



GilAz,leTmonwerSmonAS monAS Sweki, Ekhedki GAbErrAz,leTmon monAS derruS bhergoS.  
 ?>ESweki, >gábérráz >leTmon  
 Gilaz, leader fight-AGT-PL person-PL GEN-3SG, PST-hate-3SG Gaberraz, leader person-PL tree birch(ADJ).  
*Gilaz, the leader of his(?) fighter people, hated Gaberraz, the leader of the birch tree people.*

ESweki GAbErrAzdhrEwghruSAS duSoShenbuTan werSki kom GilAzEpi werSmonAS pEhwoS,  
 >gábérráz ?>EwerSki ?>EwerSmonAS  
 PST-GEN-3SG Gaberraz deceive-VN-PL evil regarding fight-3SG with Gilaz by fight-AGT-PL few,  
 kweGilAz Epi monoghoS.  
 and Gilaz by many.  
*Gaberraz' previous(?) evil deceptions about [that?] he fights with Gilaz by few fighters and Gilaz by many. (WTF?)  
 maybe: Gaberraz had evil deceptions (purporting that) Gilaz (would) fight with few fighters, (but) Gilaz (had) many.*

GAbErrAzEpi monAS derruS bhergoS ESweki SweSor, GilSnnAk, Epi TegruS henToS.  
 >gábérráz  
 Gaberraz of person-PL tree birch(ADJ) PST-GEN-3SG sister Gilsnnak, by forest near\_front.  
*Gilsnnak, the sister of Gaberraz of the birch tree people, was in a nearby forest.*

HenkewhruS,leTmonEbherki pehruS Sweki kweESEkwhki Ti kewhruSgwenki  
 ?>ESweki  
 therefore, leader PST-carry-3SG protection GEN-3SG and PST-see-3SG 3SG.FEM purpose marry.3SG  
 Ti, kwekhwan Ti Ewehdki Ti hen lEndhruS SweTi kom bhreTer  
 ?>ETi  
 3SG.FEM and “when” 3SG.FEM PST-see-3SG (be)-3SG.FEM in land GEN-3SG.FE with brother  
 M

SweTi Gaberraz.  
 >gábérráz.  
 GEN-3SG.FEM Gaberraz.

*Therefore, the leader carried his shield and sought her (i.e. Gilsnnak) in order to marry her and when he saw her she was in her land with her brother Gaberraz.*

Ewehdki GilAz, kwe Tes Ebhelki.  
 >TES>EbhElki.  
 PST-see-3SG Gilaz, and 3DU PST-hex-3SG.

*He saw Gilaz (or “Gilaz saw?”), and he hexed the two of them.*

Kwe werSnoS hen TegruS, kwe monoghoS EplEwknoS GAbErrAz.  
 ?>EwerSnoS >EplEwknoS >gábérráz.  
 and fight-3PL in forest, and many PST-flee-3PL Gaberraz.  
*And they (>2) fight in the forest, and many (people) flew (from) Gaberraz.*

Kwe EwerSki      GAbErrAz, SchwruSAS EkhednoS,      Kwe GAbErrAz GilAz Edhrebki      lendhrus  
>gábérráz,      >gábérráz      >Edhrebki      >lEndhrus  
and PST-fight-3SG Gaberraz, sword-PL PST-strike-3PL, and Gaberraz Gilaz PST-push\_out-3SG land

SwenoS, Kwe hepoS      wegh      Sweki,      Kwe pro      hyod dehmuS      EheTki  
>EheTki  
GEN-3PL and near\_backmanner GEN-3SG, and from that span\_of\_time PST-use-3SG

SweSkerruS Kwe SwesehwruSki monAS      derruS bhergoS,      nEwerSki      monAS      helyoS.  
>SweSchwruSki  
GEN-crown and GEN-sword-3SG person-PL tree      birch(ADJ), NEG-fight-3SG person-PL other.

*And Gaberraz fought, (>2) swords struck (combatants? each other?), and Gaberraz pushed Gilaz out of their land and his previous manner(?), and from that time (on) he used the birch tree people of the crown and his sword, and (he) doesn't fight others.*

Before we had the gloss of the form *EheTki*, we thought it might be *EhenTki* and guessed ... *he put his sword before the crown of the birch tree people ...* This influenced our eventual rendering; we couldn't make the clause make as much sense with "use".

### Just the smooth glosses

The beast Agjov lives in a forest, walks on two legs in the human manner, but has fur, and (of her watching travelers?), (Agjov?) enchants on the roads in or through the forest.

