auhumistins gudjins</i>	
	18:15 <i>gudjins</i>		14:53 <i>auhumistin gudjin</i>	
	18:16 <i>gudjin</i>		14:53 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>	
	18:19 <i>auhumista gudja</i>		14:54 <i>auhumistins gudjins</i>	
	18:22 <i>reikistin gudjin</i>		14:55 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>	
	18:24 <i>maistin gudjin</i>		14:60 <i>auhumista gudja</i>	
	18:26 <i>maistins gudjins</i>		14:61 <i>auhumista gudja</i>	
	18:35 <i>gudjans</i>		14:63 <i>auhumista gudja</i>	
	19:6 <i>maistans gudjans</i>		14:66 <i>auhumistins gudjins</i>	
			15:1 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>	

³ For the Gothic evidence, I follow Snædal (2013). The primary Greek comparator is the “Majority Text” by Robinson & Pierpont (2005), which represents the Byzantine text type of the Greek New Testament (cf. Falluomini 2015: 130, fn. 583); the secondary comparator is the Alexandrian (“Critical”) text (Nestle et al. 2012) – see Ratkus (2009) and Miller (forthc. a) for justification. The Latin citations refer to the pre-Vulgate versions of the Latin scriptures (Jülicher 1963–1976; *Vetus Latina Database*). The Gothic citations have been taken from the *Wulfila Project database* (www.wulfila.be), which utilises Streitberg’s (1919) edition of the Gothic texts. The English translations of the Gothic examples are intended to convey the sense of the original as accurately as possible, and they therefore do not follow any particular English Bible translation.

⁴ According to the Bible Hub database (www.biblehub.com), the Greek Bible contains 123 occurrences of *ἀρχιερέυς* (across 7 morphological forms). However, not all of these occurrences represent relevant material for comparison with Gothic. For example, the form *ἀρχιερεῖς* in Luke 20:1, attested in the Alexandrian text (Nestle et al. 2012: 266), has the counterpart *ιερεῖς* in the Byzantine Majority Text (Robinson & Pierpont 2005: 176). As a result, the Gothic rendering *gudjans* does not constitute a deviation from the Greek. Instead, it demonstrates allegiance of the Gothic text with the Byzantine text type.

		15:3 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>
		15:10 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>
		15:11 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>
		15:31 <i>auhumistans gudjans</i>

It looks at first sight as though *ἀρχιερέως* was a troublesome and linguistically awkward construct that could not be consistently given a straightforward translation in Gothic (cf. Kind 1901: 21). The scattering of the examples across the four Gospels highlights two areas of concentration in John 18 and Mark 14, but these merely reproduce the densities of the original Greek. More interestingly, the two Gospels in the Gothic translation exhibit a clear contrast in the degree of variation attested in each, with as many as five different renderings of *ἀρχιερέως* appearing in John 18 on the one hand, and on the other hand Mark 14 being remarkably consistent in the use of *auhumista gudja*. The sole exception is *gudjam* in Mark 14:10, far removed from the main area of concentration between Mark 14:43 and 14:66.

There are a total of seven Gothic renderings of *ἀρχιερέως*, illustrating different translation techniques, as detailed in Table 2.⁵

Table 2. Quantitative tendencies in the Gothic rendering of *ἀρχιερέως*

	Mt	Jh	Lk	Mk	Total
<i>auh(u)mista gudja</i>	1	6	3	17	27
<i>gudja</i>	4	5	1	2	12
<i>maista* gudja</i>	–	3	–	–	3
<i>auhumists weiha</i>	–	1	–	–	1
<i>reikista* gudja</i>	–	1	–	–	1
<i>ufargudja*</i>	–	–	–	1	1
<i>gudjane auhumistans</i>	–	–	–	1	1
Total:	5	16	4	21	46

By far, the preferred way of rendering *ἀρχιερέως* in Gothic is with a noun preceded by an attributive adjective: *auhumista gudja* ‘highest/supreme priest’, *maista* gudja* ‘greatest priest’, *reikista* gudja* ‘noblest priest’. There are 31 (67%) such examples,

⁵ The figures in Table 2 are virtually the same as Friedrichsen’s (1926: 169), with the difference that the partitive structure *gudjane auhumistans*, which is incompatible with the attributive use of *auhumista* in *auhumista gudja*, has been treated separately. The conjectured example of *auhumistans gudjans* in Luke 23:13 (Snædal 2013 i: 25) has not been counted towards the total – for a discussion of the reconstruction of Codex Gissensis see Snædal (2003).

Here and elsewhere in the text, collective reference to a given type of rendering is made in the nominative, whether or not the nominative is actually attested. Contrary to Friedrichsen (1926: 169), the generic nominatives for *auhumista gudja*, *maista* gudja* and *reikista* gudja* are given with the weak form of the adjective, as in each attestation of these formulae the adjectives appear as weak. In contrast, *auhumists* in *auhumists weiha* is the only strong form – see section 4 for discussion. In the table, the postfixed asterisk marks lexical items unattested in their citation form: *maista**, *reikista**, *ufargudja**. The prefixed asterisk (e.g. **gudjafaps*) is used for reconstructed, conjectured or ungrammatical forms.

among which *auhumista gudja* clearly prevails, as illustrated by the regular type in Table 1 (the less common renderings are given in bold). In two instances, namely Luke 3:2 and 19:47, this prevailing form is realised as *auhmistam gudjam* and *auhmistans gudjans* respectively – i.e. with a syncopated medial *-u-*.⁶

Although, in principle, this type of rendering constitutes a deviation from the Greek, no special syntactic inferences can be drawn from the placement of the adjective with respect to the noun, as the Gothic merely spells out the ordering of elements in the Greek compound. The only exception is the sole example of the partitive structure *gudjane auhumistans* ‘the most senior ones of the priests’, with the opposite relative ordering of the elements. In as many as 12 (26%) instances, *ἀρχιερέυς* is rendered by means of the noun *gudja* ‘priest’, with the *ἀρχι-* component left untranslated. Perhaps the most interesting example is the hapax legomenon *ufargudja** (< *ufar* ‘over, above’ + *gudja* ‘priest’), as it imitates the Greek compound in its structure.

2.2. As is well known, the writing of the four Gothic Gospels, transmitted by the Codex Argenteus, is divided between two hands (Munkhammar 2011a: 126–127; Falluomini 2015: 33). As shown in Table 1, one scribe was in charge of the Gospels of Matthew and John, and the other Luke and Mark. As a result, any variation between the two pairs of Gospels is bound to implicate the respective scribes.⁷

The Gothic evidence for the translation of *ἀρχιερέυς*, collated in Table 1, speaks to a high degree of variation in the Gospel of John (scribe 1), especially John 18. The four examples of *gudja* in Matthew (27:1, 3, 6, 12, making a close succession), as opposed to *auhumista gudja* in John (7:32, 45; 11:47, 12:10) represent two islands of examples with consistent usage. However, viewed against the background of *auhumista gudja* as the preferred form, the two islands are at variance with each other, as well as with the greater succession of variant forms in John 18.

The Gospels of Luke and Mark (including the dense succession in Mark 14 and 15), on the contrary, demonstrate a high degree of consistency in following the regular form *auhumista gudja*. The only outliers are the three isolated examples of *gudja* in Luke 9:22, Mark 2:26 and 14:10, and the sole instance of *ufargudja** in Mark 10:33. The partitive structure *gudjane auhumistans* in Mark 11:18 can be seen to honour the regular model with its lexical composition.

The picture that emerges from the distribution of the Gothic renderings of *ἀρχιερέυς* across the two pairs of Gospels is at odds with Friedrichsen’s (1926: 240–244) characterisation of the properties of Matthew and John (scribe 1) vs. Luke and Mark (scribe 2): in terms of the amount of total variation, contrary to expectations,

⁶ Unless reference is made specifically to Luke 3:2 and 19:47, in the ensuing discussion these syncopated forms are subsumed under the general umbrella of *auhumista gudja*.

⁷ At the time of the publication of Friedrichsen’s (1926) seminal work, it was generally believed that the text transmitted by the Codex Argenteus was the work of one person. It was only when the Codex was unbound for the facsimile project of von Friesen & Grape (1927) that dual authorship of the writing came to light. Interestingly, Friedrichsen (1926: 241–242), unaware of the scribal division between Matthew–John and Luke–Mark, concludes that the Gothic Gospels represent two different types of text: “Matthew and John exhibit an older, more primitive, less developed text, and a more ingenuous workmanship; Luke and Mark have had a more adventurous career; they suggest an atmosphere of theological refinement and text-critical activity which is wanting at least in Matthew.”

