

OLD ENGLISH SERIES • VOLUME 1

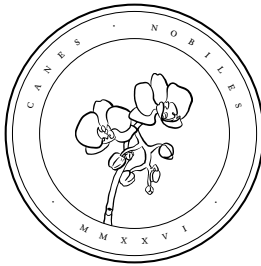
BEOWULF

Beowulf

with the Fight at Finnsburg

with a word-for-word interlinear English translation

preserving the original word order

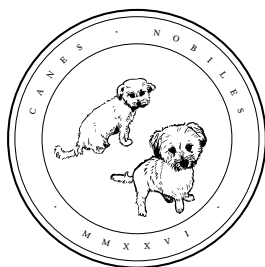


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Volume 1 of the Canes Nobiles Old English interlinear texts

The Old English text follows Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg,
edited by Friedrich Klaeber (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1922)

Set from a page scan of the 1922 printing

Translated and composed with AI, edited by Christopher Hench

Artwork by Esther Steves

Vowel length is marked as Klaeber marks it, with the macron, and with the circumflex where a long syllable stands for two; the wide space within each line is the caesura between its half-lines. Square brackets enclose letters and words he supplies, parentheses letters lost from the damaged manuscript, * * * a lacuna, and a dagger a word he leaves as corrupt; his italics for emended letters and his metrical dots are not set. The fitts are numbered as the manuscript numbers them, and a numeral in brackets is Klaeber's.

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THE FIGHT AT FINNSBURG

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The poet recalls the glory of the Spear-Danes' kings in days of old. Scyld Scefing, found as a destitute child, grows to terrify his neighbors and make every people across the whale-road pay him tribute. God sends him a son, Beowulf, whose fame spreads widely. When Scyld dies, his men lay him in a ship heaped with treasure and weapons, set a golden banner over him, and give him to the sea; no one can say who received that cargo.

Hwæt, wē Gār-Dena in gēardagum,

Lo, we of-Spear-Danes in yore-days,

þēodcyninga þrym gefrūnon,

of-people-kings glory have-heard-of,

hū ðā æþelingas ellen fremedon!

how the princes courage performed!

Oft Scyld Scēfing sceaþena þrēatum,

Often Scyld Scefing of-foes from-troops,

monegum mægþum meodosetla oftēah,

from-many tribes of-mead-seats deprived,

egsode eorl[as], syððan ærest wearð

terrified warriors, since first (he)-was

fēasceaft funden; hē þæs frōfre gebād,

destitute found; he for-that comfort lived-to-see,

wēox under wolcnum weorðmyndum þāh,

grew under skies in-honors prospered,

oð þæt him æghwylc ymsittendra

until that to-him each of-neighbors

ofer hronrāde hýran scolde,

over whale-road obey had-to,

gomban gyldan; þæt wæs gōd cyning!

tribute pay; that was good king!

5

10

Ðā̃m eafera wæs æfter cenned

To-him heir was afterward born

geong in geardum, þone God sende

young in courts, whom God sent

folce tō frōfre; fyrenðearfe ongeat,

to-the-people for comfort; dire-distress perceived,

15 þē hie ā̃r drugon aldor(lē)ase

which they before endured lordless

lange hwile; him þæs Liffreā,

long while; to-him for-that Life-Lord,

wuldres Wealdend woroldāre forgeaf;

of-glory Ruler world-honor gave;

Bēowulf wæs brēme — blād wide sprang —

Beowulf was famous renown widely sprang

Scyldes eafera Scedelandum in.

of-Scyld heir Scede-lands in.

20 Swā sceal (geong g)uma gōde gewyrcean,

So shall young man with-good bring-about,

fromum feohgiftum on fæder (bea)rme,

with-splendid wealth-gifts in of-father bosom,

þæt hine on ylde eft gewunigen

that him in age afterward may-stand-by

wilgesīpas, þonne wīg cume,

willing-companions, when war comes,

lēode gelāsten; lofdædum sceal

people may-serve; by-praise-deeds shall

25 in mægþa gehwāre man geþeôn.

in of-tribes each man prosper.

Him ðā Scyld gewāt tō gescæphwile

Himself then Scyld departed at fated-hour

felahrōr fēran on Frēan wære;
very-vigorous journeying into of-Lord keeping;
 hī hyne þā ætbæron tō brimes faroðe,
they him then bore to of-sea current,
 swāse gesiþas, swā hē selfa bæd,
dear companions, as he himself asked,
 þenden wordum wēold wine Scyldinga — 30
while with-words ruled friend of-Scyldings
 lēof landfruma lange āhte.
dear land-prince long possessed.
 Ðær æt hýðe stōd hringedstefna
There at harbor stood ring-prowed-(ship)
 isig ond ūtfūs, æþelinges fær;
icy and eager-to-set-out, of-the-prince vessel;
 ālēdon þā lēofne þēoden,
laid-down then beloved prince,
 bēaga bryttan on bearm scipes, 35
of-rings giver into bosom of-ship,
 mārne be mæste. Ðær wæs mādma fela
the-famous-one by mast. There was of-treasures many
 of feorwegum frætwa gelæded;
from far-ways of-ornaments brought;
 ne hýrde ic cýmlicor cēol gegyrwan
not heard I more-splendidly keel (be)-equipped
 hildewæpnum ond heaðowædum,
with-battle-weapons and with-war-garments,
 billum ond byrnum; him on bearme læg 40
with-swords and with-mail-coats; to-him on bosom lay
 mādma mænigo, þā him mid scoldon
of-treasures multitude, which him with had-to

on flōdes æht feor gewitan.

into of-flood possession far travel.

Nalæs hī hine læssan lācum tēodan,

Not-at-all they him with-lesser gifts provided,

þēodgestrēonum, þon þā dydon,

with-people-treasures, than those did,

45 þē hine æt frumscafte forð onsendon

who him at beginning forth sent

æinne ofer yðe umborwesende.

alone over wave being-a-child.

Þā gýt hie him āsetton segen g(yl)denne

Then yet they for-him set-up banner golden

hēah ofer hēafod, lēton holm beran,

high over head, let sea bear,

gēafon on gārsecg; him wæs geōmor sefa,

gave to ocean; to-them was sad mind,

50 murnende mōd. Men ne cunnon

mourning heart. Men not know-how

secgan tō sōðe, selerædende,

to-say for truth, ball-counselors,

hæleð under heofenum, hwā þām hlæste onfēng.

heroes under heavens, who that cargo received.

Beowulf the Scylding rules after his father, and Beowulf's son Healfdene has four children, among them Hrothgar. Success in war draws a great following to Hrothgar, and he resolves to build a mead-hall greater than any men have heard of. Heorot rises, high and horn-gabled, though fire and a feud between in-laws still wait for it. A bold spirit in the darkness endures hearing the joy in the hall each day, where a poet sings of the Creation. He is Grendel, a haunter of the moors and one of the kin of Cain, whom God banished for slaying Abel. From Cain sprang giants, elves, and evil spirits, who strove against God and were repaid.

Ðā wæs on burgum Bēowulf Scyldinga,

Then was in strongholds Beowulf of-Scyldings,

lēof lēodcyning longe þrāge

dear people-king long time

folcum gefræge — fæder ellor hwearf,

to-peoples famous father elsewhere had-turned,

aldor of earde—, oþ þæt him eft onwōc

prince from homeland, until that to-him afterward arose

hēah Healfdene; hēold þenden lifde

high Healfdene; ruled while (he)-lived

gamol ond gūðrēow glæde Scyldingas.

old and battle-fierce gracious Scyldings.

Ðām fēower bearn forðgerimed

To-him four children one-after-another

in worold wōcun, weoroda rāswa[n],

into world arose, to-the-leader of-hosts,

Heorogār ond Hrōðgār ond Hālgā til,

Heorogar and Hrothgar and Halga good,

hȳrde ic þæt [*** wæs On]elan cwēn,

heard I that (lacuna) was of-Onela queen,

55

60

Heaðo-Scilfingas healsgebedda.

of-the-Battle-Scylfing

neck-bedfellow.

Ða wæs Hrōðgāre herespēd gyfen,

Then was to-Hrothgar

war-success given,

65 wiges weorðmynd, þæt him his winemāgas

of-battle honor,

that to-him his friend-kinsmen

georne hȳrdon, oðð þæt sēo geogoð gewēox,

eagerly obeyed,

until that the youths grew,

magodriht micel. Him on mōð bearn,

young-retinue great.

To-him into mind ran,

þæt healrecd hātan wolde,

that ball-building

command would,

medoærn micel men gewyrcean * * *

mead-ball great

men build (lacuna)

70 þon[n]e ylðo bearn æfre gefrūnon,

than

of-men children

ever

heard-of,

ond þær on innan eall gedælan

and there in within

all distribute

geongum ond ealdum, swylc him God sealde,

to-young and to-old,

such to-him God gave,

būton folcscare ond feorum gumena.

except common-land

and

lives

of-men.

Ðā ic wīde gefrægn weorc gebannan

Then I widely heard

work (be)-ordered

75 manigre mægþe geond þisne middangeard,

to-many tribe

throughout

this

middle-earth,

folcstede frætwan.

folk-place adorn.

Him on fyrste gelomp

To-him in time befell

ædre mid ylðum, þæt hit wearð ealgearo,

quickly among men,

that it

was

all-ready,

healærna mæst; scōp him Heort naman
of-hall-buildings greatest; shaped for-it Heorot name

sē þe his wordes geweald wide hæfde.
he who of-his word power widely had.

Hē bēot ne ālēh, bēagas dælde,
He vow not belied, rings dealt,

80

sinc æt symle. Sele hlifade
treasure at feast. Hall towered

hēah ond horngēap; heaðowylma bād,
high and horn-gabled; of-war-surges awaited,

lāðan liges; ne wæs hit lenge þā gēn,
of-bateful fire; not was it far-off then yet,

þæt se ecghete āpumswēoran
that the sword-bated for-in-laws

æfter wælniðe wæcnan scolde.
after slaughter-malice awaken should.

85

Ðā se ellengæst earfoðlice
Then the bold-spirit grievously

þrāge geþolode, sē þe in þýstrum bād,
time endured, he who in darkness waited,

þæt hē dōgora gehwām drēam gehýrde
that he of-days on-each revelry heard

hlūdne in healle; þær wæs hearpan swēg,
loud in hall; there was of-harp sound,

swutol sang scopes. Sægde sē þe cūpe
clear song of-poet. Said he who knew-how

90

frumsceaft fira feorran reccan,
origin of-men from-afar recount,

cwæð þæt se Ælmihtiga eorðan worh(te),
said that the Almighty earth wrought,

- wlítebeorhtne wang, swā wæter bebūgeð,
beauty-bright plain, as water surrounds,
- gesette sigehrēpig sunnan ond mōnan
set victory-exultant sun and moon
- 95 lēoman tō lēohte landbūendum,
lights for light for-land-dwellers,
- ond gefrætware foldan scēatas
and adorned of-earth regions
- leomum ond lēafum, lif ēac gesceōp
with-limbs and with-leaves, life also created
- cynna gehwylcum þāra ðe cwise hwyrfaþ. —
of-kinds for-each of-those that alive move.
- Swā ðā drihtguman drēamum lifdon,
So then retinue-men in-joys lived,
- 100 ēadiglice, oð ðæt ān ongan
blessedly, until that one began
- fyrene fre(m)man fēond on helle;
crimes to-perform fiend in hell;
- wæs se grimma gāst Grendel hāten,
was the grim spirit Grendel called,
- māre mearcstapa, sē þe mōras hēold,
notorious border-stalker, he who moors held,
- fen ond fæsten; fifelcynnes eard
fen and fastness; of-monster-race homeland
- 105 wonsæli wer weardode hwile,
unblessed man inhabited for-a-while,
- sipðan him Scyppend forscifen hæfde
since him Creator condemned had
- in Cāines cynne — þone cwealm gewræc
among of-Cain kin that killing avenged

ēce Drihten, þæs þe hē Ābel slōg;
eternal Lord, because that he Abel slew;
 ne gefeah hē þære fæhðe, ac hē hine feor forwræc,
not rejoiced he in-that feud, but he him far banished,
 Metod for þȳ māne mancynne fram. 110
Ordainer for that crime mankind from.
 Þanon untȳdras ealle onwōcon,
Thence evil-broods all arose,
 eotenas ond ylfe ond orcnêas,
giants and elves and evil-spirits,
 swylce gīgantas, þā wið Gode wunnon
likewise giants, who against God strove
 lange þrāge; hē him ðæs lēan forgeald.
long time; he them for-that reward repaid.

II • GRENDEL

Grendel comes by night to Heorot, finds the Danes asleep after their feast, and carries off thirty thanes. The next night he kills again, and for twelve winters the best of halls stands empty while he wages his feud and accepts no settlement. In despair the Danes vow offerings at heathen shrines, for they do not know God. The poet cries woe to the one who must thrust his soul into the fire, and blessing on the one who may seek the Lord after death.

Gewāt ðā nēosian, syþðan niht becōm,
(He)-went then to-visit, after night came,
 hēan hūses, hū hit Hring-Dene
of-high house, how it Ring-Danes
 æfter bēorþege gebūn hæfdon.
after beer-drinking occupied had.

115

Fand þā ðær inne æþelinga gedriht

Found then there inside of-princes band

swefan æfter symble; sorge ne cūðon,

sleeping after feast; sorrow not knew,

120 wonsceaft werā. Wiht unhælo,

misery of-men. Creature of-evil,

grim ond grædig, gearo sōna wæs,

grim and greedy, ready at-once was,

rēoc ond rēpe, ond on rāste genam

savage and fierce, and in rest seized

þritig þegna; þanon eft gewāt

thirty of-thanes; thence back went

hūðe hrēmig tō hām faran,

with-plunder exulting to home going,

125 mid þære wælfylle wīca nēosan.

with the slaughter-fill dwellings to-seek.

Ðā wæs on ūhtan mid ærdæge

Then was in dawn at early-day

Grendles gūðcræft gumum undyrne;

of-Grendel war-craft to-men unbidden;

þā wæs æfter wiste wōp ūp āhafen,

then was after feast weeping up raised,

micel morgenswēg. Mære þēoden,

great morning-sound. Famous prince,

130 æþeling ærgōd, unbliðe sæt,

prince long-good, joyless sat,

þolode ðrȳðswȳð þegnsorge drēah,

suffered mighty-strong thane-sorrow endured,

syðþan hīe þæs lāðan lāst scēawedon,

after they of-the hateful-one track saw,

wergan gāstes; wæs þæt gewin tō strang,
of-cursed spirit; was that strife too strong,
 lāð ond longsum! Næs hit lengra fyrst,
hateful and long-lasting! Not-was it longer interval,
 ac ymb āne niht eft gefremede 135
but after one night again committed
 morðbeala mære, ond nō mearn fore,
murder-evil more, and not mourned for-it,
 fāhðe ond fyrene; wæs tō fæst on þām.
feud and crime; was too fixed in those.
 Þā wæs ēaðfynde þē him elles hwær
Then was easy-to-find who for-himself else where
 gerūmlicor ræste [sōhte],
more-roomily rest sought,
 bed æfter būrum, ðā him gebēacnod wæs, 140
bed among chambers, when to-him shown was,
 gesægd sōðlice sweotolan tātne
told truly by-clear token
 healðegnes hete; hēold hyne syðþan
of-ball-thane hatred; kept himself afterward
 fyr ond fæstor sē þām fēonde ætwand.
further and faster he-who from-the fiend escaped.
 Swā rixode ond wið rihte wan,
So ruled and against right strove,
 āna wið eallum, oð þæt idel stōd 145
alone against all, until that empty stood
 hūsa sēlest. Wæs sēo hwil micel;
of-houses best. Was the time long;
 twelf wintra tid torn geþolode
twelve of-winters time grief suffered

- wine Scyldinga, wēana gehwēlcne,
friend of-Scyldings, of-woes each,
- sīdra sorga; forðām [secgum] wearð,
of-great sorrows; therefore to-men became,
- 150 ylða bearnum undyrne cūð
of-men to-children unbidden known
- gyddum geōmore, þæt te Grendel wan
in-songs sadly, that Grendel strove
- hwile wið Hrōþgār, hetenīðas wæg,
for-a-while against Hrothgar, hate-malice waged,
- fyrene ond fæhðe fela missēra,
crime and feud many of-half-years,
- singāle sæce; sibbe ne wolde
continual strife; peace not wished
- 155 wið manna hwone mægenes Deniga,
with of-men any of-force of-Danes,
- feorhbealo feorran, fēa þingian,
life-bale remove, with-money settle,
- nē þær nānig witenas wēnan þorfte
nor there any of-counselors expect needed
- beorhtre bōte tō banan folmum;
bright compensation from of-slayer hands;
- (ac se) āglāca ēhtende wæs,
but the monster pursuing was,
- 160 deorc dēapscua, dugupe ond geogope,
dark death-shadow, veterans and youths,
- seomade ond syrede; sinnihte hēold
lurked and ambushed; endless-night held
- mistige mōras; men ne cunnon,
misty moors; men not know,

hwyder helrūnan hwyrftum scriþað.

whither hell-whisperers in-circlings glide.

Swā fela fyrena fēond mancynnes,

So many of-crimes fiend of-mankind,

atol āngengea oft gefremede,

terrible lone-goer often committed,

heardra hȳnða; Heorot eardode,

of-hard humiliations; Heorot inhabited,

sincfāge sel sweartum nihtum; —

treasure-adorned hall in-dark nights;

nō hē þone gifstōl grētan mōste,

not be the gift-throne approach might,

māþðum for Metode, nē his myne wisse. —

treasure before Ordainer, nor his love knew.

Þæt wæs wrēc micel wine Scyldinga,

That was misery great to-friend of-Scyldings,

mōdes brecða. Monig oft gesæt

of-heart breaking. Many often sat

rīce tō rūne; rād eahtedon,

powerful in council; plan considered,

hwæt swiðferhðum sēlest wære

what for-strong-hearted best would-be

wið fægryrum tō gefremmanne.

against sudden-terrors to do.

Hwilum hie gehēton æt hærgrafum

At-times they vowed at idol-temples

wigweorþunga, wordum bādon,

idol-worships, with-words prayed,

þæt him gāstbona gēoce gefremede

that for-them soul-slayer help would-provide

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wið þēodþrēaum. Swylc wæs þēaw hyra,
against people-calamities. Such was custom of-theirs,

hæþenra hyht; helle gemundon
of-heatbens hope; hell remembered

180 in mōdsefan, Metod hīe ne cūpon,
in mind-spirit, Ordainer they not knew,

dāda Dēmend, ne wiston hīe Drihten God,
of-deeds Judge, not knew they Lord God,

nē hīe hūru heofena Helm herian ne cūpon,
nor they indeed of-heavens Protector praise — knew-how,

wuldres Waldend. Wā bið þām ðe sceal
of-glory Ruler. Woe is to-him who must

þurh sliðne nið sǣwle bescūfan
through cruel malice soul thrust

185 in fýres fæþm, frōfre ne wēnan,
into of-fire embrace, comfort not expect,

wihte gewendan! Wēl bið þām þe mōt
at-all change! Well is to-him who may

æfter dēaðdæge Drihten sēcean
after death-day Lord seek

ond tō Fæder fæþmum freoðo wilnian!
and in of-Father embrace protection desire!

Hrothgar broods on his sorrow, and for all his wisdom he cannot end it. Among the Geats, Hygelac's thane, the strongest man alive, hears of Grendel and has a ship made ready to seek the Danish king. He chooses fourteen companions, and by the second day the foamy-necked ship sights the Danish cliffs. The coast-guard rides down to the shore and demands to know who these armed strangers are, and where they come from, before they go any farther.

Swā ðā mǣlceare maga Healfdenes

So then time-sorrow son of-Healfdene

singāla sēað; ne mihte snotor hǣleð

continually seethed; not could wise hero

wēan onwendan; wæs þæt gewin tō swyð,

woe avert; was that strife too strong,

lāþ ond longsum, þē on ðā lēode becōm,

hateful and long-lasting, which upon the people came,

nȳdwracu niþgrim, nihtbealwa mǣst.

dire-persecution cruel-with-malice, of-night-evils greatest.

Þæt fram hām gefrægn Higelāces þegn

That from home heard-of of-Hygelac thane

gōd mid Gēatum, Grendles dǣda;

good among Geats, of-Grendel deeds;

sē wæs moncynnes mægenes strengest

he was of-mankind of-might strongest

on þām dæge þysses lifes,

on that day of-this life,

æþele ond ēacen. Hēt him ȳðlidan

noble and mighty. Commanded for-himself wave-traveler

gōdne gegyrwan; cwæð, hē gūðcýning

good to-prepare; said, he war-king

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- 200 ofer swanrāde sēcean wolde,
over swan-road seek would,
 mārne þēoden, þā him wæs manna þearf.
famous prince, since to-him was of-men need.
 Ðone siðfæt him snotere ceorlas
That journey him wise men
 lȳthwōn lōgon, þēah hē him lēof wære;
very-little blamed, though he to-them dear were;
 hwetton hige(r)ōfne, hæl scēawedon.
urged the-brave-minded-one, omen observed.
- 205 Hæfde se gōða Gēata lēoda
Had the good-one of-Geats of-people
 cempan gecorone þāra þe hē cēnoste
champions chosen of-those whom he boldest
 findan mihte; fiftȳna sum
find could; of-fifteen one
 sundwudu sōhte, secg wīsade,
sea-wood sought, man pointed-out,
 lagucræftig mon landgemyrcu.
sea-skilled man land-boundaries.
- 210 Fyrst forð gewāt; flota wæs on ȳðum,
Time forth went; ship was on waves,
 bāt under beorge. Beornas gearwe
boat under cliff. Warriors ready
 on stefn stigon, — strēamas wundon,
onto prow climbed, currents eddied,
 sund wið sande; secgas bāron
sea against sand; men bore
 on bearm nacan beorhte frætwe,
into bosom of-vessel bright ornaments,

gūðsearo geatolic; guman ūt scufon,
war-gear splendid; men out pushed,

215

weras on wilsīð wudu bundenne.
men on longed-for-journey wood bound.

Gewāt þā ofer wægholm winde gefýsed
Went then over wave-sea by-wind driven

flota fāmiheals fugle gelicost,
ship foamy-necked to-bird likest,

oð þæt ymb āntid oþres dōgores
until that at due-time of-second day

wundenstefna gewaden hæfde,
curved-prow traveled had,

220

þæt ðā liðende land gesāwon,
that the seafarers land saw,

brimclifu blican, beorgas stēape,
sea-cliffs shine, hills steep,

sīde sǣnæssas; þā wæs sund liden,
broad headlands; then was sea crossed,

eoteles æt ende. Ðanon ūp hraðe
of-voyage at end. Thence up quickly

Wedera lēode on wang stigon,
of-Weders people onto plain climbed,

225

sǣwudu sǣldon, — syrcan hrysedon,
sea-wood moored, mail-shirts rattled,

gūðgewædo; Gode þancedon
war-garments; God thanked

þæs þe him yþlāde ēaðe wurdon.
for-that that to-them wave-ways easy were.

Ðā of wealle geeseah weard Scildinga,
Then from wall saw guard of-Scyldings,

- 230 sē þe holmc lifu healdan scolde,
he who sea-cliffs guard had-to,
 beran ofer bolcan beorhte randas,
carry over gangway bright shields,
 fyrdsearu fūslicu; hine fyrwyt bræc
army-gear ready; him curiosity pressed
 mōdgehygdum, hwæt þā men wāron.
in-heart-thoughts, what those men were.
 Gewāt him þā tō waroðe wicge rīdan
Went himself then to shore on-horse riding
- 235 þegn Hrōðgāres, þrymmum cwehte
thane of-Hrothgar, mightily shook
 mægenwudu mundum, meþelwordum frægn:
mighty-wood in-hands, with-formal-words asked:
 ‘Hwæt syndon gē searohæbbendra,
‘What are you of-armor-bearers,
 byrnum werede, þē þus brontne cēol
with-mail-coats protected, who thus steep keel
 ofer lagustrāte lādan cwōmon,
over sea-street to-bring came,
- 240 hider ofer holmas? [Hwæt, ic hwi]le wæs
hither over seas? Lo, I for-a-while was
 endesāta, āgwearde hēold,
coast-guard, sea-watch kept,
 þē on land Dena lāðra nānig
that into land of-Danes of-hostile-ones none
 mid scipherge sceðþan ne meahte.
with ship-army harm — could.
 Nō hēr cūðlicor cuman ongunnon
Not here more-openly to-come undertook

lindhæbbende,	nē gē lēafnesword	245
<i>shield-bearers,</i>	<i>nor you permission-word</i>	
gūðfremmendra	gearwe ne wisson,	
<i>of-war-makers</i>	<i>surely — knew,</i>	
māga gemēdu.	Næfre ic mārān geseah	
<i>of-kinsmen consent.</i>	<i>Never I greater saw</i>	
eorla ofer eorþan,	ðonne is ēower sum,	
<i>of-warriors on earth,</i>	<i>than is of-you one,</i>	
secg on searwum;	nis þæt seldguma,	
<i>man in armor;</i>	<i>not-is that hall-man,</i>	
wæpnum geweorðad,	næfne him his wlite lēoge,	250
<i>with-weapons adorned,</i>	<i>unless him his appearance belie,</i>	
ǣnlic ansýn.	Nū ic ēower sceal	
<i>peerless look.</i>	<i>Now I your must</i>	
frumcyn witan,	ǣr gē fyr heonan	
<i>lineage know,</i>	<i>before you further hence</i>	
lēasscēaweras	on land Dena	
<i>false-spies</i>	<i>into land of-Danes</i>	
furþur fēran.	Nū gē feorbūend,	
<i>further travel.</i>	<i>Now you far-dwellers,</i>	
mereliðende,	min[n]e gehýrað	255
<i>seafarers,</i>	<i>my bear</i>	
ānfealdne geþōht:	ofost is sēlest	
<i>simple thought:</i>	<i>haste is best</i>	
tō gecýðanne,	hwanan ēowre cyme syndon.’	
<i>to make-known,</i>	<i>whence your comings are.’</i>	

The leader of the band unlocks his word-board: they are Geats, Hygelac's hearth-companions, and his father was the famous Ecgtheow. They have come in loyalty to Hrothgar, to counsel him how the secret foe who haunts Heorot may be overcome. The coast-guard judges them a friendly troop, sets his men to guard their newly tarred ship, and leads them on. The boar-crested warriors march until they see the gold-adorned hall, and the guard points the way and rides back to his watch.

Him se yldesta andswarode,

Him the eldest answered,

werodes wisa, wordhord onlēac:

of-troop leader, word-board unlocked:

260 'Wē synt gumcynnes Gēata lēode

'We are of-race of-Geats people

ond Higelāces heorðgenēatas.

and of-Hygelac hearth-companions.

Wæs min fæder folcum gecyþed,

Was my father to-peoples known,

æþele ordfruma, Ecgbēow hāten;

noble leader, Ecgtheow called;

gebād wintra worn, ær hē on weg hwurfe,

lived-to-see of-winters number, before he on way passed,

265 gamol of gearдум; hine gearwe geman

old from dwellings; him readily remembers

witena wēlhwylc wīde geond eorþan.

of-wise-men nearly-every widely throughout earth.

Wē þurh holdne hige hlāford þinne,

We through loyal mind lord thy,

sunu Healfdenes sēcean cwōmon,

son of-Healfdene to-seek came,

lēodgebyrgean; wes þū ūs lārena gōd!

people-protector; be thou to-us of-counsels good!

Habbað wē tō þā m mārān micel ærende

Have we to the famous-one great errand

Deniga frēan; ne sceal þær dyrne sum

of-Danes lord; not shall there secret any

wesan, þæs ic wēne. Þū wāst, gif hit is

be, of-that I expect. Thou knowest, if it is

swā wē sōþlice secgan hýrdon,

as we truly say heard,

þæt mid Scyldingum sceaðona ic nāt hwylc,

that among Scyldings of-foes I know-not which,

dēogol dādhata deorcum nihtum

secret deed-bater in-dark nights

ēawed þurh egsan uncūðne nið,

shows through terror unknown malice,

hýnðu ond hrāfyl. Ic þæs Hrōðgār mæg

humiliation and corpse-fall. I for-this Hrothgar can

þurh rūmne sefan rād gelāran,

through generous mind counsel teach,

hū hē frōd ond gōd fēond oferswýðeþ —

how be wise and good fiend will-overpower

gyf him edwenden āfre scolde

if for-him reversal ever should

bealuwa bisigu bōt eft cuman—,

of-evils of-affliction remedy again come,

ond þā cearwylmas cōlran wurðap;

and those care-surges cooler become;

oððe ā syþðan earfoðþrāge,

or ever afterward hardship-time,

270

275

280

þrēanȳd þolað, þenden þær wunað
affliction-need he-suffers, while there remains

285 on hēahstede hūsa sēlest.
in high-place of-houses best.'

Weard mæpelode, ðær on wicge sæt,
Guard spoke, where on horse (he)-sat,

ombeht unforht: 'Æghwæpres sceal
officer unafraid: 'Of-each must

scearp scyldwiga gescād witan,
sharp shield-warrior distinction know,

worda ond worca, sē þe wēl þenceð.
of-words and of-works, he who well thinks.

290 Ic þæt gehyre, þæt þis is hold weorod
I that hear, that this is loyal troop

frēan Scyldinga. Gewitaþ forð beran
to-lord of-Scyldings. Go forth to-bear

wāpen ond gewādu, ic ēow wisiġe;
weapons and garments, I you will-guide;

swylce ic maguþegnas mīne hāte
likewise I young-thanes my will-command

wið fēonda gehwone flotan ēowerne,
against of-foes each vessel your,

295 niwtyrwydne nacan on sande
newly-tarred ship on sand

ārum healdan, oþ ðæt eft byreð
with-honor to-guard, until that again bears

ofer lagustrēamas lēofne mannan
over sea-currents dear man

wudu wundenhals tō Wedermearce,
wood curved-necked to Weder-land,

gōdfremmdra swylcum gifeþe bið,

of-good-doers to-such granted is,

þæt þone hilderæs hāl gedigeð.

that the battle-rush whole survives.

300

Gewiton him þā fēran, — flota stille bād,

Went themselves then to-travel, ship still waited,

seomode on sāle sidfæþmed scip,

rode at rope broad-bosomed ship,

on ancre fæst. Eoforlic scionon

at anchor fast. Boar-figures shone

ofer hlēorber[g]an gehroden golde,

over cheek-guards adorned with-gold,

fāh ond fȳrheard, — ferhwearde hēold

gleaming and fire-bardened, life-guard kept

305

gūþmōdgum men. Guman ōnetton,

for-war-minded men. Men hastened,

sigon ætsomne, oþ þæt hȳ [s]æl timbred

moved together, until that they hall timbered

geatolic ond goldfāh ongyton mihton;

splendid and gold-adorned perceive could;

þæt wæs foremærost foldbūendum

that was most-famous to-earth-dwellers

receda under roderum, on þām se rīca bād;

of-buildings under heavens, in which the mighty-one dwelt;

310

lixe se lēoma ofer landa fela.

shone the light over of-lands many.

Him þā hildedēor [h]of mōdigra

Them then battle-brave-one court of-proud-ones

torht getæhte, þæt hīe him tō mihton

bright showed, that they it to might

- 315 gegnum gangan; gūðbeorna sum
straight go; of-war-warriors one
 wicg gewende, word æfter cwæð:
horse turned, word after spoke:
 ‘Mæl is mē tō fēran; Fæder alwalda
‘Time is for-me to travel; Father all-ruling
 mid ārstafum ēowic gehealde
with favors you may-keep
 siða gesunde! Ic tō sǣ wille,
of-journeys safe! I to sea will,
 wið wrāð werod wearde healdan.’
against hostile troop watch keep.’

V · WULFGAR

The Geats march up the stone-paved street in ringing mail, stack their shields against the wall of Heorot, and sit down on the benches. Wulfgar, Hrothgar's herald, asks where such proud strangers come from, and guesses that daring, not exile, has brought them. Beowulf names himself as Hygelac's table-companion and asks leave to tell his errand to the king. Wulfgar carries the request to Hrothgar and urges him not to refuse men who seem so worthy, above all their chief.

- 320 Stræt wæs stānfāh, stig wisode
Street was stone-paved, path guided
 gumum ætgædere. Gūðbyrne scān
the-men together. War-mail shone
 heard hondlocen, hringīren scīr
hard hand-locked, ring-iron bright
 song in searwum, þā hīe tō sele furðum
sang in armor, when they to hall just

in hyra gryregeatwum gangan cwōmon.

in their terror-gear going came.

Setton sāmēþe side scyldas,

Set sea-weary broad shields,

rondas regnhearde wið þæs recedes weal;

shields wondrously-hard against of-the building wall;

bugon þā tō bence, — byrnan hringdon,

turned then to bench, mail-coats rang,

gūðsearo gumena; gāras stōdon,

war-gear of-men; spears stood,

sāmanna searo samod ætgædere,

of-seamen gear all together,

æscholt ufan græg; wæs se irenþrēat

ash-wood above gray; was the iron-troop

wæpnum gewurþad. Ðā ðær wlonc hæleð

with-weapons honored. Then there proud hero

ōretmecgas æfter æþelum frægn:

combat-men about lineage asked:

‘Hwanon ferigeað gē fætte scyldas,

‘Whence bring you plated shields,

græge syrcan, ond grimhelmas,

gray mail-shirts, and masked-helmets,

heresceafta hēap? Ic eom Hrōðgāres

of-war-shafts heap? I am of-Hrothgar

ār ond ombiht. Ne seah ic elpēodige

herald and officer. Not saw I foreign

þus manige men mōdiglicran.

thus many men more-spirited.

Wen’ ic þæt gē for wlenco, nalles for wræcsiðum,

Expect I that you for daring, not-at-all for exile-journeys,

325

330

335

ac for higeprymmum Hrōðgār sōhton.'

but for mind-might Hrothgar sought.'

340 Him þā ellenrōf andswarode,

Him then the-courage-famed-one answered,

wlanc Wedera lēod, word æfter spræc

proud of-Weders prince, word after spoke

heard under helme: 'Wē synt Higelāces

hard under helmet: 'We are of-Hygelac

bēodgenēatas; Bēowulf is mīn nama.

table-companions; Beowulf is my name.

Wille ic āsecgan sunu Healfdenes,

Will I declare to-son of-Healfdene,

345 mǣrum þēodne mīn ārende,

to-famous prince my errand,

aldre þinum, gif hē ūs geunnan wile,

to-chief thy, if he us grant will,

þæt wē hine swā gōdne grētan mōton.'

that we him so good greet may.'

Wulfgār mǣpelode — þæt wæs Wendla lēod,

Wulfgar spoke that was of-Vandals prince,

wæs his mōdsefa manegum gecyðed,

was his character to-many known,

350 wīg ond wisdōm—: 'Ic þæs wine Deniga,

valor and wisdom: 'I about-this friend of-Danes,

frēan Scildinga frinan wille,

lord of-Scyldings ask will,

bēaga bryttan, swā þū bēna eart,

of-rings giver, as thou petitioner art,

þēoden mǣrne ymb þinne sið,

prince famous about thy journey,

ond þē þā andsware ædre gecyðan,
and thee the answer quickly make-known,

ðē mē se gōða āgifan þenceð.
which me the good-one give intends.'

355

Hwearf þā hrædlice þær Hrōðgār sæt
Turned then quickly where Hrothgar sat

eald ond anhār mid his eorla gedriht;
old and very-gray with his of-warriors band;

ēode ellenrōf, þæt hē for eaxlum gestōd
went the-courage-famed-one, that he before shoulders stood

Deniga frēan; cūpe hē duguðe þēaw.
of-Danes of-lord; knew he of-veterans custom.

Wulfgār maðelode tō his winedrihtne:
Wulfgar spoke to his friend-lord:

360

‘Hēr syndon geferede, feorran cumene
‘Here are brought, from-afar come

ofer geofenes begang Gēata lēode;
over of-ocean expanse of-Geats people;

þone yldestan ðretmecgas
the eldest combat-men

Bēowulf nemnað. Hȳ bēnan synt,
Beowulf call. They petitioners are,

þæt hīe, þēoden mīn, wið þē mōton
that they, prince my, with thee may

365

wordum wrixlan; nō ðū him wearne getēoh
with-words exchange; not thou them refusal give

ðinra gegncwida, glædman Hrōðgār!
of-thy replies, gracious Hrothgar!

Hȳ on wīggetāwum wyrðe þinceað
They in war-gear worthy seem

eorla geæhtlan; hūru se aldor dēah,
of-warriors esteem; indeed the chief is-good,
 370 sē þā m heaðorincum hider wīsadē.
who the battle-warriors hither led.