Gilaz, the leader of his fighter people, hated Gaberraz, the leader of the birch tree people. Gaberraz had evil deceptions about (that) he fights with Gilaz by few fighters and Gilaz by many. Gilsnnak, the sister of Gaberraz of the birch tree people, was in a nearby forest.

Therefore, the leader carried his shield and sought her (i.e. Gilsnnak) in order to marry her and when he saw her she was in her land with her brother Gaberraz.

He saw Gilaz, and he (i.e. Gilaz?) hexed the two of them.

And they (>2) fight in the forest, and many people flew from Gaberraz.

And Gaberraz fought, (>2) swords struck, and Gaberraz pushed Gilaz out of their land and his previous manner(?), and from that time on he [put his sword before the crown of the birch tree people], and he doesn't fight others.

### Resolving ambiguities

Paragraph 1 of the Old Deru describes Agjov as carrying *pehruS* "protection", which might mean a shield or fur. We interpreted this as fur, because of the contrast (*buTan*) with its human-like gait. We interpreted the same word as "shield" on its second appearance.

*Ekhedki* in paragraph 2 can mean "hate" or "strike". At first we interpreted this as "strike", with the rest of the paragraph about *dhwEghruSAS duSoS* "evil deceptions" explaining the spat — e.g. that one had slandered the other by saying he didn't have as big of an army, or had fought with or against fewer people. But we couldn't make that work, so we decided on "hate" and interpreted this as a preexisting enmity which fueled a plan to attack by deception.

Paragraph 4 has unclear anaphor. Of the three people on stage, the two who form a natural pair to be jointly attacked are Gaberraz and Gilsnnak, so if the subject of *EbhElki* was recently named, it's Gilaz. Who the subject of *Ewehdkki* is doesn't matter much to the story.

## Making the narrative coherent

Agjov is the subject of the first paragraph but is never mentioned again. Why is he in the story? He has a power of enchantment, and in paragraph 4 someone hexes two people (we assume the gloss “curse” isn’t used in the English sense of merely saying mean things). So perhaps Agjov is involved in that hex; this would justify his appearance in the text. After wondering whether Gilaz *was* Agjov shape-shifted, or both Agjov and Gilaz were magic users, we settled on Gilaz getting Agjov to cast a hex for him, since that minimizes the number of magic users to account for (it is also a possible if strained reading of the agreement of *EbhElki*).

We took the evil deceptions to be the content of the hex inflicted on Gaberraz: Gilaz can produce the deceptive appearance that he has many fighters, although in fact he only has few.

So Agjov’s spell is to produce illusionary soldiers. We added a bit of backstory to fill out the end of the first Old Deru paragraph: Agjov habitually casts this spell on travelers in the forest to rob them, Gilaz has heard about this, and therefore Gilaz hires Agjov for the attempt to raid and capture Gilsnnak.

## Restructured story

Gilaz, a leader of a small military unit, had a longstanding hatred of Gaberraz, the leader of the Birch People who lived in a nearby forest.

Gilaz knew of a beast Agjov who lived in the forest and walked on two legs like a human, but had fur. Agjov was an illusionist: he robbed travellers in the forest by magicking up fake soldiers to stage a holdup.

Gilaz decided to steal Gilsnnak, Gaberraz’s sister, for his wife. He planned to have Agjov put an evil hex on Gaberraz and Gilsnnak to believe his army was larger than it in fact was. He put on his armor, mustered his unit, travelled to her forest where he hired Agjov, and sought Gilsnnak out, finding her with her brother and executing his plan.

But Gaberraz rallied a defense despite being apparently outnumbered, and the two groups fought in the forest, their swords striking. Gaberraz had the actual numerical superiority, so he won. Many of Gilaz’ people fled before Gaberraz, and Gaberraz pushed Gilaz out of his people’s land. After this he hung up his sword next to the crown of his people; he hasn’t been in another battle since.

## Translating into UNLWS

Since it’s pragmatically unnatural to talk much about the sequence of time in UNLWS, stories that go “X happened, then Y happened, then Z happened” are poor fits, and we sought to de-temporalize this one. Here are some things that we changed to run in parallel:

- Agjov’s briganding isn’t said to be stopped; it’s habitual, and he was hired for this one occasion.
- Gaberraz and Gilaz probably stay enemies; Gilaz hated Gaberraz and still does.
- “Generally, Gab’s sword hangs next to his people’s crown and he doesn’t use it. One exceptional time he had to...”
- The plan and its execution can be collapsed, as long as we distinguish the parts of the plan that happened (the ensorcelment and attempted robbery) from the parts that failed (actually getting Gilsnnak).

