

# Leeds Studies in English

## Article:

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Loki will be disguised as women when they set out for Jötunheimar. Actually the emendation robs the line of half its sting. We know that Thor is already in disguise and feeling extremely uncomfortable. But Loki is still *in propria persona* and, being the mischief-maker of the Æsir, he deliberately uses the offensive neuter plural (which refers to persons of different sexes) to accentuate Thor's humiliation.

B.D.

### ENGLISH, DUTCH OR LOW GERMAN ?

In the account of the raid on Jersey in 1406 the *Crónica de Don Pedro Niño* has a passage which, in the edition of E. de Llaguno Amirola (1782), p. 159, reads as follows:

En yendo por el camino adelante vino á la gente un Gentil ome Ingles en ropa de Haraote preguntando por el Capitan de España: que yá ellos sabian todo el ardid por un ome que prendieran quando la primera escaramuza, é el desbarato de la poca gente. E pusieronle con el Capitan Pero Niño, é fincó los hinojos ante él, é dixo: *Dios vos salve, é dé buenos días.*

This edition is based on an incomplete MS.<sup>1</sup> in which the copyist left lacunæ when he encountered words and phrases which he could not understand. In the French translation of A. de Circourt and Puymaigre (*Le Victorial* 1867) which is based on a collation of Llaguno's text with another MS.<sup>2</sup> descended from the same common original as Llaguno's MS.<sup>3</sup> the passage reads (p. 402):

On marchait ainsi quand vint aux nôtres un gentilhomme anglais en habit de héraut d'armes, demandant le capitaine d'Espagne, vu que ceux de l'île savaient tout ce qui se passait de notre côté, s'étant renseignés auprès d'un homme qu'ils avaient pris lors de la première escarmouche où les nôtres se trouvaient peu nombreux et s'étaient laissé battre. On l'amena au capitaine Pero Niño. Il mit les genoux en terre devant lui et dit: "*Mi ye rragotht geuogotht endachà,*" ce qui veut dire: " Dieu vous sauve et vous donne de bons jours."

This curious sentence cannot be English;<sup>4</sup> at first sight it

<sup>1</sup> Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, MS. 17648 (formerly *Gay*. 209).

<sup>2</sup> Biblioteca de la Academia de Historia, Madrid, MS. Est. 24. grad. 2a B, nro. 28.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Evans, *The Unconquered Knight, A Chronicle of the Deeds of Don Pero Niño* (1928), p. xii.

<sup>4</sup> The suggestion of Circourt and Puymaigre, *loc. cit.* note (adopted by Evans, *op. cit.* Note 141) " Peut-être parviendrait-on à découvrir, dans ce baragouin, quelque chose comme: *Many years and good give you God and [to] each [of you]* " is, of course, quite impossible.

would appear to be a phonetic rendering of a Middle Dutch *Mijn<sup>5</sup> Herre, god ghev'<sup>6</sup> U goede<sup>7</sup> dage* or a Middle Low German *Mîn Herre, god gev' û gôden dage*. (An *n* has apparently been omitted in *miy* <*n*> *erra*). But the *n* in *gothen dachà* clearly shows the latter hypothesis to be correct; the two languages differ in this respect, forms with *n* in the plural of adjectives being almost unknown in Middle Dutch (see J. Franck, *Mittelniederländische Grammatik*, p. 169). But why the 'Gentil ome Ingles' should have spoken in Low German does not seem clear—unless the supremacy of the Hanseatic League had made it a lingua franca among seafarers in western waters.

B.D. and A.S.C.R.

<sup>5</sup> *ij* = *i*.    <sup>6</sup> i.e. *gheve*, 3rd. sg. pres. subj. of *gheven*.    <sup>7</sup> *oe* = *ô*.