VI · BEOWULF'S REQUEST

Hrothgar recalls knowing Beowulf as a boy. His father was Ecgtheow, to whom Hrethel gave his only daughter, and seafarers report that Beowulf's hand-grip holds the strength of thirty men. Believing that God has sent him against Grendel, Hrothgar bids the Geats enter. Beowulf tells how he bound five, destroyed a race of giants, and slew sea-monsters by night; he asks leave to cleanse Heorot with his own band. Since Grendel scorns weapons, Beowulf will fight with his grip alone; if he falls, his mail-coat, Weland's work, is to go to Hygelac.

Hrōðgār mæpelode, helm Scyldinga:
Hrothgar spoke, protector of-Scyldings:
 'Ic hine cūðe cnihtwesende;
I him knew being-a-boy;
 wæs his ealdfæder Ecgbēo hāten,
was his old-father Ecgtheow called,
 ðā m tō hām forgeaf Hrēpel Gēata
to-whom to home gave Hrethel of-Geats
 375 āngan dohtor; is his eafora nū
only daughter; is his son now
 heard hēr cumen, sōhte holdne wine.
bold here come, has-sought loyal friend.
 Ðonne sægdon þæt sǣliþende,
Moreover said that seafarers,
 þā ðe gifsceattas Gēata fyredon
those who gift-treasures of-Geats carried

þyder tō þance, þæt hē þritiges
thither as thanks, that he of-thirty
 manna mægen-cræft on his mundgripe 380
of-men might-strength in his hand-grip
 heaþorōf hæbbe. Hine hālig God
battle-famed has. Him holy God
 for ārstafum ūs onsende,
out-of kindness to-us has-sent,
 tō West-Denum, þæs ic wēn hæbbe,
to West-Danes, of-that I hope have,
 wið Grendles gryre. Ic þæm gōðan sceal
against of-Grendel terror. I to-the good-one shall
 for his mōðþræce mādmas bēodan. 385
for his daring treasures offer.
 Bēo ðū on ofeste, hāt in gân
Be thou in haste, command in to-go
 sēon sibbedriht samod ætgædere;
to-see kin-band all together;
 gesaga him ēac wordum, þæt hie sint wilcuman
say to-them also with-words, that they are welcome
 Deniga lēodum.' [Þā wið duru healle
of-Danes to-people.' Then to door of-hall
 Wulfgār ēode,] word inne ābēad: 390
Wulfgar went, word from-within announced:
 'Ēow hēt secgan sigedrihten mīn,
'You commanded to-tell victory-lord my,
 aldor Ēast-Dena, þæt hē ēower æþelu can,
chief of-East-Danes, that he your lineage knows,
 ond gē him syndon ofer sǣwylmas
and you to-him are over sea-surges

heardhigende hider wilcuman.

brave-minded hither welcome.

395 Nū gē mōton gangan in ēowrum gūðsearwum,

Now you may go in your war-gear,

under heregrīman Hrōðgār gesēon;

under war-masks Hrothgar see;

lātað hildebord hēr onbīdan,

let battle-boards here wait,

wudu wælsceftas worda gepinges.’

wood slaughter-shafts of-words for-outcome.’

Ārās þā se rica, ymb hine rinc manig,

Arose then the mighty-one, around him warrior many,

400 þrȳðlic þegna hēap; sume þær bidon,

strong of-thanes throng; some there waited,

heaðorēaf hēoldon, swā him se hearda bebēad.

war-gear guarded, as them the bold-one bade.

Snyredon ætsomne — secg wisode —

Hurried together man guided

under Heorotes hrōf; [heaþorinc ēode,]

under of-Heorot roof; battle-warrior went,

heard under helme, þæt hē on heo[r]ðe gestōd.

hard under helmet, that he at hearth stood.

405 Bēowulf maðelode — on him byrne scān,

Beowulf spoke on him mail-coat shone,

searonet seowed smiþes orþancum—:

armor-net sewn of-smith by-skills:

‘Wæs þū, Hrōðgār, hāl! Ic eom Higelāces

‘Be thou, Hrothgar, hale! I am of-Hygelac

mæg ond magoðegn; hæbbe ic mārða fela

kinsman and young-thane; have I of-glorious-deeds many

ongunnen on geogoþe. Mē wearð Grendles þing
undertaken in youth. To-me became of-Grendel affair

on mīnre ēþeltyrf undyrne cūð;
on my native-soil openly known;

secgað sæliðend, þæt þæs sele stande,
say seafarers, that this hall stands,

reced sēlesta rinca gehwylcum
building best of-warriors for-each

idel ond unnyt, siððan æfenlēoht
empty and useless, after evening-light

under heofenes haðor beholen weorþeð.
under of-beaven vault hidden becomes.

Ða mē þæt gelærdon lēode mīne,
Then me that advised people my,

þā sēlestan, snotere ceorlas,
the best, wise men,

þeoden Hrōðgār, þæt ic þē sōhte,
prince Hrothgar, that I thee should-seek,

forþan hie mægenes cræft mīn[n]e cūþon;
because they of-might strength my knew;

selfe ofersāwon, ðā ic of searwum cwōm,
themselves looked-on, when I from snares came,

fāh from fēondum, þār ic fife geband,
stained from foes, where I five bound,

ȳðde eotena cyn, ond on ȳðum slōg
destroyed of-giants race, and on waves slew

niceras nihtes, nearoþearfe drēah,
water-monsters by-night, narrow-need endured,

wræc Wedera nīð — wēan āhsodon—,
avenged of-Weders hostility woe they-asked-for,

410

415

420

- forgrand gramum; ond nū wið Grendel sceal,
ground-down the-hostile-ones; and now against Grendel (I)-shall,
- 425 wið þām āglæcan āna gehēgan
against the monster alone bold
- ðing wið þyrse. Ic þē nū ðā,
meeting with giant. I thee now then,
- brego Beorht-Dena, biddan wille,
prince of-Bright-Danes, ask will,
- eodor Scyldinga, ānre bēne,
protector of-Scyldings, of-one request,
- þæt ðū mē ne forwyrne, wigendra hlēo,
that thou me not refuse, of-warriors shelter,
- 430 frēowine folca, nū ic þus feorran cōm,
noble-friend of-peoples, now I thus from-afar have-come,
- þæt ic mōte āna [ond] mīnra eorla gedryht,
that I may alone and of-my warriors band,
- þes hearda hēap, Heorot fælsian.
this hardy throng, Heorot cleanse.
- Hæbbe ic ēac geāhsod, þæt se æglæca
Have I also learned, that the monster
- for his wonhȳdum wāpna ne recceð;
for his recklessness of-weapons not cares;
- 435 ic þæt þonne forhicge, swā mē Higelāc sie,
I that then scorn, so to-me Hygelac may-be,
- mīn mondrihten mōdes bliðe,
my liege-lord of-heart glad,
- þæt ic sweord bere oþðe sidne scyld,
that I sword bear or broad shield,
- geolorand tō gūþe, ac ic mid grāpe sceal
yellow-shield to battle, but I with grip shall

fōn wið fēonde ond ymb feorh sacan,

grapple with fiend and for life fight,

lāð wið lāpum; ðær gelyfan sceal

foe with foe; there trust shall

Dryhtnes dōme sē þe hine dēað nimeð.

of-Lord judgment he who him death takes.

Wēn' ic þæt hē wille, gif hē wealdan mōt,

Expect I that he will, if he prevail may,

in þām gūðsele Gēotena lēode

in the war-ball of-Geats people

etan unforhte, swā hē oft dyde,

eat unafraid, as he often did,

māgenhrēð manna. Nā þū minne þearft

might-glory of-men. Not thou my need

hafalan hȳdan, ac hē mē habban wile

hide hide, but he me have will

d[r]ēore fāhne, gif mec dēað nimeð;

with-gore stained, if me death takes;

byrēð blōdig wæl, byrgean þenceð,

bears bloody corpse, taste intends,

eteð āngenga unmurnlice,

eats lone-goer unmourningly,

mearcað mōrhōpu; nō ðū ymb mīnes ne þearft

marks moor-retreats; not thou about my — need

lices feorme leng sorgian.

of-body sustenance longer worry.

Onsend Higelāce, gif mec hild nime,

Send to-Hygelac, if me battle take,

beaduscrūda betst, þæt mīne brēost wereð,

of-war-garments best, that my breast protects,

440

445

450

hrægla sēlest; þæt is Hrædla lāf,
of-garments best; that is of-Hrethel heirloom,

455 Welandes geweorc. Gæð ā wyrd swā hio scel!
of-Weland work. Goes ever fate as it must!

VII · HROTHGAR'S WELCOME

Hrothgar answers that Beowulf has come out of obligation and kindness: when Ecgtheow slew Heatholaf and the Weders could not shelter him, Hrothgar, newly king after his brother Heregar's death, settled that feud with treasure. It grieves him to tell how Grendel has thinned his hall-troop; drunken warriors who vowed to await the monster lay dead each morning in a blood-drenched hall. He bids Beowulf sit to the feast. A bench is cleared for the Geats, a thane pours bright drink, and a poet sings in Heorot.

Hrōðgār mæpelode, helm Scyldinga:
Hrothgar spoke, protector of-Scyldings:

‘For [g]ewy[r]htum þū, wine mīn Bēowulf,
‘For obligations thou, friend my Beowulf,

ond for ārstafum ūsic sōhtest.
and for kindness us hast-sought.

Geslōh þin fæder fæhðe mæste;
Struck thy father feud greatest;

460 wearp hē Heapolāfe tō handbonan
became he to-Heatholaf as hand-slayer

mid Wilfingum; ðā hine Wedera cyn
among Wylfings; then him of-Weders race

for herebrōgan habban ne mihte.
for war-terror keep not could.

Þanon hē gesōhte Sūð-Dena folc
Thence he sought of-South-Danes folk

ofer yðā gewēalc, Ār-Scyldinga;
over of-waves rolling, of-Honor-Scyldings;

ðā ic furþum wēold folce Deniga
when I first ruled folk of-Danes

ond on geogoðe hēold ginne rīce,
and in youth held spacious kingdom,

hordburh hæleþa; ðā wæs Heregār dēad,
hoard-city of-heroes; then was Heregar dead,

mīn yldra mæg unlifigende,
my elder kinsman not-living,

bearn Healfdenes; sē wæs betera ðonne ic!
son of-Healfdene; he was better than I!

Siððan þā fæhðe fēo þingode;
Afterward the feud with-money I-settled;

sende ic Wylfingum ofer wāteres hrycg
sent I to-Wylfings over of-water back

ealde mādmas; hē mē āþas swōr.
old treasures; he to-me oaths swore.

Sorh is mē tō secgan on sefan mīnum
Sorrow is to-me to say in mind my

gumena ængum, hwæt mē Grendel hafað
of-men to-any, what to-me Grendel has

hȳnðo on Heorote mid his hetepancum,
humiliation in Heorot with his hate-thoughts,

færniða gefremed; is mīn fletwerod,
of-sudden-hostilities done; is my hall-troop,

wighēap gewanod; hie wyrd forswēop
war-band diminished; them fate swept-away

on Grendles gryre. God ēaþe mæg
into of-Grendel terror. God easily can

465

470

475

- þone dolsceaðan dæda getwæfan!
the mad-ravager from-deeds separate!
- 480 Ful oft gebēotedon bēore druncne
Full often boasted with-beer drunk
- ofer ealowæge ðretmecgas,
over ale-cup combat-men,
- þæt hie in bēorsele bidan woldon
that they in beer-hall await would
- Grendles gūpe mid gryrum ecga.
of-Grendel attack with terrors of-edges.
- Ðonne wæs þeos medoheal on morgentid,
Then was this mead-hall at morning-time,
- 485 drihtsele drēorfāh, þonne dæg lihte,
lordly-hall gore-stained, when day shone,
- eal bencpelu blōde bestȳmed,
all bench-boards with-blood drenched,
- heall heorudrēore; āhte ic holdra þȳ lās,
hall with-sword-gore; owned I of-loyal-ones by-that less,
- dēorre duguðe, þē þā dēað fornam.
of-dear veterans, since those death took.
- Site nū tō symle ond onsæl meoto,
Sit now to feast and unbind thoughts,
- 490 sigehrēð secgum, swā þin sefa hwette.
victory-glory to-men, as thy mind may-urge.
- Þā wæs Gēatmæcgum geador ætsomne
Then was for-Geat-men together all-together
- on bēorsele benc gerȳmed;
in beer-hall bench cleared;
- þær swiðferhpe sittan ēodon,
there strong-hearted-ones to-sit went,

þrȳðum dealle. Þegn nytte behēold,

in-strength proud. Thane duty attended,

sē þe on handa bær hroden ealowāge,

he who in hand bore adorned ale-cup,

scencte scīr wered. Scop hwilum sang

poured bright drink. Poet at-times sang

hādor on Heorote. Þær wæs hāleða drēam,

clear in Heorot. There was of-heroes joy,

duguð unlȳtel Dena ond Wedera.

veterans not-small of-Danes and of-Weders.

495

VIII · UNFERTH

Unferth, Ecglaf's son, who sits at Hrothgar's feet, resents any man winning more glory than himself and taunts Beowulf with his swimming contest against Breca. For seven nights they toiled in the winter sea, he says, and Breca, the stronger, won and kept his boast; Beowulf will fare worse if he waits a night for Grendel. Beowulf answers that Unferth, drunk with beer, has said a great deal about Breca, and that he himself had more strength in the sea than any man. As boys the two swam for five nights, holding naked swords against whales, until a storm parted them. When a sea-beast dragged Beowulf to the bottom, his mail held and his sword slew it.

Unferð mapelode, Ecglāfes bearn,

Unferth spoke, of-Ecglaf son,

þē æt fōtum sæt frēan Scyldinga,

who at feet sat of-lord of-Scyldings,

onband beadurūne — wæs him Bēowulfes sīð,

unbound battle-secret was to-him of-Beowulf venture,

mōdges merefaran, micel æþpunca,

of-the-brave of-seafarer, great vexation,

500

- forþon þe hē ne ūþe, þæt ænig oðer man
because that he not granted, that any other man
- æfre mārða þon mā middangeardes
ever of-glories the more of-middle-earth
- 505 gehēde under heofenum þonne hē sylfa—:
should-obtain under heavens than he himself;
- ‘Eart þū sē Bēowulf, sē þe wið Breca wunne,
‘Art thou that Beowulf, he who against Breca strove,
- on sīdne sǣ ymb sund flite,
on broad sea about swimming contended,
- ðær git for wlence wada cunnedon
where you-two for pride waters explored
- ond for dolgilpe on dēop wæter
and for foolish-boast into deep water
- 510 aldrum nēþdon? Nē inc ænig mon,
lives risked? Nor you-two any man,
- nē lēof nē lāð, belēan mihte
nor friend nor foe, dissuade could
- sorhfullne sið, þā git on sund rēon;
from-sorrowful venture, when you-two on sea rowed;
- þær git ēagorstrēam earmum þehton,
there you-two sea-stream with-arms covered,
- māton merestrāta, mundum brugdon,
measured sea-streets, with-bands wove,
- 515 glidon ofer gārsecg; geofon yþum wēol,
glided over ocean; sea with-waves surged,
- wintrys wylm[um]. Git on wāteres æht
of-winter with-surges. You-two in of-water power
- seofon niht swuncon; hē þē æt sunde oferflāt,
seven nights toiled; he thee at swimming out-swam,

hæfde mære mægen. Þā hine on morgentīd
had more strength. Then him at morning-time

on Heaþo-Rāmas holm ūp ætbær;
onto Heatho-Reams sea up bore;

ðonon hē gesōhte swāsne ēþel, 520
thence he sought dear homeland,

lēof his lēodum, lond Brondinga,
dear to-his people, land of-Brondings,

freoðoburh fægere, þār hē folc āhte,
peace-stronghold fair, where he folk owned,

burh ond bēagas. Bēot eal wið þē
stronghold and rings. Vow all against thee

sunu Bēanstānes sōðe gelāste.
son of-Beanstan truly fulfilled.

Donne wēne ic tō þē wyrstan geþingea, 525
Therefore expect I from thee worse outcomes,

ðeah þū heaðorāsa gehwær dohte,
though thou in-battle-rushes everywhere were-good,

grimre gūðe, gif þū Grendles dearest
in-grim war, if thou for-Grendel darest

nihtlongne fyrst nēan bidan.'
night-long space near wait.'

Bēowulf mæpelode, bearn Ecgþēowes:
Beowulf spoke, son of-Ecgtheow:

'Hwæt, þū worn fela, wine mīn Unferð, 530
'Lo, thou great many, friend my Unferth,

bēore druncen ymb Breca sprāce,
with-beer drunk about Breca bast-spoken,

sægdest from his sīðe! Sōð ic talige,
bast-said of his venture! Truth I claim,

þæt ic merestrengo māran āhte,
that I sea-strength more had,
 earfeþo on yþum, ðonne ænig oþer man.
hardships on waves, than any other man.

535 Wit þæt gecwædon cnihtwesende
We-two that agreed being-boys
 ond gebēotedon — wæron bēgen þā git
and vowed were both then still
 on geogoðfeore — þæt wit on gārsecg ūt
in youth-life that we-two on ocean out
 aldrum nēðdon, ond þæt geæfndon swā.
lives would-risk, and that performed so.

Hæfdon swurd nacod, þā wit on sund rêon,
Had sword naked, when we-two on sea rowed,

540 heard on handa; wit unc wið hronfixas
hard in hand; we-two us-two against whale-fishes
 werian þōhton. Nō hē wiht fram mē
defend thought. Not he at-all from me

flōdyþum feor flēotan meahte,
on-flood-waves far float could,
 hrapor on holme, nō ic fram him wolde.
faster on sea, not I from him would.

Ðā wit ætsomne on sǣ wæron
Then we-two together on sea were

545 fif nihta fyrst, oþ þæt unc flōd tōdrāf,
five of-nights space, until that us-two flood drove-apart,
 wado weallende, wedera cealdost,
waters surging, of-weatheres coldest,
 nīpende niht, ond norþanwind
darkening night, and north-wind

heaðogrim ondhwearf; hrēo wæron ŷpa.

battle-grim turned-against; rough were waves.

Wæs merefixa mōd onhrēred;

Was of-sea-fishes heart stirred-up;

þær mē wið lāðum licsyrce mīn

there to-me against foes body-mail my

550

heard hondlocen helpe gefremede,

hard hand-locked help gave,

beadohrægl brōden, on brēostum læg

battle-garment woven, on breast lay

golde gegyrwed. Mē tō grunde tēah

with-gold adorned. Me to bottom dragged

fāh fēondscaða, fæste hæfde

hostile foe-ravager, fast held

grim on grāpe; hwæpre mē gyfeþe wearð,

grim in grip; yet to-me granted was,

555

þæt ic āglæcan orde geræhte,

that I monster with-point reached,

hildebille; heaþoræs fornam

with-battle-sword; battle-rush carried-off

mihtig meredēor þurh mīne hand.

mighty sea-beast through my hand.

Beowulf tells how he slew nine sea-monsters before dawn and the sea carried him to the land of the Finns; neither Breca nor Unferth ever did such a deed. Unferth killed his own brothers and will suffer for it in hell. Grendel would never have done such harm in Heorot if Unferth were as fierce as he claims, but Beowulf will soon show the monster the strength of the Geats. Hrothgar rejoices, and Queen Wealhtheow bears the cup around the hall; Beowulf vows to her to do the Danes' will or die. At nightfall Hrothgar entrusts Heorot to Beowulf, as he has never entrusted it to anyone.

Swā mec gelōme lāðgetēonan

So me frequently hateful-attackers

560 þrēatedon þearle. Ic him þēnode

pressed hard. I them served

dēoran sweorde, swā hit gedēfe wæs.

with-dear sword, as it fitting was.

Næs hie ðære fylle gefēan hæfdon,

Not-at-all they of-the feast joy bad,

mānfordædlan, þæt hie mē þēgon,

wicked-destroyers, that they me devoured,

symbel ymbsæton sægrunde nēah;

feast sat-around sea-bottom near;

565 ac on mergenne mēcum wunde

but in morning by-swords wounded

be yðlāfe uppe lāgon,

by wave-leavings up lay,

sweo[r]dum āswefede, þæt syðþan nā

by-swords put-to-sleep, so-that afterward never

ymb brontne ford brimliðende

around steep passage seafarers

lāde ne letton. Lēoht ēastan cōm,
voyage — hindered. Light from-east came,
 beorht bēacen Godes, brimu swaþredon, 570
bright beacon of-God, seas subsided,
 þæt ic sǣnæssas gesēon mihte,
that I headlands see could,
 windige weallas. Wyrð oft neredð
windy walls. Fate often saves
 unfǣgne eorl, þonne his ellen dēah!
undoomed warrior, when his courage avails!
 Hwæpere mē gesǣlde, þæt ic mid sweorde ofslōh
However to-me befell, that I with sword slew
 niceras nigene. Nō ic on niht gefrægn 575
water-monsters nine. Not I by night have-heard-of
 under heofones hwealf heardran feohtan,
under of-beaven vault harder fight,
 nē on ēgstrēamum earmran mannon;
nor on sea-streams more-wretched man;
 hwæpere ic fāra feng fēore gedigde
yet I of-foes grasp with-life survived
 sīpes wērig. Ðā mec sǣ oþbær,
of-venture weary. Then me sea bore-away,
 flōd æfter faroðe on Finna land, 580
flood with current onto of-Finns land,
 wadu weallendu. Nō ic wiht fram þē
waters surging. Not I anything of thee
 swylcra searoniða secgan hýrde,
of-such cunning-fights tell beard,
 billa brōgan. Breca nǣfre gīt
of-swords terror. Breca never yet

- æt heaðolāce, nē gehwæper incer,
at battle-play, nor either of-you-two,
- 585 swā deorlice dæd gefremede
so boldly deed performed
- fāgum sweordum — nō ic þæs [fela] gylpe—,
with-shining swords not I of-that much boast,
- þēah ðū þinum brōðrum tō banan wurde,
though thou to-thy brothers as slayer became,
- hēafodmægum; þæs þū in helle scealt
to-close-kinsmen; for-that thou in hell shalt
- werhðo drēogan, þēah þin wit duge.
damnation suffer, though thy wit be-good.
- 590 Secge ic þē tō sōðe, sunu Ecglāfes,
Say I to-thee in truth, son of-Ecglaf,
- þæt nāfre Gre[n]del swā fela gryra gefremede,
that never Grendel so many of-terrors would-have-performed,
- atol æglæca ealdre þinum,
terrible monster to-lord thy,
- hȳnðo on Heorote, gif þin hige wære,
humiliation in Heorot, if thy mind were,
- sefa swā searogrim, swā þū self talast;
mind so battle-fierce, as thou thyself claimest;
- 595 ac hē hafað onfunden, þæt hē þā fāhðe ne þearf,
but he has found, that he the feud not needs,
- atole ecgþræce ēower lēode
terrible sword-storm of-your people
- swiðe onsittan, Sige-Scyldinga;
greatly dread, of-Victory-Scyldings;
- nymeð nȳdbāde, nānegum ārað
takes forced-tribute, to-none shows-mercy

lēode Deniga, ac hē lust wigeð,
of-people of-Danes, but he pleasure takes,
 swefeð ond sendeþ, secce ne wēneþ
puts-to-sleep and sends-off, fight not expects
 tō Gār-Denum. Ac ic him Gēata sceal
from Spear-Danes. But I him of-Geats shall
 eafodð ond ellen ungeāra nū,
strength and courage soon now,
 gūpe gebēodan. Gāþ eft sē þe mōt
in-war offer. Goes again he who may
 tō medo mōdig, siþþan morgenlēoht
to mead brave, when morning-light
 ofer ylða bearn oþres dōgores,
over of-men children of-next day,
 sunne sweglwered sūþan scineð!
sun heaven-clad from-south shines!

600

605

Þā wæs on sǣlum sinceð brytta
Then was in joys of-treasure giver
 gamolfeax ond gūðrōf; gēoce gelyfde
gray-haired and battle-famed; help believed-in
 brego Beorht-Dena; gehyrde on Bēowulfe
prince of-Bright-Danes; heard in Beowulf
 folces hyrde fæstrædne gepōht.
of-people guardian steadfast resolve.

610

Ðær wæs hælepa hleahtor, hlyn swynsode,
There was of-heroes laughter, din resounded,
 word wæron wynsume. Eode Wealhþeow forð,
words were winsome. Went Wealhtheow forth,
 cwēn Hrōðgāres cynna gemyndig,
queen of-Hrothgar of-courtesies mindful,

- grētte goldhroden guman on healle,
greeted gold-adorned men in hall,
- 615 ond þā frēolic wif ful gesealde
and then noble woman cup gave
- ærest Ēast-Dena ēpelwearde,
first of-East-Danes to-homeland-guardian,
- bæd hine bliðne æt þære bēorþege,
bade him glad at the beer-drinking,
- lēodum lēofne; hē on lust geþeah
to-people dear; he in pleasure partook-of
- symbel ond seful, sigerōf kyning.
feast and hall-cup, victory-famed king.
- 620 Ymbēode þā ides Helminga
Went-around then lady of-Helmings
- duguþe ond geogoþe dæl æghwylcne,
of-veterans and of-youths part each,
- sincfato sealde, oþ þæt sāl ālamp,
treasure-cups gave, until that time came,
- þæt hio Bēowulfe, bēaghroden cwēn
that she to-Beowulf, ring-adorned queen
- mōde gepungen medoful ætbær;
in-mind excellent mead-cup brought;
- 625 grētte Gēata lēod, Gode þancode
greeted of-Geats prince, God thanked
- wisfæst wordum þæs ðe hire se willa gelamp,
wise with-words for-that that to-her the wish befell,
- þæt hēo on ænigne eorl gelyfde
that she in any warrior could-trust
- fyrena frōfre. Hē þæt ful geþeah,
of-crimes comfort. He that cup took,

wælrēow wiga æt Wealhþēon,

slaughter-fierce warrior from Wealtheow,

ond þā gyddode gūpe gefȳsed;

and then spoke-formally for-battle eager;

Bēowulf mabelode, bearn Ecgþēowes:

Beowulf spoke, son of-Ecgtheow:

‘Ic þæt hogode, þā ic on holm gestāh,

I that resolved, when I onto sea embarked,

sābāt gesæt mid mīnra secga gedriht,

sea-boat sat-in with of-my men band,

þæt ic ānunga ēowra lēoda

that I entirely of-your of-people

willan geworhte, oþðe on wæl crunge

will would-work, or in slaughter would-fall

fēondgrāpum fæst. Ic gefremman sceal

in-fiend-grips fast. I perform shall

eorlic ellen, oþðe endedæg

noble courage, or end-day

on þisse meoduhealle mīnne gebidan!’

in this mead-hall my await!’

Ðām wife þā word wēl licodon,

To-the woman those words well pleased,

gilpcwide Gēates; ēode goldhroden

boast-speech of-Geat; went gold-adorned

frēolicu folccwēn tō hire frēan sittan.

noble folk-queen to her lord to-sit.

Þā wæs eft swā ār inne on healle

Then was again as before inside in hall

þrȳðword sprecen, ðēod on sǣlum,

mighty-words spoken, people in joys,

630

635

640

sigefolca swēg, oþ þæt semninga
of-victory-peoples sound, until that suddenly

645 sunu Healfdenes sēcean wolde
son of-Healfdene seek wished

æfenræste; wiste þām āhlæcan
evening-rest; knew by-the monster

tō þām hēahsele hilde geþinged,
against the high-hall battle appointed,

siððan hie sunnan lēoht gesēon meah-ton,
after they of-sun light see could,

oþðe nīpende niht ofer ealle,
or darkening night over all,

650 scaduhelma gesceapu scriðan cwōman
of-shadow-belms shapes gliding came

wan under wolcnum. Werod eall ārās.
dark under skies. Company all arose.

[Ge]grētte þā guma oþerne,
Greeted then man other,

Hrōðgār Bēowulf, ond him hæl ābēad,
Hrothgar Beowulf, and him luck wished,

wīnarnes geweald, ond þæt word ācwæð:
of-wine-hall command, and that word spoke:

655 ‘Næfre ic ænegum men ār ālyfde,
‘Never I to-any man before entrusted,

siþðan ic hond ond rond hebban mihte,
since I hand and shield raise could,

ðryþærn Dena būton þē nū ðā.
mighty-hall of-Danes except thee now then.

Hafa nū ond geheald hūsa sēlest,
Have now and hold of-houses best,

gemyne mǣrþo, mægenellen cȳð,
remember glory, mighty-courage show,
waca wið wrāþum! Ne bið þē wilna gād,
watch against foe! Not will-be to-thee of-desires lack,
gif þū þæt ellenweorc aldre gedigest.
if thou that courage-work with-life survivest.

660

X • THE WATCH IN HEOROT

Hrothgar leaves the hall for Wealhtheow's bed; the King of glory has set a hall-guard against Grendel, and Beowulf trusts in his own strength and God's favor. He strips off his mail and helmet and hands his sword to a thane. Counting himself no weaker than Grendel, who knows nothing of swordplay, he vows to fight without a weapon; holy God will assign the glory. The Geats lie down, none of them expecting to see home again, but God has granted them victory through one man's strength. Grendel comes gliding through the dark, and all sleep but one.

Ða him Hrōþgār gewāt mid his hælepa gedryht,
Then himself Hrothgar went with his of-heroes band,
eodur Scyldinga ūt of healle;
protector of-Scyldings out of hall;
wolde wigfruma Wealhþēo sēcan,
wished war-chief Wealhtheow seek,
cwēn tō gebeddan. Hæfde Kyningwuldor
queen as bedfellow. Had King-of-glory
Grendle tōgēanes, swā guman gefrungon,
Grendel against, as men heard-of,
seleweard āseted; sundornytte behēold
hall-guard appointed; special-duty (he)-kept
ymb aldor Dena, eotonweard' ābēad.
around prince of-Danes, giant-watch offered.

665

- Hūru Gēata lēod georne trūwode
Indeed of-Geats prince firmly trusted
- 670 mōdgan mægnes, Metodes hylde. —
bold might, of-Ordainer favor.
- Ðā hē him of dyde isernbyrnan,
Then he himself off put iron-mail,
- helm of hafelan, sealde his hyrsted sweord,
helmet from head, gave his adorned sword,
- īrena cyst ombihtþegne,
of-irons choicest to-attendant-thane,
- ond gehealdan hēt hildegeatwe.
and to-guard ordered battle-gear.
- 675 Gespræc þā se gōda gylpworda sum,
Spoke then the good-one of-boast-words one,
- Bēowulf Gēata, ær hē on bed stige:
Beowulf of-Geats, before he into bed climbed:
- ‘Nō ic mē an herewæsmun hnāgran talige
‘Not I myself in war-strength poorer count
- gūþgeweorca, þonne Grendel hine;
of-war-deeds, than Grendel himself;
- forþan ic hine sweorde swebban nelle,
therefore I him with-sword put-to-sleep will-not,
- 680 aldre benēotan, þēah ic eal mæge;
of-life deprive, though I well may;
- nāt hē þāra gōda, þæt hē mē ongēan slēa,
knows-not he of-those good-things, that he me back strike,
- rand gehēawe, þēah ðe hē rōf sīe
shield hew, though that he famous be
- niþgeweorca; ac wit on niht sculon
of-hostile-deeds; but we-two in night shall

secge ofersittan, gif hē gesēcean dear

sword forgo, if he seek dare

wig ofer wāpen, ond sipðan witiġ God

war without weapon, and then wise God

on swā hwæþere hond hālig Dryhten

on so whichever hand holy Lord

mārðo dēme, swā him gemet þince.’

glory may-assign, as to-him fitting seems.’

Hylde hine þā heapodēor, hlēorbolster onfēng

Lay-down himself then battle-brave-one, cheek-bolster received

eorles andwlitan, ond hine ymb monig

of-warrior face, and him around many

snellic sārinc selereste gebēah.

bold sea-warrior to-ball-rest bent.

Nænig heora þōhte, þæt hē þanon scolde

None of-them thought, that he thence should

eft eardlufan æfre gesēcean,

again home-love ever seek,

folc oþðe frēoburh, þār hē āfēded wæs;

people or noble-city, where he raised was;

ac hie hæfdon gefrūnen, þæt hie ær tō fela micles

but they had heard, that them before too many by-much

in þām winsele wældēað fornam,

in the wine-hall slaughter-death carried-off,

Denigea lēode. Ac him Dryhten forgeaf

of-Danes people. But to-them Lord gave

wigspēda gewiofu, Wedera leodum,

of-war-successes weavings, of-Weders to-people,

frōfor ond fultum, þæt hie fēond heora

comfort and help, that they fiend their

685

690

695

- ðurh ānes cræft ealle ofercōmon,
through of-one strength all overcame,
 700 selfes mihtum. Sōð is gecȳþed,
own by-powers. Truth is made-known,
 þæt mihtig God manna cynnes
that mighty God of-men race
 wēold wīdeferð. Cōm on wanre niht
has-ruled forever. Came in dark night
 scriðan sceadugenga. Scēotend swāfon,
gliding shadow-walker. Warriors slept,
 þā þæt hornrecd healdan scoldon,
who that horn-hall guard had-to,
 705 ealle būton ānum. Þæt wæs yldum cūþ,
all except one. That was to-men known,
 þæt hie ne mōste, þā Metod nolde,
that them not might, when Ordainer would-not,
 se s[c]ynscaþa under sceadu bregdan; —
the demon-foe under shadow drag;
 ac hē wæccende wrāþum on andan
but he watching to-foe in anger
 bād bolgenmōd beadwa gepinges.
awaited enraged of-battles outcome.

Grendel comes from the moor under the mist, bearing God's anger, and bursts open the iron-bound door of Heorot, a light like flame in his eyes. Seeing the sleeping warriors he laughs, seizes one Geat, and devours him, feet and hands. He reaches next for Beowulf, who grips his arm, and at once the monster knows he has never met a stronger hand-grip and longs to flee to his fen. They wrestle until the hall resounds and the mead-benches are wrenched from the floor, and the Danes hear God's adversary wailing his song of defeat.

Ðā cōm of mōre under misthleopum

710

Then came from moor under mist-slopes

Grendel gongan, Godes yrre bær;

Grendel walking, of-God anger bore;

mynte se mānscaða manna cynnes

intended the evil-ravager of-men race

sumne besyrwan in sele þām hēan.

one ensnare in hall the high.

Wōd under wolcnum tō þæs þe hē winreced,

Advanced under skies to where that he wine-ball,

goldsele gumena gearwost wisse

715

gold-ball of-men most-surely knew

fættum fāhne. Ne wæs þæt forma sið,

with-gold-plates adorned. Not was that first time,

þæt hē Hrōþgāres hām gesōhte;

that he of-Hrothgar home sought;

nāfre hē on aldordagum ār nē siþðan

never he in life-days before nor since

heardran hāle, healðegnas fand!

with-harder luck, hall-thanes found!

- 720 Cōm þā tō recede rinc sīðian
Came then to ball warrior journeying
 drēamum bedæled. Duru sōna onarn
of-joys deprived. Door at-once gave-way
 fyrbendum fæst, syþðan hē hire folmum (æthr)ān;
with-fire-bands fast, when he it with-bands touched;
 onbrād þā bealohydg, ðā (hē ge)bolgen wæs,
tore-open then evil-minded, when he enraged was,
 recedes mūþan. Raþe æfter þon
of-ball mouth. Quickly after that
- 725 on fāgne flōr fēond treddode,
on patterned floor fiend trod,
 ēode yrremōd; him of ēagum stōd
went angry-minded; from-him out-of eyes stood
 ligge gelicost lēoht unfæger.
to-flame likest light unlovely.
- Geseah hē in recede rinca manige,
Saw he in hall of-warriors many,
 swefan sibbegedriht samod ætgædere,
sleeping kin-band all together,
- 730 magorinca hēap. Þā his mōd āhlōg;
of-young-warriors troop. Then his heart laughed;
 mynte þæt hē gedælde, ār þon dæg cwōme,
intended that he would-sever, before that day came,
 atol āglæca ānra gehwylces
terrible monster of-ones of-each
 lif wið lice, þā him ālumpen wæs
life from body, now to-him befallen was
 wistfylla wēn. Ne wæs þæt wyrð þā gēn,
of-feast-fill hope. Not was that fate then still,

þæt hē mā mōste manna cynnes
that he more might of-men race
 ðicgean ofer þā niht. Þrȳðswȳð behēold
devour beyond that night. Mighty-strong watched
 mæg Higelāces, hū se mānscaða
kinsman of-Hygelac, how the evil-ravager
 under færgripum gefaran wolde.
with sudden-grips proceed would.
 Nē þæt se āglāca yldan þōhte,
Nor that the monster delay thought,
 ac hē gefēng hraðe forman siðe
but he seized quickly on-first time
 slāpendne rinc, slāt unwearnum,
sleeping warrior, tore without-hindrance,
 bāt bānlocan, blōd ēdrum dranc,
bit bone-locks, blood from-veins drank,
 synsnædum swealh; sōna hæfde
in-huge-morsels swallowed; at-once had
 unlyfigendes eal gefeormod,
of-the-lifeless-one all devoured,
 fēt ond folma. Forð nēar ætstōp,
feet and hands. Forth nearer stepped,
 nam þā mid handa higepihtigne
took then with hand strong-minded
 rinc on ræste, ræhte tōgēan[es]
warrior on bed, reached toward
 fēond mid folme; hē onfēng hrape
fiend with hand; he received quickly
 inwitþancum ond wið earm gesæt.
with-malicious-thoughts and against arm sat-up.

