

# Leeds Studies in English

## Article:

Esther Dinah Clarke, 'Obthrust in North Lincolnshire', *Leeds Studies in English*, 4 (1935), 78-9

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*Leeds Studies in English*  
School of English  
University of Leeds  
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*Mauricius*, not by Mn. Welsh *aw* (Pr. Brit. *aw*), as in O. Cornish *caul* Welsh *cawl* from Lat. *caulis*.<sup>3</sup> The *b* for Lat. *p* is regular; cf. Welsh *cybydd* < Lat. *cupidus*, Welsh *pobl* < Lat. *populus*. For Pr. Brit. we may postulate a form with \**coub*-.

In the Lindisfarne Gospels Mt. 8, 23 'in nauicula' is glossed in *lytlum scipe* † *in cuople*. If we emend *cuople* to \**couple* the word would agree well with the postulated Pr. Brit. form in vocalism; we may regard it as the first instance of the British loan-word *coble*.<sup>4</sup> The *p* in the Lindisfarne form is probably due to reanalogy with Lat. *caupulus* (cf. *grēcisc* beside the regular *crēcisc* 'graecus' in Lindisfarne).<sup>5</sup>

A.S.C.R.

### OBTHRUST IN NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE.

In his article on "English Names and Old English Heathenism" in *Essays and Studies* (xix, 58-9), Professor Dickins mentions OE. *þyrs*, or perhaps ON. *þurs*, as being probably the second element of the Yorkshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire dialectal *Hob-thrush* or *Hobthrust*; *Hob* is a diminutive of *Robert* (cf. *Hobgoblin*). No Middle English form with metathesis of *r* is recorded in NED., Stratmann-Bradley or Mayhew-Skeat; but Dr. G. R. Owst (*Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, p. 270) cites from a sermon of Master Rypon of Durham a reference to 'a certain demon—in English *Thrus*'—which ground corn till furnished with a fine new coat. Nor is any form of *Hobthrust* recorded as current in Lincolnshire in either edition of Edward Peacock's *Glossary of Words used in the Wapentakes of Manley and Corringham* or in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*.

<sup>3</sup> See H. Pedersen, *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen* i §131.

<sup>4</sup> The Lindisfarne form can hardly be explained as a direct loan from Latin; corresponding to a Latin *au* we should expect O.E. *ēa* in early loan-words (cf. *cēas*: Lat. *causa*) and OE. *āw*, *āu* in late ones (cf. *cāwel*: Lat. *caulis*); see K. Luick, *Historische Grammatik der englischen Sprache* § 216.

<sup>5</sup> It is possible that a (learned) reformat with \**coup*- also existed in Pr. Brit.; cf. Mn. Welsh *epistol* beside M. Welsh *ebostol*: Lat. *epistola*; see Pedersen, *op. cit.* § 144 note 4.

From the little village of Hibaldstow in North Lindsey, Lincolnshire, there is a country lane leading to the Carrs or clay-land; by the side of this lane is a tiny bubbling spring which gurgles noisily. One of the inhabitants of the village relates how, in the 1890's when very young, he was terrified by older boys who told him to listen there for the *Obthrust*. Like the *þyrs* of the Cottonian Gnostic Verses (43), it was said to dwell alone in the marsh-land in the depth of the country.

A still further corruption of *Hobthrus* is noted by Professor Dickens from South Lincolnshire. Forty years ago the epithet *Jacob Thrust* could be applied to a boy, clearly in the sense of 'imp.'

ESTHER DINAH CLARKE.

### ÞRYMSKVIÐA 81-83.

Thor's hammer has been stolen by the giant Thrymr, who promises to restore it only if the goddess Freyja be given to him in marriage. Freyja indignantly refuses the proffered alliance and Thor is with difficulty induced to take her place disguised in bridal veil and women's weeds. In the following stanza (vv. 81-83) the Codex Regius, our only manuscript text of authority, reads (with abbreviations expanded):

Pa *quap* loci laufeyjar sonr. *mvn ec oc með þer ambót vera.*  
vid scolom aka tvau i iotvn heima.

This is in the conventional orthography:

Þá kvað Loki, Laufeyjar sonr:

"Mun ek ok með þér ambótt vera;

vit skulum aka tvau í Jötunheima."

(Then spake Loki, son of Laufey: "I too will go with thee to be thy handmaid; we two must drive to Giant-homes").

Since Bugge (1867) all editors with the exception of Neckel have emended *tvau* on the assumption that the feminine pl. *tvær* is more appropriate than the neuter since both Thor and