

Question: Ye olde English problem

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English has changed a lot since the period in which Germanic languages were brought to these islands over 1500 years ago. In this problem, you will look at the way in which the use of pronouns in Old English (the variety of English that existed in Anglo-Saxon times) differs from the use of pronouns in the modern language. Watch out! The word order in Old English is sometimes not the same as in Modern English.

Look at the following Old English sentences and their Modern English translations then complete the exercises that follow. Note: the letter *þ* is pronounced like 'th'.

<i>wit lufodon þæt mægden</i>	we both loved the girl
<i>þæt mægden unc lufode</i>	the girl loved us both
<i>ge lufodon þone cyning</i>	you all loved the king
<i>se cyning inc lufode</i>	the king loved you both
<i>þæt mægden we lufodon</i>	we all loved the girl
<i>we inc lufodon</i>	we all loved you both
<i>wit eow lufodon</i>	we both loved you all

D1. Translate the following into modern English. (6 pts)

- (a) *se cyning eow lufode*
- (b) *ge lufodon þæt mægden*
- (c) *wit inc lufodon*

D2. When they function as subject, the Old English phrases for 'the prince' and 'the child' are *se æþeling* and *þæt cild*, respectively. Using this information, translate from the following from Modern English into Old English. (14 pts)

- (a) The prince loved the child
- (b) The child loved the prince
- (c) We all loved the child
- (d) The child loved you both
- (e) The girl loved you all

Question: Ye Olde English Problem Solution

D1. Translate the following into modern English.

- (a) *se cyning eow lufode* *The king loved you all*
- (b) *ge lufodon þæt mægden* *You all loved the girl*
- (c) *wit inc lufodon* *We both loved you both*

D2. Translate the following from Modern English into Old English. (14 pts)

- (a) The prince loved the child *se æpeling lufode þæt cild*
- (b) The child loved the prince *þæt cild lufode þone æpeling*
- (c) We all loved the child *þæt cild we lufodon* OR *we lufodon þæt cild*
- (d) The child loved you both *þæt cild inc lufode*
- (e) The girl loved you all *þæt mægden eow lufode*

Explanation

Old English had the following grammatical features which had to be reflected in the translations:

- (a) cases (subject and object not the same) for pronouns and articles
- (b) a distinction between dual ('both') and plural ('all')
- (c) verb agreement with the subject (singular vs plural)
- (d) different genders for nouns
- (e) different word order to Modern English

The following table shows the details of (a)-(d)

	As subject	As object	verb agreement
'the' (girl, child)	<i>þæt</i>	<i>þæt</i>	<i>lufode</i>
'the' (king, prince)	<i>se</i>	<i>þone</i>	
we both	<i>wit</i>	<i>unc</i>	<i>lufodon</i>
we all	<i>we</i>		
you both		<i>inc</i>	
you all	<i>ge</i>	<i>eow</i>	

Word order: when the object (O) is a pronoun, verb goes to the end SOV
 When the object is a noun, both OSV and SVO are possible