

## Hungaro-Gothica: Are there Gothic loanwords in Hungarian?

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Gothic evolved from Proto-Germanic and belongs to the family of Eastern Germanic languages. Its speakers lived, among other things, at the northern and western shores of the Black Sea during and after the third century. A well-preserved Bible translation from the fourth century allows a rather precise reconstruction of its Western Gothic branch. At their core, Gothic languages died out at the end of the Migration Period.

I could imagine two contact scenarios between Hungarians and Goths: Either during the sixth and seventh century at the north-eastern shores of the Black Sea; Or during and after the ninth century in the Carpathian Basin, probably in Transylvania.

In this paper, I want to briefly outline three hypothetical gothic loanwords in Hungarian:

### 1) *garázda* ('quarrelsome')

**EWUng:** The form *garázna* is a secondary development. The chronology of and the relationship between the adjectival and substantival meaning is unclear. **TESz:** Of unknown origin. The sources support the idea that forms containing a <d> are older than the forms containing an <n>. It seems that the original meaning of this word was that of a noun [i.e. 'dispute', 'quarrel']. **Kniezsa:** Not from Old-Slavic *gorazdb* ('skilful'), due to phonetic, semantic and word class related problems. The phonetic problem is that old forms with an initial *gr-* would remain unexplained. Semantic plausibility is only given if Old-Slavic *gorazdb* is derived from Gothic *\*garazds* ('loquacious'), which in itself seems highly unlikely. Word class related problems include the fact that Slavic *gorazdb* is an adjective, while Hungarian *garázda* was first a noun. Also, during this period, abstract nouns were not derived from loan-adjectives anymore: *tiszta* means 'clean' but not 'cleanness' and *szent* means 'holy' but not 'holiness'. It is therefore unlikely that *garázda* would be the only exception to this. **Úrhegyi:** Derived from Old-Slavic *grozna/grozno* ('horrible', 'threatening'). This explains the old forms with the initial *gr-* consonant cluster; *garázna* is the original form, which is still in use in Transylvania, while the more commonly used form *garázda* evolved from *garázna*. This would be the only example for a development of *-zd-* > *-zn-* in Hungarian. The semantic development 'horrible' > 'quarrelsome' seems very realistic. The adjectival form is older than the noun.

### Comments:

The etymology that I propose here is *garázda* ('quarrelsome') ← Gothic *garazna* ('neighbour'). The other possibility of *garázda* ← Gothic *\*garazds* ('loquacious') seems rather unlikely because there is no evidence for this Gothic form and its reconstruction seems implausible. Beyond that, there would be phonetical problems as well, like the development of *-s* > *-a*. In contrast, I think there is a theoretical possibility for *garázda* ('quarrelsome') ← Gothic *garazna* ('neighbour'), even though there are a number of difficulties again. Firstly, there are phonetical problems: Older forms with initial *gr-* would still remain unexplained. Also, the development of *-zn-* > *-zd-* seems unlikely. Semantically I could imagine two scenarios, depending on whether the word was initially an adjective or a noun. Either the development was 'neighbour' > 'quarrelsome neighbour' > 'quarrelsome' or 'neighbour' > 'neighbourhood dispute' > 'dispute'. Both are admittedly not highly probable, but at the same time not necessarily impossible. The original word class itself will, it seems, remain a riddle.

### 2) *boly* ('anthill')

**TESz:** Of disputed origin – probably an onomatopoeic word; identical with the root of the word family *bolyong* ('to roam'), *bolydul* ('to stir') etc, which denotes 'restless movement'. **Róna-Tas 2011:** *boy* < *bol'* < *\*boyol* ← West Old Turkic *\*boyul*, see East Old Turkic *\*bogul* ('stack of hay'). The semantic change is supported by the Transylvanian dialectal expression *boly széna* ('one stack of hay').

### Comments:

The phonetical congruence with the root denoting 'restless movement' is, in my view, purely coincidental. The expression *egy boly széna*, on the other hand, might also be a secondary development. Therefore, I suggest the etymology *boly* ('anthill') < *\*[boljo]* ('small hill') ← Gothic *\*bauljo* ('lump'). Phonologically the borrowing seems plausible to me: Gothic <au> was pronounced as [ɔ] or [ɔ:], the drop of the ending vowel is regular, and the consonant cluster [-lj-] could have developed into [-ʎ-] in Hungarian. Also, from a semantic point of view, I don't see many difficulties, if indeed the original meaning of *boly* was 'small hill', 'pile', as in 'anthill'. In that case this word would have referred to the outward appearance of an anthill, rather than to its inner buzzing. I think the same can be said about the geographical place name *Bool* from 1235.

### 3) *gond* ('worry', 'caring', 'thought', 'thing')

EWUng: Of unknown origin. It is impossible to find out the relationship between the single meanings. However, the less abstract ones, 'caring' and 'thing', seem to be older. TESz: Of unknown origin. Based on its derivations the original meaning was most probably 'thought', or maybe 'caring'.

#### **Comments:**

Here I propose *gond* ('thought') < \*[gundi] ← Gothic \*gunþi ('fight'). From a phonological point of view this development seems likely to me. Gothic <þ> is usually pronounced as [θ] but later sources documented its intervocal sonorisation to [d]. Also, the change u > o, as well as the drop of the final vowel are regular in Hungarian. As to the semantic development I could imagine a transition from 'fight' > 'battle plan' > 'idea', 'thought'. A similar development is found in Hausa where *dàbàaràa* ('idea') ← Arabic *dubbāra* ('plan'), according to WOLD.

#### **Literature**

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