Matthew and John are rather more varied than Luke and Mark. On the surface, at least, this could be seen to imply that the high degree of variation in the pair Matthew–John is due to the input of scribe 1; conversely, scribe 2 could similarly be suspected of having eliminated any original variation in his pair of the Gospels. Neither scenario is likely, however, as in each case the findings for the translation of *ἀρχιερέως* are offset by collective evidence for the opposite general tendencies reported by Friedrichsen (see also Hunter 1969: 343–344). In other words, it is hard to imagine that either scribe should have simultaneously exercised two conflicting approaches. Rather, the disagreement of our data with the general tendencies can be indicative of some ulterior motives behind the variation that have yet to be exposed.

It is also worth pointing out that the practice of blaming any instances of variation on later corruptions (Velten 1930: 339; Werth 1973: 267–268; Thompson 2008: 144–151; Francini 2009, etc.) either by copyists or redactors is a common fallacy. First, there is no reason – outside clearly demonstrable instances – to assume that the original text was variation-free. Not even closely related languages can be matched in their entirety, and different kinds of adjustment, variation and compromise in translation from one language to another are therefore unavoidable and only natural – for details see Nida (2003: 226–240). Second, it is counterintuitive to assume that a scribe, commissioned to reproduce a written document as accurately as possible, would go beyond occasional minor correction of particularly egregious usages or harmonisation and indulge in the liberty of radical reinterpretation or rewriting (cf. Marchand 1973: 38–43; Falluomini 2015: 86).

In this regard, the above-mentioned syncopated forms (*auhmist-* rather than the more conventional *auhunist-*) in Luke 3:2 and 19:47, as well as the syncopated form *auhmisto* ‘highest (point)’ in Luke 4:29 *und auhmisto þis fairgunjis* ‘unto the brow of the hill’, merit a separate mention. Assuming that the Gospels of Luke and Mark were written down by the same scribe, the three syncopated forms, attested only in the Gospel of Luke, stand in stark contrast to 18 unsyncopated attestations of this adjective in the Gospel of Mark. This clearly suggests that the difference in spelling cannot be attributed to the scribe and goes back to some earlier stage in the production of the Gothic text. The question of whether the syncopated forms reflect the original spelling by the translator responsible for the respective parts of the Gothic text, or were introduced by some later reviser, remains open.

If we assume any revisionist initiative on the scribes’ part, in the case of *ἀρχιερέως* the scribes should also be assumed to have conducted some serious linguistic comparison of the Gothic with the original Greek and Latin texts in either producing the variation in John 18 (perhaps based on the variation attested in pre-Vulgate Latin) or smoothing out any original variation in Mark 14 (based on the uniform use of a single term in the presumed Greek original). Neither is likely, as there is simply no reason a scribe should alter something that has already been established on this large scale – even less so considering the psychological stresses and physical effort involved in manuscript copying (Metzger & Ehrman 2005: 16–33; for a classification of the different types of scribal input, also see pp. 250–271).

3. Lexical scope and stylistic considerations

3.1. In his discussion of the different Gothic renderings of ἀρχιερέως, Friedrichsen (1926: 170) suggests that “The chief difficulty is to account for the untypical and inaccurate *gudja*, which elsewhere regularly and correctly renders *ιερέως*.” This statement is clearly predicated on assuming a one-to-one correspondence between the components of ἀρχιερέως and *auhumista gudja* at the level of form as well as meaning. Thus, the use of ἀρχι- in Greek is automatically expected to invoke *auhumists* (or its equivalent) in Gothic, whilst the rendering of ἀρχιερέως with *gudja* is seen to compromise on the semantics of the Greek compound by broadening its reference in Gothic – that is, the alleged inadequacy consists in a hyponym being translated by means of a superordinate term.

Outside the examples listed in Table 1, there are only six examples of *gudja* (Luke 1:5, 5:14, 6:4, 20:1, Mark 1:44, Matthew 8:4), all of which correspond to *ιερέως* in Greek. This, however, does not necessarily mean that *gudja* and *ιερέως* make an ideal semantic match. After all, *gudja* is chosen as a translation of ἀρχιερέως in as many as 12 (26%) instances out of 46. It can thus be speculated that *gudja* was adequate for denoting something like ‘senior priest’ or ‘spiritual leader’,⁸ in which case the many instances of ἀρχι- being given an adjective in Gothic would be merely an example of the Gothic translator’s insistence on closely mirroring the original.⁹ Whether or not this is true, it is conceivable that the translation of ἀρχιερέως represents an area of tension between, on the one hand, care for verbatim precision and, on the other, faithfulness to the structure of the text. Thus, where there exists no risk of ambiguity, *gudja* by itself makes for a simpler and better rendering of ἀρχιερέως, as this way the structure of the text does not have to be tampered with by inserting new syntactic material.

Additionally, the evidence from Luke 20:1 of variation between ἀρχιερέως in Alexandrian Greek and *ιερέως* in Byzantine Greek (Majority Text) highlights the possibility that, in at least some instances of *gudja* appearing by itself, we may be dealing with instances of genuine and accurate translation. Falluomini (2015: 83, fn. 386) points out two more instances (John 7:32 and 18:22) of *ιερέως* (rather than ἀρχιερέως) transmitted by individual Greek manuscripts. In other words, the choice of

⁸ Attempts to capture the religious flavour of the Gothic equivalents of ἀρχιερέως and its base noun *ιερέως* have been made in the earlier literature. By relating *gudja* ‘priest’ to *gub* ‘god’, Üçok (1938: 67) suggests that *gudja* denotes a person in touch with the higher being (i.e. God); a priest is a person who manifests divine power within himself. In a similar vein, Laird (1940: 57) states that *gudja* denotes a person “who is active in the service of the gods.”

⁹ Kind (1901: 21) surmises that “The use of the simple *gudja* to translate ἀρχιερέως seems to point to the fact that this word meant high priest as well as simply priest, and slipped in at a time during the translation when Ulfilas was paying attention more to meaning and less to form.” It is apparent that Kind’s understanding of the variation rests on the unwavering premise that the Gothic translation was the work of one person. For a logical alternative, see the conclusion to section 4 of this paper. To the best of my knowledge, Burkitt (1927: 94) represents the first attempt in the literature to suggest that the variation in the Gothic translation is due to the Greek ἀρχιερέως being ambiguous: “It seems to me, after going through the occurrences both in Gothic and the Latin MSS, that the Gothic variations are best accounted for as proceeding from the occasionally felt ambiguity of the Greek term rather than as mechanical assimilation to any Latin text.”

gudja may refer to competition between *ἱερέυς* and *ἀρχιερέυς* in some original Greek sources to which we no longer have access.

3.2. It has been observed that, in translating a Greek term repeated in close succession, Gothic avoids using the same word in favour of synonyms as a way of stylistic diversification (Stutz 1966: 78 and 1972: 380; Falluomini 2015: 82; cf. also Groeper 1915: 15–19 and Werth 1973). If this is indeed a principle that was followed by the Gothic translator, then it should certainly be testable on the evidence of *ἀρχιερέυς* and its different Gothic equivalents.

The data reported in Table 1 illustrates four areas of concentration that can be examined for stylistic manipulation: Matthew 27:1–12, John 18:3–35, Mark 14:43–66 and 15:1–31. It is immediately apparent that John 18 is in clear contrast to the other clusters of examples in that it alone displays some considerable variation among items in close succession. Irrespective of the method of rendering, the clusters in Matthew and Mark are fully consistent in using the same word or phrase. Nor is there any evidence for avoiding the same word or phrase within the relatively closely situated pairs such as John 7:32 and 7:45, or 11:47 and 12:10; as suggested above, the partitive structure *gudjane auhumistans* in Mark 11:18 is grammatically different from the dominant model of *auhumista gudja*, attested in Mark 11:27, but is lexically faithful to it.

Thus, as a whole, the argument for stylistic diversification among items in close succession cannot be sustained on this evidence. However, if the variation attested in John 18 can be shown to have stylistic underpinnings – as suggested by Scardigli (1973: 108–109), who appeals to Wulfila aiming at stylistic and rhetorical effects – this then highlights two inherently different manners of linguistic behaviour between John 18 and the other areas of concentration – a picture that is incompatible with the doctrinal view of one original Gothic translator.