735

740

745

- 750 Sōna þæt onfunde fyrena hyrde,
At-once that found of-crimes keeper,
 þæt hē ne mētte middangeardes,
that be not had-met of-middle-earth,
 eorþan scēata on elran men
of-earth of-regions in other man
 mundgripe mārān; hē on mōde wearð
hand-grip greater; he in heart became
 forht on ferhðe; nō þȳ ær fram meahte.
afraid in spirit; not the sooner away could.
- 755 Hyge wæs him hinfūs, wolde on heolster flēon,
Mind was to-him eager-to-be-gone, would into darkness flee,
 sēcan dēofla gedræg; ne wæs his drohtoð þār
seek of-devils company; not was his condition there
 swylce hē on ealderdagum ær gemētte.
such-as he in life-days before met.
 Gemunde þā se gōda, mæg Higelāces,
Remembered then the good, kinsman of-Hygelaç,
 æfenspræce, ūplang āstōd
evening-speech, upright stood
- 760 ond him fæste wiðfēng; fingras burston;
and him firmly grasped; fingers burst;
 eoten wæs ūtweard, eorl furþur stōp.
giant was outward, warrior further stepped.
 Mynte se mæra, (þ)ær hē meahte swā,
Intended the notorious-one, if he might so,
 widre gewindan ond on weg þanon
wider escape and on way thence
 flēon on fenhopu; wiste his fingra geweald
flee into fen-refuges; knew his of-fingers power

on grames grāpum. Þæt wæs gēocor sið,
in of-hostile-one grips. That was sad journey,

765

þæt se hearmscaþa tō Heorute ātēah!
that the harm-ravager to Heorot made!

Dryhtsele dynede; Denum eallum wearð,
Lordly-hall resounded; To-Danes all became,

ceasterbūendum, cēnra gehwylcum,
to-fortress-dwellers, of-bold-ones to-each,

eorlum ealuserwen. Yrre wāron bēgen,
to-warriors ale-dispensing. Angry were both,

rēpe renweardas. Reced hlynsode.
fierce house-guardians. Hall resounded.

770

Ða wæs wundor micel, þæt se winsele
Then was wonder great, that the wine-ball

wiðhæfde heapodēorum, þæt hē on hrūsan ne fēol,
withstood the-battle-brave-ones, that it on ground not fell,

fāger foldbold; ac hē þæs fæste wæs
fair earth-building; but it so firmly was

innan ond ūtan irenbendum
inside and outside with-iron-bands

searþoncum besmīpod. Þær fram sylle ābēag
with-skill forged. There from sill bent-away

775

medubenc monig mīne gefræge
mead-bench many by-my bearing

golde geregnad, þær þā gramān wunnon.
with-gold adorned, where the hostile-ones fought.

Þæs ne wēndon ār witan Scyldinga,
Of-that not expected before counselors of-Scyldings,

þæt hit ā mid gemete manna ānig
that it ever by means of-men any

- 780 betlic ond bānfāg tōbreca meahte,
splendid and bone-adorned shatter could,
 listum tōlūcan, nymþe liges fæþm
by-cunning pull-apart, unless of-fire embrace
 swulge on swapule. Swēg ūp āstāg
should-swallow in flame. Sound up rose
 niwe geneahhe: Norð-Denum stōd
new constantly: on-North-Danes stood
 atelic egesa, ānra gehwylcum
terrible fear, of-ones on-each
- 785 þāra þe of wealle wōp gehȳrdon,
of-those who from wall wail heard,
 gryrelēoð galan Godes andsacan,
terror-song sing of-God adversary,
 sigelēasne sang, sār wānigean
victory-less song, pain lament
 helle hæfton. Hēold hine fæste
of-hell captive. Held him fast
 sē þe manna wæs mægene strengest
he who of-men was in-might strongest
- 790 on þām dæge þysses lifes.
on that day of-this life.

Beowulf will not let the murderous visitor go alive. His men draw their old swords to defend him, not knowing that Grendel has laid a spell on every blade so that none can touch him. In Beowulf's grip the monster's shoulder bursts, sinews spring apart, and Grendel, mortally wounded, flees to his joyless dwelling under the fen-slopes, knowing his days are at an end. Beowulf has cleansed Heorot and fulfilled his boast to the Danes, and as a clear token he sets Grendel's hand, arm, and shoulder, the whole grip, under the vaulted roof.

Nolde eorla hlēo ānige þinga

Would-not of-warriors protector in-any way

þone cwealmcuman cwicne forlātan,

the murderous-visitor alive let-go,

nē his lifdagas lēoda ānigum

nor his life-days of-peoples to-any

nytte tealde. Ðær genehost brægd

useful counted. There many drew

eorl Bēowulfes ealde lāfe,

warrior of-Beowulf old heirloom,

wolde frēadrihtnes feorh ealgian,

wished of-lord-master life defend,

māres þēodnes, ðær hīe meahthon swā.

of-famous prince, if they could so.

Hīe þæt ne wiston, þā hīe gewin drugon,

They that not knew, when they strife engaged,

heardhigende hildemecgas,

brave-minded battle-men,

ond on healfa gehwone hēawan þōhton,

and on of-sides each to-bew thought,

795

800

sāwle sēcan: þone synscaðan

soul to-seek: that sin-ravager

ænig ofer eorþan irenna cyst,

any over earth of-irons choicest,

gūðbilla nān grētan nolde;

of-war-swords none touch would;

ac hē sigewæpnum forsworen hæfde,

but he victory-weapons forsworn had,

805 ecga gehwylcre. Scolde his aldorgedāl

of-edges each. Was-to his life-parting

on ðām dæge þysses lifes

on that day of-this life

earmlic wurðan, ond se ellorgāst

wretched become, and the alien-spirit

on fēonda geweald feor siðian. —

into of-fiends power far journey.

Ðā þæt onfunde sē þe fela āror

Then that found he who much before

810 mōdes myrðe manna cynne,

of-heart affliction of-men to-race,

fyrene gefremede — hē fāg wið God—,

crimes committed he at-feud with God,

þæt him se lichoma lāstan nolde,

that him the body serve would-not,

ac hine se mōdega mæg Hygelāces

but him the proud kinsman of-Hygelac

hæfde be honda; wæs gehwæper oðrum

had by hand; was each to-other

815 lifigende lāð. Līcsār gebād

living hateful. Body-wound suffered

atol æglæca; him on eaxle wearð

terrible monster; on-him on shoulder became

syndolh sweotol, seonowe onsprungon,

huge-wound visible, sinews sprang-apart,

burston bānlocan. Bēowulfe wearð

burst bone-locks. To-Beowulf was

gūðhrēð gyfeþe; scolde Grendel þonan

war-glory granted; had-to Grendel thence

feorhsēoc flēon under fenhleoðu,

life-sick flee under fen-slopes,

sēcean wynlēas wic; wiste þē geornor,

seek joyless dwelling; knew the more-surely,

þæt his aldres wæs ende gegongen,

that of-his life was end come,

dōgera dægriṃ. Denum eallum wearð

of-days day-count. To-Danes all was

æfter þām wælræse willa gelumpen.

after that slaughter-rush wish fulfilled.

Hæfde þā gefælsod sē þe ær feorran cōm

Had then cleansed he who before from-afar came

snotor ond swyðferhð sele Hrōðgāres,

wise and strong-hearted hall of-Hrothgar,

genered wið nīðe. Nihtweorce gefeh,

saved from hostility. In-night-work rejoiced,

ellenmārpum. Hæfde Ēast-Denum

in-courage-glory. Had to-East-Danes

Gēatmecga lēod gilp gelæsted,

of-Geat-men prince boast fulfilled,

swylce oncyþðe ealle gebētte,

likewise distress all remedied,

820

825

830

inwidsorge, þē hīe ær drugon

malice-sorrow, which they before endured

ond for þrēanȳdum þolian scoldon,

and from dire-constraints suffer had-to,

torn unlȳtel. Ðæt wæs tācen sweotol,

grief not-small. That was token clear,

syþðan hildedēor hond ālegde,

when battle-brave-one hand laid-down,

835 earm ond eaxle — þær wæs eal geador

arm and shoulder there was all together

Grendles grāpe — under gēapne hr(ōf).

of-Grendel grip under vaulted roof.

XIII · SIGEMUND AND HEREMOD

In the morning warriors go out to follow Grendel's tracks to the mere, whose water wells with hot blood where the doomed monster dived and hell received his heathen soul. Riding back, they race their horses and say that no shield-bearer anywhere is better or worthier of a kingdom than Beowulf, though they never fault Hrothgar. A king's thane skilled in old tales makes a new song of Beowulf's venture. He tells of Sigemund, who slew a dragon guarding a hoard, and of Heremod, whose strength failed and who became a grief to his people. Beowulf grows dearer to all men, while crime takes hold of Heremod. Then Hrothgar and his queen walk to the hall to see the wonder.

Ðā wæs on morgen mine gefrāge

Then was in morning by-my bearing

ymb þā gifhealle gūðrinc monig;

around the gift-hall warrior many;

fērdon folctogan feorran ond nēan

went folk-leaders from-afar and from-near

geond widwegas wundor scēawian,

through wide-ways wonder to-see,

lāpes lāstas. Nō his lifgedāl

of-hateful-one tracks. Not his life-parting

sārlic þūhte secga ænegum

sorrowful seemed of-men to-any

þāra þe tirlēases trode scēawode,

of-those who of-glory-less-one track looked-at,

hū hē wērigmōd on weg þanon,

how he weary-hearted on way thence,

nīða ofercumen, on nicera mere

in-hostilities overcome, into of-water-monsters mere

fāge ond geflymed feorhlāstas bær.

doomed and put-to-flight life-tracks bore.

Ðær wæs on blōde brim weallende,

There was with blood water surging,

atol yða geswing eal gemenged,

terrible of-waves swirl all mingled,

hāton heolfre, heorodrēore wēol;

with-hot gore, with-sword-blood welled;

dēaðfāge dēof; siððan drēama lēas

death-doomed dived; after of-joys bereft

in fenfreoðo feorh ālegde,

in fen-refuge life laid-down,

hæþene sāwle; þær him hel onfēng.

heathen soul; there him hell received.

Þanon eft gewiton ealdgesiðas

Thence back went old-companions

swylce geong manig of gomenwāpe,

likewise young many from joyful-journey,

840

845

850

- 855 fram mere mōdge mēarum rīdan,
from mere proud on-horses to-ride,
 beornas on blancum. Ðær wæs Bēowulfes
warriors on white-horses. There was of-Beowulf
 mārðo mǣned; monig oft gecwæð,
glory proclaimed; many often said,
 þætte sūð nē norð be sām twēonum
that south nor north by seas between
 ofer eormengrund oþer nānig
over vast-earth other none
- 860 under swegles begong sēlra nāre
under of-sky expanse better were
 rondhæbbendra, rices wyrðra. —
of-shield-bearers, of-kingdom worthier.
 Nē hie hūru winedrihten wiht ne lōgon,
Nor they indeed friend-lord at-all — faulted,
 glædne Hrōðgār, ac þæt wæs gōd cyning. —
gracious Hrothgar, but that was good king.
 Hwilum heaþorōfe hlēapan lēton,
At-times battle-famed-ones gallop let,
- 865 on geflit faran fealwe mēaras,
in contest go bay horses,
 ðær him foldwegas fægere þūhton,
where to-them earth-ways fair seemed,
 cystum cūðe. Hwilum cyninges þegn,
for-excellence known. At-times of-king thane,
 guma gilphlæden, gidða gemyndig,
man boast-laden, of-songs mindful,
 sē ðe ealfela ealdgesegena
be who very-many of-old-tales

worn gemunde — word oþer fand

multitude remembered word other found

870

sōðe gebunden — secg eft ongan

truly bound man in-turn began

sið Bēowulfes snyttrum styrian,

venture of-Beowulf with-skill to-stir,

ond on spēd wrecan spel gerāde,

and with success recite tale apt,

wordum wrixlan; wēlhwyrc gecwæð,

with-words vary; nearly-everything told,

þæt hē fram Sigemunde[s] secgan hȳrde

that he about of-Sigemund tell heard

875

ellendǣdum, uncūpes fela,

courage-deeds, of-unknown much,

Wælsinges gewin, wide siðas,

of-Waelsing strife, wide journeys,

þāra þe gumena bearn gearwe ne wiston,

of-those which of-men children well not knew,

fāhðe ond fyrena, būton Fitela mid hine,

feud and crimes, except Fitela with him,

þonne hē swulces hwæt secgan wolde,

when he of-such something tell would,

880

eam his nefan, swā hie ā wæron

uncle to-his nephew, as they ever were

æt niða gehwām nȳdgesteallan;

at of-hostilities each need-comrades;

hæfdon ealfela eotena cynnes

had very-many of-giants race

sweordum gesǣged. Sigemunde gesprong

with-swords laid-low. To-Sigemund sprang

- 885 æfter dēaðdæge dōm unlȳtel,
after death-day glory not-small,
 syþðan wiges heard wyrm ācwealde,
after in-war hard serpent killed,
 hordes hyrde; hē under hārne stān,
of-board guardian; he under gray stone,
 æþelinges bearn, āna genēðde
of-prince son, alone ventured
 frēcne dāde, ne wæs him Fitela mid;
daring deed, not was him Fitela with;
- 890 hwæpre him gesælde, ðæt þæt swurd þurhwōd
yet to-him befell, that the sword pierced
 wrætlicne wyrm, þæt hit on wealle ætstōd,
wondrous serpent, that it in wall stuck,
 dryhtlic iren; draca morðre swealt.
lordly iron; dragon by-murder died.
 Hæfde āglæca elne gegongen,
Had the-fearsome-one by-courage achieved,
 þæt hē bēahhordes brūcan mōste
that he of-ring-board enjoy might
- 895 selfes dōme; sǣbāt gehleōd,
by-own choice; sea-boat loaded,
 bær on bearm scipes beorhte frætwa,
bore into bosom of-ship bright treasures,
 Wælses eafera; wyrm hāt gemealt.
of-Waels son; serpent hot melted.
 Sē wæs wreccena wide mǣrost
He was of-adventurers widely most-famous
 ofer werpēode, wīgendra hlēo
throughout nations, of-warriors protector

ellendædum	— hē þæs ær ondāh—,	900
<i>for-courage-deeds</i>	<i>he for-that before prospered,</i>	
siððan Heremōdes	hild sweðrode,	
<i>after of-Heremod</i>	<i>war-strength waned,</i>	
eafod̥ ond ellen.	Hē mid Ēotenum wearð	
<i>strength and courage.</i>	<i>He among Jutes was</i>	
on fēonda gewæld	forð forlācen,	
<i>into of-enemies power</i>	<i>forth betrayed,</i>	
snūde forsended.	Hine sorhwylmas	
<i>quickly dispatched.</i>	<i>Him sorrow-surges</i>	
lemede tō lange;	hē his lēodum wearð,	905
<i>crippled too long;</i>	<i>he to-his people became,</i>	
eallum æþellingum	tō aldorcare;	
<i>to-all princes</i>	<i>as life-care;</i>	
swylce oft bemearn	ærran mælum	
<i>likewise often lamented</i>	<i>in-earlier times</i>	
swiðferhþes sið	snotor ceorl monig,	
<i>of-strong-hearted-one venture</i>	<i>wise man many,</i>	
sē þe him bealwa tō	bōte gelyfde,	
<i>he who in-him of-evils as</i>	<i>remedy trusted,</i>	
þæt þæt ðeodnes bearn	geþeon scolde,	910
<i>that the of-prince son</i>	<i>prosper should,</i>	
fæderæþelum onfōn,	folc gehealdan,	
<i>father-lineage receive,</i>	<i>folk rule,</i>	
hord ond hlēoburh,	hælepa rice,	
<i>board and stronghold,</i>	<i>of-heroes kingdom,</i>	
ēpel Scyldinga.	Hē þær eallum wearð,	
<i>homeland of-Scyldings.</i>	<i>He there to-all became,</i>	
mæg Higelāces	manna cynne,	
<i>kinsman of-Hygelac</i>	<i>of-men to-race,</i>	

- 915 frēondum gefægra; hine fyren onwōd.
to-friends more-pleasing; him crime entered.
 Hwylum flitende fealwe strāte
At-times contending bay road
 mēarum mæton. Ðā wæs morgenlēoht
with-horses measured. Then was morning-light
 scofen ond scynded. Ēode scealc monig
advanced and hastened. Went retainer many
 swiðhigende tō sele þām hēan
stout-hearted to hall the high
- 920 searowundor sēon; swylce self cyning
curious-wonder to-see; likewise himself king
 of brýdbūre, bēahhorda weard,
from bride-chamber, of-ring-boards guardian,
 tryddode tīrfæst getrume micle,
trod glory-fast with-company great,
 cystum gecýped, ond his cwēn mid him
for-virtues known, and his queen with him
 medostigge mæt mægþa hōse.
mead-path measured of-maidens with-train.

Standing on the steps beneath the gold-adorned roof and Grendel's hand, Hrothgar thanks the Almighty, who works wonder after wonder where the wise had despaired. He takes Beowulf to his heart as a son and promises him whatever lies in his power. Beowulf answers that he wished to pin the fiend down, but God did not let him hold Grendel, who escaped leaving his arm behind; wounded, the monster must await the Ordainer's judgment. Unferth falls silent as the nobles gaze at the steel-hard claws that no sword could have harmed.

Hrōðgār maþelode — hē tō healle gēong,

Hrothgar spoke he to hall went,

stōd on stapole, geseah stēapne hrōf

stood on step, saw steep roof

golde fāhne ond Grendles hond—:

with-gold adorned and of-Grendel hand:

‘Ðisse ansýne Alwealdan þanc

For-this sight to-Almighty thanks

lungre gelimpe! Fela ic lāþes gebād,

promptly be-given! Much I of-hateful endured,

grynna æt Grendle; ā mæg God wyrca

of-griefs from Grendel; ever can God work

wunder æfter wundre, wuldres Hyrde.

wonder after wonder, of-glory Shepherd.

Ðæt wæs ungeāra, þæt ic ænigra mē

That was not-long-ago, that I of-any myself

wēana ne wēnde tō wīdan feore

of-woes not expected to wide life

bōte gebidan, þonne blōde fāh

remedy to-live-to-see, when with-blood stained

925

930

- 935 hūsa sēlest heorodrēorig stōd, —
of-houses best sword-bloody stood,
 wēa widscofen witenas gehwylcum
woe far-reaching of-counselors for-each
 ðāra þe ne wēndon, þæt hie wīðferhð
of-those who not expected, that they ever
 lēoda landgeweorc lāpum beweredon
of-people land-work against-foes could-defend
 scuccum ond scinum. Nū scealc hafað
against-demons and against-specters. Now warrior has
- 940 þurh Drihtnes miht dæd gefremede,
through of-Lord might deed performed,
 ðē wē ealle ār ne meahton
which we all before not could
 snyttrum besyrwan. Hwæt, þæt secgan mæg
with-wisdom contrive. Lo, that say may
 efne swā hwylc mægþa, swā ðone magan cende
even so whichever of-women, as that son bore
 æfter gumcynnum, gyf hēo gýt lyfað,
among mankind, if she still lives,
- 945 þæt hyre Ealdmetod ēste wære
that to-her Old-Ordainer gracious was
 bearngebyrdo. Nū ic, Bēowulf, þec,
in-child-bearing. Now I, Beowulf, thee,
 secg[a] betsta, mē for sunu wylle
of-men best, for-me as son will
 frēogan on ferhþe; heald forð tela
love in heart; hold henceforth well
 nīwe sibbe. Ne bið þē [n]ænigra gād
new kinship. — will-be for-thee of-none lack

worolde wilna, þē ic gewæld hæbbe.

950

of-world of-desires, which I power have.

Ful oft ic for læssan lēan teohhode,

Full often I for less reward granted,

hordweorþunge hnāhran rince,

hoard-honor to-lesser warrior,

sāmran æt sæcce. Þū þē self hafast

to-weaker at strife. Thou for-thee thyself hast

dædum gefremed, þæt þīn [dōm] lyfað

by-deeds brought-about, that thy glory lives

āwa tō aldre. Alwalda þec

955

ever to eternity. All-ruler thee

gōde forgyld, swā hē nū gýt dyde!

with-good may-repay, as he now yet did!

Beowulf mapelode, bearn Ec[g]þēowes:

Beowulf spoke, son of-Ecgtheow:

‘Wē þæt ellenweorc ēstum miclum,

‘We that courage-work with-goodwill great,

feohtan fremedon, frēcne genēddon

fight performed, boldly ventured

eafod uncūpes. Ūþe ic swiþor,

960

strength of-unknown-one. Wished I rather,

þæt ðū hine selfne gesēon mōste,

that thou him himself see might,

fēond on frætewum fylwērigne!

fiend in trappings fall-weary!

Ic hine hrædlice heardan clammum

I him quickly with-hard grips

on wælbedde wriþan þōhte,

on slaughter-bed bind thought,

- 965 þæt hē for mundgripe mīnum scolde
that he because-of hand-grip my should
 licgean lifbysig, būtan his lic swice;
lie struggling-for-life, unless his body escaped;
 ic hine ne mihte, þā Metod nolde,
I him not could, since Ordainer would-not,
 ganges getwāman, nō ic him þæs georne ætfealh,
from-going hinder, not I him so firmly held,
 feorhgeniðlan; wæs tō foremihtig
life-enemy; was too overpowering
- 970 fēond on fēpe. Hwæpere hē his folme forlēt
fiend in going. However he his hand left
 tō lifwraþe lāst weardian,
for life-protection track to-guard,
 earm ond eaxle; nō þær ænige swā þēah
arm and shoulder; not there any so though
 fēasceaft guma frōfre gebohte;
wretched man comfort bought;
 nō þȳ leng leofað lāðgetēona
not the longer lives hateful-ravager
- 975 synnum geswenced, ac hyne sār hafað
by-sins oppressed, but him pain has
 in nīdgripe nearwe befongen,
in need-grip closely enclosed,
 balwon bendum; ðær ābidan sceal
in-deadly bonds; there await shall
 maga māne fāh miclan dōmes,
son with-crime stained great judgment,
 hū him scīr Metod scrīfan wille.
how him bright Ordainer decree will.'

Dā wæs swigra secg, sunu Ec[g]lāfes, 980
Then was more-silent man, son of-Ecglaef,
 on gylpspræce gūðgeweorca,
in boast-speech of-war-deeds,
 siþðan æþelingas eorles cræfte
when princes of-warrior by-strength
 ofer hēanne hrōf hand scēawedon,
over high roof hand looked-at,
 fēondes fingras; foran æghwylc wæs,
of-fiend fingers; in-front each was,
 stið[r]a nægla gehwylc stýle gelicost, 985
of-stiff of-nails each to-steel likest,
 hǣþenes handsporu hilderinces
of-beatben band-spur of-battle-warrior
 egl[u] unhēoru; æghwylc gecwæð,
spikes monstrous; each said,
 þæt him heardra nān hrīnan wolde
that him of-hard-ones none touch would
 iren ārgōd, þæt ðæs āhlācan
iron good-of-old, that of-the monster
 blōdige beadufolme onberan wolde. 990
bloody battle-band weaken would.

Men and women hurry to adorn Heorot, hanging gold-woven tapestries along the walls, though the hall is badly shattered and only the roof has come through whole; no one escapes death, which every soul must seek. Hrothgar and Hrothulf feast in a hall full of friends, and the Scyldings as yet do no treachery. Hrothgar gives Beowulf a golden banner, a helmet, a mail-coat, and a famous sword, and has eight gold-bridled horses led in, one bearing his own war-saddle. No one who speaks the truth could fault such gifts.

Ðā wæs hāten hreþe Heort innanweard

Then was commanded quickly Heorot inside

folmum gefrætword; fela þāra wæs,

with-hands adorned; many of-them was,

wera ond wīfa, þē þæt wīnrecd,

of-men and of-women, who that wine-hall,

gestsele gyredon. Goldfāg scinon

guest-hall prepared. Gold-adorned shone

995 web æfter wāgum, wundorsiona fela

tapestries along walls, of-wondrous-sights many

secga gehwylcum þāra þe on swylc starað.

of-men to-each of-those who at such gaze.

Wæs þæt beorhte bold tōbrocen swiðe

Was that bright building shattered badly

eal inneward irenbendum fæst,

all inside with-iron-bands fast,

heorras tōhlidene; hrōf āna genæs

binges sprung-apart; roof alone survived

1000 ealles ansund, þē se āglāca

wholly sound, when the monster

fyrendædum fāg on flēam gewand

by-crime-deeds stained in flight turned

aldres orwēna. Nō þæt yðe byð

of-life despairing. Not that easy is

tō beflēonne — fremme sē þe wille—,

to escape let-try he who will,

ac gesēcan sceal sāwlberendra

but seek must of-soul-bearers

nýde genýdde, niþða bearna,

by-necessity compelled, of-men of-children,

grundbūendra gearwe stōwe,

of-earth-dwellers prepared place,

þær his lichoma legerbedde fæst

where his body in-death-bed fast

swefep æfter symle. Ða wæs sāl ond māl,

sleeps after feast. Then was time and occasion,

þæt tō healle gang Healfdenes sunu;

that to hall went of-Healfdene son;

wolde self cyning symbel þicgan.

wished himself king feast partake-of.

Ne gefrægen ic þā mægþe mārān weorode

Not heard I that people in-greater company

ymb hyra sincgyfan sēl gebāran.

around their treasure-giver better bear-themselves.

Bugon þā tō bence blædāgande,

Turned then to bench glory-owning-ones,

fylle gefægon, fægere geþægon

in-feast rejoiced, fairly partook-of

medoful manig; māgas wæra[n]

mead-cup many; kinsmen were

1005

1010

1015

swiðhigende on sele þām hēan,

stout-hearted in hall the high,

Hrōðgār ond Hrōþulf. Heorot innan wæs

Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Heorot within was

frēondum āfyllled; nalles fācenstafas

with-friends filled; not-at-all treacheries

Ƣeod-Scyldingas þenden fremedon. —

People-Scyldings at-that-time performed.

1020 Forgeaf þā Bēowulfe bearn Healfdenes

Gave then to-Beowulf son of-Healfdene

segen gyldenre sigores tō lēane,

banner golden of-victory as reward,

hroden hiltcumbor, helm ond byrnan;

adorned staff-banner, helmet and mail-coat;

mære mādþumsweord manige gesāwon

famous treasure-sword many saw

beforan beorn beran. Bēowulf gepah

before warrior borne. Beowulf took

1025 ful on flette; nō hē þære feohgyfte

cup in hall; not he of-that wealth-gift

for sc[ē]oten[d]um scamigan ðorfte, —

before warriors be-ashamed needed,

ne gefrægn ic frēondlicor fēower mādmas

not heard I more-kindly four treasures

golde gegyrede gummanna fela

with-gold adorned of-men many

in ealobence oðrum gesellan.

on ale-bench to-another give.

1030 Ymb þæs helmes hrōf hēafodbeorge

Around of-the helmet roof head-protection

wirum bewunden wala ūtan hēold,
with-wires wound ridge outside held,

þæt him fēla lāf frēcne ne meahte
that him of-files remnant fiercely not could

scūrheard sceþðan, þonne scyldfreca
shower-hard harm, when shield-warrior

ongēan gramum gangan scolde.
against foes go had-to.

Heht ðā eorla hlēo eahta mēaras
Commanded then of-warriors protector eight horses

fætdhlēore on flet tēon,
plated-cheeked into hall to-lead,

in under eoderas; þāra ānum stōd
in under enclosures; of-them on-one stood

sadol searwum fāh, since gewurþad;
saddle with-skill adorned, with-treasure honored;

þæt wæs hildesetl hēahcyniges,
that was battle-seat of-high-king,

ðonne sweorda gelāc sunu Healfdenes
when of-swords play son of-Healfdene

efnan wolde, — nāfre on ōre læg
perform wished, never at front lay

widcūpes wīg, ðonne walu fēollon.
of-widely-known-one valor, when corpses fell.

Ond ðā Bēowulfe bēga gehwāþres
And then to-Beowulf of-both of-each

eodor Ingwina onweald getēah,
protector of-Ingwine possession granted,

wicga ond wāpna; hēt hine wēl brūcan.
of-horses and of-weapons; bade him well enjoy.

1035

1040

1045

Swā manlice mære þēoden,

So manfully famous prince,

hordweard hāleþa heaþorāsas geald

board-guardian of-heroes battle-rushes repaid

mēarum ond mādum, swā hȳ nāfre man lȳhð,

with-horses and with-treasures, as them never man blames,

sē þe secgan wile sōð æfter rihte.

he who say will truth according-to right.

XVI • THE LAY OF FINN

Hrothgar gives treasure to each of Beowulf's companions and pays gold for the man Grendel killed; God rules all men, and forethought is best. Then Hrothgar's poet sings of Finn's sons. Hildeburh, Hoc's daughter, loses her brother Hnaef and her son when a sudden attack falls on them in Frisia. With too few thanes left to drive out the Danes, Finn swears a truce with Hengest, the fallen prince's thane: the Danes shall share the hall and the gifts, and no Frisian shall taunt them. Hnaef's pyre is built, Hildeburh has her son laid in the flames at his uncle's shoulder, and the fire swallows the dead of both peoples.

1050 Ðā gȳt æghwylcum eorla drihten

Then further to-each of-warriors lord

þāra þe mid Bēowulfe brimlāde tēah,

of-those who with Beowulf sea-way traveled,

on þære medubence mǣpðum gesealde,

on the mead-bench treasure gave,

yrfelāfe, ond þone ænne heht

heirloom, and the one commanded

golde forgyldan, þone ðe Grendel ær

with-gold to-pay-for, him whom Grendel before

māne ācwealde, — swā hē hyra mā wolde,
with-crime killed, as he of-them more would,

1055

nefne him wītig God wyrd forstōde
unless them wise God fate had-prevented

ond ðæs mannes mōd. Metod eallum wēold
and of-that man courage. Ordainer all ruled

gumena cynnes, swā hē nū git dēð.
of-men of-race, as he now yet does.

Forþan bið andgit æghwær sēlest,
Therefore is understanding everywhere best,

ferhðes foreþanc. Fela sceal gebidan
of-mind forethought. Much shall experience

1060

lēofes ond lāþes sē þe longe hēr
of-dear and of-hateful he who long here

on ðyssum windagum worolde brūceð!
in these days-of-strife world uses!

Þær wæs sang ond swēg samod ætgædere
There was song and music all together

fore Healfdenes hildewisan,
before of-Healfdene war-leader,

gomenwudu grēted, gid oft wrecen,
joy-wood touched, lay often recited,

1065

ðonne healgamen Hrōþgāres scop
when ball-entertainment of-Hrothgar poet

æfter medobence mǣnan scolde,
along mead-bench tell was-to,

[be] Finnes eaferum, ðā hīe se fār begeat.
about of-Finn sons, when them the sudden-attack befell.

Hæleð Healf-Dena, Hnæf Scyldinga,
Hero of-Half-Danes, Hnaef of-Scyldings,

- 1070 in Frēs wæle feallan scolde.
in Frisian-slaughter fall was-fated.
- Nē hūru Hildeburh herian þorfte
Not indeed Hildeburh praise needed
- Ēotena trēowe; unsynnum wearð
of-Jutes good-faith; blamelessly was
- beloren lēofum æt þām lindplegan
deprived of-dear-ones at the shield-play
- bearnum ond brōðrum; hie on gebyrd hruron
of-sons and of-brothers; they by fate fell
- 1075 gāre wunde; þæt wæs geōmuru ides!
by-spear wounded; that was sad lady!
- Nalles hōlinga Hōces dohtor
Not-at-all without-cause of-Hoc daughter
- meotodscaft bemearn, syþðan morgen cōm,
decree-of-fate mourned, when morning came,
- ðā hēo under swegle gesēon meahte
when she under sky see could
- morþorbealo māga, þār hē[o] ār mǣste hēold
murder-bale of-kinsmen, where she before most held
- 1080 worolde wyne. Wīg ealle fornam
of-world joy. War all carried-off
- Finnes þegnas nemne fēaum ānum,
of-Finn thanes except few only,
- þæt hē ne mehte on þām meðelstede
so-that he not could on the meeting-place
- wig Hengeste wiht gefeohtan,
battle against-Hengest at-all fight-out,
- nē þā wēalāfe wīge forþringan
nor the woe-remnants by-war dislodge

þēodnes ðegne; ac hig him geþingo budon,
of-prince from-thane; but they to-them terms offered,

1085

þæt hīe him oðer flet eal gerȳmdon,
that they for-them another hall all would-clear,

healle ond hēahsetl, þæt hīe healfre geweald
hall and high-seat, that they of-half control

wið Ēotena bearn āgan mōston,
with of-Jutes sons own might,

ond æt feohgyftum Folcwaldan sunu
and at wealth-gifts of-Folcwalda son

dōgra gehwylce Dene weorþode,
of-days on-each Danes would-honor,

1090

Hengestes hēap hringum wenede
of-Hengest troop with-rings would-favor

efne swā swiðe sincgestrēonum
even as greatly with-treasure-riches

fāttan goldes, swā hē Frēsena cyn
of-plated gold, as he of-Frisians race

on bēorsele byldan wolde.
in beer-hall encourage would.

Ðā hīe getrūwedon on twā healfa
Then they pledged on two sides

1095

fæste frioðuwære. Fin Hengeste
firm peace-treaty. Finn to-Hengest

elne unflitme āðum benemde,
with-zeal indisputably with-oaths declared,

þæt hē þā wēalāfe weotena dōme
that he the woe-remnants of-counselors by-judgment

ārum hēolde, þæt ðær ānig mon
with-honors would-bold, that there any man

- 1100 wordum nē worcum wære ne bræce,
by-words or by-works treaty not should-break,
 nē þurh inwitsearo æfre gemænden,
nor through malice ever should-complain,
 ðēah hīe hira bēaggyfan banan folgedon
though they their of-ring-giver slayer followed
 ðeodenlēase, þā him swā geþearfod wæs;
lordless, since to-them so needful was;
 gyf þonne Frýsna hwylc frēcnan spræce
if then of-Frisians any with-rash speech
- 1105 ðæs morþorhetes myndgiend wære,
of-the murder-hate reminder were,
 þonne hit sweordes ecg sēðan scolde. —
then it of-sword edge settle should.
 Ād wæs geæfned, ond icge gold
Pyre was made-ready, and splendid [?] gold
 āhæfen of horde. Here-Scyldinga
raised from board. of-War-Scyldings
 betst beadorinca wæs on bæl gearu.
best of-battle-warriors was on pyre ready.
- 1110 Æt þām āde wæs ēþgesýne
At the pyre was easily-seen
 swātfāh syrce, swýn ealgylden,
blood-stained mail-shirt, swine all-golden,
 eofer irenheard, æþeling manig
boar iron-hard, prince many
 wundum āwyrded; sume on wæle crungon!
by-wounds destroyed; some in slaughter fell!
 Hēt ðā Hildeburh æt Hnæfes āde
Commanded then Hildeburh at of-Hnaef pyre

hire selfre sunu sweoloðe befæstan,

1115

her own son to-flame to-commit,

bānfatu bærnan, ond on bæl dōn

bone-vessels burn, and on pyre place

ēame on eaxle. Ides gnornode,

by-uncle at shoulder. Lady mourned,

geōmrode giddum. Gūðrinc āstāh.

lamented in-songs. Warrior ascended.

Wand tō wolcnum wālfyra mǣst,

Wound to skies of-slaughter-fires greatest,

hlynode for hlāwe; hafelan multon,

1120

roared before mound; heads melted,

bengeato burston, ðonne blōd ætspranc,

wound-gates burst, then blood sprang-out,

lāðbite lices. Lig ealle forswearg,

hostile-bites of-body. Flame all swallowed,

gǣsta gifrost, þāra ðe þær gūð fornam

of-spirits greediest, of-those whom there war carried-off

bēga folces; wæs hira blād scacen.

of-both people; was their glory departed.