Other adjustments:

- The forest the Birch People call home is a birch forest, presumably. We also assume Agjov’s forest is the same one.
- It’s practically universal that the most of the losers of a battle flee: the alternative is that they’re captured or killed first. So to emphasize the magnitude of the victory, rather than saying many flee we’ll say they flee quickly.
- ‘He put on his armor’ and ‘the swords struck’ are obvious figures in a battle narrative, the sort of

adornment which UNLWS prefers to leave out. We retain the mention of Gaberraz using his sword with a time pronoun.

We kept the personal names: they're useful for long-distance coreference without ruining the layout. But you can't borrow a sequence of speech sounds or letters into UNLWS. We thought the names smelled Proto-Germanic (they seem to show a masculine singular ending -az!) and ran with these reminiscences:

- Agjov: PG *agjō* 'edge', which we interpreted to 'blade' since in our story he provides illusionary blades. We wound up decomposing 'sword' as 'tool for slicing people', so Agjov's UNLWS name is simply based on 'tool' (still apt enough!)
- Gaberraz: PG *ga-* perfective + *beranq* 'to carry'. His UNLWS name suggests 'was carried' as 'was on a moving ground object'.
- Gilaz: PG *gelwaz* 'yellow' or, if it were unlauded, *gulbq* 'gold'. But the only way we currently have to refer to colors in UNLWS is by literally showing them on the page, and personal names shouldn't emically require color. Gold is shiny, so Gilaz' UNLWS name is based on 'reflect light'.
- Gilsnnak: the same *gil* + PG *snakó* 'snake'. Her UNLWS name combines the body stroke of 'snake' with a vee from 'reflect light'.

### Close backtranslation

*The order this translation is arranged in is, of course, not a feature of the UNLWS text.*

Ride and Shiny Snake are brother and sister. Ride is the leader of the Birchfolk, a society who live in a birch (lit. peeling-tree) forest. He has a tool for slicing people which he doesn't use, and which stays near his headwear that symbolizes his rule, except this one time. The Birchfolk include various groups, one of which is a number of fighters.

Also in the forest is Tool. Tool walks upright on two legs, as people do, and all of their skin has long hair on it. At the time of our story, Tool frequently does the following. They create a visual illusion of a large group of evil soldiers ("evil" is lit. "bad"; it is not meant that they fight poorly). The target of the illusion<sup>1</sup> is, generally, a group of travelers in the forest. The illusory soldiers stop the targets, and Tool says to them "if (you want) these soldiers not to attack and finish you, what you give me in return is everything (you have)".<sup>2</sup>

Outside the forest is Reflective, a man who leads a small, loyal retinue of fighters. His feelings towards Ride are a tense mix of contempt and disgust. Reflective has heard of Tool's banditry, and makes a plan. Part 1: enter the forest with his retinue<sup>3</sup>, and once there, hire Tool to cast their spell on Ride and Shiny Snake<sup>4</sup>, with Shiny Snake herself as the price demanded. Reflective plans that (though) his force is smaller than the group of fighters among the Birchfolk, his actual force plus Tool's illusory army will jointly outnumber Ride's. This will bring about Part 2: abduct Shiny Snake to outside the forest and forcibly marry her.

Part 1 takes place, (but) not Part 2. Tool's illusion succeeds as planned. Reflective's force attacks, but, unexpectedly, Ride and the Birchfolk military fight back, doing much heavier damage. This is the time Ride used his sword. This projection of military power makes Reflective and his retinue leave the forest swiftly.

*The signature reads:* Sai and Alex write this text, which will be presented at the instance of the LCS bringing a group together after nine previous occasions. In what form do you express its meaning?

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<sup>1</sup> Pronoun: triangle with a single stroke.

<sup>2</sup> The text doesn't mention whether this ruse is usually successful.

<sup>3</sup> Pronoun: empty triangle. The use of this pronoun bound directly to "Reflective and his army" is the one near the retreat. In a linear language that would be a strained cataphor, because the incursion comes first temporally; but UNLWS doesn't have cataphor at all, because it doesn't have intrinsic reading order. Using a pronoun here let us eliminate a line crossing the forest boundary that didn't semantically cross the boundary.

<sup>4</sup> Pronoun: triangle with a single stroke, same as for travelers. This is disambiguated due to the coordinated stack construction, which creates a composite polyadic predication of Tool, the target, and the thing demanded. The pronoun isn't grammatically necessary; it is used here merely to avoid a line crossing.