4. Exegetical input

4.1. The traditional discussion of *ἀρχιερέυς* in Gothic translation assumes primacy of the presumed Greek text, taking it unquestioningly for granted that the variation attested in Gothic constitutes an infraction of consistent usage prescribed by the original Greek. In theory, at least, it should be possible to imagine the opposite – namely, that by varying the way it renders the same Greek word, Gothic realises important distinctions that are not visible in the Greek. At the heart of the matter lies a subtle difference in the reference of the many instantiations of *ἀρχιερέυς*. In particular, the plural form *ἀρχιερεῖς* in our corpus and elsewhere in the New Testament refers collectively to ‘chief priests’, as opposed to the singular *ἀρχιερέυς*, which denotes the ‘high priest’, an exclusive office of great eminence that stood apart from and above the chief priests.¹⁰

¹⁰ Groeper (1915: 19) makes a passing mention of the Sanhedrin in connection with variation in the Gothic references to the chairman of the Sanhedrin, but does not investigate the subject further. More generally, Groeper (pp. 15–19) selectively targets the different instances of variation in Gothic, suggesting an array of ad hoc motivations, from stylistic choices to the influence of parallel passages

4.2. The distinction between the high priest and chief priests is well recognised in theological literature. The high priest was situated at the top of Jewish religious hierarchy and as such was the supreme mediator between the people and God; the high priest also played an extraordinary political role (Hartman 1963: 1003; Sabourin 1973: 101, 161–163; Schürer 1979: 202, 215, 227, 275). At any given time, there could only be one high priest, and he alone was endowed with the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement with an offering of sacrifice (Hartman 1963: 1003–1004; Schürer 1979: 275–276). Originally hereditary, at the time of Jesus Christ, High Priesthood was an appointed office that was not held for life; the holder of the office constantly changing ensured that at any given time there were a number of former high priests who nevertheless occupied important positions and maintained much of their influence (Schürer 1979: 227–233; cf. Sabourin 1973: 147). The high priest functioned as president of the Sanhedrin, the highest court of justice and an aristocratic council in ancient Jerusalem, whose members included scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, elders and priests (Schürer 1979: 200, 218; Harlow 2005: 379).

Below the high priest in the hierarchy were the chief priests (designated by the plural *ἀρχιερεῖς*), a college comprised of former high priests as well as senior members of privileged noble families from which high priests were drawn (Sabourin 1973: 165; Schürer 1979: 235–236; Casey 2010: 346; cf. Schrenk 1965: 271), followed by regular priests and their assistants, the Levites (Harlow 2005: 378). In their capacity as chief priests, the *ἀρχιερεῖς* each held a seat and had a voice in the Sanhedrin (Schrenk 1965: 270).

Thus, it is clear that the distinction between the high priest and chief priests is warranted. Nevertheless, the scope of reference of the singular *ἀρχιερεύς* and plural *ἀρχιερεῖς* is not always clear-cut. For example, the mention of Caiaphas (the high priest at the time of Jesus's death) and Annas (father-in-law of Caiaphas, and himself a former high priest) in the same context in John 18 make the reference of *ἀρχιερεύς* ambiguous in some of the verses. Nor is it entirely clear whether the *δοῦλος* 'servant, slave' in John 18:10, 26 (as well as Mark 14:47) belongs to Annas or Caiaphas (Schrenk 1965: 270). At the same time, the plural *ἀρχιερεῖς* can be argued to refer generically to the (compositionally heterogeneous) Sanhedrin as a whole (including the high priest, the chief priests and other office holders) (Schrenk 1965: 271), or perhaps a narrower cohort of high priestly officials. The ambiguity inherent in the singular and plural forms of *ἀρχιερεύς* opens room for interpretation and can be resolved through lexical diversification, as evidenced by Bible translations into many different languages.

and Latin; some usages are left unexplained. As such, his account of the Gothic translation of *ἀρχιερεύς* is unpersuasive.

In her dissertation, Laird (1940: 57–58; 60) points out that the many Gothic variants translate the singular *ἀρχιερεύς* and the plural *ἀρχιερεῖς*. However, Laird's use of 'chief priest', 'chief priests' and 'chief priest (or) high priest' as blanket references indicates that she sees no distinction between the offices of the high priest and the chief priests, and hence no distinction between the reference of the singular *ἀρχιερεύς* and the plural *ἀρχιερεῖς*.

4.3. The Gothic text of John 18 and Mark 14 surviving virtually in full (except for verses 1–3 and part of verse 4 in Mark) and each showcasing a succession of examples of ἀρχιερεύς, these books can be examined for exegetical input on the part of the Gothic translator along the above principles.

The succession in John 18 is framed between two (and only) plural references to *gudjans* in 18:3 and 18:35, as illustrated in the examples below. The episode in between deals with Judas’s betrayal of Jesus and Jesus being taken for questioning to the house of Annas, who then sends him to Caiaphas. Subsequently, Jesus is brought before Pontius Pilate.

(1) John 18:3

*ip Iudas nam hansa jah þize **gudjane** jah Fareisaie andbahtans, iddjuh
jaindwairþs miþ skeimam jah haizam jah wepnam*

‘Then Judas took a band of officers from the priests and Pharisees, (and) went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.’

(2) John 18:35

*andhof Peilatus: waitei ik Iudaius im? so þiuda þeina jah **gudjans** anafulhun
þuk mis; hwa gatawides?*

‘Pilate answered: am I a Jew? Your own nation and the priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?’

In both examples the reference of the plural forms is generic: in 18:3 *gudjane* refers to two office holders within the Sanhedrin (the priestly college and the Pharisees), and in 18:35 the juxtaposition of *so þiuda þeina* ‘your own nation’ and *gudjans* ‘priests’ implies, at the very least, the priestly authorities, and at the most, the whole of the Sanhedrin (cf. Schrenk 1965: 270).

(3) John 18:10

*ip Seimon Paitrus habands hairu, uslauk ina jah sloh þis **auhumistins gudjins**
skalk*

‘Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s slave.’

John 18:10 introduces the first singular reference to *gudja* in a sequence of 9 singulars. As suggested above, the actual personal reference of *auhumistins gudjins* is unclear, as it may mean either Annas or Caiaphas. What is clear, though, is that the Gothic translator deems it important to designate the high priest by the title by spelling out the Greek compound in full. In this way, this specification is contrasted with the preceding generic plural in 18:3, clarifying the extraordinary reference of *auhumistins gudjins*.

(4) John 18:13

*jah gatauhun ina du Annin frumist; sa was auk swaihra Kajafin,
saei was **auhumists weiha** þis atþnjis*

‘And, first, led him to Annas; for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the supreme holy (master) that year.’

Following his capture, Jesus was brought for interrogation by Annas (in office AD 6–15), as stated in John 18:13. This episode is peculiar owing to the incidental mention of Caiaphas, the incumbent high priest (in office AD 18–36). This way, Annas and Caiaphas are juxtaposed as high priests in spite of Annas having been deposed. The great authority that Annas continued to exercise is further confirmed by his (technically incorrect) mention side by side with Caiaphas in Luke 3:2 *at auhmistam gudjam Annin jah Kajafin* ‘at (the time of) the high priests Annas and Caiaphas’ (Greek ἐπὶ ἀρχιερέως Ἄννα καὶ Καϊάφα) – it is impossible for the office to have been held jointly (Chilton 1992: 804).

In this context, the Gothic specification *auhumists weiha* in John 18:13 is especially interesting. Rather than merely citing the (formulaic) designation of office *auhumista gudja* (which would overlap with the ambiguous *auhumistins gudjins* in 18:10 and, in part, with three following references to Annas as *gudja* in 18:15–16), the translator opts for a descriptive specification of Caiaphas’s unique role as the incumbent high priest – that is, Caiaphas was the ‘supreme holy (master)’.¹¹ It is

¹¹ In attempting to explain the variation in references to priests in the Gothic Gospel of John, Üçok (1938: 66) appeals to Wulfila’s stylistic prowess. Similarly, Laird (1940: 60) notes that “the use of the phrase *auhumists weiha* in John 18 is due to the desire of the translator to vary as much as possible the rendering of ἀρχιερέως.” However, Üçok’s (1938: 68) suggestion that the lexical variation with which Gothic renders ἀρχιερέως refers to a difference between a priest with a permanent office (*gudja*) and one in office for a limited time (*weiha*) seems ad hoc and does not account for the full extent of variation. Further, this suggestion is mistaken because the formulation *saei was auhumists weiha þis atapnjis* ‘who was the highest priest of that year’ in John 18:13 refers to the historic year in which Jesus died and therefore cannot be understood to imply an annual appointment of the high priest. According to Schrenk (1965: 270), “It is inconceivable that a book so knowledgeable in Jewish matters as John’s Gospel should be suggesting that the high-priesthood was a yearly office.” Burkitt’s (1927: 94) suggestion that “*auhumists weiha* in Jn. xviii 13 emphasizes the ordination of Caiaphas for that particular year” is factually incorrect, as Caiaphas was in office in AD 18–36.