The Frisians go home, and Hengest winters with Finn, thinking more of vengeance than of the sea; when a sword is laid in his lap, he does not refuse the custom. Guthlaf and Oslaf voice their grief, Finn is slain in his own hall, and the Danes carry his treasure and Queen Hildeburh home. The lay ends and Wealhtheow comes to Hrothgar, who still sits at peace with his nephew Hrothulf. She bids him be generous to the Geats and leave his kingdom to his own kin, trusting Hrothulf to honor her sons, and walks to where Beowulf sits beside them.

1125 Gewiton him ðā wīgend wica nēosian,

Went themselves then warriors dwellings to-see,

frēondum befeallen, Frýsland gesēon,

of-friends bereft, Frisia to-see,

hāmas ond hēaburh. Hengest ðā gýt

homes and high-stronghold. Hengest then still

wælfāgne winter wunode mid Finne

slaughter-stained winter stayed with Finn

[ea]l unhlitme; eard gemunde,

all without-choice; homeland remembered,

1130 þēah þe hē meahte on mere drīfan

though that he could on sea drive

hringdstefnan, — holm storme wēol,

ring-prowed-ship, sea with-storm surged,

won wið winde, winter yþe belēac

contended against wind, winter wave locked

isgebinde, oþ ðæt oþer cōm

with-ice-bond, until that another came

gēar in geardas, — swā nū gýt dēð,

year into dwellings, as now still does,

þā ðe syngāles sēle bewitiað,

those that continually season observe,

1135

wuldortorhtan weder. Ðā wæs winter scacen,

glory-bright weathers. Then was winter departed,

fæger foldan bearm; fundode wrecca,

fair of-earth bosom; was-eager exile,

gist of gearдум; hē tō gyrnwræce

guest from dwellings; he of grief-vengeance

swiðor þōhte þonne tō sǣlāde,

more thought than of sea-voyage,

gif hē torngemōt þurhtēon mihte,

if he angry-meeting bring-about could,

1140

þæt hē Ēotena bearn inne gemunde.

that he of-Jutes sons within remembered.

Swā hē ne forwyrnde woroldrǣdenne,

So he not refused world-custom,

þonne him Hūnlāfing hildelēoman,

when him Hunlafing battle-light,

billa sēlest on bearm dyde;

of-swords best into lap put;

þæs wæron mid Ēotenum ecge cūðe.

whose were among Jutes edges known.

1145

Swylce ferhðfrecan Fin eft begett

Likewise bold-spirited Finn afterward befell

sweordbealo sliðen æt his selfes hām,

sword-bale cruel at his own home,

sipðan grimne gripe Gūðlāf ond Ōslāf

after grim attack Gutblaf and Oslaf

æfter sǣsiðe sorge mǣndon,

after sea-journey sorrow lamented,

- 1150 ætwiton wēana dæl; ne meahte wæfre mōð
reproached of-woes share; not could restless heart
forhabban in hrepre. Ðā wæs heal roden
restrain in breast. Then was hall reddened
fēonda fēorum, swilce Finn slægen,
of-foes with-lives, likewise Finn slain,
cyning on corþre, ond sēo cwēn numen.
king among troop, and the queen taken.
Scēotend Scyldinga tō scypon feredon
Warriors of-Scyldings to ships carried
1155 eal ingesteald eorðcyninges,
all household-goods of-earth-king,
swylce hie æt Finnes hām findan meahton
such-as they at of-Finn home find could
sigla searogimma. Hie on sælāde
of-jewels of-cunning-gems. They on sea-way
drihtlice wif tō Denum feredon,
lordly woman to Danes carried,
læddon tō lēodum. Lēoð wæs āsungen,
led to people. Lay was sung,
1160 glēomannes gyd. Gamen eft āstāh,
of-gleeman song. Mirth again rose,
beorhtode bencswēg, byrelas sealdon
brightened bench-noise, cupbearers gave
wīn of wunderfatum. Þā cwōm Wealhþeo forð
wine from wondrous-vessels. Then came Wealtheow forth
gān under gyldnum bēage þær þā gōðan twēgen
going under golden circlet where the good two
sæton suhtergefæderan; þā gýt wæs hiera sib ætgædere,
sat nephew-and-uncle; then still was their kinship together,

æghwylc oðrum trýwe. Swylce þær Unferþ þyle 1165
each to-other true. Likewise there Unferth spokesman

æt fōtum sæt frēan Scyldinga;
at feet sat of-lord of-Scyldings;

gehwylc hiora his ferhþe trēowde,
each of-them his spirit trusted,

þæt hē hæfde mōd micel, þeah þe hē his māgum nāre
that he had courage great, though that he to-his kinsmen were-not

ārfæst æt ecga gelācum. Spræc ðā ides Scyldinga:
honorable at of-swords plays. Spoke then lady of-Scyldings:

‘Onfōh þissum fulle, frēodrihten mīn,
‘Receive this cup, noble-lord my,

since brytta! Þū on sǣlum wes, 1170
of-treasure giver! Thou in joy be,

goldwine gumena, ond tō Gēatum spræc
gold-friend of-men, and to Geats speak

mildum wordum, swā sceal man dōn!
with-kind words, as should one do!

Bēo wið Gēatas glæd, geofena gemyndig,
Be to Geats gracious, of-gifts mindful,

nēan ond feorran þū nū hafast.
from-near and from-afar (which)-thou now hast.

Mē man sægde, þæt þū ðē for sunu wolde 1175
To-me one said, that thou for-thyself as son wouldst

hereri[n]c habban. Heorot is gefælsod,
warrior have. Heorot is cleansed,

bēahsele beorhta; brūc þenden þū mōte
ring-hall bright; enjoy while thou mayest

manigra mēdo, ond þīnum māgum lāf
many rewards, and to-thy kinsmen leave

- folc ond rice, þonne ðū forð scyle,
people and kingdom, when thou forth must,
- 1180 methodscaft sêon. Ic mīnne can
ordainer-decree see. I my know
- glædne Hrōþulf, þæt hē þā geogoðe wile
gracious Hrothulf, that he the youths will
- ārum healdan, gyf þū ār þonne hē,
with-honor keep, if thou before than he,
- wine Scildinga, worold oflætest;
friend of-Scyldings, world leavest;
- wēne ic þæt hē mid gōde gyldan wille
expect I that he with good repay will
- 1185 uncran eaferan, gif hē þæt eal gemon,
of-us-two sons, if he that all remembers,
- hwæt wit tō willan ond tō worðmyndum
what we-two for pleasure and for honors
- umborwesendum ār ārna gefremedon.⁷
to-him-being-a-child before of-favors did.'
- Hwearf þā bī bence, þær hyre byre wāron,
Turned then by bench, where her sons were,
- Hrēðric ond Hrōðmund, ond hælepa bearn,
Hrethric and Hrothmund, and of-heroes sons,
- 1190 giogoð ætgædere; þær se gōða sæt,
youths together; where the good-one sat,
- Bēowulf Gēata be þām gebrōðrum twām.
Beowulf of-Geats by the brothers two.

Beowulf is given the cup, two arm-rings, a mail-coat, and the finest neck-ring the poet has heard of since Hama carried off the necklace of the Brosings. Hygelac would wear that ring on his last raid, when pride led him into a feud with the Frisians and he fell under his shield, leaving it to the Franks. Wealhtheow bids Beowulf enjoy the gifts and be kind to her sons, for every man in the hall is loyal. Then Hrothgar goes to his rest, and the warriors bed down in the hall with their weapons beside them, not knowing that one of them is doomed.

Him wæs ful boren, ond frēondlāpu

To-him was cup borne, and friendly-invitation

wordum bewægned, ond wunden gold

with-words offered, and twisted gold

ēstum geēawed, earm[h]rēade twā,

graciously presented, arm-ornaments two,

hrægl ond hringas, healsbēaga mǣst

garment and rings, of-neck-rings greatest

þāra þe ic on foldan gefrægen hæbbe.

of-those that I on earth heard-of have.

Nænigne ic under swegle sēlan hȳrde

None I under sky better heard-of

hordmāðum hæleþa, syððan Hāma ætwæg

board-treasure of-heroes, since Hama carried-off

tō þære byrhtan byrig Brōsinga mene,

to the bright city of-Brosings necklace,

sigle ond sincfæt, — searoniðas flēah

jewel and treasure-vessel, cunning-hostilities fled

Eormenrices, gecēas ēcne rād. —

of-Eormenric, chose eternal gain.

1195

1200

- Þone hring hæfde Higelāc Gēata,
That ring had Hygelac of-Geats,
 nefa Swertinges nȳhstan siððe,
nephew of-Swerting on-last time,
 siððan hē under segne sinc ealgode,
when he under banner treasure defended,
 1205 wælreāf werede; hyne wyrd fornam,
slaughter-spoil guarded; him fate carried-off,
 syððan hē for wlenco wēan āhsode,
when he for pride woe asked-for,
 fāhðe tō Frȳsum. Hē þā frætwe wæg,
feud with Frisians. He the treasure bore,
 eorclanstānas ofer ȳða ful,
precious-stones over of-waves cup,
 rice þēoden; hē under rande gecranc.
mighty prince; he under shield fell.
 1210 Gehwearf þā in Francna fæpm feorh cyninges,
Passed then into of-Franks grasp life of-king,
 brēostgewædu, ond se bēah somod;
breast-garments, and the ring also;
 wyrsan wigfreca wæl rēafedon
worse warriors slain plundered
 æfter gūðsceare, Gēata lēode
after battle-carnage, of-Geats people
 hrēawic hēoldon. — Heal swēge onfēng.
corpse-field held. Hall noise received.
 1215 Wealhðeo maþelode, hēo fore þām werede spræc:
Wealhtheow spoke, she before the company said:
 ‘Brūc ðisses bēages, Bēowulf lēofa,
‘Enjoy this ring, Beowulf dear,

hyse, mid hǣle, ond þisses hrægles nēot,
young-man, with luck, and this garment use,
 þeo[d]gestrēona, ond geþēoh tela,
of-people-treasures, and prosper well,
 cen þec mid cræfte, ond þyssum cnýhtum wes
show thyself with strength, and to-these boys be
 lāra liðe! Ic þē þæs lēan geman.

1220

of-counsels kind! I thee of-that reward will-remember.
 Hafast þū gefēred, þæt ðē feor ond nēah
Hast thou brought-about, that thee far and near

ealne wideferhþ weras ehtigað,
all life-long men will-praise,
 efne swā sīde swā sǣ bebūgeð
even as widely as sea surrounds

windgeard weallas. Wes þenden þū lifige,
wind-home walls. Be while thou livest,

æþeling, ēadig! Ic þē an tela
prince, blessed! I thee grant well

1225

sincgestrēona. Bēo þū suna mīnum
of-treasure-riches. Be thou to-sons my

dǣdum gedēfe, drēamhealdende!
in-deeds kind, joy-possessing!

Hēr is æghwylc eorl oþrum getrýwe,
Here is each warrior to-other true,

mōdes milde, mandrihtne hol[d],
of-heart gentle, to-liege-lord loyal,

þegnas syndon geþwāre, þēod ealgearo,
thanes are united, people all-ready,

1230

druncne dryhtguman; dō swā ic bidde!
having-drunk retainers; do as I bid!

Ēode þā tō setle. Þær wæs symbla cyst,
Went then to seat. There was of-feasts choicest,

druncon wīn weras. Wyrð ne cūþon,
drank wine men. Fate not knew,
 geōsceaft grimme, swā hit āgangen wearð
destiny grim, as it come-to-pass was

1235 eorla manegum, syþðan æfen cwōm,
of-warriors to-many, when evening came,
 ond him Hrōþgār gewāt tō hofe sīnum,
and himself Hrothgar went to court his,

rice tō ræste. Reced weardode
mighty-one to rest. Hall guarded
 unrīm eorla, swā hīe oft ær dydon.
countless of-warriors, as they often before did.

Bençpelu beredon; hit geondbræded wearð
Bench-boards cleared; it spread-over was

1240 beddum ond bolstrum. Bēorscealca sum
with-beds and bolsters. Of-beer-drinkers one

fūs ond fæge fletræste gebēag.
ready and doomed to-ball-rest bent.

Setton him tō hēafdon hilderandas,
Set for-themselves at heads battle-shields,

bordwudu beorhtan; þær on bence wæs
board-wood bright; there on bench was

ofer æþelinge yþgesēne
over prince easily-seen

1245 heapostēapa helm, hringed byrne,
battle-towering helmet, ringed mail-coat,

þrecwudu þrymlic. Wæs þēaw hyra,
mighty-wood glorious. Was custom their,

þæt hīe oft wāron an wīg gearwe,
that they often were for war ready,
 gē æt hām gē on herge, gē gehwæper þāra
both at home and in army, and either of those
 efne swylce mæla, swylce hira mandryhtne
even at-such times, as to-their liege-lord
 þearf gesælde; wæs sēo þēod tilu.

1250

XVIII • GRENDEL'S MOTHER

The warriors sleep, and one of them pays dearly for his rest. Grendel is dead, but an avenger lives: his mother, who has dwelt in the cold waters since Cain slew his brother and fathered a race of monsters. She comes to Heorot to avenge her son; her onslaught is less terrible by as much as a woman's strength in war is less than an armed man's. Swords are drawn, and she flees to the fen with one of the nobles, the companion Hrothgar held dearest, and Grendel's hand, while the king grieves. Beowulf, lodged elsewhere, is fetched at dawn and asks whether Hrothgar has had a pleasant night.

Sigon þā tō slæpe. Sum sære angeald
Sank then to sleep. One sorely paid-for
 æfenræste, swā him ful oft gelamp,
evening-rest, as to-them full often befell,
 siþðan goldsele Grendel warode,
since gold-hall Grendel occupied,
 unriht æfnde, oþ þæt ende becwōm,
wrong did, until that end came,
 swylt æfter synnum. Þæt gesyne wearþ,
death after sins. That evident became,

1255

wīdcūþ werum, þætte wrecend þā gýt
widely-known to-men, that avenger then still

lifde æfter lāþum, lange þrāge,
lived after hateful-one, long time,

æfter gūðceare; Grendles mōdor,
after war-sorrow; of-Grendel mother,

ides āglæcwīf yrmþe gemunde,
lady monster-woman misery remembered,

1260 sē þe wāteregesān wunian scolde,
one who water-terror inhabit had-to,

cealde strēamas, siþðan Cāin wearð
cold streams, since Cain became

tō ecgbanan āngan brēþer,
as sword-slayer to-only brother,

fæderenmāge; hē þā fāg gewāt,
paternal-kinsman; he then outlawed departed,

morþre gemearcod mandream flêon,
by-murder marked human-joy to-flee,

1265 wēsten warode. Þanon wōc fela
wilderness inhabited. Thence arose many

geōsceaftgāsta; wæs þāra Grendel sum,
of-fated-spirits; was of-them Grendel one,

heorowearh hetelic, sē æt Heorote fand
fierce-outlaw hateful, who at Heorot found

wæccendne wer wīges bīdan;
watchful man battle awaiting;

þær him āglæca ætgrāpe wearð;
there him monster to-grips came;

1270 hwæþre hē gemunde mægenes strenges,
yet he remembered of-might strength,

gimfæste gife, ðē him God sealde,
ample gift, which him God gave,
 ond him tō Anwaldan āre gelyfde,
and himself to Sole-Ruler for-grace trusted,
 frōfre ond fultum; ðȳ hē þone fēond ofercwōm,
comfort and help; therefore he the fiend overcame,
 gehnāgde helle gāst. Þā hē hēan gewāt,
humbled of-hell spirit. Then he abject departed,
 drēame bedæled dēapwīc sēon,
of-joy deprived death-dwelling to-see,
 mancynnes fēond. Ond his mōdor þā gȳt
of-mankind fiend. And his mother then yet
 gīfre ond galgmōd gegān wolde
greedy and gallows-minded undertake wished
 sorhfulne sið, sunu dēoð wrecan.
sorrowful journey, of-son death avenge.

Cōm þā tō Heorote, ðær Hring-Dene

Came then to Heorot, where Ring-Danes

geond þæt sæld swāfun. Þā ðær sōna wearð
throughout that hall slept. Then there at-once came

edhwyrft eorlum, siþðan inne fealh
reversal to-warriors, when inside penetrated

Grendles mōdor. Wæs se gryre lāssa
of-Grendel mother. Was the terror less

efne swā micle, swā bið mægþa cræft,
even so much, as is of-women strength,

wiggryre wifes be wæpnedmen,
war-terror of-woman beside weaponed-man,

þonne heoru bunden, hamere geþrūen,
when sword bound, by-hammer forged,

1275

1280

1285

sweord swāte fāh swīn ofer helme
sword with-blood stained boar over helmet

ecgum dyhtig andweard scireð.
with-edges strong opposite shears.

Ðā wæs on healle heardecg togen
Then was in hall hard-edged drawn

sweord ofer setlum, sidrand manig
sword over seats, broad-shield many

1290 hafen handa fæst; helm ne gemunde,
raised in-hand fast; helmet (he)-not remembered,

byrnan sīde, þā hine se brōga angeat.
mail-coat broad, when him the terror seized.

Hēo wæs on ofste, wolde ūt þanon,
She was in haste, wished out thence,

fēore beorgan, þā hēo onfunden wæs;
life save, when she discovered was;

hraðe hēo æpelinga āne hæfde
quickly she of-princes one had

1295 fæste befangen, þā hēo tō fenne gang.
fast seized, when she to fen went.

Sē wæs Hrōþgāre hāleþa lēofost
He was to-Hrothgar of-heroes dearest

on gesiðes hād be sām twēonum,
in of-companion rank by seas between,

rice randwiga, þone ðe hēo on ræste ābrēat,
mighty shield-warrior, him whom she at rest destroyed,

blādfæstne beorn. Næs Bēowulf ðær,
glorious warrior. Not-was Beowulf there,

1300 ac wæs oþer in ær geteohhod
but was other lodging before assigned

æfter mǫþðungife mǣrum Gēate.

after treasure-giving to-famous Geat.

Hrēam wearð in Heorote; hēo under heolfre genam

Outcry arose in Heorot; she in gore took

cūpe folme; cearu wæs geniwod,

known hand; sorrow was renewed,

geworden in wicun. Ne wæs þæt gewrixle til,

come-about in dwellings. Not was that exchange good,

þæt hīe on bā healfa bicgan scoldon

that they on both sides pay had-to

frēonda fēorum! Þā wæs frōd cyning,

of-friends with-lives! Then was wise king,

hār hilderinc on hrēon mōde,

gray battle-warrior in troubled heart,

syðþan hē aldrþegn unlyfigendne,

when he chief-thane lifeless,

þone dēorestan dēadne wisse.

the dearest dead knew.

Hraþe wæs tō būre Bēowulf fetod,

Quickly was to chamber Beowulf fetched,

sigorēadig secg. Samod ārdæge

victory-blessed man. Together-with early-day

ēode eorla sum, æpele cempa

went of-warriors one, noble champion

self mid gesiðum þær se snotera bād,

himself with companions where the wise-one waited,

hwæper him Alwalda æfre wille

whether him All-Ruler ever would

æfter wēaspelle wyrpe gefremman.

after woe-tidings change bring-about.

1305

1310

1315

Gang ðā æfter flōre fyrdwyrðe man

Went then along floor army-worthy man

mid his handscale — healwudu dynede—,

with his hand-troop hall-wood resounded,

þæt hē þone wisan wordum nǣgde

that he the wise-one with-words addressed

frēan Ingwina, frægn gif him wære

lord of-Ingwine, asked if to-him had-been

1320 æfter nēodlaðu[m] niht getæse.

after urgent-invitation night pleasant.

XX • THE HAUNTED MERE

Hrothgar answers that there is no joy to ask about: Aeschere, his confidant and shoulder-companion in battle, is dead, killed by a restless slaughter-spirit avenging Grendel. His people have spoken of two border-stalkers haunting the moors, one in a woman's likeness and the other, called Grendel, in a man's form but larger. They dwell in a secret land of wolf-slopes and windy headlands, where a mountain stream plunges under the earth; not far off, under frosted trees, lies a mere that burns with fire at night, and a hunted hart would sooner die on its bank than enter. Help lies with Beowulf alone, and Hrothgar promises him gold if he returns.

Hrōðgār mapelode, helm Scyldinga:

Hrothgar spoke, protector of-Scyldings:

‘Ne frin þū æfter sǣlum! Sorh is genīwod

‘Not ask thou about joys! Sorrow is renewed

Denigea lēodum. Dēad is Æschere,

of-Danes to-people. Dead is Aeschere,

Yrmenlāfes yldra brōþor,

of-Yrmenlaf elder brother,

mīn rūnwita ond mīn rǣdbora,
my secret-knower and my counsel-bearer,
 eaxlgestealla, ðonne wē on orlege
shoulder-companion, when we in battle
 hafelan weredon, þonne hniton fēpan,
heads defended, when clashed foot-troops,
 eoferas cnysedan. Swy(lc) scolde eorl wesan,
boars struck. Such should warrior be,
 [æþeling] ærgōd, swylc Æschere wæs!
prince good-of-old, such-as Aeschere was!
 Wearð him on Heorote tō handbanan
Became for-him in Heorot as hand-slayer
 wælgæst wāfre; ic ne wāt hwæder
slaughter-spirit restless; I not know whitber
 atol æse wlanc eftsīðas tēah,
terrible in-carrion exulting return-journeys took,
 fylle gefægnod. Hēo þā fāhðe wræc,
by-feast made-glad. She the feud avenged,
 þē þū gystran niht Grendel cwealdest
in-which thou yesterday night Grendel killedst
 þurh hǣstne hād heardum clammum,
through violent manner with-hard grips,
 forþan hē tō lange lēode mīne
because he too long people my
 wanode ond wyrde. Hē æt wīge gecrang
diminished and destroyed. He in battle fell
 ealdres scyldig, ond nū oþer cwōm
of-life forfeit, and now another has-come
 mihtig mānscaða, wolde hyre mæg wrecan,
mighty evil-ravager, wished her kinsman avenge,

1325

1330

1335

- 1340 gē feor hafað fæhðe gestæled,
and far has feud carried,
 þæs þe þincean mæg þegne monegum,
as that seem may to-thane many,
 sē þe æfter sincgyfan on sefan grēoteþ, —
he who for treasure-giver in mind weeps,
 hreþerbealo hearde; nū sēo hand ligeð,
breast-bale hard; now the hand lies-(dead),
 sē þe ēow wēlhwylcra wilna dohte.
he who to-you of-nearly-all of-desires availed.
- 1345 Ic þæt londbūend, lēode mine,
I that land-dwellers, people my,
 selerædende secgan hýrde,
hall-counselors say heard,
 þæt hie gesāwon swylce twēgen
that they saw such two
 micle mearcstapan mōras healdan,
great border-stalkers moors hold,
 ellorgæstas. Ðāra oðer wæs,
alien-spirits. Of-them one was,
- 1350 þæs þe hie gewislicost gewitan meahton,
as that they most-certainly know could,
 idese onlicnes; oðer earmsceapen
of-woman likeness; other wretched-shaped
 on weres wæstmum wræclāstas træd,
in of-man form exile-paths trod,
 næfne hē wæs māra þonne ænig man oðer;
except he was bigger than any man other;
 þone on gēardagum Grendel nemdon
him in days-of-old Grendel named

- foldbūende; nō hie fæder cunnon,
earth-dwellers; not they father know,
- hwæper him ænig wæs ær ācenned
whethere to-him any was before born
- dyrnra gāsta. Hie dýgel lond
of-secret spirits. They secret land
- warigeað wulfhleoðu, windige næssas,
inhabit wolf-slopes, windy headlands,
- frēcne fengelād, ðær fyrgenstrēam
dangerous fen-path, where mountain-stream
- under næssa genipu niþer gewitedð,
under of-headlands mists down goes,
- flōd under foldan. Nis þæt feor heonon
flood under earth. Not-is that far hence
- milgearnearces, þæt se mere standeð;
of-mile-measure, that the mere stands;
- ofer þām hongiað hrinde bearwas,
over it hang frosted groves,
- wudu wýrtum fæst wæter oferhelmað.
wood by-roots fast water overshadow.
- Þær mæg nihta gehwām niðwundor sēon,
There (one)-may of-nights on-each hostile-wonder see,
- fýr on flōde. Nō þæs frōd leofað
fire on flood. Not so wise lives
- gumena bearna, þæt þone grund wite.
of-men of-children, that the bottom knows.
- Ðeah þe hāðstapa hundum geswenced,
Though that heath-stepper by-hounds harassed,
- heorot hornum trum holtwudu sēce,
hart with-horns strong forest-wood may-seek,

- 1370 feorran geflȳmed, ær hē feorh seleð,
from-afar put-to-flight, sooner he life gives-up,
 aldor on ōfre, ær hē in wille,
life on bank, before he in will,
 hafelan [beorgan]; nis þæt hēoru stōw!
head save; not-is that pleasant place!
 Ðonon ȳðgeblond ūp āstigeð
Thence wave-surge up rises
 won tō wolcnum, þonne wind styreþ
dark to skies, when wind stirs-up
- 1375 lāð gewidru, oð þæt lyft drysmaþ,
hateful storms, until that air grows-dark,
 roderas rēotað. Nū is se rād gelang
heavens weep. Now is the help dependent
 eft æt þē ānum. Eard gīt ne const,
again on thee alone. Region yet not knowest,
 frēcne stōwe, ðær þū findan miht
dangerous place, where thou find mayest
 sinnigne secg; sēc gif þū dyrre!
sinful man; seek if thou dare!
- 1380 Ic þē þā fāhðe fēo lēanige,
I thee for-the feud with-money will-reward,
 ealdgestrēonum, swā ic ær dyde,
with-ancient-treasures, as I before did,
 wundnum golde, gyf þū on weg cymest.
with-twisted gold, if thou on way comest.'

Beowulf answers that it is better to avenge a friend than to mourn him: every man must die, so let him win glory first. He swears the monster will find no refuge. Hrothgar and his men ride over steep paths to the mere, where they find Aeschere's head on the cliff and the water welling with blood; sea-serpents lie on the slopes, and Beowulf shoots one with an arrow. He arms himself in a woven mail-coat and a boar-crested helmet, and Unferth, forgetting his drunken taunt, lends him the ancient sword Hrunting, which has never failed; Unferth himself dares not risk the waves.

Bēowulf mapelode, bearn Ecgþēowes:

Beowulf spoke, son of-Ecgþeow:

‘Ne sorga, snotor guma! Sēlre bið æghwām,

‘Not grieve, wise man! Better is for-each,

þæt hē his frēond wrece, þonne hē fela murne. 1385

that he his friend avenge, than he much mourn.

Ūre æghwylc sceal ende gebidan

Of-us each must end experience

worolde lifes; wyrce sē þe mōte

of-world of-life; let-achieve he who may

dōmes ær dēaþe; þæt bið drihtguman

glory before death; that is for-warrior

unlifgendum æfter sēlest.

lifeless afterward best.

Āris, rīces weard, uton hraþe fēran, 1390

Arise, of-kingdom guardian, let-us quickly go,

Grendles māgan gang scēawigan.

of-Grendel of-kinswoman track to-examine.

Ic hit þē gehāte: nō hē on helm losaþ,

I it to-thee promise: not he into cover will-escape,

nē on foldan fæþm, nē on fyrgeholt,
nor into of-earth embrace, nor into mountain-wood,
 nē on gyfenes grund, gā þār hē wille!
nor into of-ocean bottom, go where he will!

1395 Ðys dōgor þū geþyld hafa
This day thou patience have
 wēana gehwylces, swā ic þē wēne tō.
of-woes each, as I thee expect of.
 Āhlēop ðā se gomela, Gode þancode,
Leapt-up then the old-one, God thanked,
 mihtigan Drihtne, þæs se man gespræc.
mighty Lord, for-what the man spoke.

Þā wæs Hrōðgāre hors gebæted,
Then was for-Hrothgar horse bridled,

1400 wicg wundenfeax. Wisa fengel
steed curly-maned. Wise prince
 geatolic gende; gumfēpa stōp
splendid rode; troop-of-men marched
 lindhæbbendra. Lāstas wæron
of-shield-bearers. Tracks were
 æfter waldswaþum wide gesýne,
along forest-paths widely visible,
 gang ofer grundas, [swā] gegnum fōr
going over grounds, so straight she-went

1405 ofer myrcan mōr, magoþegna bær
over murky moor, of-young-thanes bore
 þone sēlestan sāwollēasne
the best soulless

þāra þe mid Hrōðgāre hām eahtode.
of-those who with Hrothgar home guarded.

Oferēode þā æþelinga bearn

Crossed then of-princes son

stēap stānhliðo, stige nearwe,

steep rocky-slopes, paths narrow,

enge ānpaðas, uncūð gelād,

narrow single-paths, unknown way,

neowle næssas, nicorhūsa fela;

steep headlands, of-water-monster-houses many;

hē fēara sum beforan gengde

he of-few one ahead went

wisra monna wong scēawian,

of-wise men plain to-view,

oþ þæt hē fāringa fyrngenbēamas

until that he suddenly mountain-trees

ofer hārne stān hleonian funde,

over gray stone leaning found,

wynlēasne wudu; wæter under stōd

joyless wood; water beneath stood

drēorig ond gedrēfed. Denum eallum wæs,

bloody and troubled. To-Danes all was,

winum Scyldinga weorce on mōde

to-friends of-Scyldings painful in heart

tō gepolianne, ðegne monegum,

to endure, to-thane many,

oncȳð eorla gehwām, syðþan Æscheres

grief of-warriors to-each, when of-Aeschere

on þām holmclife hafelan mētton.

on the sea-cliff head found.

Flōd blōde wēol — folc tō sǣgon —

Flood with-blood welled folk at gazed

1410

1415

1420

hātan heolfre. Horn stundum song

with-hot gore. Horn at-times sang

fūslic f(yrd)lēoð. Fēþa eal gesæt.

eager war-song, Troop all sat-down.

1425 Gesāwon ðā æfter wætere wyrmcynnes fela,

Saw then along water of-serpent-kind many,

sellice sǣdracan sund cunnian,

strange sea-dragons sea explore,

swylce on næshleoðum nicras licgean,

likewise on headland-slopes water-monsters lie,

ðā on undernmæl oft bewitigað

which in morning-time often attend

sorhfulne sið on segrāde,

sorrowful journey on sail-road,

1430 wyrmas ond wildēor. Hie on weg hruron

serpents and wild-beasts. They on way rushed

bitere ond gebolgne; bearhtm ongēaton,

fierce and enraged; noise perceived,

gūðhorn galan. Sumne Gēata lēod

war-horn sing. One of-Geats prince

of flānbogan fēores getwǣfde,

with arrow-bow of-life separated,

ȳðgewinnes, þæt him on aldre stōd

of-wave-strife, that him in life stood

1435 herestræl hearda; hē on holme wæs

war-arrow hard; he in sea was

sundes þē sǣnra, ðē hyne swylt fornam.

at-swimming the slower, as him death carried-off.

Hræpe wearð on ȳðum mid eofersprēotum

Quickly was on waves with boar-spears

heorohōcyhtum	hearde	genearwod,	
<i>sharp-hooked</i>	<i>hard</i>	<i>pressed,</i>	
nīða	genāged,	ond on	næs togen,
<i>by-hostility</i>	<i>assailed,</i>	<i>and onto</i>	<i>headland drawn,</i>
wundorlic	wāgbora;	weras	scēawedon
<i>wondrous</i>	<i>wave-roamer;</i>	<i>men</i>	<i>looked-at</i>
gryreligne	gist.	Gyrede	hine Bēowulf
<i>terrible</i>	<i>guest.</i>	<i>Clothed</i>	<i>himself Beowulf</i>
eorlgewāðum,	nalles	for ealdre	mearn;
<i>in-warrior-garments,</i>	<i>not-at-all</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>life worried;</i>
scolde herebyrne	hondum	gebrōden,	
<i>had-to</i>	<i>war-mail</i>	<i>by-hands</i>	<i>woven,</i>
sīd ond	searofāh	sund	cunnian,
<i>broad and</i>	<i>cunningly-adorned</i>	<i>sea</i>	<i>explore,</i>
sēo ðe bāncofan	beorgan	cūpe,	
<i>that which</i>	<i>bone-chamber</i>	<i>protect</i>	<i>could,</i>
þæt him hildegrāp	hrepre	ne mihte,	
<i>that him</i>	<i>battle-grip</i>	<i>in-breast</i>	<i>not could,</i>
eorres	inwītfeng	aldre	gesceþðan;
<i>of-angry-one</i>	<i>malicious-grasp</i>	<i>to-life</i>	<i>harm;</i>
ac se hwīta helm	hafelan	werede,	
<i>but the</i>	<i>bright helmet</i>	<i>head</i>	<i>protected,</i>
sē þe meregrundas	mengan	scolde,	
<i>that which</i>	<i>mere-bottoms</i>	<i>stir</i>	<i>had-to,</i>
sēcan sundgebland	since	geweorðad,	
<i>seek</i>	<i>sea-turmoil</i>	<i>with-treasure</i>	<i>honored,</i>
befongen frēawrāsum,	swā	hine fyrndagum	
<i>encircled</i>	<i>with-lordly-bands,</i>	<i>as it</i>	<i>in-days-of-old</i>
worhte wāpna smið,	wundrum	tēode,	
<i>made</i>	<i>of-weapons</i>	<i>smith,</i>	<i>wondrously fashioned,</i>

besette swīnlicum, þæt hine syðþan nō

set with-boar-figures, that it afterward not

brond nē beadomēcas bītan ne meahton.

sword nor battle-blades bite — could.

1455 Næs þæt þonne mæ̃tost mægenfultuma,

Not-was that then least of-mighty-helps,

þæt him on ðearfe lāh ðyle Hrōðgāres;

that to-him in need lent spokesman of-Hrothgar;

wæs þā̃m hæftmēce Hrunting nama;

was to-the bilted-sword Hrunting name;

þæt wæs ān foran ealdgestrēona;

that was one foremost of-ancient-treasures;

ecg wæs īren, ātertānum fāh,

edge was iron, with-poison-twigs gleaming,

1460 āhyrded heaþoswāte; nāfre hit æt hilde ne swāc

hardened in-battle-blood; never it in battle — failed

manna ængum þāra þe hit mid mundum bewand,

of-men to-any of-those who it with hands grasped,

sē ðe gryresiðas gegān dorste,

he who terror-journeys undertake dared,

folcstede fāra; næs þæt forma sið,

folk-place of-foes; not-was that first time,

þæt hit ellenweorc æfnan scolde.

that it courage-work perform should.

1465 Hūru ne gemunde mago Ecglāfes

Indeed not remembered son of-Ecglaf

eafopes cræftig, þæt hē ār gespræc

of-strength powerful, what he before spoke

wīne druncen, þā hē þæs wāpn̄es onlāh

with-wine drunk, when he the weapon lent

sēlan swordfreca; selfa ne dorste
to-better sword-warrior; himself not dared
 under yða gewin aldre genēþan,
under of-waves strife life risk,
 drihtscype drēogan; þær hē dōme forlēas,
heroic-deed perform; there he glory lost,
 ellenmārðum. Ne wæs þām oðrum swā,
courage-fame. Not was to-the other so,
 syðþan hē hine tō gūðe gegyred hæfde.
when he himself for battle clothed had.

1470

XXII · THE FIGHT IN THE MERE

Beowulf asks Hrothgar to protect his men and send his gifts to Hygelac if he dies, and to let Unferth have Beowulf's own heirloom sword; he will win glory with Hrunting or die. He dives, and after most of a day reaches the bottom, where Grendel's mother seizes him and drags him to her hall while sea-beasts tear at his mail. In a hall where the water cannot reach, lit by firelight, he strikes her, but Hrunting fails for the first time. He throws it down and wrestles her to the floor; she grapples back, he stumbles, and she sits on him and draws her knife, but his mail turns the point, holy God decides the fight, and Beowulf stands up again.

Bēowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþēowes:
Beowulf spoke, son of-Ecgþeow:
 ‘Gepenc nū, se mǣra maga Healfdenes,
‘Consider now, the famous son of-Healfdene,
 snottra fengel, nū ic eom siðes fūs,
wise prince, now I am for-journey eager,
 goldwine gumena, hwæt wit geō spræcon,
gold-friend of-men, what we-two formerly spoke,

1475

gif ic æt þearfe þīnre scolde
if I at need thy should
 aldre linnan, þæt ðū mē ā wære
from-life depart, that thou to-me ever wouldst-be
 forðgewitenum on fæder stæle.
departed in of-father place.