In defence of Üçok’s suggestion (repeated by Frodl 1951: 57–58), one might recall that the conclusions we come to today are aided by virtually two millennia of Bible scholarship and historical research. The same knowledge might not necessarily have been available to the Gothic translator. It is therefore possible to imagine a situation in which the translator was guided by contextual considerations rather than expertise in Jewish traditions. Assuming that derivationally *gudja* ‘priest’ implies one permanently in contact with God, the qualification *τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐκείνου* ‘of that year’ in John 18:13 may have prompted the translator to render ἀρχιερέως with *weiha* ‘holy/consecrated one’, a notion more consistent with the practicalities of sacrifice and officiating on holy rituals. Thus, in theory at least, the difference between *gudja* and *weiha* may refer to a perceived contextual contrast between permanence and transience.

If, however, we concede that the translator had to be aware of the actual meaning of ‘of that year’, then it is entirely conceivable that his decision to invoke the descriptive specification *auhumists weiha* in John 18:13 – a rendering of ἀρχιερέως unique to this verse – was motivated by the objective of expository clarity. In other words, the translator deliberately avoided placing the official title *auhumista gudja* ‘high priest’ side by side with *þis atapnjis* ‘of that year’ as a way of preventing potential misunderstanding, where the high priest might be wrongly understood as a temporary appointment. Thus, the translator’s actual intention was to communicate the following: ‘(The High Priest) Caiaphas was the supreme religious leader that year.’ If this interpretation of the translator’s

noteworthy that this specification is exceptional not only in the use of the noun *weiha* (< adj. *weihs* ‘holy’) instead of *gudja*, but also the fact that the attribute *auhumists* appears uniquely in its strong form, the remaining 32 attestations of this adjective in Gothic being weak.¹² The use of the strong form may perhaps be seen to correlate with the predicative environment in which the phrase occurs.

The following three priestly references are to Annas, as illustrated in (5 a–b).

(5) a. John 18:15

paruh laistida Iesu Seimon Paitrus jah anþar siponeis. sah þan siponeis was kunþs þamma gudjin jah miþinngalaiþ miþ Iesua in rohsn þis gudjins
 ‘And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. This disciple was known to the priest, and he entered the court of the priest along with Jesus.’

b. John 18:16

iþ Paitrus stop at daurom uta. paruh usiddja ut sa siponeis anþar, saei was kunþs þamma gudjin, jah qaq daurawardai jah attauh inn Paitru
 ‘However, Peter stood at the door outside. So out went the other disciple, who was known to the priest, and spoke to the maid keeping the door, and brought Peter in.’

In spite of Greek being consistent in using ἀρχιερεύς, the Gothic translator, having just established Caiaphas’s superiority as the incumbent high priest, downgrades to the specification of Annas as *gudja*, drawing a clarificational demarcation between Caiaphas as the office holder and Annas as a deposed, albeit authoritative, official. The second reference *gudjins* in 18:15 is clearly anaphoric, whilst in 18:16 *gudjin* occurs in a context that merely repeats part of the clause from the previous verse. In other words, having transitioned from reference to Caiaphas in 18:13 to Annas in 18:15 and taken care to avoid ambiguity, the translator is merely demonstrating consistency in referring to Annas between verses 15 and 16.

The next two mentions of the high priest, both with reference to Annas, have different Gothic realisations, as illustrated in (6) and (7).

(6) John 18:19

iþ sa auhumista gudja frah Iesu bi siponjans is jah bi laisein is
 ‘Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.’

(7) John 18:22

sums andbahte <at>standands gaf slah lofin Iesua qapuh: swau andhaffis þamma reikistin gudjin?

motivation is right, then it is consistent with the general care with which he draws semantic (referential) demarcations in John 18.

¹² In as many as 5 instances, including Matthew 27:62, Luke 3:2, Mark 14:47, 14:53(×2), the weak adjective occurs by itself, without a definite determiner of any kind. For a detailed treatment of undetermined weak forms of adjectives, including *auhumista* ‘highest’, see Ratkus (forthc.).

‘One of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow with his hand, saying: Is that how you answer the noblest priest?’

Following a brief interlude in which Peter renounces Jesus, 18:19 opens an episode of Jesus being questioned by the high priest. In this context, the reference *auhumista gudja* at the beginning of verse 19 is unsurprising: the Gothic translator is aiming to depict Jesus as being questioned not merely by a priest, but by one in a position of superior authority and with the power of judgement – an intent that requires designation by the title. In contrast, in referring to Annas in verse 22 the translator switches to *reikistin gudjin*, a designation found nowhere else in the Gothic corpus. This verse follows Jesus’s rather dismissive response to the high priest’s questioning. As a result, the Gothic translator endeavours to reconcile the servant’s question and his striking of Jesus by capturing the servant’s physical and verbal action as an adequate response to the trigger in the previous context, thereby constructing a consistent narrative. The designation *reikistin gudjin* ‘noblest priest’ places emphasis on the high dignity of Annas, bringing out a hierarchy between the noble status of the high priest and the inferior status of bound Jesus: ‘Is that how you dare to address the noblest one?!’.

The final two singular mentions of priest in John 18 resort to yet another new designation, as illustrated in (8).

(8) a. John 18:24

þanuh insandida ina Annas gabundanana du Kajafin, þamma maistin gudjin
‘Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the great priest.’

b. John 18:26

qap sums þize skalke þis maistins gudjins, sah niþjis was þammei afmaimait
Paitrus auso
‘There spoke one of the servants of the great priest, a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off.’

John 18:24 in (8a) contains the first reference to Caiaphas since the cursory mention in verse 13 (example 4). Hence, the switch to a different designation is intended as a form of delimitation between the high priests Annas and Caiaphas. In verse 26 (8b), the translator is, again, demonstrating consistency by linking this anaphoric reference to Caiaphas with the reference in verse 24.

The tendency that obtains in book 14 of the Gothic Gospel of Mark is diametrically opposite to that in John 18. There is no testimony of the first plural reference to ἀρχιερεῖς in Mark 14, as verses 1–3 (and part of verse 4) have not survived in the Gothic version. The second plural ἀρχιερεῖς, referring collectively to chief priests, attests *gudjam* used by itself (similar to John 18:3, 35). The succession of 10 priestly references, attested in Mark’s account of the betrayal, arrest and questioning of Jesus, begins in 14:43. What is most remarkable is that, unlike John 18, Mark 14 insists on rendering all singular references to the high priest (verses 47, 53, 54, 60, 61, 63, 66) and plural references (43, 53, 55) to the chief priests uniformly

as *auhumista(ns) gudja(ns)* – despite exegetical and contextual triggers that call for distinctions. The clearest example illustrating the (lack of) contrast is in 14:53.

(9) Mark 14:53

*jah gatauhun Iesu du auhumistin gudjin; jah garunnun miþ imma
auhumistans gudjans allai jah þai sinistans jah bokarjos*

‘And they led Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests and elders and scribes hastened together with him.’

This verse contains two references to priests: the singular *auhumistin gudjin* ‘high priest’ and the plural *auhumistans gudjans* ‘chief priests’. However, not even the contrast created by the contextual adjacency of these two referentially different designations justifies lexical differentiation between them on the translator’s part.

Thus, contrary to John 18, in which the translator exercises his theological and literary acumen,¹³ demonstrating personal involvement and particular linguistic ingenuity in his account of the episode, Mark 14 exhibits translative precision in rendering the Greek compound consistently as *auhumista gudja*.

In the surviving evidence of the Gothic Gospel of Matthew there are only 5 references to ἀρχιερεῖς, all of which are in the plural and denote chief priests. The final reference in 27:62 follows the preferred Gothic formula in the rendering *auhumistans gudjans*. However, in the first four (27:1, 3, 6, 12), similar to John 18:3 and 18:35, the noun *gudja* appears on its own. Apart from speculating that these one-word references may have been perceived by the Gothic translator as referring generally to temple authorities, including chief priests and non-priests (cf. Schrenk 1965: 271), and therefore unworthy of qualification with *auhumista*, the fragmentary attestation of books 27 (and 26) of the Gospel of Matthew makes it impossible to ascertain whether the variation in Matthew is contingent on any internal logic.¹⁴ For the same reason, the four examples attested in the Gothic Gospel of Luke are not conducive to generalisations. In addition to Luke 3:2, as discussed above, 19:47 and

¹³ By comparing the Gothic translations of the Greek ὅμοι- (*ὅμοιος* ‘like, resembling, the same as’) and ἴσ- (*ἴσος* ‘equal, identical’) Quinlin (2007) concludes that in translating ἴσα ‘equal’ as *galeiko* ‘like, in the same manner’, rather than *samaleiko* ‘likewise, in the same way’, in Philippians 2:6 Wulfila was driven by theological motives.

An anonymous referee points out with reference to Quinlin (2007) that the case of Philippians 2:6 has long been known and its discussion can be traced through numerous editions of Gothic texts as far back as Castiglioni (1835). The alleged Arianism in this instance has also been doubted by other scholars – for instance, see Schäferdiek (2002), Falluomini (2015: 15).

¹⁴ Groeper (1915: 17) surmises that the lack of variation in Matthew can indicate that this Gospel was translated first (i.e. before the rest of the New Testament), at a time when there was no gradation of priests. (See also Frodl 1951: 58 for a repetition of the same view.) Although Groeper admits that this is a weak argument, it remains unclear whether he means the absence of gradation in Gothic or Hebrew priesthood. Assuming that Groeper was aware of the ancient hierarchy in Hebrew priesthood, the notion that there was no gradation of Gothic priests at the time of the translation of the Gospel of Matthew implies that the “later” gospels should be consistent in their use of terminology. However, our evidence shows this to be false. There does not appear to be any evidence to suggest that any one of the Gothic Gospels was translated before the others.

20:19, as well as Matthew 8:31 and 11:27, attest the generally preferred rendering *auh(u)mista gudja* in referring collectively to chief priests.

If the translation of any part of the Gospel of Mark was subject to the same exegetical inputs from the Gothic translator as book 18 of the Gospel of John, then the partitive structure *gudjane auhumistans* in Mark 11:18 presents an exciting inference.

(10) Mark 11:18

*jah gahausidedun þai bokarjos jah gudjane auhumistans jah sokidedun,
hwaiwa imma usqistidedeina*

‘And the scribes and the chief priests heard it and sought how to destroy him.’

The English translation of Mark 11:18 in example (10) offers a traditional interpretation of the verse. However, if the unique partitive is seen to encode a theological judgement, then what the Gothic translator is implying is that the conspiracy against Jesus was hatched only by the most senior representatives of the priesthood within the Sanhedrin rather than all chief priests without distinction. This point of antagonism against Jesus has, in fact, been expressed in theological and historical literature – for instance, see Shepherd (1962: 889), McLaren (1991: 92–101), Bond (2004: 62–63); cf. Chilton (1992: 804).

Finally, the plural form *gudjam* in Luke 9:22 refers collectively to chief priests, similar to Matthew 27:1–12 and John 18:3 and 18:35. However, the singular *gudjin* in Mark 2:26 is unusual (cf. John 18:15–16 in example 5), as it denotes the high priest (Abiathar). In this instance *gudjin* translates the Greek genitive singular *ἀρχιερέως*. However, the generic reference to priests later in the same sentence (Gothic *þanzei ni skuld ist matjan niba ainaim gudjam*; Greek *οὐδὲ οὐκ ἔξεστιν φαγεῖν εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν* ‘which is not permitted for any but the **priests** to eat’) may have been the factor that motivated the translator to truncate the reference to *gudjin* (from expected *auhumistin gudjin*) in the interests of consistency, eliminating any potential of ambiguity.

4.4. Few scholars doubt that the Gothic Bible translation was subject to some degree of influence from (pre-Vulgate) Latin – for instance, see Friedrichsen (1926: 161–168; 1961: 64), Plate (1931: 65), Hunter (1969: 344–355), Metzger (1977: 385–386), Burton (2002), Falluomini (2015: 128) among others. It can, therefore, be hypothesised that the variation attested in the Gothic text refers to the language of pre-Vulgate Latin scriptures.

Table 3. Rendering of ἀρχιερεύς in pre-Vulgate Latin

John		Mark	
18:3	<i>principibus sacerdotum, pontificibus</i>	14:10	<i>principes sacerdotum, summos sacerdotes, pontifices sacerdotum, pontifices</i>
18:10	<i>principis sacerdotum, principi sacerdoti, pontificis, principes</i>	14:43	<i>principibus sacerdotum, summis sacerdotibus, pontificibus</i>
18:13	<i>princeps sacerdotum, summus sacerdos, pontifex</i>	14:47	<i>principis sacerdotum (-tis), summi sacerdotis, sacerdotis</i>
18:15	<i>principi sacerdotum, pontifici, principibus, principis</i>	14:53	<i>principem (-pes) sacerdotum, summum sacerdotem, pontificem</i>
18:15	<i>sacerdotum, pontificis</i>	14:53	<i>principes sacerdotum, summi sacerdotes, pontifices</i>
18:16	<i>principi sacerdotum, principis, pontifici</i>	14:54	<i>principis sacerdotum, summi sacerdotis, pontificis</i>
18:19	<i>princeps sacerdotum, summus sacerdos, pontifex</i>	14:55	<i>principes sacerdotum, princeps, summi sacerdotes, pontifices</i>
18:22	<i>principi sacerdotum, pontifici</i>	14:60	<i>princeps sacerdotum, summus sacerdos, pontifex</i>
18:24	<i>pontificem, principem sacerdotum</i>	14:61	<i>summus sacerdos, pontifex, princeps sacerdotum</i>
18:26	<i>pontificis, principis sacerdotum</i>	14:63	<i>princeps sacerdotum, summus sacerdos, pontifex</i>
18:35	<i>princeps sacerdotum, principis, principes, pontifices, pontifex</i>	14:66	<i>principis sacerdotum, summi sacerdotis (-tes), pontificis</i>
19:6	<i>principes sacerdotum, princeps sacerdotis, pontifices</i>	15:1	<i>summi sacerdotes, principes sacerdotum, pontifices</i>
		15:3	<i>summi sacerdotes, principes sacerdotum, pontifices</i>
		15:10	<i>principes sacerdotum, summi sacerdotes,</i>
		15:11	<i>principes sacerdotum, pontifices,</i>

		<i>sacerdotes</i>
	15:31	<i>principes sacerdotum,</i> <i>summi sacerdotes,</i> <i>principibus sacerdot,</i> <i>sacerdotes</i>

Table 3 compares the pre-Vulgate Latin equivalents of *ἀρχιερέυς* in the relevant verses of the Gospels of John and Mark. What is immediately apparent is the many variants transmitted by different Latin manuscripts, collated in Jülicher (1963; 1970). Even if it is assumed that the variation attested in Gothic is a result of Latin influence, the high degree of variation in Latin makes it impossible to trace Gothic to any given Latin source. More importantly, the situation in Gothic, with the linguistic enterprise of John 18 and inertia of Mark 14 and 15, is in contrast to the Latin evidence, which attests to as much variation in Mark as in John. In other words, it is unlikely that the Latin sources exercised a high degree of influence on some parts of the Gothic text and not on others.

Interestingly, the pre-Vulgate Latin version of Matthew (Jülicher 1972) is consistent in using *princeps sacerdotum* in verses 27:1, 3, 6, 12, 62, which could in principle be linked to Gothic being equally consistent in insisting on *gudja* in verses 1, 3, 6 and 12. However, this does not account for the switch to *auhumista gudja* in 27:62. The Latin evidence for verses 3:2, 9:22, 19:47, 20:19 in Luke (Jülicher 1976) and the remaining verses in John (7:32, 7:45, 11:47, 12:10) and Mark (2:26, 8:31, 10:33, 11:18, 11:27) attests to as much variation as the sequences in John 18 and Mark 14 and 15.

It is possible that, in some individual instances, Gothic did follow the Latin model. For instance, the use of the partitive structure *gudjane auhumistans* lit. ‘of the priests the highest (ones)’ in Mark 11:18 can be suspected to refer to the partitive *principes sacerdotum* lit. ‘chiefs of the priests’ from a string of Latin variants (*principes sacerdotum, principes sacerdotes, pontifices, summi sacerdotes, summis sacerdotibus, principes et sacerdotes*). We may suppose, of course, that the use of the partitive in Gothic is an independent operation that merely coincides with one of the few Latin variants. However, owing to the existence of a partitive in Latin, we cannot be confident in this assumption. What we can be confident of, though, is that Latin cannot be invoked to account for the lexical differentiation in the use of Gothic adjectives *auhumista, reikista**, *maista** or nouns *gudja, weiha, ufargudja**.