1480 Wes þū mundbora minum magoþegnum,
Be thou guardian to-my young-thanes,
 hondgesellum, gif mec hild nime;
to-hand-companions, if me battle take;
 swylce þū ðā mādmas, þē þū mē sealdest,
likewise thou the treasures, which thou me gavest,
 Hrōðgār lēofa, Higelāce onsend.
Hrothgar dear, to-Hygelac send.

Mæg þonne on þāem golde ongitan Gēata dryhten,
May then by the gold perceive of-Geats lord,
 1485 gesēon sunu Hrædles, þonne hē on þæt sinc starað,
see son of-Hrethel, when he on that treasure gazes,
 þæt ic gumcystum gōdne funde
that I in-manly-virtues good found
 bēaga bryttan, brēac þonne mōste.
of-rings giver, enjoyed while might.
 Ond þū Unferð læt ealde lāfe,
And thou Unferth let old beirloom,
 wrætlic wāgsweord wīdcūðne man
wondrous wave-sword widely-known man
 1490 heardecg habban; ic mē mid Hruntinge
hard-edged have; I for-myself with Hrunting
 dōm gewyrce, oþðe mec dēað nimeð!
glory will-achieve, or me death will-take!

After þā wordum Weder-Gēata lēod
After those words of-Weder-Geats prince
 efste mid elne, — nalas andsware
hastened with courage, not-at-all answer
 bīdan wolde; brimwylm onfēng
await would; sea-surge received
 hilderince. Ðā wæs hwil dāges,
the-battle-warrior. Then was space of-day,
 ær hē þone grundwong ongytan mehte.
before he the ground-plain perceive could.
 Sōna þæt onfunde sē ðe flōða begong
At-once that found one who of-floods expanse
 heorogīfre behēold hund missēra,
fiercely-greedy held hundred of-half-years,
 grim ond grædig, þæt þær gumena sum
grim and greedy, that there of-men one
 ælwihta eard ufan cunnode.
of-alien-creatures home from-above explored.
 Grāp þā tōgēanes, gūðrinc gefēng
Grasped then toward, warrior seized
 atolan clommum; nō þȳ ær in gescōd
with-terrible claws; not the sooner inside harmed
 hālan lice; hring ūtan ymbbearh,
sound body; ring outside protected,
 þæt hēo þone fyrdhom ðurhfōn ne mihte,
so-that she the war-coat pierce not could,
 locene leoðosyrca lāpan fingrum.
locked limb-shirt with-hateful fingers.
 Bær þā sēo brimwyl[f], þā hēo tō botme cōm,
Bore then the sea-wolf, when she to bottom came,

1495

1500

1505

hringa þengel tō hofe sīnum,
of-rings prince to dwelling her,
 swā hē ne mihte nō — hē þām mōdig wæs —
so-that he not could however he so brave was
 wāpna gewældan, ac hine wundra þæs fela
weapons wield, but him of-wondrous-creatures so many

1510 swe[n]cte on sunde, sǣdēor monig
harassed in water, sea-beast many
 hildetūxum heresyrcan bræc,
with-battle-tusks war-shirt broke,

ehton āglæcan. Ðā se eorl ongeat,
pursued the-fearsome-one. Then the warrior perceived,
 þæt hē [in] niðsele nāthwylcum wæs,
that he in hostile-hall some was,
 þær him nānig wæter wihte ne scepede,
where him no water at-all — harmed,

1515 nē him for hrōfsele hrīnan ne mehte
nor him because-of roofed-hall touch — could
 fǣrgripe flōdes; fȳrlēoht geseah,
sudden-grip of-flood; fire-light saw,
 blācne lēoman beorhte scīnan.
brilliant light brightly shine.

Ongeat þā se gōda grundwyrgegne,
Perceived then the good-one bottom-accursed-one,
 merewif mihtig; mægenræs forgeaf
mere-woman mighty; mighty-rush gave

1520 hildebille, hond sweng ne oftēah,
to-battle-sword, hand stroke not withheld,
 þæt hire on hafelan hringmæl āgōl
that her on head ring-marked-sword sang

grædig gūðlēoð. Ðā se gist onfand,

greedy war-song, Then the guest found,

þæt se beadolēoma bitan nolde,

that the battle-light bite would-not,

aldre sceþðan, ac sēo ecg geswāc

to-life harm, but the edge failed

ðeodne æt þearfe; ðolode ær fela

the-prince at need; endured before many

hondgemōta, helm oft gescær,

of-hand-encounters, helmet often cut-through,

fāges fyrdhrægl; ðā wæs forma sið

of-doomed-one war-garment; then was first time

dēorum mādme, þæt his dōm ālæg.

for-precious treasure, that its glory failed.

Eft wæs anræd, nalas elnes læt,

Again was resolute, not-at-all of-courage slack,

mārða gemyndig mæg Hylāces:

of-glorious-deeds mindful kinsman of-Hygelac:

wearp ðā wundenmæl wrættum gebunden

threw then twisted-sword with-ornaments bound

yrre ðretta, þæt hit on eorðan læg,

angry champion, that it on earth lay,

stið ond stýlecg; strenge getrūwode,

stiff and steel-edged; strength trusted,

mundgripe mægenes. Swā sceal man dōn,

hand-grip of-might. So must one do,

þonne hē æt gūðe gegān þenceð

when he in battle win intends

longsumne lof; nā ymb his lif cearað.

long-lasting praise; not about his life cares.

1525

1530

1535

Gefēng þā be eaxle — nas for fæhðe mearn —
Seized then by shoulder not-at-all for feud worried

Gūð-Gēata lēod Grendles mōdor;
of-War-Geats prince of-Grendel mother;

brægd þā beadwe heard, þā hē gebolgen wæs,
flung then in-battle bard, when he enraged was,

1540 feorhgeniðlan, þæt hēo on flet gebēah.
the-life-enemy, that she on floor fell.

Hēo him eft hraþe andlēan forgeald
She him again quickly requital repaid

grimman grāpum ond him tōgēanes fēng;
with-grim grips and him against grasped;

oferwearp þā wērigmōd wigena strengest,
stumbled then weary-hearted of-warriors strongest,

fēþecempa, þæt hē on fylle wearð.
foot-warrior, that he in fall was.

1545 Ofsæt þā þone selegyst, ond hyre seax getēah
Sat-on then the hall-guest, and her knife drew

brād [ond] brūnecg; wolde hire bearn wrecan,
broad and bright-edged; wished her son avenge,

āngan eaferan. Him on eaxle læg
only offspring, Him on shoulder lay

brēostnet brōden; þæt gebearh fēore,
breast-net woven; that protected life,

wið ord ond wið ecge ingang forstōd.
against point and against edge entrance prevented.

1550 Hæfde ðā forsiðod sunu Ecgþēowes
Had then perished son of-Ecgtheow

under gynne grund, Gēata cempa,
under wide ground, of-Geats champion,

nemne him heaðobyrne helpe gefremede,

unless him battle-mail help had-given,

herenet hearde, — ond hālig God

war-net hard, and holy God

gewēold wigsigor; wītig Drihten,

brought-about war-victory; wise Lord,

rodera Rædend hit on ryht gescēd

of-heavens Ruler it in right decided

ȳðelice, syþðan hē eft āstōd.

easily, once he again stood-up.

1555

XXIII • THE GIANT SWORD

Beowulf sees an ancient sword, the work of giants, hanging among the armor, and strikes Grendel's mother through the neck with it. Light fills the hall; he finds Grendel's corpse and cuts off the head. Above, the Danes see the water fill with blood and go home believing him dead, while his own men wait. The blade melts like ice in the monster's hot blood, and Beowulf swims up with only the hilt and the head, which four men carry to Heorot and bear into the hall by the hair.

Geseah ðā on searwum sigeēadig bil,

Saw then among armor victory-blessed blade,

ealdsweord eotenisc ecgum þȳhtig,

old-sword giantish with-edges strong,

wigena weorðmynd; þæt [wæs] wāpna cyst, —

of-warriors glory; that was of-weapons choicest,

būton hit wæs mære ðonne ænig mon oðer

except it was greater than any man other

tō beadulāce ætberan meahte,

to battle-play carry could,

1560

gōd ond geatolic, gīganta geweorc.

good and splendid, of-giants work.

Hē gefēng þā fetelhilt, freca Scyldinga

He seized then belted-hilt, warrior of-Scyldings

hrēoh ond heorogrim, hringmæl gebrægd

fierce and savage, ring-patterned-sword drew

1565 aldres orwēna, yrringa slōh,

of-life despairing, angrily struck,

þæt hire wið halse heard grāpode,

that her against neck hard gripped,

bānhringas bræc; bil eal ðurhwōd

bone-rings broke; blade all went-through

fāgne flāschoman; hēo on flet gecrong,

doomed flesh-covering; she on floor fell,

sweord wæs swātig, secg weorce gefeh.

sword was bloody, man in-work rejoiced.

1570 Lixte se lēoma, lēoht inne stōd,

Shone the light, light within stood,

efne swā of hefene hādre scīneð

even as from heaven brightly shines

rodores candel. Hē æfter recede wlāt;

of-sky candle. He along hall looked;

hwearf þā be wealle, wāpen hafenade

turned then by wall, weapon raised

heard be hiltum Higelāces ðegn

hard by hilts of-Hygelacthane

1575 yrre ond anræd, — næs sēo ecg fracod

angry and resolute, not-was the edge useless

hilderince, ac hē hrape wolde

to-the-battle-warrior, but he quickly wished

Grendle forgyldan gūðrāsa fela

to-Grendel repay of-war-rushes many

ðāra þe hē geworhte tō West-Denum

of-those which he made on West-Danes

oftor micle ðonne on ānne sið,

oftener by-much than on one occasion,

þonne hē Hrōðgāres heorðgenēatas

when he of-Hrothgar hearth-companions

slōh on sweofote, slāpende frāt

slew in sleep, sleeping devoured

folces Denigea fýftýne men,

of-folk of-Danes fifteen men,

ond ðer swylc ūt offerede,

and other such out carried-off,

lāðlicu lāc. Hē him þæs lēan forgeald,

loathsome booty. He him for-that reward paid,

rēpe cempa, tō ðæs þe hē on ræste geseah

fierce champion, to that-extent that he on bed saw

gūðwērigne Grendel licgan,

war-weary Grendel lie,

aldorlēasne, swā him ær gescōd

lifeless, as him before harmed

hild æt Heorote. Hrā wide sprong,

battle at Heorot. Corpse widely sprang,

syþðan hē æfter dēaðe drepe þrōwade,

when he after death blow suffered,

heorosweng heardne, ond hine þā hēafde becearf.

sword-stroke hard, and him then from-head cut-off.

Sōna þæt gesāwon snottre ceorlas,

At-once that saw wise men,

þā ðe mid Hrōðgāre on holm wliton,
those who with Hrothgar on water gazed,

þæt wæs yðgeblond eal gemenged,
that was wave-surge all mingled,

brim blōde fāh. Blondenfeaxe,
sea with-blood stained. Gray-haired,

1595 gomele ymb gōdne ongeador spræcon,
old-ones about good-one together spoke,

þæt hig þæs ædelinges eft ne wēndon,
that they of-the prince again not expected,

þæt hē sighehrēðig sēcean cōme
that he victory-exultant to-seek would-come

mārne þēoden; þā ðæs monige gewearð,
famous prince; then of-that many became-convinced,

þæt hine sēo brimwylf ābroten hæfde.
that him the sea-wolf destroyed had.

1600 Ðā cōm nōn dāges. Næs ofgēafon
Then came ninth-hour of-day. Headland left

hwate Scyldingas; gewāt him hām þonon
brave Scyldings; went himself home thence

goldwine gumena. Gistas sētan
gold-friend of-men. Guests sat

mōdes sēoce ond on mere staredon;
of-heart sick and on mere stared;

wiston ond ne wēndon, þæt hie heora winedrihten
wished and not expected, that they their friend-lord

1605 selfne gesāwon. — Þā þæt sword ongan
himself would-see. Then that sword began

æfter heaþoswāte hildegicelum,
from battle-blood in-battle-icicles,

wigbil wanian; þæt wæs wundra sum,

war-blade to-dwindle; that was of-wonders one,

þæt hit eal gemealt ise gelicost,

that it all melted to-ice likest,

ðonne forstes bend Fæder onlæteð,

when of-frost bond Father loosens,

onwinded wælrāpas, sē gewæld hafað

unwinds pool-ropes, he-who power has

sæla ond mæla; þæt is sōð Metod.

of-seasons and of-times; that is true Ordainer.

Ne nōm hē in þæm wicum, Weder-Gēata lēod,

Not took he in those dwellings, of-Weder-Geats prince,

māðmæhta mā, þēh hē þær monige geseah,

of-treasure-possession more, though he there many saw,

būton þone hafelan ond þā hilt somod

except the head and the hilt as-well

since fāge; sweord ær gemealt,

with-treasure adorned; sword before melted,

forbarn brōdenmæl; wæs þæt blōd tō þæs hāt,

burned-up patterned-blade; was the blood to that-degree hot,

ættren ellorgæst, sē þær inne swealt.

poisonous alien-spirit, which there inside died.

Sōna wæs on sunde sē þe ær æt sæcce gebād

At-once was in swimming he who before at battle lived-through

wighryre wrāðra, wæter ūp þurhdēaf;

war-fall of-foes, water up dived-through;

wæron yðgeblond eal gefælsod,

were wave-surges all cleansed,

ēacne eardas, þā se ellorgāst

vast regions, when the alien-spirit

1610

1615

1620

oflēt lifdagas ond þās lænan gesceaft.

left life-days and this transitory world.

Cōm þā tō lande lidmanna helm

Came then to land of-seafarers protector

swiðmōd swymman; sǣlāce gefeah,

strong-hearted swimming; in-sea-booty rejoiced,

1625 mægenbyrþenne þāra þe hē him mid hæfde.

in-mighty-burden of-those which he him with had.

Ēodon him þā tōgēanes, Gode þancodon,

Went him then toward, God thanked,

ðryðlic þegna hēap, þēodnes gefēgon,

mighty of-thanes troop, in-prince rejoiced,

þæs þe hī hyne gesundne gesēon mōston.

because that they him sound see might.

Ðā wæs of þām hrōran helm ond byrne

Then was from the vigorous-one helmet and mail-coat

1630 lungre ālȳsed. Lagu drūsade,

quickly loosened. Water grew-calm,

wæter under wolcnum, wældrēore fāg.

water under skies, with-slaughter-blood stained.

Fērdon forð þonon fēpelāstum

Went forth thence on-foot-paths

ferhþum fægne, foldweg mǣton,

in-hearts glad, earth-way measured,

cūpe strāte; cyningbalde men

known road; king-bold men

1635 from þām holmclife hafelan bāron

from the sea-cliff head carried

earfoðlice heora æghwæþrum

laboriously of-them for-each

felamōdigra; fēower scoldon

of-very-brave-ones; four had-to

on þām wælstenge weorcum geferian

on the slaughter-pole with-difficulty carry

tō þām goldsele Grendles hēafod, —

to the gold-ball of-Grendel head,

oþ ðæt semninga tō sele cōmon

until that suddenly to hall came

frome fyrdhwate fēowertýne

bold war-keen fourteen

Gēata gongan; gumdryhten mid

of-Geats going; liege-lord with-them

mōdig on gemonge meodowongas træd.

proud in company mead-fields trod.

Ðā cōm in gān ealdor ðegna,

Then came in going chief of-thanes,

dædcēne mon dōme gewurpad,

deed-bold man with-glory honored,

hæle hildedēor, Hrōðgār grētan.

hero battle-brave, Hrothgar to-greet.

Þā wæs be feaxe on flet boren

Then was by hair onto floor borne

Grendles hēafod, þær guman druncon,

of-Grendel head, where men drank,

egeslic for eorlum ond þære idese mid,

terrible before warriors and the lady with-them,

wlitesēon wrætlic; weras on sāwon.

spectacle wondrous; men upon looked.

1640

1645

1650

Beowulf tells Hrothgar that Hrunting failed him and God showed him the giant sword, whose blade melted in the monster's blood; Heorot is safe now. The golden hilt passes to the old king. On it is the origin of the ancient strife, when the flood destroyed the race of giants, and runes on its gold plates name the man the sword was first made for. Hrothgar praises Beowulf's patient strength and warns him by the example of Heremod, a king who grew bloodthirsty and gave no rings. He tells how God grants a man power until he forgets that it will end.

Bēowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgbēowes:

Beowulf spoke, son of-Ecgtbeow:

‘Hwæt, wē þē þās sǣlāc, sunu Healfdenes,

‘Lo, we to-thee these sea-spoils, son of-Healfdene,

lēod Scyldinga, lustum brōhton

prince of-Scyldings, gladly have-brought

tīres tō tǣcne, þē þū hēr tō lōcast.

of-glory as token, which thou here on lookest.

1655 Ic þæt unsōfte ealdre gedigde,

I that not-easily with-life survived,

wigge under wātere, weorc genēþde

in-battle under water, work ventured

earfoðlice; ætrihte wæs

with-difficulty; straightway would-have-been

gūð getwāfed, nymðe mec God scylde.

fight ended, unless me God bad-shielded.

Ne meahte ic æt hilde mid Hruntinge

Not could I in battle with Hrunting

1660 wiht gewyrca, þēah þæt wāpen duge;

anything accomplish, though that weapon be-good;

ac mē geūðe ylða Waldend,

but me granted of-men Ruler,

þæt ic on wāge geseah wlitig hangian

that I on wall saw beautiful hanging

ealdsweord ēacen — oftost wīsoðe

old-sword mighty most-often guided

winigea lēasum—, þæt ic ðȳ wǣpne gebræd.

of-friends the-bereft, that I with-that weapon drew.

Ofslōh ðā æt þāre sæcce, þā mē sāl āgeald,

Slew then at that fight, when to-me chance granted,

hūses hyrdas. Þā þæt hildebil

of-house guardians. Then that battle-blade

forbarn brogdenmæl, swā þæt blōd gesprang,

burned-up patterned-blade, as the blood sprang,

hātost heaþoswāta. Ic þæt hilt þanan

hottest of-battle-bloods. I the hilt thence

fēondum ætferede; fyrendæda wræc,

from-foes carried-off; crime-deeds avenged,

deaðcwealm Denigea, swā hit gedēfe wæs.

death-slaughter of-Danes, as it fitting was.

Ic hit þē þonne gehāte, þæt þū on Heorote mōst

I it to-thee then promise, that thou in Heorot mayest

sorhlēas swefan mid þinra secga gedryht,

free-of-care sleep with of-thy men band,

ond þegna gehwylc þinra lēoda,

and of-thanes each of-thy people,

duguðe ond iogoþe, þæt þū him ondrædan ne þearft,

of-veterans and of-youths, that thou for-them dread not needst,

þeoden Scyldinga, on þā healfe,

prince of-Scyldings, from that side,

1665

1670

1675

aldorbealu eorlum, swā þū ær dydest.’

life-bale for-warriors, as thou before didst.’

Ðā wæs gylden hilt gamelum rince,

Then was golden hilt to-the-old warrior,

hārum hildfruman on hand gyfen,

gray war-chief into hand given,

enta ārgeweorc; hit on āht gehwearf

of-giants ancient-work; it into possession passed

1680 æfter dēofla hryre Denigea frēan,

after of-devils fall of-Danes to-lord,

wundorsmīpa geweorc; ond þā þās worold ofgeaf

of-wonder-smiths work; and when this world left

gromheort guma, Godes andsaca,

hostile-hearted man, of-God adversary,

morðres scyldig, ond his mōdor ēac;

of-murder guilty, and his mother also;

on gewæld gehwearf woroldcýninga

into possession passed of-world-kings

1685 ðām sēlestan be sām twēonum

to-the best by seas between

ðāra þe on Scedenigge sceattas dælde.

of-those who in Scandinavia treasures dealt.

Hrōðgār maðelode — hylt scēawode,

Hrotgar spoke hilt looked-at,

ealde lāfe, on ðām wæs ōr writen

old heirloom, on which was origin written

fyrngewinnes; syðþan flōd ofslōh,

of-ancient-strife; when flood destroyed,

1690 gifen gēotende gīganta cyn,

ocean pouring of-giants race,

frēcne gefērdon; þæt wæs fremde þēod

terribly they-fared; that was alien people

ēcean Dryhtne; him þæs endelēan

to-eternal Lord; to-them for-that final-reward

þurh wāteres wylm Waldend sealde.

through of-water surge Ruler gave.

Swā wæs on ðām scennum scīran goldes

So was on the plates of-bright gold

þurh rūnstafas rihte gemearcod,

in rune-letters rightly marked,

geseted ond gesæd, hwām þæt sweord geworht,

set-down and said, for-whom the sword wrought,

īrena cyst ārest wære,

of-irons choicest first had-been,

wreōpenhilt ond wyrmfāh. Ðā se wīsa spræc

twisted-bilted and serpent-adorned. Then the wise-one spoke

sunu Healfdenes — swigedon ealle—:

son of-Healfdene fell-silent all:

‘Þæt, lā, mæg secgan sē þe sōð ond riht

‘That, lo, may say he who truth and right

fremeð on folce, feor eal gemon,

performs among people, far all remembers,

eald ēþelweard, þæt ðes eorl wære

old homeland-guardian, that this warrior was

geboren betera! Blæd is āræred

born better! Glory is raised

geond widwegas, wine mīn Bēowulf,

through wide-ways, friend my Beowulf,

ðin ofer þēoda gehwylce. Eal þū hit gepyldum healdest, 1705

thy over peoples each. All thou it with-patience holdest,

- mægen mid mōdes snyttrum. Ic þē sceal mīne gelæstan
strength with of-mind wisdom. I to-thee shall my fulfill
- frēode, swā wit furðum spræcon. Ðū scealt tō frōfre weorþan
friendship, as we-two lately spoke. Thou shalt as comfort become
- eal langtwīdig lēodum þīnum,
all long-lasting to-people thy,
- hæleðum tō helpe. Ne wearð Heremōd swā
to-heroes as help. Not was Heremod so
- 1710 eaforum Ecgwelan, Ār-Scyldingum;
to-sons of-Ecgwela, to-Honor-Scyldings;
- ne gewēox hē him tō willan, ac tō wælfealle
not grew-up he for-them to pleasure, but to slaughter-fall
- ond tō dēaðcwalum Deniga lēodum;
and to death-destruction of-Danes to-people;
- brēat bolgenmōd bēodgenēatas,
killed enraged-hearted table-companions,
- eaxlgesteallan, oþ þæt hē āna hwearf,
shoulder-comrades, until that he alone passed,
- 1715 mære þēoden mondrēamum from.
famous prince human-joys from.
- Ðeah þe hine mihtig God mægenes wynnum,
Though that him mighty God of-might in-joys,
- eafeþum stēpte, ofer ealle men
in-strengths exalted, over all men
- forð gefremede, hwæpere him on ferhþe grēow
forth advanced, yet in-him in spirit grew
- brēosthord blōdrēow; nallas bēagas geaf
breast-board bloodthirsty; not-at-all rings gave
- 1720 Denum æfter dōme; drēamlēas gebād,
to-Danes for glory; joyless lived-to-see,

þæt hē þæs gewinnes weorc þrōwade,
that he of-that strife pain suffered,
 lēodbealo longsum. Ðū þē lār be þon,
people-bale long-lasting. Thou thyself teach by that,
 gumcyste ongit! Ic þis gid be þē
manly-virtue understand! I this tale for thee
 āwræc wintrum frōd. Wundor is tō secgan,
have-recited in-winters wise. Wonder is to say,
 hū mihtig God manna cynne
how mighty God of-men to-race
 þurh sidne sefan snyttru bryttað,
through broad mind wisdom dispenses,
 eard ond eorlscipe; hē āh ealra geweald.
land and nobility; he owns of-all power.
 Hwylum hē on lufan lāteð hworfan
At-times he in love lets wander
 monnes mōdgeþonc mæran cynnes,
of-man mind-thought of-famous race,
 seleð him on ēple eorþan wynne
gives him in homeland of-earth joy
 tō healdanne hlēoburh werā,
to hold stronghold of-men,
 gedēð him swā gewealdene worolde dālas,
makes him so subject of-world parts,
 sīde rīce, þæt hē his selfa ne mæg
wide kingdom, that he of-it himself not can
 his unsnyttrum ende geþencean.
in-his folly end conceive.
 Wunað hē on wiste; nō hine wiht dweleð
Dwells he in feasting; not him at-all binders

1725

1730

1735

ādl nē yldo, nē him inwitsorh
sickness nor age, nor him malicious-sorrow
 on sefa(n) sweorced, nē gesacu ōhwær
in mind darkens, nor strife anywhere
 ecghete ēowed, ac him eal worold
sword-hate shows, but for-him all world
 wendeð on willan; hē þæt wyrse ne con—,
turns to will; he the worse not knows,

XXV · HROTHGAR'S SERMON

Hrothgar goes on: arrogance grows in such a man while his soul's guardian sleeps, until the devil's arrows strike him; he hoards what God gave him, and after his death another spends it freely. He urges Beowulf to choose eternal gains, for sickness, sword, fire, flood, or age will soon overcome him. He himself ruled the Ring-Danes for fifty years until Grendel came, and now thanks God that he has lived to see the monster's head. They feast, and at dawn the Geats prepare to sail; Unferth has Hrunting brought and gives it to Beowulf, who thanks him for the gift and speaks no word against the blade.

1740 oð þæt him on innan oferhygda dæl
until that him in within of-arrogance portion
 weaxed ond wridað; þonne se weard swefeð,
grows and flourishes; then the guardian sleeps,
 sāwele hyrde; bið se slāp tō fæst,
of-soul keeper; is the sleep too fast,
 bisgum gebunden, bona swiðe nēah,
with-cares bound, slayer very near,
 sē þe of flānbogan fyrenum scēoteð.
he who from arrow-bow wickedly shoots.

Ponne bið on hreþre under helm drepen
Then is in breast under helmet struck

1745

biteran strāle — him bebeorgan ne con—,
by-bitter arrow himself protect not can,

wōm wundorbebodum wergan gāstes;
by-crooked strange-commands of-accursed spirit;

þinceð him tō lýtēl, þæt hē lange hēold,
seems to-him too little, what he long held,

gȳtsað gromhȳdig, nallas on gylp seleð
covets hostile-minded, not-at-all in pride gives

fætte bēagas, ond hē þā forðgesceaft
plated rings, and he the future

1750

forgyteð ond forgȳmeð, þæs þe him ær God sealde,
forgets and neglects, of-that which him before God gave,

wuldres Waldend, weorðmynda dæl.
of-glory Ruler, of-honors portion.

Hit on endestæf eft gelimpeð,
It in end afterward happens,

þæt se lichoma lāne gedreoseð,
that the body transitory decays,

fæge gefealleð; fēhð oþer tō,
doomed falls; takes other over,

1755

sē þe unmunlice mādmas dāleþ,
he who without-regret treasures deals,

eorles ārgestrēon, egesan ne gȳmeð.
of-warrior old-treasure, fear not heeds.

Bebeorh þē ðone bealonið, Bēowulf lēofa,
Guard thyself against-that evil-malice, Beowulf dear,

secg[a] betsta, ond þē þæt sēle gecēos,
of-men best, and for-thyself the better choose,

- 1760 ēce rādas; oferhȳda ne gȳm,
eternal gains; arrogance not heed,
 mære cempa! Nū is þīnes mægnes blāð
famous champion! Now is of-thy strength glory
 āne hwile; eft sōna bið,
for-one while; afterward soon will-be,
 þæt þec ādl oððe ecg eafopes getwāfeð,
that thee sickness or sword of-strength deprives,
 oððe fȳres feng, oððe flōdes wylm,
or of-fire grasp, or of-flood surge,
 1765 oððe gripe mēces, oððe gāres fliht,
or grip of-sword, or of-spear flight,
 oððe atol yldo; oððe ēagena bearhtm
or terrible age; or of-eyes brightness
 forsited ð ond forsworced; semninga bið,
fails and darkens; suddenly will-be,
 þæt ðec, dryhtguma, dēað oferswȳðeð.
that thee, warrior, death overpower.
 Swā ic Hring-Dena hund missēra
So I of-Ring-Danes hundred of-half-years
 1770 wēold under wolcnum ond hig wigge belēac
ruled under skies and them by-war protected
 manigum mægþa geond þysne middangeard,
from-many tribes throughout this middle-earth,
 æscum ond ecgum, þæt ic mē ænigne
with-spears and with-swords, so-that I for-myself any
 under swegles begong gesacan ne tealde.
under of-sky expanse adversary not counted.
 Hwæt, mē þæs on ēþle edwenden cwōm,
Lo, to-me of-this in homeland reversal came,

gyrn æfter gomene, seopðan Grendel wearð,
grief after joy, since Grendel became,

1775

ealdgewinna, ingenga mīn;
old-enemy, invader my;

ic þære sōcne singāles wæg
I from-that persecution continually bore

mōdceare micle. Þæs sig Metode þanc,
heart-care great. For-this be to-Ordainer thanks,

ēcean Dryhtne, þæs ðe ic on aldre gebād,
to-eternal Lord, for-that that I in life lived-to-see,

þæt ic on þone hafelan heorodrēorigne
that I on the head sword-gory

1780

ofer eald gewin ēagum starige!
after old strife with-eyes gaze!

Gā nū tō setle, symbolwynne drēoh
Go now to seat, feast-joy enjoy

wiggeweorþað; unc sceal worn fela
war-honored; for-us-two shall multitude many

māþma gemænra, siþðan morgen bið.
of-treasures shared, when morning comes.'

Gēat wæs glædmōd, gēong sōna tō,
Geat was glad-hearted, went at-once thither,

1785

setles nēosan, swā se snottra heht.
seat to-seek, as the wise-one bade.

Þā wæs eft swā ær ellenrōfum,
Then was again as before for-the-courage-famed,

fletsittendum fægere gereorded
for-ball-sitters fairly feast-prepared

nīowan stefne. — Nihthelm geswearc
with-new turn. Night-helm darkened

- 1790 **deorc ofer dryhtgumum. Duguð eal ārās;**
dark over retainers. Veterans all arose;
- wolde blondenfeax beddes nēosan,**
wished gray-haired bed to-seek,
- gamela Scylding. Gēat unigmetes wēl,**
old Scylding. Geat immeasurably well,
- rōfne randwigan restan lyste;**
brave shield-warrior to-rest (it)-pleased;
- sōna him seleþegn siðes wērgum,**
at-once him hall-thane of-journey for-weary,
- 1795 **feorrancundum forð wisade,**
for-the-far-come forth guided,
- sē for andrysnum ealle beweotede**
who out-of courtesy all attended-to
- þegnes þearfe, swylce þȳ dōgore**
of-thane need, such-as in-that day
- heapoliðende habban scoldon.**
battle-sailors have were-wont.
- Reste hine þā rūmheort; reced hliuade**
Rested himself then great-hearted-one; hall towered
- 1800 **gēap ond goldfāh; gæst inne swæf,**
vaulted and gold-adorned; guest within slept,
- oþ þæt hrefn blaca heofones wynne**
until that raven black of-heaven joy
- bliðheort bodode. Ðā cōm beorht scacan**
blithe-hearted announced. Then came bright hastening
- [scīma ofer sceaðwa]; scaþan ðonetton,**
light over shadows; warriors hastened,
- wæron æþelingas eft tō lēodum**
were princes back to people

fūse tō farenne; wolde feor þanon

eager to go; wished far thence

cuma collenferhð cēoles nēosan.

guest bold-spirited ship to-seek.

Heht þā se hearda Hrunting beran

Commanded then the bold-one Hrunting to-bear

sunu Ecglāfes, heht his sweord niman,

son of-Ecglaf, bade his sword take,

lēoflic īren; — sægde him þæs lēanes þanc,

dear iron; said to-him for-that reward thanks,

cwæð, hē þone gūðwine gōdne tealde,

said, he the war-friend good counted,

wigcræftigne, nales wordum lōg

war-skilled, not-at-all with-words blamed

mēces ecge; þæt wæs mōdig secg. —

of-sword edge; that was brave man.

Ond þā siððfrome, searwum gearwe

And when eager-to-set-out, with-armor ready

wīgend wāron; ēode weorð Denum

warriors were; went honored to-Danes

æþeling tō yppan, þær se oþer wæs,

prince to high-seat, where the other was,

hæle hildedēor Hrōðgār grētte.

hero battle-brave Hrothgar greeted.

1805

1810

1815

Beowulf takes his leave, promising thousands of thanes, with Hygelac's backing, if Hrothgar's neighbors ever threaten him; Hrethric will find friends among the Geats. Hrothgar marvels at such wisdom in so young a man and says the Geats could choose no better king if Hygelac falls. Beowulf has made peace between the peoples for as long as Hrothgar rules; Hrothgar gives him twelve more treasures and kisses him, weeping, expecting they will not meet again. As Beowulf goes down to his ship, Hrothgar's gift is often praised; he is a king blameless until age takes his strength.

Bēowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgbēowes:

Beowulf spoke, son of-Ecgtbeow:

‘Nū wē sāliðend secgan wyllað

‘Now we seafarers say wish

feorran cumene, þæt wē fundiaþ

from-afar come, that we are-eager

1820 Higelāc sēcan. Wæron hēr tela

Higelac to-seek. Were-we here well

willum bewenede; þū ūs wēl dohtest.

to-our-desire entertained; thou us well hast-treated.

Gif ic þonne on eorþan ōwihte mæg

If I then on earth at-all can

þinre mōdlufan māran tilian,

thy heart-love greater earn,

gumena dryhten, ðonne ic gýt dyde,

of-men lord, than I yet did,

1825 gūðgeweorca, ic bēo gearo sōna.

of-war-deeds, I will-be ready at-once.

Gif ic þæt gefricge ofer flōða begang,

If I that learn over of-floods expanse,

þæt þec ymbsittend egesan þýwað,

that thee neighbors with-terror threaten,

swā þec hetende hwilum dydon,

as thee enemies at-times did,

ic ðē þūsenda þegna bringe,

I to-thee thousands of-thanes will-bring,

hæleþa tō helpe. Ic on Higelāce wāt,

of-heroes as help. I of Hygelac know,

Gēata dryhten, þēah ðe hē geong sý,

of-Geats lord, though that he young be,

folces hyrde, þæt hē mec fremman wile

of-people guardian, that he me support will

wordum ond weorcum, þæt ic þē wēl herige

with-words and with-works, that I thee well may-honor

ond þē tō gēoce gārholt bere,

and to-thee as help spear-wood may-bear,

mægenes fultum, þār ðe bið manna þearf.

of-might support, where to-thee is of-men need.

Gif him þonne Hrēþric tō hofum Gēata

If himself then Hrethric to courts of-Geats

geþingeð þēodnes bearn, hē mæg þār fela

decides of-prince son, he can there many

frēonda findan; feorcýpðe bēoð

of-friends find; far-lands are

sēlran gesōhte þāem þe him selfa dēah.

better sought by-him who for-him himself is-strong.'

Hrōðgār maþelode him on andsware:

Hrothgar spoke him in answer:

‘Þē þā wordcwydas wigtig Drihten

‘To-thee those words wise Lord

1830

1835

1840

on sefan sende; ne hȳrde ic snotorlicor
into mind sent; not heard I more-wisely

on swā geongum feore guman þingian.
in so young life man speak.

Þū eart mægenes strang, ond on mōde frōd,
Thou art in-strength strong, and in mind wise,

1845 wis wordcwida! Wēn ic talige,
prudent of-words! Expectation I count,

gif þæt gegangeð, þæt ðe gār nymeð,
if that happens, that that spear takes,

hild heorugrimme Hrēþles eaferan,
battle sword-grim of-Hrethel son,

ād̥l oþðe iren ealdor ðinne,
sickness or iron lord thy,

folces hȳrde, ond þū þin feorh hafast,
of-people guardian, and thou thy life hast,

1850 þæt þe Sǣ-Gēatas sēlran næbben
that that Sea-Geats better have-not

tō gecēosenne cyning ænigne,
to choose king any,

hordweard hǣleþa, gyf þū healdan wylt
board-guardian of-heroes, if thou hold wilt

māga rīce. Mē þin mōdsefa
of-kinsmen kingdom. Me thy spirit

licað leng swā wēl, lēofa Bēowulf.
pleases the-longer the better, dear Beowulf.

1855 Hafast þū gefēred, þæt þām folcum sceal,
Hast thou brought-about, that for-the peoples shall,

Gēata lēodum ond Gār-Denum
of-Geats to-people and to-Spear-Danes

sib gemæne, ond sacu restan,
peace shared, and strife rest,
inwitniþas, þē hīe ær drugon,
malice-enmities, which they before endured,
wesan, þenden ic wealde wīdan rīces,
be, while I rule wide kingdom,

māþmas gemæne, manig oþerne 1860
treasures shared, many other

gōdum gegrēttan ofer ganotes bæð;
with-good-things greet over of-gannet bath;

sceal hringnaca ofer heafu bringan
shall ringed-ship over seas bring

lāc ond luftācen. Ic þā lēode wāt
gifts and love-tokens. I the people know

gē wið fēond gē wið frēond fæste geworhte,
both toward foe and toward friend firmly disposed,

æghwæs untæle ealde wisan.' 1865
in-every-way blameless in-old manner.'

Ðā gīt him eorla hlēo inne gesealde,
Then yet him of-warriors protector within gave,

mago Healfdenes māþmas twelfe;
son of-Healfdene treasures twelve;

hēt [h]ine mid þām lācum lēode swāse
bade him with those gifts people dear

sēcean on gesyntum, snūde eft cuman.
seek in safety, quickly again come.

Gecyste þā cyning æpelum gōd, 1870
Kissed then king in-lineage good,

þēoden Scyldinga ðegn[a] betstan
prince of-Scyldings of-thanes best

ond be healse genam; hruron him tēaras
and by neck took; fell from-him tears

blondenfeaxum. Him wæs bēga wēn
from-the-gray-haired. To-him was of-both expectation

ealdum infrōdum, ōþres swiðor,
to-old very-wise, of-second more-strongly,

1875 þæt h[ī]e seoðða(n) [nō] gesēon mōston,
that they afterward not see might,

mōdige on meþle. Wæs him se man tō þon lēof,
brave-ones in council. Was to-him the man to that dear,

þæt hē þone brēostwylm forberan ne mehte;
that he the breast-surge restrain not could;

ac him on hreþre hygebendum fæst
but him in breast by-heart-bonds fast

æfter dēorum men dyrne langað
for dear man secret longing

1880 born wið blōde. Him Bēowulf þanan,
burned in blood. Himself Beowulf thence,

gūðrinc goldwlanc græsmoldan træd
warrior gold-proud grass-earth trod

since hrēmig; sǣgenga bād
in-treasure exulting; sea-goer waited

āge[n]dfrēan, sē þe on ancre rād.
owner-lord, that which at anchor rode.

Þā wæs on gange gifu Hrōðgāres
Then was on journey gift of-Hrothgar

1885 oft geæhted; þæt wæs ān cyning
often praised; that was peerless king

æghwæs orleahstre, oþ þæt hine ylðo benam
in-every-way blameless, until that him age deprived
 mægenes wynnum, sē þe oft manegum scōd.
of-strength of-joys, that which often to-many harmed.

XXVII • HYGD AND THRYTH

The Geats board their ship, Beowulf gives the Danish boat-guard a gold-bound sword, and the ship sails home to the Geatish cliffs. The treasure is carried up toward Hygelac's hall, where his young queen Hygd is wise and generous with gifts. The poet contrasts her with Thryth, a queen who had put to death any man but her lord who dared to look at her. Married to Offa, she changed her ways and became famous for her goodness, while Offa ruled wisely and was praised for his gifts and his wars.

Cwōm þā tō flōde felamōdigra,
Came then to sea of-very-brave-ones,
 hægstealdra [hēap]; hringnet bāron,
of-young-warriors troop; ring-nets bore,
 locene leoðosyrca. Landweard onfand
locked limb-shirts. Coast-guard perceived
 eftsīð eorla, swā hē ær dyde;
return of-warriors, as he before did;
 nō hē mid hearme of hliðes nōsan
not he with insult from of-cliff headland
 gæs(tas) grētte, ac him tōgēanes rād,
the-strangers greeted, but them toward rode,
 cwæð þæt wilcuman Wedera lēodum
said that welcome of-Wēders to-people
 scaþan scīrhave tō scipe fōron.
warriors bright-armored to ship went.

1890

1895

Ðā wæs on sande sǣgēap naca
Then was on sand sea-curved vessel
 hladen herewǣdum hringedstefna,
laden with-war-garments ring-prowed-ship,
 mēarum ond mǣðmum; mæst hlifade
with-horses and with-treasures; mast towered
 ofer Hrōðgāres hordgestrēonum.
over of-Hrothgar board-treasures.

1900 Hē þām bātwearde bunden golde
He to-the boat-guard bound with-gold
 swurd gesealde, þæt hē syðþan wæs
sword gave, that he afterward was
 on meodubence mǣþme þý weorþra,
on mead-bench by-treasure the more-honored,
 yrfelāfe. Gewāt him on naca
by-herloom. Went itself onward vessel
 drēfan dēop wæter, Dena land ofgeaf.
to-stir deep water, of-Danes land left.

1905 Ðā wæs be mæste merehrægla sum,
Then was by mast of-sea-garments one,
 segl sǣle fæst; sundwudu þunede;
sail with-rope fast; sea-wood groaned;
 nō þær wēgflotan wind ofer yðum
not there wave-floater wind over waves
 siðes getwǣfde; sǣgenga fōr,
from-journey hindered; sea-goer went,
 flēat fāmigheals forð ofer yðe,
floated foamy-necked forth over wave,
 1910 bundenstefna ofer brimstrēamas,
bound-prow over sea-streams,

þæt hīe Gēata clifu ongitan meah-ton,
that they of-Geats cliffs perceive could,

cūþe næssas; cēol ūp geþrang
known headlands; keel up pressed

lyftgeswenced, on lande stōd.
wind-driven, on land stood.

Hraþe wæs æt holme hȳðweard geara,
Quickly was at sea harbor-guard ready,

sē þe ær lange tid lēofra manna
he who before long time for-dear men

fūs æt faroðe feor wlātode;
eager at shore far had-gazed;

sælde tō sande sidfæþme scip
moored to sand broad-bosomed ship

oncerbendum fæst, þȳ lās hym ȳþa ðrym
with-anchor-bonds fast, by-that less it of-waves force

wudu wynsuman forwrecan meahte.
wood winsome destroy could.

Hēt þā ūp beran æþelinga gestrēon,
Commanded then up to-bear of-princes treasure,

frætwe ond fætgold; næs him feor þanon
ornaments and plated-gold; not-was to-them far thence

tō gesēcenne since bryttan,
to seek of-treasure giver,

Higelac Hreþling, þær æt hām wunað
Hygelac Hrethling, where at home dwells

selfa mid gesiðum sǣwealle nēah.
himself with companions sea-wall near.

Bold wæs betlic, bregorōf cyning,
Building was splendid, prince-brave king,

1915

1920

1925

hêa healle, Hygd swiðe geong,
high in-hall, Hygd very young,
 wīs wēlpungen, þēah ðe wintra lýt
wise well-accomplished, though that of-winters few
 under burhlocan gebiden hæbbe,
within fortress lived-through has,
 Hæreþes dohtor; næs hīo hnāh swā þēah,
of-Haereth daughter; not-was she mean so though,

1930 nē tō gnēað gifa Gēata lēodum,
nor too sparing of-gifts of-Geats to-people,
 mǣpmgestrēona. Mōd Prȳðe [ne] wæg,
of-treasure-riches. Pride of-Thryth not bore,

fremu folces cwēn, firen' ondrysne;
excellent of-people queen, crime terrible;
 nānig þæt dorste dēor genēþan
none that dared bold undertake
 swā̅sra gesiða, nefne sinfrêa,
of-dear companions, except great-lord,

1935 þæt hire an dāges ēagum starede;
that to-her on by-day with-eyes gazed;
 ac him wælbende weotode tealde
but for-him slaughter-bonds destined counted

handgewriþene; hraþe seopðan wæs
hand-twisted; quickly afterward was
 æfter mundgripe mēce geþinged,
after hand-grip sword appointed,

þæt hit sceādenmāl scȳran mōste,
that it patterned-blade settle might,

1940 cwealmbealu cȳðan. Ne bið swylc cwēnlic þēaw
death-bale make-known. Not is such queenly custom

idese tō efnanne, þeah ðe hio ænlicu sý,
for-woman to perform, though that she peerless be,

þætte freoðuwebbe fēores onsāce
that peace-weaver of-life deprive

æfter ligetorne lēofne mannan.
after pretended-injury dear man.

Hūru þæt onhōhsnod[e] Hemminges mæg:
Indeed that stopped of-Hemming kinsman:

ealodrincende oðer sædan,
ale-drinking-ones other said,

þæt hio lēodbealewa lās gefremede,
that she of-people-evils less performed,

inwitniða, syððan ærest wearð
of-malicious-acts, after first was

gyfen goldhroden geongum ceman,
given gold-adorned to-young champion,

æðelum diore, syððan hio Offan flet
in-lineage dear, when she of-Offa hall

ofer fealone flōd be fæder lāre
over tawny flood by of-father counsel

sīðe gesōhte; ðær hio syððan well
by-journey sought; where she afterward well

in gumstōle, gōde mære,
on throne, for-good famous,

lifgesceafta lifigende brēc,
of-life-lot living made-use,

hiold hēahlufan wið hælepa brego,
held high-love with of-heroes prince,

ealles moncynnes mīne gefræge
of-all mankind by-my bearing

1945

1950

1955

þone sēlestan bi sām twēonum,
the best by seas between,
 eormencynnes; forðām Offa wæs
of-vast-race; because Offa was
 geofum ond gūðum, gārcēne man,
for-gifts and for-wars, spear-bold man,
 wide geweorðod, wīsdōme hēold
widely honored, with-wisdom held
 1960 ēðel sinne; — þonon Ēomēr wōc
homeland his; thence Eomer arose
 hæleðum tō helpe, Hem[m]inges mæg,
to-heroes as help, of-Hemming kinsman,
 nefa Garmundes, niða cræftig.
grandson of-Garmund, of-hostilities skilled.

XXVIII • FREAWARU

Beowulf and his men walk up the shore to Hygelac's hall, where Queen Hygd pours the mead and Hygelac asks how the voyage went, confessing that he had begged Beowulf not to go. Beowulf tells of avenging Hrothgar's sorrow on Grendel and of his welcome in Heorot, where Hrothgar seated him beside his own son and Hrothgar's daughter Freawaru carried the ale-cup. She is promised to Ingeld, son of Froda, to settle the feud with the Heathobards, but Beowulf doubts the peace will hold: when she enters Ingeld's hall with her Danish retinue, the Heathobards will see their ancestors' heirlooms gleaming on the Danes.

Gewāt him ðā se hearda mid his hondscrole
Went himself then the bold-one with his hand-troop
 sylf æfter sande sǣwong tredan,
himself along shore sea-plain to-tread,

wide	waroðas.	Woruldcandel	scān,	1965
<i>wide</i>	<i>shores.</i>	<i>World-candle</i>	<i>shone,</i>	
sigel	sūðan	fūs.	Hī sið ðrugon,	
<i>sun</i>	<i>from-south</i>	<i>hastening.</i>	<i>They journey accomplished,</i>	
elne	geēodon,	tō ðæs ðe	eorla hlēo,	
<i>with-courage</i>	<i>went,</i>	<i>to that-(place)</i>	<i>where of-warriors protector,</i>	
bonan	Ongenþēoes	burgum	in innan,	
<i>slayer</i>	<i>of-Ongentbeow</i>	<i>strongholds</i>	<i>in within,</i>	
geongne	gūðcýning	gōdne	gefrūnon	
<i>young</i>	<i>war-king</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>heard</i>	
hringas	dælan.	Higelāce	wæs	1970
<i>rings</i>	<i>to-deal.</i>	<i>To-Hygelac</i>	<i>was</i>	
sið	Bēowulfes	snūde	gecýðed,	
<i>journey</i>	<i>of-Beowulf</i>	<i>quickly</i>	<i>made-known,</i>	
þæt	ðær on	wordig	wigendra hlēo,	
<i>that</i>	<i>there into</i>	<i>enclosure</i>	<i>of-warriors protector,</i>	
lindgestealla	lifigende	cwōm,		
<i>shield-comrade</i>	<i>living</i>	<i>came,</i>		
heaðolāces	hāl	tō hofe	gongan.	
<i>from-battle-play</i>	<i>unhurt</i>	<i>to court</i>	<i>walking.</i>	
Hraðe	wæs gerýmed,	swā se	rica bebēad,	1975
<i>Quickly</i>	<i>was cleared,</i>	<i>as the mighty-one</i>	<i>commanded,</i>	
fēðgestum	flet	innanweard.		
<i>for-foot-guests</i>	<i>hall</i>	<i>inside.</i>		
Gesæt	þā wið	sylfne	sē ðā sæcce genæs,	
<i>Sat</i>	<i>then beside</i>	<i>(him)-himself</i>	<i>he-who then strife survived,</i>	
mæg	wið mæge,	syððan	mandryhten	
<i>kinsman</i>	<i>with kinsman,</i>	<i>after</i>	<i>liege-lord</i>	
þurh	hlēoðorcwyde	holdne	gegrētte,	
<i>with</i>	<i>formal-speech</i>	<i>loyal</i>	<i>greeted,</i>	

1980 mēaglum wordum. Meoduscencum hwearf
with-weighty words. With-mead-cups went

geond þæt healrēced Hæreðes dohtor,
throughout that hall-building of-Haereth daughter,

lufode ðā lēode, liðwāge bær
cared-for the people, drink-cup bore

hæleðum tō handa. Higelāc ongan
to-heroes into hand. Hygelac began

sinne geseldan in sele þām hēan
his hall-companion in hall the high

1985 fægre fricgcean, hyne fyrwet bræc,
courteously to-question, him curiosity pressed,

hwylce Sæ-Gēata siðas wæron:
what of-Sea-Geats adventures were:

‘Hū lomp ēow on lāde, lēofa Biowulf,
‘How fared-it for-you on journey, dear Beowulf,

þā ðū fāringa feorr gehogodest
when thou suddenly far resolvedst

sæcce sēcean ofer sealt wæter,
strife to-seek over salt water,

1990 hilde tō Hiorote? Ac ðū Hrōðgāre
battle at Heorot? But thou for-Hrothgar

wīdcūðne wēan wihte gebēttest,
widely-known woe at-all didst-remedy,

mārum ðēodne? Ic ðæs mōdceare
famous prince? I for-this heart-care

sorhwylmum sēað, siðe ne trūwode
with-sorrow-surges seethed, venture not trusted

lēofes mannes; ic ðē lange bād,
of-dear man; I thee long asked,

þæt ðū þone wælgæst wihte ne grētte,
that thou the slaughter-spirit at-all not shouldst-approach,

1995

lēte Sūð-Dene sylfe geweorðan
shouldst-let South-Danes themselves settle

gūðe wið Grendel. Gode ic þanc secge,
war with Grendel. To-God I thanks say,

þæs ðe ic ðē gesundne gesēon mōste.
because that I thee sound see might.'

Biowulf maðelode, bearn Ecgðioes:
Beowulf spoke, son of-Ecgtheow:

‘Þæt is undyrne, dryhten Higelāc,
‘That is not-bidden, lord Hygelac,

2000

(micel) gemēting, monegum fira,
great meeting, to-many of-men,

hwylc (orleg)hwil uncer Grendles
what battle-time of-us-two of-Grendel

wearð on ðām wange, þær hē worna fela
was on that plain, where he great-number many

Sige-Scyldingum sorge gefremede,
to-Victory-Scyldings sorrow caused,

ymðe tō aldre; ic ðæt eall gewræc,
misery for ever; I that all avenged,

2005

swā begylpan [ne] þearf Grendeles māga
so boast not need of-Grendel of-kinsmen

(ǣnig) ofer eorðan ūthlem þone,
any over earth dawn-uproar that,

sē ðe lengest leofað lāðan cynnes,
he who longest lives of-bateful race,

f(ācne) bifongen. — Ic ðær furðum cwōm
with-treachery encompassed. I there first came

- 2010 *tō ðām hringsele* *Hrōðgār grētan;*
to the ring-ball *Hrothgar to-greet;*
sōna mē se mæra *mago Healfdenes,*
at-once me the famous *son of-Healfdene,*
syððan hē mōdsefan *mīnne cūðe,*
after he mind *my knew,*
wið his sylfes sunu *setl getæhte.*
beside his own son *seat assigned.*
Weorod wæs on wyne; *ne seah ic wīdan feorh*
Company was in joy; *not saw I (in)-wide life*
- 2015 *under heofones hwealf* *healsittendra*
under of-heaven vault *of-ball-sitters*
medudrēam māran. *Hwilum mæru cwēn,*
mead-joy greater. *At-times famous queen,*
frīðusibb folca *flet eall geondhwearf,*
peace-pledge of-peoples ball all went-throughout,
bælde byre geonge; *oft hīo bēahwriðan*
encouraged youths young; *often she ring-twist*
secge (sealde), *ær hīe tō setle gēong.*
to-man gave, *before she to seat went.*
- 2020 *Hwilum for (d)uguðe* *dohtor Hrōðgāres*
At-times before veterans *daughter of-Hrothgar*
eorlum on ende *ealuwæge bær,*
to-warriors at end *ale-cup bore,*
þā ic Frēaware *fletsittende*
whom I Freawaru *ball-sitters*
nemnan hýrde, *þær hīo (næ)gled sinc*
name heard, *where she nail-studded treasure*
hæleðum sealde. *Sio gehāten (is),*
to-heroes gave. *She promised is,*

geong goldhroden, gladum suna Frōdan;

young gold-adorned, to-glad son of-Froda;

(h)afað þæs geworden wine Scyldinga,

has for-that agreed friend of-Scyldings,

rīces hyrde, ond þæt rād talað,

of-kingdom guardian, and that counsel considers,

þæt hē mid ðy wīfe wælfæhða dæl,

that he with that woman of-slaughter-feuds part,

sæcca gesette. Oft seldan hwær

of-strifes may-settle. Often seldom anywhere

æfter lēodhryre lýtla hwile

after prince-fall little while

bongār būgeð, þeah sēo brȳd duge!

deadly-spear rests, though the bride be-good!

Mæg þæs þonne ofþyncan ðeodne Heaðo-Beardna

May for-that then displease to-prince of-Heathobards

ond þegna gehwām þāra lēoda,

and of-thanes to-each of-those people,

þonne hē mid fæmnan on flett gāð, —

when he with lady into hall goes,

dryhtbearn Dena duguða biwenede;

noble-son of-Danes by-veterans attended;

on him gladiað gomelra lāfe,

on him gleam of-old-ones heirlooms,

heard ond hringmæl Heaða-Bear[d]na gestrēon,

bard and ring-patterned of-Heathobards treasure,

þenden hie ðām wæpnum wealdan mōston, —

while they those weapons wield might,

2025

2030

2035

Beowulf foresees that the Danish peace will fail: at the feast an old Heathobard will show a young warrior a Dane wearing the sword the young man's father carried when the Danes killed him, and goad him until blood is shed. Then he tells Hygelac of the fight in Heorot, where Grendel swallowed Hondscioh and fled leaving his hand, and of the feasting that followed. Grendel's mother killed Aeschere, and at Hrothgar's plea Beowulf sought her in the mere, cut off her head, and was rewarded again.

oð ðæt hie forlæddan tō ðām lindplegan
until that they led-to-ruin to the shield-play

2040 swāse gesiðas ond hyra sylfra feorh.
dear companions and their own lives.

Þonne cwið æt bēore sē ðe bēah gesyhð,
Then says at beer he who ring sees,
eald æscwiga, sē ðe eall gem(an),
old spear-warrior, he who all remembers,

gārwealm gumena — him bið grim sefa—,
spear-death of-men to-him is grim mind,
onginneð geōmormōd geong(um) cempa
begins sad-bearted to-young champion

2045 þurh hreðra gehygd higes cunnian,
through of-breast thoughts mind to-test,
wigbealu weccan, ond þæt word ācwyð:
war-bale to-awaken, and this word speaks:

“Meaht ðū, mīn wine, mēce gecnāwan,
“Canst thou, my friend, sword recognize,
þone þīn fæder tō gefeohte bær
which thy father to fight bore

under heregrīman hindeman siðe,
under war-mask on-last time,
 dýre iren, þær hyne Dene slōgon,
precious iron, where him Danes slew,
 wēoldon wælstōwe, syððan Wiðergyld læg,
held slaughter-place, after Withergyld lay,
 æfter hæleþa hryre, hwate Scyldungas?
after of-heroes fall, bold Scyldings?
 Nū hēr þāra banena byre nāthwylces
Now here of-those slayers son of-some-one
 frætsum hrēmig on flet gæð,
in-ornaments exulting into hall goes,
 morðres gylpeð, ond þone mǣðpum byreð,
of-murder boasts, and the treasure bears,
 þone þe ðū mid rihte rædan sceoldest.”
which that thou by right possess shouldst.”
 Manað swā ond myndgað mǣla gehwylce
Urges so and reminds occasions on-each
 sārūm wordum, oð ðæt sǣl cymeð,
with-bitter words, until that time comes,
 þæt se fæmnan þegn fore fæder dædum
that the of-lady thane for of-father deeds
 æfter billes bite blōdfāg swefeð,
after of-sword bite blood-stained sleeps,
 ealdres scyldig; him se oðer þonan
of-life forfeit; him the other thence
 losað (li)figende, con him land gear.
escapes living, knows himself land well.
 Þonne bīoð (āb)rocene on bā healfe
Then will-be broken on both sides

2050

2055

2060

- āðsweord eorla; (syðð)ðan Ingelde
oath-swearings of-warriors; after in-Ingeld
- 2065 weallað wælniðas, ond him wiðflufan
surge slaughter-batreds, and to-him wife-love
 æfter cearwælmum cōlran weorðað.
after care-surges cooler becomes.
- Pȳ ic Heaðo-Bear[d]na hylðo ne telge,
Therefore I of-Heathobards loyalty not count,
 dryhtsibbe dæl Denum unfæcne,
of-lordly-alliance share to-Danes free-of-guile,
 frēondscipe fæstne. Ic sceal forð spreca
friendship firm. I shall forth speak
- 2070 gēn ymbe Grendel, þæt ðū geare cunne,
further about Grendel, that thou well mayest-know,
 since brytta, tō hwan syððan wearð
of-treasure giver, to what afterward came
 hondræs hæleða. Syððan heofones gim
hand-rush of-heroes. After of-heaven gem
 glād ofer grundas, gæst yrre cwōm,
glided over lands, spirit angry came,
 eatol æfengrom ūser nēosan,
terrible evening-fierce us to-seek,
- 2075 ðær wē gesunde sāl weardodon.
where we unharmed hall guarded.
 Þær wæs Hondscið hild onsæge,
There was to-Hondscið battle fatal,
 feorhbealu fægum; hē fyrrest læg,
life-bale to-the-doomed-one; he first lay,
 gyrðed cempa; him Grendel wearð,
armed champion; to-him Grendel became,

mǣrum maguþegne tō mūðbonan,

to-famous young-thane as mouth-slayer,

lēofes mannes lic eall forswalg.

of-dear man body all swallowed.

Nō ðȳ ær ūt ðā gēn idelhende

Not the sooner out then yet empty-handed

bona blōdigtoð, bealewa gemyndig,

slayer bloody-toothed, of-evils mindful,

of ðām goldsele gongan wolde;

from that gold-hall go would;

ac hē mægnes rōf mīn costode,

but he in-strength famed me tested,

grāpode gearofolm. Glōf hangode

grasped ready-banded. Glove hung

sīd ond syllic, searobendum fæst;

broad and strange, with-cunning-bands fast;

sīo wæs orðoncum eall gegyrwed

it was with-skills all prepared

dēofles cræftum ond dracan fellum.

of-devil with-crafts and of-dragon with-skins.

Hē mec þær on innan unsynnigne,

He me there in within innocent,

dior dædfruma gedōn wolde

fierce deed-doer put would

manigra sumne; hyt ne mihte swā,

of-many one; it not could so,

syððan ic on yrrē uppriht āstōd.

after I in anger upright stood.

Tō lang ys tō reccenne, hū i(c) ðām lēodsceaðan

Too long is to recount, how I to-the people-ravager

2080

2085

2090

yfla gehwylces ondlēan forgeald;

of-evils for-each requital repaid;

2095 þær ic, þēoden mīn, þīne lēode

there I, prince my, thy people

weorðode weorcum. Hē on weg losade,

honored by-works. He on way escaped,

lȳtle hwile lifwynna br(ēa)c;

little while life-joys enjoyed;

hwæpre him sio swiðre swaðe weardade

yet of-him the right(-band) track guarded

hand on Hiorde, ond hē hēan ðonan,

hand in Heorot, and he abject thence,

2100 mōdes geōmor meregrund gefēoll.

of-heart sad mere-bottom fell-to.

Mē þone wælræs wine Scildunga

Me for-that slaughter-rush friend of-Scyldings

fættan golde fela lēanode,

with-plated gold much rewarded,

manegum mādum, syððan mergen cōm,

with-many treasures, when morning came,

ond wē tō symble geseten hæfdon.

and we to feast seated had.

2105 Þær wæs gidd ond glēo; gomela Scilding,

There was song and mirth; old Scylding,

felafricgende feorran rehte;

much-learned from-far-back told;

hwilum hildedēor hearpan wyne,

at-times battle-brave-one of-harp joy,

gomenwudu grētte, hwilum gyd āwræc

joy-wood touched, at-times song recited

sōð ond sārlic, hwilum syllic spell

true and sorrowful, at-times strange tale

rehte æfter rihte rūmheort cyning;

told according-to right great-hearted king;

hwilum eft ongan eldo gebunden,

at-times again began by-age bound,

gomel gūðwiga gioguðe cwīðan,

old war-warrior youth to-lament,

hildestrongo; hreðer inne wēoll,

battle-strength; heart within surged,

þonne hē wintrum frōd worn gemunde.

when he in-winters wise multitude remembered.

Swā wē þær inne andlangne dæg

So we there within whole day

nīode nāman, oð ðæt niht becwōm

pleasure took, until that night came

oðer tō yldum. Þā wæs eft hraðe

another to men. Then was in-turn quickly

gearo gyrnwræce Grendeles mōdor,

ready for-grief-vengeance of-Grendel mother,

sīðode sorhfull; sunu dēað fornam,

journeyed sorrowful; son death took,

wighete Wedra. Wif unhýre

war-bate of-Weders. Woman monstrous

hyre bearn gewræc, beorn ācwealde

her son avenged, warrior killed

ellenlice; þær wæs Æschere,

boldly; there was from-Aeschere,

frōdan fyrnwitan feorh ūðgege.

wise old-counselor life departed.

2110

2115

2120

Nōðer hȳ hine ne mōston, syððan mergen cwōm,
Neither they him — might, when morning came,

2125 dēaðwērigne Denia lēode
death-weary of-Danes people

bronde forbærnan, nē on bēl hladan
with-fire burn, nor on pyre place

lēofne mannan; hīo þæt lic ætbær
dear man; she the body carried-off

fēondes fæð(mum un)der firgenstrēam.
of-fiend in-embrace under mountain-stream.

Þæt wæs Hrōðgāre hrēowa tornost
That was to-Hrothgar of-sorrows bitterest

2130 þāra þe lēodfruman lange begēate.
of-those which people-prince long befell.

Þā se ðēoden mec ðīne life
Then the prince me by-thy life

healsode hrēohmōd, þæt ic on holma geþring
implored troubled-in-mind, that I in of-waters throng

eorlscipe efnde, ealdre genēðde,
heroism should-perform, life should-risk,

mārðo fremede; hē mē mēde gehēt.
glory should-accomplish; he me reward promised.

2135 Ic ðā ðæs wælmes, þē is wīde cūð,
I then of-that surge, which is widely known,

grimne gryreligne grundhyrde fond.
grim terrible bottom-guardian found.

Þær unc hwile wæs hand gemāne;
There for-us-two for-a-while was hand in-common;

holm heolfre wēoll, ond ic hēafde becearf
sea with-gore surged, and I off-head cut

in ðām [gūð]sele Grendeles mōdor

in that battle-hall of-Grendel mother

ēacnum ecgum; unsōfte þonan

with-mighty edges; not-easily thence

feorh oðferede; næs ic fæge þā gýt;

life carried-away; not-was I doomed then yet;

ac mē eorla hlēo eft gesealde

but me of-warriors protector again gave

māðma menigeo, maga Healfdenes.

of-treasures multitude, son of-Healfdene.

2140

XXXI · THE DRAGON WAKES

Beowulf gives Hygelac the treasures, among them Heorogar's war-gear and four matching horses, for a kinsman should be loyal and weave no treachery; Hygd receives Wealhtheow's necklace. Beowulf, once thought slack by the Geats, is honored, and Hygelac gives him Hrethel's sword, land, and a hall. Years later Hygelac and his son Heardred are killed, and Beowulf rules the Geats well for fifty winters, until a dragon begins to rage in the dark, angered because a man has crept into its barrow and stolen a cup from its hoard.

Swā se ðeodkyning þēawum lyfde;

So the people-king in-customs lived;

nealles ic ðām lēanum forloren hæfde,

not-at-all I those rewards lost had,

mægnæs mēde, ac hē mē (māðma)s geaf,

of-strength reward, but he me treasures gave,

sunu Healfdenes on (min)ne sylfes dōm;

son of-Healfdene at my own choice;

ðā ic ðē, beorcnyning, bringan wylle,

which I to-thee, warrior-king, bring will,

2145

ēstum geȳwan. Gēn is eall æt ðē

graciously present. Still is all on thee

2150 [mīnra] lissa gelong; ic lȳt hafo

of-my favors dependent; I few have

hēafodmāga nefne, Hygelāc, ðec.’

of-close-kinsmen except, Hygelac, thee.’

Hēt ðā in beran eafor hēafodsegn,

Commanded then in to-bear boar head-standard,

heaðostēapne helm, hāre byrnan,

battle-towering helmet, gray mail-coat,

gūðsweord geatolic, gyd æfter wræc:

war-sword splendid, speech afterward recited:

2155 ‘Mē ðis hildesceorp Hrōðgār sealde,

‘Me this battle-garment Hrothgar gave,

snotra fengel; sume worde hēt,

wise prince; with-certain word commanded,

þæt ic his ārest ðē ēst gesægde;

that I its first to-thee bequest should-tell;

cwæð þæt hyt hæfde Hiorogār cyning,

said that it had Heorogar king,

lēod Scyldunga lange hwile;

prince of-Scyldings long while;

2160 nō ðȳ ār suna sīnum syllan wolde,

not the sooner to-son his give would,

hwatum Heorowearde, þēah hē him hold wære,

to-bold Heorowearde, though he to-him loyal were,

brēostgewædu. Brūc ealles well!’

breast-garments. Enjoy all well!’

Hȳrde ic þæt þām frætnum fēower mēaras

Heard I that with-those treasures four horses

lungre, gelice lāst weardode,
swift, alike track followed,
 æppelfealuwe; hē him ēst getēah 2165
apple-fallow; he him favor granted
 mēara ond māðma. — Swā sceal mæg dôn,
of-horses and of-treasures. So should kinsman do,
 nealles inwitnet ððrum bregdon
not-at-all malice-net for-another weave
 dyrnum cræfte, dēað rēn(ian)
with-secret craft, death prepare
 hondgesteallan. Hygelāce wæs
for-hand-comrade. To-Hygelac was
 nīða heardum nefa swyðe hold, 2170
in-hostilities hard nephew very loyal,
 ond gehwæðer ððrum hrōþra gemyndig. —
and each to-other of-benefits mindful.
 Hýrde ic þæt hē ðone healsbēah Hygde gesælde,
Heard I that he the neck-ring to-Hygd gave,
 wrætlicne wundurmāððum, ðone þe him Wealhðeo geaf,
wondrous wonder-treasure, that which to-him Wealhtheow gave,
 ðeod(nes) dohtor, þrīo wicg somod
of-prince daughter, three horses as-well
 swancor ond sadolbeorht; hyre syððan wæs 2175
graceful and saddle-bright; to-her afterward was
 æfter bēahðege br[ē]ost geweorðod.
after ring-receiving breast adorned.
 Swā bealdode bearn Ecgðeowes,
 So showed-courage son of-Ecgtheow,
 guma gūðum cūð, gōdum dædum,
man in-battles known, by-good deeds,

- drēah æfter dōme, nealles druncne slōg
acted according-to glory, not-at-all drunk slew
- 2180 heorðgenēatas; næs him hrēoh sefa,
hearth-companions; not-was to-him fierce mind,
 ac hē mancynnes mæste cræfte
but he of-mankind with-greatest strength
 ginfæstan gifē, þē him God sealde,
ample gift, which him God gave,
 hēold hildedēor. Hēan wæs lange,
beld battle-brave-one. Despised was-he long,
 swā hyne Gēata bearn gōdne ne tealdon,
as him of-Geats sons good not counted,
- 2185 nē hyne on medobence micles wyrðne
nor him on mead-bench of-much worthy
 drihten Wedera gedōn wolde;
lord of-Weders make would;
 swyðe (wēn)don, þæt hē slēac wære,
strongly believed, that he slack were,
 æðeling unfrom. Edwenden cwōm
prince unbold. Reversal came
 tirēadigum menn torna gehwylces. —
to-glory-blessed man of-griefs for-each.
- 2190 Hēt ðā eorla hlēo in gefetian,
Commanded then of-warriors protector in to-fetch,
 heaðorōf cyning Hrēðles lāfe
battle-famed king of-Hrethel heirloom
 golde gegyrede; næs mid Gēatum ðā
with-gold adorned; not-was among Geats then
 sincmāðþum sēlra on sweordes hād;
treasure-jewel better in of-sword form;

þæt hē on Biowulfes bearm ālegde,
that he into of-Beowulf lap laid,
 ond him gesealde seofan þūsendo,
and him gave seven thousands,
 bold ond bregostōl. Him wæs bām samod
building and princely-throne. To-them was to-both together
 on ðām lēodscipe lond gecynde,
in the nation land inherited,
 eard ēðelriht, oðrum swiðor
estate native-right, to-other more-greatly
 sīde rice þām ðær sēla wæs.
wide kingdom to-the-one there higher was.

Eft þæt geiode ufaran dōgrum
Afterward that happened in-later days
 hildehlæmmum, syððan Hygelāc læg,
in-battle-clashes, after Hygelac lay,
 ond Hear[dr]ēde hildemēceas
and to-Heardred battle-swords
 under bordhrēoðan tō bonan wurdon,
under shield-cover as slayer became,
 ðā hyne gesōhtan on sigepēode
when him sought among victory-people

hearde hildfrecan, Heaðo-Scilfingas,
hard battle-warriors, Battle-Scylfings,
 niða genāgdan nefan Hererices—:
by-hostility assailed nephew of-Hereric:
 syððan Bēowulfe brāde rice
after-that to-Beowulf broad kingdom
 on hand gehwearf; hē gehēold tela
into hand passed; he held well

2195

2200

2205

- fiftig wintra — wæs ðā frōd cyning,
fifty winters was then wise king,
- 2210 eald ēþelweard—, oð ðæt ān ongan
old homeland-guardian, until that one began
 deorcum nihtum draca rīcs[i]an,
in-dark nights dragon to-rule,
 sē ðe on hēa(um) h(æþ)e hord beweotode,
he who on high heath board guarded,
 stānbeorh stēapne; stig under læg
stone-barrow steep; path under lay
 eldum uncūð. Þær on innan giong
to-men unknown. There in within went
- 2215 nið[ð]a nāthwylc, (forþ nē)h gefe(al)g
of-men some-one, forth near penetrated
 hǣðnum horde, hond (wæge nam),
to-beathen board, hand cup took,
 (sīd,) since fāh; nē hē þæt syððan (bemāð),
large, with-treasure adorned; nor he that afterward concealed,
 þ(ēah) ð(e hē) slāpende besyre(d wur)de
though that he sleeping tricked was
 þēofes cræfte; þæt sīe ðiod (onfand),
of-thief by-craft; that the people found,
- 2220 b(ig)folc beorna, þæt hē gebolge(n) wæs.
neighboring-people of-men, that he enraged was.

A slave fleeing punishment broke into the barrow and stole a cup; the manuscript here is badly damaged. The board had been buried by the last survivor of a noble race, who lamented that no one now bears the sword or polishes the cup, that the harp gives no joy, and that no hawk swings through the hall and no horse stamps in the courtyard. A dragon found it and guarded it for three hundred years, until the thief carried the cup to his lord and won his pardon. Finding the cup gone, the dragon circles the barrow and at nightfall sets out to burn the land.

Nealles mid gewældum wyrmhord ābræc

Not-at-all by will serpent-board broke-into

sylfes willum, sē ðe him sære gesceod,

of-his-own accord, he who him sorely harmed,

ac for þrēanēdlan þ(ēow) nāthwylces

but for dire-need slave of-some-one

hæleða bearna heteswengeas flēah,

of-heroes of-sons hate-blows fled,

(ærnes) þearfa, ond ðær inne fealh,

of-house in-need, and there inside penetrated,

secg synbysig. Sōna † mwatide

man guilt-burdened. At-once (corrupt) beheld [?]