Even if some individual examples can be linked to pre-Vulgate Latin that the translator allegedly drew upon, this does not mean that, as a whole, the Gothic evidence for *ἀρχιερέυς* does not reflect the translator’s original Gothic-centred decisions (also see Ratkus 2016: 47). For the same reason, the notion put forward by Falluomini (2015: 83), and especially Friedrichsen (1926: 171), that the renderings (*auhumista*) *gudja* and (*auhumista*) *weiha* are modelled upon the Latin (*summus*) *sacerdos*, cannot be sustained. To be sure, there exists a likeness between Gothic *auhumista gudja* and Latin *summus sacerdos* in that both involve a noun modified by an attributive adjective. However, there is no reason to assume dependency of one upon the other as, in the absence of structurally adequate equivalents (i.e.

compounds), both languages merely translate the Greek compound in a way that is most natural to each.

True, it cannot be ruled out that the translator was (or translators were) aware of the pre-Vulgate Latin translation, and that knowledge of the Latin attributive structure put him (or them) more at ease in rendering ἀρχιερέως by means of *auhumista gudja*. However, the sequence of *gudja* occurring on its own in Matthew 27:1, 3, 6, 12 (against Latin *princeps sacerdotum*) would suggest that the Latin model did not deter the Gothic translator(s) from making choices unsupported either by either Greek or Latin. In other words, the existence of *summus sacerdos* in pre-Vulgate Latin proves nothing about Latin influence on Gothic at the time of Wulfila (cf. Tarelli 1939: 387–388). I therefore agree entirely with Burkitt’s (1927: 93) critical take on Friedrichsen’s discussion: “When, however, the actual occurrences are tabulated, the various terms do not even tend to correspond with those in any Latin MS: there is nothing, for instance, to shew that *auhumists gudja* corresponds to *princeps sacerdotum*.”

As a result, the variation attested in Gothic is more than likely to represent the original state of affairs; it is unlikely to be significantly related to the variation in pre-Vulgate Latin or be a result of later corruptions. The view entertained by Friedrichsen (1926: 170), among others,¹⁵ that the Gothic variants are “curious deviations from what was probably the original and uniform rendering” is founded on a purist vision of the original of the Gothic Bible, written down by one person and separated from the surviving manuscript by two centuries. It is also predicated on the assumption that the Gothic translators produced a slavishly faithful translation of the Greek *Vorlage*. Even if it can be demonstrated that some variants entered the Gothic text during its transmission, the assumption that the original text was free from variation is baseless.

The easiest solution to addressing variation is to put a stylistic label on it. Indeed, some of the Gothic variants in John 18 can be viewed as being coloured with some stylistic overtones. However, as a goal in itself, a stylistic label carries little explanatory value. As demonstrated by Snædal (2010: 313) and Ratkus (2015: 265–289), some stylistic variants in Gothic are at the service of, and interface with, some overarching communicative and linguistic principles. What follows from the above discussion is that the variation in the translation of Greek ἀρχιερέως into Gothic paints a picture of a collaborative effort. The adventurous nature of John 18 is in contrast to the static presentation of Mark 14 and 15, highlighting two mutually exclusive approaches not merely to translation, but to exegetical reading of the Bible. On this evidence, as well as that of the smaller clusters of variants, we can suspect the involvement of at least two, and perhaps more, Gothic translators.¹⁶

¹⁵ For instance, Velten (1930: 339) assumes that *auhumists weiha* in John 18:13 is “presumably due to a later emendation modeled after a Latin text”, but offers no substantiation.

¹⁶ The notion questioning Wulfila’s single-handed translation of the Bible into Gothic is not new. For example, Jellinek (1926: 10–11) and Friedrichsen (1961: 104) suggest that the Bible was translated into Gothic by a group of scholars, supervised by Wulfila as editor-in-chief (also see Heather and Mathews 1991: 145–148; Thompson 2008: 118; Falluomini 2013: 329 and 2015: 8; cf. Ratkus 2015: 291 and 2016: 48; Miller *forthc.* a). Porterfield (1939: 19) inquires: “Would the differences in style argue, without proving, that Wulfila did not do all of the translation himself but assigned certain parts to sympathetic collaborators?”

5. *ufargudja** and **gudjafaps*

The plural dative *ufargudjam* in Mark 10:33 *jah sunus mans atgibada þaim ufargudjam jah bokarjam* ‘And the son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes’ is morphologically the most accurate rendering of ἀρχιερέυς. As a hapax legomenon, however, it is also the most unusual. The existence of this compound naturally poses the question of why, given that the form was available, it was not exploited more.

The relatively common occurrence of the prefix *ufar-* in Gothic points to its productivity, irrespective of the fact that it often calques different Greek elements (ἐπί ‘on, to’, ὑπέρ ‘over, beyond’, περί ‘all-around, exceeding’, etc.). The majority of *ufar-*derivatives are verbs: *ufargaggan* ‘cross over’, *ufargiutan** ‘pour to overflowing’, *ufarhafjan** ‘exalt oneself’, *ufarhafnan** ‘exalt oneself’, *ufarhamon* ‘put on’, *ufarhauhjan** ‘be puffed up’, *ufarhleiprjan** ‘pitch a tent over sb.’, *ufarhugjan** ‘be elated’, *ufarlagjan** ‘lay upon’, *ufarleipjan** ‘pass over’, *ufarmunnon** ‘forget’, *ufarskadwjan** ‘overshadow’, *ufarsteigan** ‘go up’, *ufartrusnjan** ‘sprinkle over’, *ufarþeihan** ‘excel, surpass’, *ufarwahsjan** ‘grow abundantly’, etc.

In addition to verbs, *ufar-* occasionally occurs with nouns and adjectives: *ufarfullei** ‘superfluity’ and *ufarfulls** ‘overfull, abundant’ (< *ufarfulljan** ‘exceed, abound’), *ufarhauseins** ‘disobedience’ (< **ufarhausjan* < *ufar-* + *hausjan* ‘hear, listen’), *ufarmeleins* ‘superscription’ and *ufarmeli* ‘superscription’ (< *ufarmeljan** ‘write/inscribe over’), *ufarmaudei** ‘oblivion, forgetting’ (< **ufarmaudjan* < *ufar-* + *maudjan** ‘remind’), *ufarranneins** ‘sprinkling’ (< *ufar* + **rannjan*; cf. *urrannjan** ‘cause to run/rise’, *rinnan** ‘run, walk’), *ufarskafts* ‘first fruits’ (< **ufarskapjan*; cf. *gaskapjan** ‘create’), *ufarswara** ‘perjurer’ (< *ufarswaran** ‘swear falsely’). Additionally, the noun *ufarassus* ‘abundance’ represents a derivative with the noun-forming suffix *-assus* (see Casaretto 2004: 538; Lehmann 1986: 76 on *-assus*).

It follows from the evidence given above that *ufar-* most readily latches onto verbs or deverbal bases. In addition to *ufargudja**, the only personal noun is *ufarswara** ‘perjurer’, which calques the Greek ἐπίορκος ‘perjured, perjurer’ (< ἐπί ‘on, to, against’ + ὄρκος ‘oath’; cf. Casaretto 2004: 216). As pointed out to me by D. Gary Miller (personal communication), *ufarswara** fits a larger pattern of deverbal agentives (including *allawaurstwa** ‘one who effects or fulfils everything’, *faihuskula** ‘money-ower, debtor’, *fauragagga** ‘manager, governor, administrator’) and is, therefore, more likely a deverbal agentive.

The non-verbal *ufar-* derivatives include the adjective *ufarhiminakunds** ‘heavenly’ (*ufar-* + *himinakunds** ‘heavenly’) and the adverb (or perhaps preposition) *ufarjaina* ‘beyond’ (*ufar-* + *jaina* < *jains* ‘that one’), the latter two also calquing the

Metlen (1932: 22–23) and Barasch (1973: 2, 190) conclude that the evidence of variation in Gothic implicates several translators, with the Gothic Gospel of John being especially rich in variation. Griepentrog (1990: 18, 35) not only asserts that the Gothic Bible translation was carried out by different translators, but goes as far as to suggest that several translations of the Gothic gospels must have existed, which ended up in various manuscripts.