þæt * * * ðām gyst(e) gryre)brōga stōd;

that (lacuna) to-the stranger terror stood;

hwæðre (earm)sceapen * * *

yet wretched-shaped-one (lacuna)

* * * sceapen

(lacuna) shaped

* * * (þā hyne) se fār begeat.

(lacuna) when him the peril seized.

2225

2230

Sincfæt * * * Þær wæs swylcra fela

Treasure-vessel (lacuna) There was of-such many

in ðām eorð(hū)se ærgestrēona,

in the earth-house of-ancient-treasures,

swā hȳ on gēardagum gumena nāthwylc,

as them in days-of-old of-men some-one,

eormenlāfe æðelan cynnes,

huge-legacy of-noble race,

2235 þanchycgende þær gehȳdde,

thoughtful there hid,

dēore mǣðmas. Ealle hie dēað fornam

precious treasures. All them death took

ærran mǣlum, ond sē ān ðā gēn

in-earlier times, and the one then still

lēoda duguðe, sē ðær lengest hwearf,

of-people veterans, who there longest lived,

weard winegeōmor wēnde þæs ylcan,

guardian friend-mourning expected the same,

2240 þæt hē lȳtel fæc longgestrēona

that he little space long-treasures

brūcan mōste. Beorh eallgearo

enjoy might. Barrow all-ready

wunode on wonge wæterȳðum nēah,

stood on plain water-waves near,

niwe be næsse, nearocræftum fæst;

new by headland, by-narrow-crafts secure;

þær on innan bær eorlgestrēona

there into within bore of-warriors'-treasures

2245 hringa hyrde hordwyrðne dæl,

of-rings keeper board-worthy portion,

fættan goldes, fēa worda cwæð:

of-plated gold, few words spoke:

‘Heald þū nū, hrūse, nū hæleð ne mōstan,

‘Hold thou now, earth, now heroes not might,

eorla æhte! Hwæt, hyt ær on ðe

of-warriors possessions! Lo, it before from thee

gōde begēaton; gūðdēað fornam,

good-men obtained; war-death took,

feorhbealo frēcne fȳra gehwylcne

life-bale terrible of-men each

lēoda mīnra þāra ðe þis [lif] ofgeaf,

of-people my of-those who this life gave-up,

secga seledrēam. Nāh, hwā sweord wege

of-men hall-joy. (I)-have-not, who sword may-bear

oððe fe(o)r(mie) fæted wæge,

or may-polish plated cup,

dryncfæt dēore; dug(uð) ellor s[c]eōc.

drinking-vessel precious; veterans elsewhere has-gone.

Sceal se hearda helm (hydr)stedgolde,

Shall the hard helmet adorned-with-gold,

fætum befeallen; feormynd swefað,

of-plates (be)-bereft; polishers sleep,

þā ðe beadogriman bȳwan sceoldon;

those who battle-mask adorn should;

gē swylce sēo herepād, sio æt hilde gebād

and likewise the war-coat, which in battle endured

ofer borda gebræc bite irena,

over of-shields crash bite of-irons,

brosnað æfter beorne. Ne mæg byrnan hring

decays after warrior. Not can of-mail-coat ring

2250

2255

2260

- æfter wigfruman wīde fēran,
after war-chief widely travel,
 hæleðum be healfe. Næs hearpan wyn,
with-heroes at side. Not-at-all of-harp joy,
 gomen glēobēames, nē gōd hafoc
play of-gee-wood, nor good hawk
 geond sæl swingeð, nē se swifta mearh
through hall swings, nor the swift horse
 2265 burhstede bēateð. Bealocwealm hafað
courtyard stamps. Evil-death has
 fela feorhcynna forð onsended!
many of-living-races forth sent!
 Swā giōmormōd giohðo mǣnde
So sad-hearted grief lamented
 ān æfter eallum, unbliðe hwe(arf)
one after all, joyless moved
 dāges ond nihtes, oð ðæt dēaðes wylm
by-day and by-night, until that of-death surge
 2270 hrān æt heortan. Hordwynne fond
touched at heart. Hoard-joy found
 eald ūhtsceaða opene standan,
old dawn-ravager open standing,
 sē ðe byrnende biorgas sēceð,
be who burning barrows seeks,
 nacod niðdraca, nihtes flēogeð
naked malicious-dragon, by-night flies
 fýre befangen; hyne foldbūend
by-fire encircled; him earth-dwellers
 2275 (swiðe ondræ)da(ð). Hē gesēcean sceall
greatly dread. He seek must

(ho)r(d on) hrūsan, þær hē hǣðen gold
 board in earth, where he beathen gold
 warað wintrum frōd; ne byð him wihte ðȳ sēl.
 guards in-winters wise; not is to-him at-all the better.

Swā se ðēodsceaða þreo hund wintra
 So the people-ravager three hundred winters

hēold on hrūsan hordærna sum
 held in earth of-board-houses one

ēacencræftig, oð ðæt hyne ān ābealch
 mighty-strong, until that him one angered

mon on mōde; mandryhtne bær
 man in heart; to-liege-lord bore

fāted wāge, frioðowāre bād
 plated cup, peace-pact asked

hlāford sinne. Ðā wæs hord rāsod,
 lord his. Then was board searched,

onboren bēaga hord, bēne getiðad
 diminished of-rings board, request granted

fēasceaftum men; frēa scēawode
 to-wretched man; lord looked-at

fira fyrngeweorc forman siðe. —
 of-men ancient-work on-first time.

Ðā se wyrm onwōc, wrōht wæs geniwad;
 When the serpent awoke, strife was renewed;

stonc ðā æfter stāne, stearcheort onfand
 sniffed then along stone, stout-hearted-one found

fēondes fōtlāst; hē tō forð gestöp
 of-enemy foot-track; he too far had-stepped

dyrnan cræfte dracan hēafde nēah.
 with-secret craft of-dragon to-head near.

2280

2285

2290

Swā mæg unfæge ēaðe gedigan
So can undoomed-one easily survive

wēan ond wræcsið sē ðe Waldendes
woe and exile he who of-Ruler

hyldo gehealdeþ! Hordweard sōhte
favor keeps! Hoard-guardian searched

georne æfter grunde, wolde guman findan
eagerly along ground, wished man find

2295 þone þe him on sweofote sære getēode;
him who to-him in sleep sorely harmed;

hāt ond hrēohmōd hlāw oft ymbhwearf
hot and fierce-hearted barrow often circled

ealne ūtanweard; nē ðær ænig mon
all outside; nor there any man

on þære wēstenne, — hwæðre wiges gefeh,
in the wilderness, yet in-war rejoiced,

bea(du)[we] weorces; hwilum on beorh æthwearf,
in-battle of-work; at-times into barrow turned,

2300 sincfæt sōhte; hē þæt sōna onfand,
treasure-vessel sought; he that at-once found,

ðæt hæfde gumena sum goldes gefandod,
that had of-men one gold tampered-with,

hēahgestrēona. Hordweard onbād
high-treasures. Hoard-guardian waited

earfoðlice, oð ðæt æfen cwōm;
with-difficulty, until that evening came;

wæs ðā gebolgen beorges hyrde,
was then enraged of-barrow keeper,

2305 wolde se lāða lige forgyldan
wished the hateful-one with-flame repay

drincfæt dýre. Þā wæs dæg sceacen
drinking-vessel precious. Then was day departed
 wyrme on willan; nō on wealle læ[n]g
to-serpent according-to desire; not by wall longer
 biðan wolde, ac mid bāle fōr,
wait would, but with fire went,
 fýre gefýsed. Wæs se fruma egeslic
by-fire ready. Was the beginning terrible
 lēodum on lande, swā hyt lungre wearð
to-people in land, as it quickly was
 on hyra sincgifan sāre geendod.
to their treasure-giver sorely ended.

2310

XXXIII • BEOWULF RESOLVES

The dragon's fire burns Beowulf's own hall, the gift-throne of the Geats. Fearing he has angered God, Beowulf has an iron shield made and scorns to lead an army against the dragon; the poet foretells that both must die. He recalls Beowulf's past: the swim home from Hygelac's fatal raid in Frisia with thirty suits of armor, and the throne he refused out of loyalty to young Heardred. When Onela of the Swedes killed Heardred for sheltering Ohthere's exiled sons, Onela went home and let Beowulf rule.

Ðā se gæst ongan glēdum spiwan,
Then the stranger began with-embers to-speak,
 beorht hofu bærnan, — brynelēoma stōd
bright dwellings to-burn, fire-light stood
 eldum on andan; nō ðær āht cwices
to-men as harm; not there anything alive
 lāð lyftfloga lāfan wolde.
hateful air-flies leave would.

2315

Wæs þæs wyrmes wīg wīde gesȳne,

Was of-the serpent warfare widely visible,

nearofāges nīð nēan ond feorran,

of-cruel-foe malice near and far,

hū se gūðsceaða Gēata lēode

how the war-ravager of-Geats people

hatode ond hȳnde; hord eft gescēat,

hated and humiliated; to-board back hastened,

2320 dryhtsele dyrnne ær dāges hwile.

lordly-ball secret before of-day time.

Hæfde landwara lige befangen,

Had land-dwellers with-flame encircled,

bæle ond bronde; beorges getrūwode,

with-fire and with-burning; in-barrow trusted,

wiges ond wealles; him sēo wēn gelēah.

in-war and in-wall; him the hope deceived.

Þā wæs Biowulfe brōga gecȳðed

Then was to-Beowulf terror made-known

2325 snūde tō sōðe, þæt his sylfes hām,

quickly in truth, that his own home,

bolda sēlest brynewylmum mealt,

of-buildings best in-burning-surges melted,

giftstōl Gēata. Þæt ðām gōðan wæs

gift-throne of-Geats. That to-the good-one was

hrēow on hreðre, hygesorga mǣst;

grief in breast, of-mind-sorrows greatest;

wēnde se wisa, þæt hē Wealdende

thought the wise-one, that he Ruler

2330 ofer ealde riht ēcean Dryhtne

against old law eternal Lord

bitre gebulge; brēost innan wēoll
bitterly had-angered; breast within surged
 þēostrum geþoncum, swā him geþȳwe ne wæs.
with-dark thoughts, as for-him usual not was.
 Hæfde ligdraca lēoda fæsten,
Had fire-dragon of-people fortress,
 ēalond ūtan, eorðweard ðone
sea-land outside, earth-stronghold that
 glēdum forgrunden; him ðæs gūðkyning,
with-embers ground-down; him for-that war-king,
 Wedera þioden wræce leornode.
of-Weders prince vengeance devised.
 Heht him þā gewyrcean wīgendra hlēo
Commanded for-himself then to-make of-warriors protector
 eallirene, eorla dryhten,
all-iron, of-warriors lord,
 wigbord wrætlic; wisse hē gearwe,
war-shield wondrous; knew he well,
 þæt him holtwudu he(lpan) ne meahhte,
that him forest-wood help not could,
 lind wið lige. Sceolde lāndaga
linden against flame. Had-to of-transitory-days
 æþeling ærgōd ende gebīdan,
prince good-of-old end experience,
 worulde lifes, ond se wyrm somod,
of-world of-life, and the serpent as-well,
 þēah ðe hordwelan hēolde lange.
though that hoard-wealth he-held long.
 Oferhogode ðā hringa fengel,
Scorned then of-rings prince,

2335

2340

2345

þæt hē þone wīdfloga weorode gesōhte,
that he the wide-flier with-troop should-seek,
 sīdan herge; nō hē him þā sæcce ondrēd,
with-large army; not he for-himself the battle feared,
 nē him þæs wyrmes wīg for wiht dyde,
nor to-him of-the serpent war-strength for anything counted,
 eafoð ond ellen, forðon hē ær fela
strength and courage, because he before many

2350 nearo nēðende niða gedigde,
perils risking of-hostilities survived,
 hildehlemma, syððan hē Hrōðgāres,
of-battle-clashes, after he of-Hrothgar,
 sigorēadig secg, sele fælsode,
victory-blessed man, hall cleansed,
 ond æt gūðe forgrāp Grendeles mægum
and in battle crushed of-Grendel kin
 lāðan cynnes. Nō þæt lāsest wæs
of-hateful race. Not that least was

2355 hondgemōt[a], þær mon Hygelac slōh,
of-hand-encounters, where one Hygelac slew,
 syððan Gēata cyning gūðe rāsum,
when of-Geats king of-battle in-rushes,
 frēawine folca Frēslondum on,
lord-friend of-peoples Frisian-lands in,
 Hrēðles eafora hiorodryncum swealt,
of-Hrethel son by-sword-drinks died,
 bille gebēaten. Ðonan Biowulf cōm
by-sword beaten. Thence Beowulf came
 2360 sylfes cräfte, sundnytte drēah;
by-own strength, swimming performed;

hæfde him on earme (āna) þritig

had himself on arm alone thirty

hildegeatwa, þā hē tō holme (st)āg.

battle-armors, when he to sea climbed.

Nealles Hetware hrēmge þorf(t)on

Not-at-all Hetware exulting needed

fēðewiges, þē him foran ongēan

of-foot-battle, who him in-front against

linde bāron; lýt eft becwōm

shields bore; few again came

fram þām hildfreca hāmes niosan!

from the battle-warrior home to-seek!

Oferswam ðā sioleða bigong sunu Ecgðēowes,

Swam-over then of-seas expanse son of-Ecgtheow,

earm ānhaga eft tō lēodum;

wretched solitary-one back to people;

þær him Hygd gebēad hord ond rice,

there him Hygd offered board and kingdom,

bēagas ond bregostōl; bearne ne trūwode,

rings and princely-throne; in-son not trusted,

þæt hē wið ælfylcum ēpelstōlas

that he against foreign-hosts ancestral-thrones

healdan cūðe, ðā wæs Hygelāc dēad.

hold could, when was Hygelac dead.

Nō ðȳ ær fēasceaftē findan meahton

Not the sooner the-destitute-ones prevail could

æt ðām æðelinge ænige ðinga,

with that prince in-any way,

þæt hē Heardrēde hlāford wære,

that he to-Heardred lord would-be,

2365

2370

2375

oððe þone cynedōm ciosan wolde;

or the kingship choose would;

hwæðre hē hine on folce frēondlārum hēold,

yet he him among people with-friendly-counsels supported,

ēstum mid āre, oð ðæt hē yldra wearð,

graciously with honor, until that he older became,

Weder-Gēatum wēold. Hyne wræcmæcgas

Weder-Geats ruled. Him exiles

2380 ofer sǣ sōhtan, suna Ōhteres;

over sea sought, sons of-Ohthere;

hæfdon hȳ forhealden helm Scylfinga,

had they rebelled-against protector of-Scylfings,

þone sēlestan sǣcyninga

the best of-sea-kings

þāra ðe in Swīorice sinc brytnade,

of-those who in Sweden treasure dispensed,

mārne þēoden. Him þæt tō mearce wearð;

famous prince. To-him that as limit became;

2385 hē þār [f]or feorme feorhwunde hlēat,

he there for hospitality life-wound received,

sweordes swengum, sunu Hygelāces;

of-sword by-strokes, son of-Hygelac;

ond him eft gewāt Ongendōies bearn

and himself back went of-Ongentheow son

hāmes nīosan, syððan Heardrēd læg,

home to-seek, after Heardred lay,

lēt ðone bregostōl Biowulf healdan,

let the princely-throne Beowulf hold,

2390 Gēatum wealdan; þæt wæs gōd cyning.

Geats rule; that was good king.

Beowulf later avenged Heardred by helping the exile Eadgils kill Onela. Now, with eleven companions and the thief as guide, he comes to the dragon's barrow and sits on the headland, sad and ready for death. He recalls being taken at seven into the care of King Hrethel, whose son Haethcyn killed his brother Herebeald by accident with an arrow. Hrethel could not avenge one son on another, and his grief is likened to that of an old man who sees his son hang on the gallows.

Sē ðæs lēodhryres lēan gemunde

He for-that prince-fall requital remembered

uferan dōgrum, Ēadgilse wearð

in-later days, to-Eadgils became

fēasceaftum frēond; folce gestēpte

to-the-destitute friend; with-army supported

ofer sǣ side sunu Ōhteres,

over sea wide son of-Obthere,

wigum ond wǣpnum; hē gewræc syððan

with-warriors and with-weapons; he avenged afterward

cealdum cearsiðum, cyning ealdre binēat.

with-cold care-journeys, king of-life deprived.

Swā hē niða gehwane genesen hæfde,

So he of-hostilities each survived had,

slīðra geslyhta, sunu Ecgðiwes,

of-fierce clashes, son of-Ecgtheow,

ellenweorca, oð ðone āne dæg,

of-courage-deeds, until that one day,

þē hē wið þām wyrme gewegan sceolde.

when he against the serpent fight had-to.

Gewāt þā twelfa sum torne gebolgen

Went then of-twelve one with-anger swollen

2395

2400

dryhten Gēata dracan scēawian;
lord of-Geats dragon to-see;
 hæfde þā gefrūnen, hwanan sīo fāhð ārās,
had then learned, whence the feud arose,
 bealonið biorna; him tō bearme cwōm
evil-malice of-men; to-him into bosom came

2405 māðpumfæt mære þurh ðæs meldan hond.
treasure-vessel famous through of-the informer hand.

Sē wæs on ðām ðrēate þreottēoða secg,
He was in that troop thirteenth man,
 sē ðæs orleges ōr onstealde,
who of-the strife beginning caused,

hæft hygegiōmor, sceolde hēan ðonon
captive sad-minded, had-to abject thence
 wong wīsian. Hē ofer willan giong
place point-out. He against will went

2410 tō ðæs ðe hē eorðsele ānne wisse,
to where that he earth-hall one knew,

hlāw under hrūsan holmwylme nēh,
mound under ground sea-surge near,
 yðgewinne; sē wæs innan full
wave-strife; which was within full

wrætta ond wira. Weard unhiore,
of-ornaments and of-wires. Guardian monstrous,

gearo gūðfreca goldmāðmas hēold
ready war-warrior gold-treasures held

2415 eald under eorðan; næs þæt yðe cēap
old under earth; not-was that easy bargain

tō gegangenne gumena ānigum.
to obtain of-men for-any.

Gesæt ðā on nasse niðheard cyning;
Sat then on headland battle-bard king;
 þenden hālo ābēad heorðgenēatum,
while good-wishes offered to-hearth-companions,
 goldwine Gēata. Him wæs geōmor sefa,
gold-friend of-Geats. To-him was sad mind,
 wāfre ond wālfūs, wyrd ungemete nēah,
restless and ready-for-death, fate immeasurably near,
 sē ðone gomelan grētan sceolde,
which the old-one meet had-to,
 sēcean sāwle hord, sundur gedælan
seek of-soul board, asunder part
 lif wið lice; nō þon lange wæs
life from body; not then long was
 feorh æþelinges flæsce bewunden.
life of-prince in-flesh wound.

2420

Biowulf maþelade, bearn Ecgðēowes:
Beowulf spoke, son of-Ecgtheow:
 ‘Fela ic on giogoðe gūðrāsa genæs,
‘Many I in youth of-war-rushes survived,
 orleghwila; ic þæt eall gemon.
of-battle-times; I that all remember.

2425

Ic wæs syfanwintre, þā mec sinca baldor,
I was seven-years-old, when me of-treasures lord,
 frēawine folca æt minum fæder genam;
lord-friend of-peoples from my father took;
 hēold mec ond hæfde Hrēðel cyning,
kept me and had Hrethel king,
 geaf mē sinc ond symbel, sibbe gemunde;
gave me treasure and feast, kinship remembered;

2430

næs ic him tō life lāðra ōwihte
not-was I to-him in life more-bateful in-any-way

beorn in burgum þonne his bearna hwylc,
warrior in strongholds than of-his sons any,

Herebeald ond Hæðcyn oððe Hygelāc mīn.
Herebeald and Haethcyn or Hygelac my.

2435 Wæs þām yldestan ungedēfe
Was for-the eldest wrongfully

māges dāðum morþorbed strēd,
of-kinsman by-deeds murder-bed spread,

syððan hyne Hæðcyn of hornbogan,
when him Haethcyn from horn-bow,

his frēawine flāne geswencte,
his lord-friend with-arrow struck,

miste mercelses ond his māg ofscēt,
missed mark and his kinsman shot,

2440 brōðor oðerne blōdigan gāre.
brother the-other with-bloody arrow.

Þæt wæs feohlēas gefeoht, fyrenum gesyngad,
That was fee-less fight, with-crimes made-sinful,

hreðre hygemēðe; sceolde hwæðre swā þeah
in-heart mind-wearying; bad-to nevertheless so though

æðeling unwrecen ealdres linnan.
prince unavenged of-life be-deprived.

Swā bið geōmorlic gomelum ceorle
So is sad for-old man

2445 tō gebidanne, þæt his byre ride
to live-to-see, that his son ride

giong on galgan; þonne hē gyd wrece,
young on gallows; then he lay may-utter,

sārigne sang, þonne his sunu hangað
sorrowful song, when his son hangs
 hrefne tō hrōðre, ond hē him helpe ne mæg
for-raven as joy, and he him help not can
 eald ond infrōd ænige gefremman.
old and very-wise any give.

Symble bið gemyndgad morna gehwylce
Always is reminded of-mornings on-each
 eaforan ellorsið; ððres ne gȳmeð
of-son elsewhere-journey; of-another not cares

2450

tō gebidanne burgum in innan
to wait-for strongholds in within
 yrfeweardas, þonne se ān hafað
heir, when the one has

þurh dēaðes nȳd dāda gefondad.
through of-death constraint deeds experienced.

Gesyhð sorhcearig on his suna būre
Sees sorrow-anxious in of-his son chamber

2455

wīnsele wēstne, windge reste
wine-hall deserted, windy resting-place
 rēte berofene, — ridend swefað,
of-joy bereft, riders sleep,

hæleð in hoðman; nis þār hearpan swēg,
heroes in grave; not-is there of-harp sound,
 gomen in geardum, swylce ðær iū wæron.
joy in courts, as there once were.

Hrethel dies of grief, and war breaks out between Swedes and Geats: Haethcyn falls, Eofor kills the old Swedish king Ongentbeow, and Beowulf repays Hygelac's gifts by crushing Daeghrefn to death. Now he vows one last feat, bids his men wait on the barrow, and goes alone with shield and mail-coat against the dragon's fire. His sword fails on the dragon's bone, flame engulfs him, and his companions flee into the wood. One of them grieves, for a loyal man cannot set kinship aside.

- 2460 Gewīteð þonne on sealman, sorhlēoð gæleð
Goes then to bed, sorrow-song sings
 ān æfter ānum; þūhte him eall tō rūm,
one for one; seemed to-him all too spacious,
 wongas ond wicstede. Swā Wedra helm
fields and dwelling-place. So of-Weders protector
 æfter Herebealde heortan sorge
for Herebeald of-heart sorrow
 weallinde wæg; wihte ne meahte
surging bore; at-all not could
- 2465 on ðām feorhbonan fæghðe gebētan;
on the life-slayer feud remedy;
 nō ðȳ ær hē þone heaðorinc hatian ne meahte
not the sooner he the battle-warrior hate — could
 lāðum dædum, þēah him lēof ne wæs.
by-hostile deeds, though to-him dear not was.
 Hē ðā mid þære sorhge, þē him tō sār belamp,
He then with the sorrow, which him too sorely befell,
 gumdrēam ofgeaf, Godes lēoht gecēas;
human-joy gave-up, of-God light chose;
- 2470 eaferum lāfde, swā dēð ēadig mon,
to-heirs left, as does prosperous man,

lond ond lēodbyrig, þā hē of life gewāt.
land and people-strongholds, when he from life departed.

Þā wæs synn ond sacu Swēona ond Gēata
Then was wrong and strife of-Swedes and of-Geats

ofer wīd wæter wrōht gemæne,
over wide water quarrel in-common,

herenið hearda, syððan Hrēðel swealt,
war-batred hard, after Hrethel died,

oððe him Ongenðeowes eaferan wæran
and to-them of-Ongentheow sons were

2475

frome fyrdhwate, frēode ne woldon
bold war-keen, friendship not wished

ofer heafo healdan, ac ymb Hrēosnabeorh
over seas to-keep, but around Hreosnabeorh

eatolne inwitscear oft gefremedon.
terrible malicious-slaughter often committed.

Þæt mægwine mine gewrācan,
That kin-friends my avenged,

fāhðe ond fyrene, swā hyt gefrāge wæs,
feud and crime, as it well-known was,

2480

þeah ðe oðer his ealdre gebohte,
though that the-other with-bis life paid,

heardan cēape; Hæðcynne wearð,
at-bard price; for-Haethcyn became,

Gēata dryhtne gūð onsāge.
of-Geats for-lord war fatal.

Þā ic on morgne gefrægn mæg oðerne
Then I in morning beard kinsman other

billes ecgum on bonan stælan,
of-sword with-edges on slayer avenge,

2485

þær Ongenþēow Eofores nīosað;
where Ongentheow of-Eofor attacks;
 gūðhelm tōglād, gomela Scylfing
war-helmet split-apart, old Scylfing
 hrēas [hilde]blāc; hond gemunde
fell battle-pale; hand remembered
 fāhðo genōge, feorhsweng ne oftēah.
feuds enough, life-blow not held-back.

2490 Ic him þā māðmas, þē hē mē sealde,
I him the treasures, which he me gave,

geald æt gūðe, swā mē gifeðe wæs,
repaid in battle, as to-me granted was,
 lēohtan sweorde; hē mē lond forgeaf,
with-bright sword; he me land gave,
 eard ēðelwyn. Næs him ænig þearf,
estate native-joy. Not-was for-him any need,

þæt hē tō Gifðum oððe tō Gār-Denum
that he to Giftbas or to Spear-Danes

2495 oððe in Swīorice sēcean þurfe
or into Sweden seek need

wyrsan wīgfreca, weorðe gecȳpan;
worse warrior, with-payment buy;

symle ic him on fēðan beforan wolde,
always I him in foot-troop in-front would-be,

āna on orde, ond swā tō aldre sceall
alone in front, and so for life shall

sæcce fremman, þenden þis sweord þolað,
battle perform, while this sword endures,

2500 þæt mec ær ond sið oft gelæste,
which me early and late often served,

syððan ic for ðugeðum Dæghrefne wearð
after I before veterans for-Daeghrefn became

tō handbonan, Hūga ceman; —
as hand-slayer, of-Hugas champion;

nalles hē ðā frætwe Frēscyning[e],
not-at-all he those ornaments to-Frisian-king,

brēostweorðunge bringan mōste,
breast-adornment bring might,

ac in campe gecrong cumbles hyrde,
but in combat fell of-banner keeper,

æþeling on elne; ne wæs ecg bona,
prince in courage; not was edge slayer,

ac him hildegrāp heortan wylmas,
but for-him battle-grip of-heart surges,

bānhūs gebræc. Nū sceall billes ecg,
bone-house broke. Now shall of-sword edge,

hond ond heard sweord ymb hord wigan.’
hand and hard sword for board fight.’

Bēowulf maðelode, bēotwordum spræc
Beowulf spoke, with-vow-words spoke

nīehstan sīðe: ‘Ic genēðde fela
on-last time: ‘I ventured many

gūða on geogoðe; gýt ic wylle,
of-battles in youth; yet I will,

frōd folces weard fæhðe sēcan,
old of-people guardian feud seek,

mārðu fremman, gif mec se mǣnsceaða
glory perform, if me the evil-ravager

of eorðsele ūt gesēceð.’
from earth-hall out seeks.’

2505

2510

2515

Gegrētte ðā gumena gehwylcne,

Greeted then of-men each,

hwate helmberend hindeman sīðe,

bold helmet-bearers on-last time,

swāse gesiðas: 'Nolde ic sweord beran,

dear companions: 'Would-not I sword bear,

wāpen tō wyrme, gif ic wiste hū

weapon to serpent, if I knew how

2520 wið ðām āglæcean elles meahte

against the monster otherwise could

gylpe wiðgripan, swā ic giō wið Grendle dyde;

with-boast grapple, as I once with Grendel did;

ac ic ðær heaðufýres hātes wēne,

but I there of-battle-fire hot expect,

[o]reðes ond attres; forðon ic mē on hafu

of-breath and of-poison; therefore I me on have

bord ond byrnan. Nelle ic beorges weard

shield and mail-coat. Will-not I of-barrow guardian

2525 oferfleôn fōtes trem, ac unc [furður] sceal

flee of-foot space, but for-us-two further shall

weorðan æt wealle, swā unc wyrd getēoð,

happen at wall, as for-us-two fate allots,

Metod manna gehwæs. Ic eom on mōde from,

Ordainer of-men each. I am in heart bold,

þæt ic wið þone gūðflogan gylp ofersitte.

so-that I against the war-flier boast forgo.

Gebide gē on beorge byrnum werede,

Wait you on barrow by-mail-coats protected,

2530 secgas on searwum, hwæðer sēl mæge

men in armor, which better can

æfter wælræse wunde gedȳgan

after slaughter-rush wounds survive

uncer twēga. Nis þæt ēower sið,

of-us two. Not-is that your venture,

nē gemet mannes, nefn(e) min ānes,

nor measure of-man, except mine alone,

þæt hē wið āglæcean eofoðo dæle,

that he against monster strength share,

eorlscype efne. Ic mid elne sceall

heroism perform. I with courage shall

gold gegangan, oððe gūð nimeð,

gold win, or war takes,

feorhbealu frēcne frēan ēowerne!

life-bale terrible lord your!

Ārās ðā bi rōnde rōf ōretta,

Arose then by shield brave champion,

heard under helme, hiorosercean bær

hard under helmet, battle-shirt bore

under stāncleofu, strengo getrūwode

under stone-cliffs, strength trusted

ānes mannes; ne bið swylc earges sið!

of-one man; not is such of-coward venture!

Geseah ðā be wealle sē ðe worna fela,

Saw then by wall he who great-number many,

gumcystum gōd gūða gedigde,

in-manly-virtues good of-battles survived,

hildehlemma, þonne hnitan fēðan,

of-battle-clashes, when clashed foot-troops,

sto[n]dan stānbogan, strēam ūt þonan

stand stone-arches, stream out thence

2535

2540

2545

brecan of beorge; wæs þære burnan wælm
break from barrow; was of-the stream surge

heaðofȳrum hāt; ne meahhte horde nēah
with-battle-fires hot; not could board near

unbyrnende ænige hwile
unburnt any while

dēop gedȳgan for dracan lēge.
deep endure because-of of-dragon flame.

2550 Lēt ðā of brēostum, ðā hē gebolgen wæs,
Let then from breast, when he enraged was,

Weder-Gēata lēod word ūt faran,
of-Weder-Geats prince word out go,

stearcheort stymde; stefn in becōm
stout-hearted stormed; voice in came

heaðotorht hlynnan under hārne stān.
battle-clear to-resound under gray stone.

Hete wæs onhrēred, hordweard oncnīow
Hate was stirred, board-guardian recognized

2555 mannes reorde; næs ðær mārā fyrst
of-man voice; not-was there more time

frēode tō friclan. From ærest cwōm
friendship to seek. From first came

oruð āglācean ūt of stāne,
breath of-monster out of stone,

hāt hildeswāt; hrūse dynede.
hot battle-sweat; earth resounded.

Biorn under beorge bordrand onswāf
Warrior under barrow shield-rim swung

2560 wið ðām gryregieste, Gēata dryhten;
against the terrible-guest, of-Geats lord;

ðā wæs hringbogan heorte gefýsed

then was of-ring-bender heart impelled

sæcce tō sēceanne. Sweord ær gebræd

strife to seek. Sword before drew

gōd gūðcýning, gomele lāfe,

good war-king, old heirloom,

ecgum anglāw; æghwæðrum wæs

in-edges not-blunt; to-each was

bealohycgendra brōga fram oðrum.

of-evil-minded-ones terror from other.

Stiðmōd gestōd wið stēapne rond

Resolute stood against steep shield

winia bealdor, ðā se wyrm gebēah

of-friends lord, when the serpent coiled

snūde tōsomne; hē on searwum bād.

quickly together; he in armor waited.

Gewāt ðā byrnende gebogen scriðan,

Went then burning coiled gliding,

tō gescipe scyndan. Scyld wēl gebearg

to fate hastening. Shield well protected

life ond lice læssan hwile

life and body for-a-shorter while

mārum þeodne, þonne his myne sōhte;

for-famous prince, than his mind sought;

ðær hē þȳ fyrste forman dōgore

there he for-that time on-first day

wealdan mōste, swā him wyrd ne gescrāf

prevail had-to, as to-him fate not decreed

hrēð æt hilde. Hond ūp ābræd

glory in battle. Hand up raised

2565

2570

2575

Gēata dryhten, gryrefāhne slōh
of-Geats lord, terribly-shining-one struck

incge-lāfe, þæt sio ecg gewāc
with-splendid [?]-heirloom, that the edge failed

brūn on bāne, bāt unswiðor,
bright on bone, bit less-strongly,

þonne his ðiodcynig þearfe hæfde
than its people-king need had

2580 bysigum gebāded. Ðā wæs beorges weard
by-afflictions oppressed. Then was of-barrow guardian

æfter heaðuswenge on hrēoum mōde,
after battle-stroke in fierce heart,

wearp wælfyre; wīde sprunon
threw slaughter-fire; widely sprang

hildelēoman. Hrēðsigora ne gealp
battle-lights. Of-glory-victories not boasted

goldwine Gēata; gūðbill geswāc
gold-friend of-Geats; war-sword failed

2585 nacod æt nīðe, swā hyt nō sceolde,
naked at hostility, as it not should,

iren ārgōd. — Ne wæs þæt ēðe sið,
iron good-of-old. Not was that easy venture,

þæt se mæra maga Ecgðēowes
that the famous son of-Ecgtheow

grundwong þone ofgyfan wolde;
earth-plain that give-up would;

sceolde [ofer] willan wic eardian
had-to against will dwelling inhabit

2590 elles hwergen, swā sceal āghwylc mon
else somewhere, as must each man

ālætan lændagas. Næs ðā long tō ðon,
leave transitory-days. Not-was then long to that,
 þæt ðā āglæcean hȳ eft gemetton.
that the fearsome-ones themselves again met.
 Hyrte hyne hordweard, hreðer æðme wēoll,
Took-heart himself board-guardian, breast with-breath surged,
 nīwan stefne; nearo ðrōwode
with-new turn; distress suffered
 fȳre befongen sē ðe ær folce wēold.
by-fire encircled he who before people ruled.
 Nealles him on hēape handgesteallan,
Not-at-all him in band band-comrades,
 æðelinga bearn ymbe gestōdon
of-princes sons around stood
 hildecystum, ac hȳ on holt bugon,
with-warlike-virtues, but they into wood fled,
 ealdre burgan. Hiora in ānum wēoll
life to-save. Of-them in one surged
 sefa wið sorgum; sibb' æfre ne mæg
mind with sorrows; kinship ever not can
 wiht onwendan þām ðe wēl þenceð.
at-all change for-him who well thinks.

2595

2600

Wiglaf, son of Weobstan, sees his lord suffering in the heat and remembers the gifts Beowulf gave him. He takes up the old sword his father won from Eanmund, and reproaches the others for forgetting their vows in the mead-hall; he would rather burn beside his lord than go home. He wades through the smoke to Beowulf's side, and when his wooden shield is burned away he shelters under Beowulf's. Beowulf strikes again and his sword Naegling shatters, and the dragon seizes him by the neck with its fangs.

Wiglāf wæs hāten, Wēoxstānes sunu,

Wiglaf was called, of-Weobstan son,

lēoflic lindwiga, lēod Scylfinga,

beloved shield-warrior, prince of-Scylfings,

māeg Ælfheres; geseah his mondryhten

kinsman of-Ælfhere; saw his liege-lord

2605 under heregriman hāt prōwian.

under war-mask heat suffer.