Greek: *ἐπουράνιος* ‘heavenly, celestial’ (< *ἐπί* ‘on, to, against’ + *οὐρανός* ‘heaven’), *ὑπερέκεινα* ‘beyond’ (< *ὑπέρ* ‘over, beyond’ + *ἐκεῖνος* ‘that one there’). It is worthwhile noting that *ufarhiminakunds** is attested twice, but only in one verse (1 Corinthians 15:48). The sudden switch in 1 Corinthians 15:49 to *himinakunds** and the translation of *ἐπουράνιος* with *himinakunds** elsewhere (Ephesians 2:6, 3:10, 6:12) suggests that *himinakunds** by itself was sufficient as translation of *ἐπουράνιος*, and the use of *ufar-* on *ufarhiminakunds** was superfluous (i.e. literalistic overkill).¹⁷ By extension, this suggests that *ufargudja** may have been an equally unidiomatic accidental calque. Thus, the tendency for *ufar-* to occur with verbs or non-personal deverbals seems to have been a constraint on the use of *ufargudja**.

In addition to grammatical compatibility issues, it is possible that *ufar-* was semantically incompatible with *gudja*. If a parallel with modern English can be risked, **overpriest* is immediately awkward (but cf. *overlord*); *superpriest* is grammatically acceptable, but carries an undesirable semantic overtone. The semantics of ‘excess’, ‘location above’ or ‘failure’ inherent in Gothic *ufar-*, evident from the above list of examples, rendered it unsuitable. In other words, Gothic simply did not have a morphologically and semantically convenient means to render *ἀρχιερεύς* as a compound, and the noun *gudja*, whether modified by an attribute or used by itself, was simply the best available solution.

Because the surviving Gothic Bible is fragmentary, not all instantiations of Greek *ἀρχι-* in the Bible (*ἀρχιτρίκλινος* ‘master of the feast’, *ἀρχιτέκτων* ‘master builder’, *ἀρχιποίμενος* ‘chief shepherd’) are represented in the available Gothic records. However, the five attestations of Greek *ἀρχισυνάγωγος* ‘leader of the synagogue’ that can be matched up to the surviving Gothic records open up the possibility that, similar to Gothic *swnagogafaps** ‘leader of the synagogue’, *ἀρχιερεύς* might be expected to generate **gudjafaps* (cf. Benveniste 1963: 49).¹⁸ The base *-faps*, attested

¹⁷ Ephesians 1:20 attests simply *himins* ‘heaven’ in *jah gasatida in taihswon seinai in himinam* ‘and seated him at his right in the heavens’, but it is possible that the Gothic translates the variant Greek reading *ἐν τοῖς οὐρανόις* lit. ‘in the heaven(ly)’ (Nestle et al. 2012: 592), rather than the standard Alexandrian and Byzantine reading *ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανόις* lit. ‘in the over-heaven(ly)’. An anonymous reader points out that *οὐράνιος* ‘heavenly’ is translated with *ufar himinam* in Matthew 6:14, 26, 32, and that the formation of *ufarhiminakunds** was perhaps influenced by the combination *ufar himinam*.

It must be noted, however, that there appears to be some significant difference between *ufarhiminakunds** and *ufar himinam*. Both in 1 Corinthians 15:48 and 49 (*ufar*)*himinakunds** is a substantivised relational adjective that is juxtaposed with another relational adjective: 1 Corinthians 15:48 *hwileiks sa muldeina ... hwileiks sa ufarhiminakunda* ‘as is the earthy ... as is the heavenly’; 1 Corinthians 15:49 *jah swaswe berum manneikan þis airþeinins, bairaima jah frisagt þis himinakundins* ‘And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the example of the heavenly’ (cf. three attestations of *himinakunds** in 2:2, 4:3, 4:4 of the Skeireins). By contrast, in Matthew 6:14, 26 and 32 Gothic resorts to a descriptive specification with a relative clause where there is no such parallelism and where a relational adjective might perhaps be less idiomatic: *atta izwar sa ufar himinam* lit. ‘your Father, the one (who is) over in heaven’ (cf. pre-Vulgate Latin *pater vester, qui (est) in caelis; pater vester caelestis*). Besides, the translation of *οὐράνιος* need not be limited to *ufar himinam*, as illustrated in Matthew 5:48: *swaswe atta izwar sa in himinam fullatojis ist* ‘as your Father, the one (who is) in heaven, is perfect’. Thus, it seems to me that there is little, if any, connection between the use of *ufar himinam* in Matthew and *ufarhiminakunds** in Corinthians.

¹⁸ In Luke 8:49 only, *ἀρχισυνάγωγος* (gen. *ἀρχισυναγωγού*) is rendered as (gen.) *fauramaþleis*

with *hundafaps* ‘centurion’ (×9) and *busundifaps* ‘leader of a thousand men’ (×2), denotes, in both instances, the commander of a large group of people (see Benveniste 1963 for a discussion of *-faps* and Casaretto 2004: 184 regarding *brufþfaps* ‘bridegroom’). The same is implied metonymically in *swnagogafaps** – that is, leader of the members of the synagogue. In the absence of a morphological constraint, the hypothetical **gudjafaps* would be a semantically inappropriate rendering of *ἀρχιερέυς*, which denotes the head of the entire heterogeneous Sanhedrin, rather than merely the leader of priests. The interpretation of **gudjafaps* as an identificational compound ‘priest who is a master; master who is a priest’ is ruled out with the attested endocentric *-fab-* compounds. The absence of a lexical analogue to **fabgudja* vitiates the compound as a defensible construct.

6. Conclusion

In spite of the original Greek being consistent in the use of *ἀρχιερέυς* in the Gospels, Gothic demonstrates some considerable variation in translating the compound. In light of a lack of consensus on the subject in the literature, this paper set out with the goal of examining the variation in Gothic with a view to understanding the linguistic factors involved in the variation and explaining the apparent indifference of the Gothic translator to the noun *ufargudja**, which, on the surface, appears as potentially the most appropriate way to render *ἀρχιερέυς*. What was discovered during the investigation exceeded all expectations, as it emerged that the actual explanation of the variation attested in Gothic lay not so much in the linguistics as in the theology.

Whether or not the above discussion correctly captures every instance of variation in the Gothic translation of Greek *ἀρχιερέυς*, there is no doubt that much of the variation (especially the variation in John 18) is a consequence of exegetical and creative inputs on the part of the Gothic translator (cf. Smirnicksaja 2007: 74, 77 and 2014). The absence of a linguistically convenient Gothic equivalent for *ἀρχιερέυς*, in conjunction with the need to draw important referential distinctions and construct a clear narrative that would be understood by its target audience, engendered the variation in John 18. The care with which the narrative is crafted suggests that parts of the Gothic text were actually in liturgical use at the time of Wulfila. The higher extent of variation in the Gothic Gospel of John highlights its special status vis-à-vis the Synoptic Gospels. More nuanced and philosophical than the other Gospels, the Gospel of John enjoyed a higher prestige and therefore merited a greater linguistic polish. It is perhaps not an accident, viewed in this context, that the surviving commentary on the Gothic Bible – the Skeireins – was a commentary on John rather than any other Gospel.

On the whole, the variation across the Gospels appears to be at the intersection of three competing, or perhaps sometimes mutually complementary, forces: a necessity to make exegetical distinctions (realised in the difference between the singular

swnagogais ‘leader/ruler of the synagogue’ (*fauramapli** lit. ‘chief/leading speaker’). The Greek *ἀρχιτελώνης* ‘chief publican’ in Luke 19:2 is rendered in Gothic by means of the partitive structure *fauramapleis motarje* ‘the chief of the publicans’.

ἀρχιερέυς ‘high priest’ and plural ἀρχιερεῖς ‘chief priests’); a propensity for expository clarity of the narrative (evident in the care with which the translator distinguishes between Annas and Caiaphas in John 18); general fidelity to the surface text (literalism in translation), as evidenced by the many instances of failure of the above two principles (especially clear in Mark 14) (cf. Plate 1931: 66–67).

The differences in the translation technique observed in different parts of the Gospels strongly suggest that the translation of the Bible into Gothic was a collaborative undertaking, carried out by a minimum of two translators, and perhaps a larger team. Even if some individual usages can be linked to the influence of pre-Vulgate Latin at the time of Wulfila, as a whole the variation is unlikely to have been modelled after Latin or introduced by later scribes or redactors, and it largely reflects the original decisions of the Gothic translators. At the same time, the existence of the many variants also highlights a lack of consistent editorial policy on the part of Wulfila. Whatever was Wulfila’s actual role in the Gothic Bible project, the evidence discussed in this paper speaks against him as the (only) original translator – all the more so considering that all of what we know about Wulfila’s translation of the Bible, handed down to us through the testimony of ancient historians, is based on circumstantial evidence.

Lastly, it is worth pointing out that our understanding of some linguistic phenomena is contingent on how well we are aware of the historical particulars and context of our sources. What follows from the argument advanced in this paper is that engaging the Biblical and exegetical background in addressing instances of variation in Bible translation becomes a linguist’s responsibility. Viewed against the evidence of collective involvement in the translation of the Gothic Bible, this also speaks to numerous benefits that can be gained from a dissociative approach to some received dogmatic truths.

7. A postscript to the conclusion

Having finished editing the manuscript of this paper as per the comments of two anonymous readers, I received a third anonymous report. The author of the report expressed a reservation over some of the above conclusions and suggested an alternative explanation of the variation discussed in this paper: “[...] a possible scenario would be that Wulfila first produced a rough translation of the biblical text, where he almost automatically rendered ἀρχιερέυς with *auhumista gudja*, but refined certain chapters later on. Although this explanation is, of course, guesswork as well, it might be advisable to underline the tentative character of the assumption of several translators even more.”

At this point, it is worth reiterating that the objective of this paper was to unravel the motives behind the considerable variation in the Gothic translation of the Greek noun ἀρχιερέυς. Thus, the mission I set out with was neither to disprove Wulfila’s authorship of the Gothic Bible translation, nor to prove multiple translatorship. Because some of the third reader’s comments refer to what I believe to be persistent misconceptions in the study of the Gothic Bible and its language, some further

additions to and clarifications of my methods and conclusions are in order. At the bottom of this debate lies the question of what constitutes valid argumentation.

The quality of an investigation is rooted in the nature of the evidence at the disposal of the investigator, as well as the standard of the analysis conducted. The most pertinent kinds of primary evidence include original documents or firsthand witness accounts of the original events or documents. Indirect, or circumstantial, evidence includes secondhand accounts of the original events or any considerations that may lead the investigator to an appreciation of the original events by inference. Additionally, tertiary considerations that contribute to a better understanding of the context of the original events are also admissible. Let us review the evidence available for constructing an account of the Gothic Bible translation.

There exists no direct evidence of any kind to support the notion that Wulfila translated the Bible into Gothic. The surviving manuscripts are not in Wulfila's hand because they postdate Wulfila (c. 311–383) by about two centuries. The little we know about Wulfila's role in spreading the word of God among the Goths is based on the testimony of ancient churchmen and historians, including Auxentius (of Durostorum),¹⁹ Philostorgius, Sozomen, Socrates, Theodoret, Jordanes, Cassiodorus and Walafrid Strabo among others.²⁰

Only Auxentius's testimony is an admissible source of primary evidence on Wulfila, as he was Wulfila's contemporary, foster son and pupil. Auxentius states that Wulfila left "several treatises and many interpretations/commentaries" (Lat. *plūrēs tractātūs et multās interpretātiōnēs*) (Streitberg 1919: xvi); nothing is said about Wulfila as a translator of the Bible. Admittedly, Auxentius does not deny that Wulfila translated the Bible, which leaves the field open for other primary evidence. In the absence of such evidence, our only primary investigative resource is the language of our Gothic documents. Needless to say, a linguistic analysis of the Gothic translation of the Bible cannot identify the translator. It can, however, throw light on the credibility of the hypothesis of Wulfila as a single translator.

The earliest attribution of the Gothic translation of the Bible to Wulfila is by Philostorgius (368–c. 439), who would have been only about 15 years of age at the time of Wulfila's death. This, combined with the fact that we are familiar with Philostorgius's *Church History* only through a summary made by Photius four centuries later, places Philostorgius's testimony securely in the category of

¹⁹ On Auxentius of Durostorum, aka Auxentius Mercurinus, see Klein (1953).

²⁰ A broader discussion of Wulfila's life and work is given in Heather & Matthews (1991: 124–144). For an appraisal of the different testimonies on Wulfila and their relative value, see Leont'ev (1964). Leont'ev questions the trustworthiness of the few laconic references to Wulfila as a Bible translator and argues that some of the church historians' testimonies are compositionally and stylistically consistent with the genre of ecclesiastical legend. In other words, Wulfila's role as a translator may have been exaggerated either in part or entirely by ascribing to him as a distinguished senior master the merit of several lower-ranking translators whose names were individually not important enough to be remembered (cf. also Metlen 1932: 23; Griepentrog 1990: 34). For a summative account of Wulfilian historiography identifying the concerns and contradictions of the different sources, see McLynn (2007).

Lendinara (1992) compares the different ancient church historians' testimonies with a focus on Wulfila's role in devising the Gothic alphabet.

circumstantial evidence, along with the testimonies of any later writers. It must also be mentioned that there is no full consensus on Wulfila among church historians. For instance, the 9th-century theologian Walafrid Strabo clearly refers to a collective effort: “The learned men of that nation translated the divine books into the propriety of their language” (Lat. *studiōsī illius gentis dīvinōs librōs in suae locūtiōnis proprietātem trānstulērunt*) (Streitberg 1919: xxv). However, even if all post-Wulfilian writers were unanimous in their assertion that Wulfila translated the Bible into Gothic, their testimonies would amount to no more than circumstantial evidence.

The traditional Wulfilian narrative can therefore only be treated as an assumption, or a hypothesis, that is in need of verification. Some tertiary considerations might also be invoked as an aid to contextualising and interpreting well-established facts. For example, one might argue that, given the time constraints imposed on Wulfila by his office as bishop, a project so complex and time-consuming as Bible translation would have been too difficult for one person to complete on his own – cf. Rendboe (2008: 37; 2010: 43–44) and Munkhammar (2011b: 47) in this connection. However, nothing of this nature is known for a fact. As a result, and importantly, no circumstantial or tertiary considerations can substitute for (the lack of) primary evidence in perpetuating a tenacious legend. Until some hard historical evidence comes to light, the language of the Gothic documents remains the most secure foundation upon which the provenance of the Gothic Bible translation can be envisioned.

As mentioned above, the third anonymous reader of this paper proposed an alternative scenario in an effort to defend the traditional Wulfilian narrative. In particular, (s)he presumed Wulfila to have first produced a rough translation and refined parts of it later, which might help explain the existence of variation. Interesting as it may be, this hypothesis operates on a unitarian assumption of the Wulfilian Gothic Bible. However, as shown above, this assumption is merely an unproved *idée fixe*! Hence, the third reader’s alternative scenario, based on an unproved assumption, involves a double leap of faith. In other words, if the testimony of ancient church historians is circumstantial evidence, then the proposed alternative scenario is entirely meta-circumstantial – i.e. a product of one’s imagination. As such, it cannot be seriously entertained as a counterargument to any data-driven conclusions.

The evidence for the translation of ἀρχιερέυς reported in this paper is systematic in its nature and suggests some form of collaborative involvement in the Gothic project. If, for the sake of argument, the traditional Wulfilian hypothesis is honoured with a presumption of credibility, then the conclusion that follows is that Wulfila cannot have been the only translator. It must also be emphasised that the evidence reported in this paper is not confined to simple lexical variation. The prevalent (non-syncopated) rendering *auhumist-*, the syncopated form *auhmist-* and the experimental compound *ufargudja* are unlikely to have issued from one and same person. Although it would make every sense to speak of the lexical variants in John 18 as refinements aimed at elucidating the narrative, this concept is inapplicable to either the syncopated forms or *ufargudja* in any of the established senses of “refinement”.

The notion that multiple translators were involved in the Gothic Bible project is also supported by many pieces of evidence by way of form densities (for example, the distribution of *-ata* vis-à-vis the bare stem, as discussed in Ratkus 2015) or peculiarities of the use and distribution of different terms and constructions (split infinitives, infinitives with *þata*, etc.) – see Ratkus (2016: 48) for a discussion of variation in the translation of individual lexical items and Miller (forthc. b) for a full discussion. The evidence for multiple translators is so compelling that the burden of proof really lies with the unitarians. One way or another, in this debate emphasis should be placed on cataloguing every possible instance of variation as opposed to every possible instance of non-variation, where variation could be expected but does not occur. The potential benefits of this approach are difficult to overestimate.²¹ Only based on this kind of evidence can anything be asserted beyond a reasonable doubt.

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²¹ In her discussion of the language of the Gothic Gospel of John, Francini (2009) uncovers instances of variation prompted by different linguistic motives as well as theological interpretation. Francini's conclusion resonates with the received dictum whereby consistency is assumed as a trait of Wulfila's original; any outliers can then be hypothetically ascribed to two centuries of textual transmission. As a result, Francini's unquestioning acceptance of the traditional Wulfilian narrative does not allow her to consider her evidence on its merits and entertain the possibility that variation can be a natural consequence of collective effort.

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