Gemunde ðā ðā āre, þē hē him ær forgeaf,

Remembered then the favors, which he him before gave,

wicstede weligne Wægmundinga,

dwelling-place wealthy of-Waegmundings,

folcrihta gehwylc, swā his fæder āhte;

folk-rights each, as his father owned;

ne mihte ðā forhabban, hond rond gefēng,

not could then restrain, hand shield seized,

2610 geolwe linde, gomel swyrd getēah;

yellow linden, old sword drew;

þæt wæs mid eldum Ēanmundes lāf,

that was among men of-Eanmund heirloom,

suna Ōhtere[s]; þām æt sæcce wearð,
son of-Ohthere; to-whom in battle became,
 wræcca(n) winelēasum Wēohstān bana
to-exile friendless Weobstan slayer
 mēces ecgum, ond his māgum ætbær
of-sword with-edges, and to-his kinsmen carried
 brūnfāgne helm, hringde byrnan,
brown-shining helmet, ringed mail-coat,
 ealdsweord etonisc; þæt him Onela forgeaf,
old-sword gigantic; that him Onela gave,
 his gædelinges gūðgewædu,
of-his kinsman war-garments,
 fyrdsearo fūslic, — nō ymbe ðā fāhðe spræc,
army-gear ready, not about the feud spoke,
 þēah ðe hē his brōðor bearn ābredwade.
though that he of-his brother son bad-killed.
 Hē [ðā] frætwe gehēold fela missēra,
He those treasures kept many of-half-years,
 bill ond byrnan, oð ðæt his byre mihte
blade and mail-coat, until that his son could
 eorlscipe efnan swā his ærfæder;
heroism perform as his forefather;
 geaf him ðā mid Gēatum gūðgewæda,
gave him then among Geats of-war-garments,
 æghwæs unrīm, þā hē of ealdre gewāt
of-each countless, when he from life departed
 frōd on forðweg. — Þā wæs forma sið
old on forth-way. Then was first time
 geongan cempan, þæt hē gūðe ræs
for-young champion, that he of-war rush

2615

2620

2625

mid his frēodryhtne fremman sceolde.

with his noble-lord perform should.

Ne gemealt him se mōdsefa, nē his māges lāf

Not melted in-him the courage, nor of-his kinsman heirloom

gewāc æt wīge; þæt se wyrm onfand,

failed in battle; that the serpent found,

2630 syððan hie tōgædre gegān hæfdon.

after they together come had.

Wiglāf maðelode, wordrihta fela

Wiglaf spoke, of-right-words many

sægde gesiðum — him wæs sefa geōmor—:

said to-companions to-him was mind sad:

‘Ic ðæt mæl geman, þār wē medu þēgun,

I that time remember, when we mead drank,

þonne wē gehēton ūssum hlāforde

when we promised our lord

2635 in biorsele, ðē ūs ðās bēagas geaf,

in beer-hall, who us these rings gave,

þæt wē him ða gūðgeatwa gyldan woldon,

that we him the war-gear repay would,

gif him þyslicu þearf gelumpe,

if him such need befell,

helmas ond heard sword. Ðē hē ūsic on herge gecēas

helmets and hard sword. Therefore he us in army chose

tō ðyssum siðfate sylfes willum,

for this venture by-own will,

2640 onmunde ūsic mārða, ond mē þās mādmas geaf,

deemed-worthy us of-glories, and me these treasures gave,

þē hē ūsic gārwigend gōde tealde,

because he us spear-warriors good counted,

hwate helmberend, — þeah ðe hlāford ūs
bold helmet-bearers, though that lord for-us

þis ellenweorc āna âððhte
this courage-work alone intended

tō gefremmanne, folces hyrde,
to perform, of-people guardian,

forðām hē manna mæst mārða gefremede,
because he of-men most of-glories performed,

2645

dæda dollicra. Nū is sē dæg cumen,
of-deeds daring, Now is the day come,

þæt ūre mandryhten mægenes behōfað,
that our liege-lord of-strength has-need,

gōdra gūðrinca; wutun gongan tō,
of-good of-warriors; let-us go to,

helpan hildfruman, þenden hyt sȳ,
help battle-chief, while it is,

glēdegesa grim! God wāt on mec,
fire-terror grim! God knows of me,

2650

þæt mē is micle lēofre, þæt minne lichaman
that to-me is much dearer, that my body

mid minne goldgyfan glēd fæðmie.
with my gold-giver fire embrace.

Ne þynced mē gerysne, þæt wē rondas beren
Not seems to-me fitting, that we shields bear

eft tō earde, nemne we æror mægen
back to home, unless we first can

fāne gefyllan, feorh ealgian
foe fell, life defend

2655

Wedra ðeodnes. Ic wāt geara,
of-Weders prince. I know well,

þæt nāron ealðgewyrht, þæt hē āna scyle
that not-were old-deserts, that be alone should

Gēata duguðe gnorn þrōwian,
of-Geats of-veterans grief suffer,

gesigan æt sæcce; ūrum sceal sweord ond helm,
sink in battle; for-us shall sword and helmet,

2660 byrne ond beaduscṛūd bām gemāne.
mail-coat and battle-garment for-both in-common.'

Wōd þā þurh þone wælrēc, wīgheafolan bær
Advanced then through the slaughter-smoke, war-helmet bore

frēan on fultum, fēa worda cwæð:
for-lord in help, few words spoke:

‘Lēofa Biowulf, lāst eall tela,
‘Dear Beowulf, perform all well,

swā ðū on geoguðfēore gēara gecwāde,
as thou in youth-life formerly saidst,

2665 þæt ðū ne ālāte be ðē lifigendum
that thou not wouldst-let by thee living

dōm gedrēosan; scealt nū dāðdum rōf,
glory fail; shalt-thou now in-deeds brave,

æðeling anhȳdig, ealle mægene
prince resolute, with-all strength

feorh ealgian; ic ðē fullāestu.
life defend; I thee will-help.'

Æfter ðām wordum wȳrm yrre cwōm,
After those words serpent angry came,

2670 atol inwitgæst oðre siðe
terrible malicious-stranger on-second time

fȳrwylmum fāh fionda nīos(i)an,
with-fire-surges shining of-foes to-seek,

lāðra manna. Ligȳðum forborn
of-bated men. With-flame-waves burned
 bord wið rond[ē], byrne ne meahthe
shield to rim, mail-coat not could
 geongum gārwigan gēoce gefremman,
to-young spear-warrior help give,
 ac se maga geonga under his mǣges scyld
but the man young under of-his kinsman shield
 elne geēode, þā his āgen w(æ)s
with-courage went, when his own was
 glēdum forgrunden. Þā gēn gūðcýning
by-embers destroyed. Then yet war-king
 m(ǣrða) gemunde, mǣgenstrengo slōh
of-glories remembered, with-mighty-strength struck
 hildebille, þæt hyt on heafolan stōd
with-battle-sword, that it on head stuck
 niþe genȳded; Nægling forbærst,
by-hostility driven; Naegling burst,
 geswāc æt sǣcce sweord Biowulfes
failed in battle sword of-Beowulf
 gomol ond grǣgmǣl. Him þæt gifede ne wæs,
old and gray-patterned. To-him that granted not was,
 þæt him irenna ecge mihton
that him of-irons edges could
 helpan æt hilde; wæs sio hond tō strong,
help in battle; was the hand too strong,
 sē ðe mēca gehwane mine gefræge
he who of-swords each by-my hearing
 swenge ofersōhte, þonne hē tō sǣcce bær
by-stroke overtaxed, when he to battle bore

2675

2680

2685

wæpen wund[r]um heard; næs him wihte ðe sēl.
weapon wondrously hard; not-was for-him at-all the better.

Ða wæs þeodsceaða þridan siðe,
Then was people-ravager on-third time,

frēcne fýrdraca fæhða gemyndig,
fierce fire-dragon of-feuds mindful,

2690 ræsde on ðone rōfan, þā him rūm āgeald,
rusbed on the brave-one, when to-him opportunity offered,

hāt ond heaðogrim, heals ealne ymbefēng
hot and battle-grim, neck whole encircled

biteran bānum; hē geblōdegod wearð
with-bitter bones; he bloodied became

sāwuldriore, swāt yðum wēoll.
with-soul-blood, blood in-waves surged.

XXXVII · THE DRAGON'S DEATH

Wiglaf strikes the dragon lower down, his hand burning, and the fire begins to die; Beowulf draws his knife and cuts the dragon through the middle. It is Beowulf's last victory. The poison swells in his wound, and he sits by the wall gazing at the giants' stone arches while Wiglaf washes him with water and unfastens his helmet. Beowulf wishes he had a son to leave his armor to, and says he ruled fifty years, picked no treacherous quarrels, and swore no false oaths, so God cannot charge him with murdering his kin. He sends Wiglaf into the barrow so that he may see the treasure before he dies.

Ða ic æt þearfe [gefrægn] þeodcyniges
Then I at need heard of-people-king

2695 andlongne eorl ellen cýðan,
upright warrior courage show,

cræft ond cēnðu, swā him gecynde wæs.

strength and boldness, as to-him natural was.

Ne hēdde hē þæs heafolan, ac sio hand gebarn

Not heeded he the head, but the hand burned

mōdiges mannes, þær hē his mæges healp,

of-brave man, where he his kinsman helped,

þæt hē þone niðgæst nioðor hwēne slōh,

so-that he the malicious-stranger lower somewhat struck,

secg on searwum, þæt ðæt sweord gedēaf

man in armor, that the sword plunged-in

fāh ond fæted, þæt ðæt fyr ongon

shining and plated, so-that the fire began

sweðrian syððan. Ðā gēn sylf cyning

to-abate afterward. Then yet himself king

gewēold his gewitte, wæll-seaxe gebræd

controlled his senses, slaughter-knife drew

biter ond beaduscearp, þæt hē on byrnan wæg;

bitter and battle-sharp, which he on mail-coat wore;

forwrat Wedra helm wyrm on middan.

cut-through of-Weders protector serpent in middle.

Fēond gefyldan — ferh ellen wrac—,

Foe felled life courage drove-out,

ond hī hyne þā bēgen ābroten hæfdon,

and they him then both destroyed had,

sibæðelingas; swylc sceolde secg wesan,

kindred-princes; such should man be,

þegn æt ðearfe! Þæt ðām þeodne wæs

thane in need! That for-the prince was

sīðas[t] sigehwila sylfes dædum,

last of-victory-times by-own deeds,

2700

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worlde geweorces. Ðā sio wund ongon,
of-world of-work. Then the wound began,
 þē him se eorðdraca ār geworhte,
which him the earth-dragon before made,
 swelan ond swellan; hē þæt sōna onfand,
to-burn and to-swell; he that at-once found,
 þæt him on brēostum bealonīð(e) wēoll
that in-him in breast with-evil-malice surged

2715 attor on innan. Ðā se æðeling giong,
poison in within. Then the prince went,
 þæt hē bi wealle wishcgynde
so-that he by wall wise-minded
 gesæt on sesse; seah on enta geweorc,
sat on seat; looked on of-giants work,
 hū ðā stānbogan stapulum fæste
how the stone-arches with-pillars fast
 ēce eorðreced innan healde.
eternal earth-hall within held.

2720 Hyne þā mid handa heorodrēorigne,
Him then with hand sword-bloody,
 þēoden mārne þegn ungemete till,
prince famous thane immeasurably good,
 winedryhten his wætere gelafede
friend-lord his with-water laved
 hilde sædne ond his hel(m) onspēon.
from-battle weary and his helmet unfastened.

Biowulf mæpelode — hē ofer benne spræc,
Beowulf spoke he over wound spoke,

2725 wunde wælblēate; wisse hē gearwe,
wound deadly-pale; knew he well,

þæt hē dæghwila gedrogen hæfde,
that he day-times spent had,
 eorðan wynn(e); ðā wæs eall sceacen
of-earth joy; then was all departed
 dōgongerimes, dēað ungemete nēah—:
of-day-count, death immeasurably near:

‘Nū ic suna minum syllan wolde
Now I to-son my give would

gūðgewādu, þār mē gifeðe swā
war-garments, if to-me granted so

ānig yrfeweard æfter wurde
any heir after were

lice gelenge. Ic ðās lēode hēold
to-body belonging I this people ruled

fiftig wintra; næs sē folccyning,
fifty winters; not-was the folk-king,

ymbesittendra ānig ðāra,
of-neighbors any of-those,

þē mec gūðwinum grētan dorste,
who me with-war-friends approach dared,

egesā ðeôn. Ic on earde bād
with-terror threaten. I in homeland awaited

mālgescæfta, hēold mīn tela,
destined-times, beld mine well,

ne sōhte searoniðas, nē mē swōr fela
not sought treacherous-quarrels, nor for-myself swore many

āða on unriht. Ic ðæs ealles mæg
oaths in wrong. I of-this all can

feorhbennum sēoc gefēan habban;
with-life-wounds sick joy have;

2730

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2740

forðām mē witan ne ðearf Waldend fira
because me charge not need Ruler of-men

morðorbealo māga, þonne mīn sceaceð
murder-bale of-kinsmen, when my departs

lif of lice. Nū ðū lungre geong
life from body. Now thou quickly go

hord scēawian under hārne stān,
board to-view under gray stone,

2745 Wiglāf lēofa, nū se wyrm ligeð,
Wiglaf dear, now the serpent lies,

swefeð sāre wund, since berēafod.
sleeps sorely wounded, of-treasure bereft.

Bio nū on ofoste, þæt ic ārwelan,
Be now in haste, that I ancient-wealth,

goldæht ongite, gearo scēawige
gold-possession may-behold, readily see

swegle searogimmas, þæt ic ðy sēft mæge
bright curious-gems, that I the more-easily may

2750 æfter mādðumwelan mīn ālātan
after treasure-wealth my give-up

lif ond lēodscipe, þone ic longe hēold.
life and people, which I long held.'

Wiglaf enters the barrow and sees gold glittering on the ground, rusty helmets, the vessels of men long dead, and a golden banner shining over the board. He carries out cups, dishes, and the banner and hurries back to find his lord near death. Beowulf thanks God for the treasure he has won for his people and asks that a barrow be raised on Hronesness, to be called Beowulf's barrow by seafarers. He gives Wiglaf his golden collar, helmet, and mail-coat, calls him the last of the Waegmundings, and dies.

Ðā ic snūde gefrægn sunu Wihstānes

Then I quickly heard son of-Weobstan

æfter wordcwydum wundum dryhtne

after word-sayings to-wounded lord

hȳran heaðosiocum, hringnet beran,

obey to-battle-sick-one, ring-net bear,

brogdne beadusercean under beorges hrōf.

woven battle-shirt under of-barrow roof.

2755

Geseah ðā sigehrēðig, þā hē bi sesse gēong,

Saw then victory-exultant, when he by seat went,

magōþegn mōdig mǣððumsigla fealo,

young-thane brave of-treasure-jewels many,

gold glitinian grunde getenge,

gold glittering to-ground close,

wundur on wealle, ond þæs wyrmes denn,

wonders on wall, and of-the serpent den,

ealdes ūhtflogan, orcas stondan,

old of-dawn-flier, cups standing,

2760

fyrnmanna fatu, feormendlēase,

of-men-of-old vessels, without-polishers,

hyrstum behrorene; þār wæs helm monig
of-ornaments bereft; there was helmet many

eald ond ðmig, earmbēaga fela
old and rusty, of-arm-rings many

searwum gesæled. — Sinc ēaðe mæg,
cunningly bound. Treasure easily can,

2765 gold on grund(e) gumcynnes gehwone
gold in ground of-mankind each

oferhigian, hýde sē ðe wylle! —
overpower [?], hide be who will!

Swylce hē siomian geseah segn eallgylden
Likewise he hanging saw banner all-golden

hēah ofer horde, hondwundra mæst,
high over board, of-hand-wonders greatest,

gelocen leoðocræftum; of ðām lēoma stōd,
locked by-limb-skills; from which light stood,

2770 þæt hē þone grundwong ongitan meahte,
so-that he the ground-plain perceive could,

wræte giondwilitan. Næs ðæs wyrmes þār
treasures survey. Not-was of-the serpent there

onsýn ænig, ac hyne ecg fornam.
sight any, but him edge carried-off.

Ðā ic on hlāwe gefrægn hord rēafian,
Then I in mound heard board plunder,

eald enta geweorc ānne mannan,
old of-giants work one man,

2775 him on bearm hladon bunan ond discas
for-himself into bosom load cups and disbes

sylfes dōme; segn ēac genōm,
own by-choice; banner also took,

bēacna beorhtost. Bill ær gescōd

of-beacons brightest. Sword before injured

— ecg wæs iren — ealdhlāfordes

edge was iron of-old-lord

þām ðāra mǣðma mundbora wæs

to-him of-those treasures guardian was

longe hwile, ligegesā wæg

long while, fire-terror bore

hātne for horde, hioroweallende

hot for board, fiercely-surgīng

middelnihctum, oð þæt hē morðre swealt.

at-midnights, until that he by-violence died.

Ār wæs on ofoste, eftsīðes georn,

Messenger was in haste, of-return eager,

frætsum gefyrðred; hyne fyrwet bræc,

by-treasures urged; him curiosity pressed,

hwæðer collenferð cwicne gemette

whether bold-spirited alive would-find

in ðām wongstede Wedra þēoden

in the plain-place of-Weders prince

ellensiocne, þær hē hine ær forlēt.

strength-failing, where he him before left.

Hē ðā mid þām mǣðmum mārne þioden,

He then with the treasures famous prince,

dryhten sinne drorigne fand

lord his bloody found

ealdres æt ende; hē hine eft ongon

of-life at end; he him again began

wāteres weorpan, oð þæt wordes ord

with-water to-sprinkle, until that of-word point

2780

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brēosthord þurhbræc. [Biorncyning spræc]

breast-board broke-through. Warrior-king spoke

gomel on gιοhðe — gold scēawode—:

old in sorrow gold looked-at:

‘Ic ðāra frætwa Frēan ealles ðanc,

I for-these treasures to-Lord of-all thanks,

2795 Wuldurcyninge wordum secge,

to-Glory-King with-words say,

ēcum Dryhtne, þē ic hēr on starie,

to-eternal Lord, which I here at gaze,

þæs ðe ic mōste mīnum lēodum

for-that that I might for-my people

ær swyldæge swylc gestrynan.

before death-day such acquire.

Nū ic on māðma hord mīne bebohte

Now I for of-treasures board my have-sold

2800 frōde feorhlege, fremmað gēna

old life-laying, attend-to still

lēoda þearfe; ne mæg ic hēr leng wesan.

of-people need; not can I here longer be.

Hātað heaðomære hlāw gewyrcean

Command battle-famous-ones mound to-make

beorhtne æfter bāle æt brimes nōsan;

bright after pyre at of-sea headland;

sē scel tō gemyndum mīnum lēodum

it shall as memorial for-my people

2805 hēah hlifian on Hronesnæsse,

high tower on Hronesness,

þæt hit sēliðend syððan hātan

so-that it seafarers afterward call

Biowulfes biorh, ðā ðe brentingas

of-Beowulf barrow, those who ships

ofer flōda genipu feorran drifað.

over of-floods mists from-afar drive.'

Dyde him of healse hring gyldenne

Took from-himself from neck ring golden

þioden þristhȳdig, þegne gesealde,

prince bold-minded, to-thane gave,

geongum gārwigian, goldfāhne helm,

to-young spear-warrior, gold-adorned helmet,

bēah ond byrnan, hēt hyne brūcan well—:

ring and mail-coat, bade him use well:

‘Pū eart endelāf ūsses cynnes,

‘Thou art last-remnant of-our race,

Wægmundinga; ealle wyrð forswēop

of-Waegmundings; all fate swept-away

mīne māgas tō metodscafte,

my kinsmen to ordainer-decree,

eorlas on elne; ic him æfter sceal.

warriors in courage; I them after must.'

Þæt wæs þām gomelan gingæste word

That was to-the old-one last word

brēostgehygdum, ār hē bāl cure,

from-breast-thoughts, before he pyre chose,

hāte heaðowylmas; him of hræðre gewāt

hot battle-surges; from-him from breast departed

sāwol sēcean sōðfæstra dōm.

soul to-seek of-the-righteous glory.

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Wiglaf grieves beside his dead lord and the dead dragon, which will never again fly over its hoard at midnight. The ten cowards come out of the wood with their shields and find him trying in vain to revive Beowulf with water. He rebukes them: their lord gave them their armor, but when war came he had no comrades to boast of, and God let him avenge himself alone, for Wiglaf's own help was too little. Now their kin will lose land and gifts, and death is better than a life of shame.

Ðā wæs gegongen guman unfrōdum

Then was come-about to-the-man young

earfoðlice, þæt hē on eorðan geseah

with-difficulty, that he on earth saw

þone lēofestan lifes æt ende

the dearest of-life at end

blēate gebāran. Bona swylce læg,

wretchedly fare. Slayer likewise lay,

2825 egeslic eorðdraca ealdre berēafod,

terrible earth-dragon of-life bereft,

bealwe gebāded. Bēahhordum leng

by-evil oppressed. Ring-boards longer

wurm wōhbogen wealdan ne mōste,

serpent coiled rule not might,

ac him irenna ecga fornāmon,

but him of-irons edges carried-off,

hearde heaðoscearde homera lāfe,

hard battle-notched of-hammers leavings,

2830 þæt se wīdfloga wundum stille

so-that the wide-flter with-wounds still

hrēas on hrūsan hordærne nēah.

fell on earth board-house near.

Nalles æfter lyfte lācende hwearf

Not-at-all through air flying turned

middelnihum, māðmæhta wlonc

at-midnights, of-treasure-possessions proud

ansyn ywde, ac hē eorðan gefeoll

face showed, but he to-earth fell

for ðæs hildfruman hondgeweorc.

because-of of-the battle-chief handiwork.

Hūru þæt on lande lýt manna ðāh

Indeed that in land few of-men prospered

mægenāgendra mīne gefræge,

of-strength-owners by-my bearing,

þēah ðe hē dāda gehwæs dyrstig wære,

though that he of-deeds each daring were,

þæt hē wið attorsceaðan oreðe geræsd,

that he against of-poison-ravager breath rushed,

oððe hringsele hondum styrede,

or ring-hall with-hands disturbed,

gif hē wæccende weard onfunde

if he watching guardian found

būon on beorge. Biowulfe wearð

dwelling in barrow. To-Beowulf was

dryhtmāðma dæl dēaðe forgolden;

of-lordly-treasures share with-death paid;

hæfde æghwæðer ende gefēred

had each end reached

lānan lifes. Næs ðā lang tō ðon,

of-transitory life. Not-was then long till that,

þæt ðā hildlatan holt ofgefān,

that the battle-laggards wood left,

2835

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2845

tȳdre trēowlogan tȳne ætsomne,

weak troth-breakers ten together,

ðā ne dorston ær dareðum lācan

who not dared before with-spears play

on hyra mandryhtnes miclan þearfe;

in their of-liege-lord great need;

2850 ac hȳ scamiende scyldas bāran,

but they ashamed shields bore,

gūðgewādu þær se gomela læg;

war-garments where the old-one lay;

wlitan on Wilāf. Hē gewērgad sæt,

looked at Wiglaf. He wearied sat,

fēðecempa frēan eaxlum nēah,

foot-champion of-lord shoulders near,

wehte hyne wætre; him wiht ne spēow.

roused him with-water; him at-all not availed.

2855 Ne meahte hē on eorðan, ðēah hē ūðe wēl,

Not could he on earth, though he wished well,

on ðām frumgāre feorh gehealdan,

in the first-spear life keep,

nē ðæs Wealdendes wiht oncirran;

nor of-the Ruler anything change;

wolde dōm Godes dædum rædan

would judgment of-God by-deeds rule

gumena gehwylcum, swā hē nū gēn dēð.

of-men for-each, as it now still does.

2860 Þā wæs æt ðām geongan grim andswaru

Then was from the young-one grim answer

ēðbegēte þām ðe ær his elne forlēas.

easily-got for-him who before his courage lost.

Wiglāf maðelode, Wēohstānes sunu,
Wiglaf spoke, of-Weohstan son,
 sec[ɡ] sāriferð — seah on unlēofe—:
man sad-spirited looked on unloved-ones:
 ‘Þæt, lā, mæg secgan sē ðe wyle sōð specan,
‘That, lo, may say he who will truth speak,
 þæt se mondryhten, sē ēow ðā mādmas geaf,
that the liege-lord, who you the treasures gave,
 ēoredgeatwe, þē gē þær on standað, —
army-gear, which you there in stand,
 þonne hē on ealubence oft gesealde
when he on ale-bench often gave
 healsittendum helm ond byrnan,
to-ball-sitters helmet and mail-coat,
 þēoden his þegnum, swylce hē prýðlicost
prince to-his thanes, such-as he most-splendid
 ōwer feor oððe nēah findan meahte—,
anywhere far or near find could,
 þæt hē gēnunga gūðgewādu
that he utterly war-garments
 wrāðe forwurpe, ðā hyne wig beget.
wretchedly threw-away, when him war befell.
 Nealles folccýning fyrdgesteallum
Not-at-all folk-king of-army-comrades
 gylpan þorfte; hwæðre him God ūðe,
boast needed; yet him God granted,
 sigora Waldend, þæt hē hyne sylfne gewræc
of-victories Ruler, that he him self avenged
 āna mid ecge, þā him wæs elnes þearf.
alone with edge, when to-him was of-courage need.

2865

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2875

Ic him lifwraðe lȳtle meahte

I him life-protection little could

ætgifan æt gūðe, ond ongan swā þēah

give in battle, and began so though

ofer mīn gemet mǣges helpan;

beyond my measure kinsman to-help;

2880 symle wæs þȳ sǣmra, þonne ic sweorde drep

ever was the weaker, when I with-sword struck

ferhðgeniðlan, fȳr unswiðor

life-enemy, fire less-strongly

wēoll of gewitte. Wergendra tō lȳt

surged from head. Of-defenders too few

þrong ymbe þēoden, þā hyne sio þræg becwōm.

thronged around prince, when him the hard-time came.

Nū sceal sincþego ond swyrdgifu,

Now shall treasure-receiving and sword-giving,

2885 eall ēðelwyn ēowrum cynne,

all native-joy for-your race,

lufen ālicgean; londrihtes mōt

love [?] cease; of-land-right must

þære mǣgburge monna æghwylc

of-that kindred of-men each

idel hweorfan, syððan æðelingas

empty wander, after princes

feorran gefricgean flēam ēowerne,

from-afar hear-of flight your,

2890 dōmlēasan dǣd. Dēað bið sēlla

inglorious deed. Death is better

eorla gehwylcum þonne edwitlif!

of-warriors for-each than life-of-shame!

Wiglaf sends word to the warriors waiting on the cliff, and a messenger announces Beowulf's death and the dragon's. He foresees war: the Franks and Frisians have hated the Geats since Hygelac's raid, and the Swedes will not keep peace. He recalls how the Geats once attacked Ongentheow, who killed their king Haethcyn, rescued his own wife, and besieged the survivors in Ravenswood, threatening to hang them for the birds, until at dawn they heard Hygelac's horns coming to their rescue.

Heht ðā þæt heaðoweorc tō hagan bīdan

Commanded then that battle-work to enclosure to-announce

ūp ofer ecgclif, þær þæt eorlweorod

up over edge-cliff, where that warrior-band

morgenlongne dæg mōdgiōmor sæt,

morning-long day heart-sad sat,

bordhæbbende, bēga on wēnum,

shield-bearing, of-both in expectation,

2895

endedōgores ond eftcymes

of-last-day and of-return

lēofes monnes. Lȳt swigode

of-dear man. Little kept-silent

nīwra spella sē ðe næs gerād,

of-new tidings he who headland rode,

ac hē sōðlice sægde ofer ealle:

but he truly said before all:

‘Nū is wilgeofa Wedra lēoda,

Now is joy-giver of-Weders of-people,

2900

dryhten Gēata dēaðbedde fæst,

lord of-Geats on-death-bed fast,

wunað wælreste wyrmes dǣdum;

dwells in-slaughter-bed of-serpent by-deeds;

him on efn ligeð ealdorgewinna

beside-him on level lies life-enemy

sexbennum sēoc; sweorde ne meahte

with-knife-wounds sick; with-sword not could

2905 on ðām āglācean ænige þinga

on the monster in-any way

wunde gewyrcean. Wiglāf siteð

wound make. Wiglaf sits

ofer Biowulfe, byre Wihstānes,

over Beowulf, son of-Weobstan,

eorl ofer ððrum unlifigendum,

warrior over other lifeless,

healdeð higemæðum hēafodwearde

holds with-mind-weary head-watch

2910 lēofes ond lāðes. Nū ys lēodum wēn

of-loved-one and of-hated-one. Now is for-people expectation

orleghwile, syððan under[ne]

of-war-time, after unbidden

Froncum ond Frýsum fyll cyninges

to-Franks and Frisians full of-king

wide weorðeð. Wæs sio wrōht scepen

widely becomes. Was the strife created

heard wið Hūgas, syððan Higelāc cwōm

hard against Hugas, after Hygelac came

2915 faran flotherge on Frēsna land,

traveling with-ship-army into of-Frisians land,

þær hyne Hetware hilde genægdon,

where him Hetware in-battle assailed,

elne geēodon mid ofermægene,

with-courage achieved with superior-force,

þæt se byrnwiga būgan sceolde,
so-that the mail-warrior bow had-to,

fēoll on fēðan; nalles frætwe geaf
fell in foot-troop; not-at-all treasures gave

ealdor dugoðe. Ūs wæs ā syððan 2920
chief to-veterans. To-us was ever since

Merewioingas milts ungyfeðe. —
of-Merovingian favor not-granted.

Nē ic te Swēoðēode sibbe oððe trēowe
Nor I from Swedish-people peace or good-faith

wihte ne wēne, ac wæs wide cūð,
at-all — expect, but was widely known,

þætte Ongenðio ealdre besnyðede
that Ongenþeow of-life deprived

Hæðcen Hrēþling wið Hrefnawudu, 2925
Haethcyn Hretbling by Ravenswood,

þā for onmēðlan ārest gesōhton
when for arrogance first sought

Gēata lēode Gūð-Scilfingas.
of-Geats people War-Scylfings.

Sōna him se frōða fæder Ōhtheres,
At-once him the wise father of-Ohthere,

eald ond egesfull ondslyht āgeaf,
old and terrible counter-blow gave,

ābrēot brimwisan, brýd āhredde, 2930
cut-down sea-king, wife rescued,

gomela iōmēowlan golde berofene,
old-one old-woman of-gold bereft,

Onelan mōdor ond Ōhtheres;
of-Onela mother and of-Ohthere;

ond ðā folgode feorhgeniðlan,

and then followed life-enemies,

oð ðæt hī oðēodon earfoðlice

until that they went-away with-difficulty

2935 in Hrefnesholt hlāfordlēase.

into Ravenswood lordless.

Besæt ðā sinherge sweorda lāfe

Besieged then with-great-army of-swords leavings

wundum wēрге; wēan oft gehēt

by-wounds weary; misery often promised

earmre teohhe ondlonge niht,

to-wretched company whole night,

cwæð, hē on mergenne mēces ecgum

said, he in morning of-sword with-edges

2940 gētan wolde, sum[e] on galgtrēowu[m]

destroy would, some on gallows-trees

[fuglum] tō gamene. Frōfor eft gelamp

for-birds as sport. Comfort afterward came

sārigmōdum somod ærdæge,

to-the-sad-hearted together-with early-day,

syððan hie Hygelāces horn ond bȳman,

when they of-Hygelac born and trumpet,

gealdor ongēaton, þā se gōda cōm

sound heard, when the good-one came

2945 lēoda dugode on lāst faran.

of-people with-veterans on track traveling

The messenger tells how Ongentheow fell back to his fortress and was brought to bay by Hygelac's men: Wulf wounded him and was struck down, and Eofor killed the old king, for which Hygelac gave each brother land and rings, and gave Eofor his only daughter. That feud, he says, will bring the Swedes upon the Geats now that their king is dead, and the hoard must burn with Beowulf; no harp will wake the warriors, but the raven will tell the eagle of its feast. The warriors find Beowulf's body beside the fifty-foot dragon, among treasures laid under a spell that only God could lift.

Wæs	sio	swātswaðu	Sw[ē]ona	ond	Gēata,	
Was	the	blood-track	of-Swedes	and	of-Geats,	
wælræs	weora	wīde	gesýne,			
slaughter-rush	of-men	widely	visible,			
hū	ðā	folc	mid	him	fæhðe	tōwehton.
how	the	peoples	between	themselves	feud	stirred-up.
Gewāt	him	ðā	se	gōda	mid	his gædelingum,
Went	himself	then	the	good-one	with	his kinsmen,
frōd	felageōmor	fæsten	sēcean,			2950
wise	very-sad	fortress	to-seek,			
eorl	Ongenþio	ufor	oncirde;			
warrior	Ongentheow	higher	turned;			
hæfde	Higelāces	hilde	gefrūnen,			
had	of-Hygelac	warfare	heard-of,			
wlonces	wigcræft;	wiðres	ne	trūwode,		
of-proud-one	war-skill;	in-resistance	not	trusted,		
þæt	hē	sāmannum	onsacan	mihte,		
that	he	to-seamen	fight-off	could,		
heaðoliðendum	hord	forstandan,				2955
from-battle-sailors	board	defend,				

bearn ond brýde; bēah eft þonan

children and wife; bent back thence

eald under eorðweall. Ðā wæs æht boden

old under earth-wall. Then was pursuit offered

Swēona lēodum, segn Higelāce[s]

of-Swedes to-people, banners of-Hygela

freoðowong þone forð oferēodon,

refuge-field that forth overran,

2960 syððan Hrēðlingas tō hagan þrungon.

after Hrethlings to enclosure pressed.

Þær wearð Ongenðíow ecgum sweorda,

There was Ogentheow with-edges of-swords,

blondenfexa on bid wrecen,

gray-haired to bay driven,

þæt se þeodcyning ðafian sceolde

so-that the people-king submit had-to

Eafores āne dōm. Hyne yrringa

of-Eofof sole judgment. Him angrily

2965 Wulf Wonrēding wāpne gerāhte,

Wulf Wonreding with-weapon reached,

þæt him for swenge swāt ædrum sprong

so-that him from blow blood from-veins sprang

forð under fexe. Næs hē forht swā ðēh,

forth under hair. Not-was he afraid so though,

gomela Scilfing, ac forgeald hraðe

old Scylfing, but repaid quickly

wyrsan wrixle wælhlem þone,

with-worse exchange slaughter-blow that,

2970 syððan ðeodcyning þyder oncirde.

after people-king thither turned.

Ne meahhte se snella sunu Wonrēdes

Not could the bold son of-Wonred

ealdum ceorle ondslyht giofan,

to-old man counter-blow give,

ac hē him on hēafde helm ær gescer,

but he him on head helmet before cut,

þæt hē blōde fāh būgan sceolde,

so-that he with-blood stained bow bad-to,

fēoll on foldan; næs hē fāge þā gīt,

fell on earth; not-was he doomed then yet,

ac hē hyne gewyrpte, þeah ðe him wund hrine.

but he himself recovered, though that him wound touched.

Lēt se hearda Higelāces þegn

Let the hardy of-Hygelacthane

brād[n]e mēce, þā his brōðor læg,

broad sword, when his brother lay,

ealdsweord eotonisc entiscne helm

old-sword gigantic giant-made helmet

breca[n] ofer bordweal; ðā gebēah cyning,

break over shield-wall; then bent king,

folces hyrde, wæs in feorh dropan.

of-people guardian, was into life struck.

Ðā wæron monige, þē his mæg wriðon,

Then were many, who his kinsman bound,

ricone ārærdon, ðā him gerȳmed wearð,

quickly raised-up, when to-them cleared was,

þæt hie wælstōwe wealdan mōston.

that they slaughter-place control might.

Þenden rēafode rinc oðerne,

Meanwhile plundered warrior other,

2975

2980

2985

nam on Ongendōio irenbyrnan,
took from Ongentbeow iron-mail,
 heard swyrd hilted, and his helm somod;
hard sword hilted, and his helmet as-well;
 hāres hyrste Higelāce bær.
of-gray-one trappings to-Hygelac bore.

Hē ð(ām) frætsum fēng ond him fægre gehēt
He the treasures received and him fairly promised

2990 lēana (mid) lēodum, ond gelāste swā;
rewards among people, and fulfilled so;
 geald þone gūðræs Gēata dryhten,
repaid the war-rush of-Geats lord,

Hrēðles eafora, þā hē tō hām becōm,
of-Hrethel son, when he to home came,

Iofore ond Wulfe mid ofer māðmum,
to-Eofor and to-Wulf with excessive-treasures,

sealde hiora gehwæðrum hund þūsenda
gave of-them to-each hundred thousands

2995 landes ond locenra bēaga, — ne ðorfte him ðā lēan oðwitan
of-land and of-locked rings, not needed them those rewards blame
 mon on middangearde, syððā[n] hie ðā mārða geslōgon;
man on middle-earth, after they those glories won;

ond ðā Iofore forgeaf āngan dohtor,
and then to-Eofor gave only daughter,

hāmweorðunge, hylde tō wedde.
home-honor, favor as pledge.

Þæt ys sio fāhðo ond se fēondscipe,
That is the feud and the enmity,

3000 wælnið wera, ðæs ðe ic [wēn] hafo,
slaughter-bate of-men, for-which that I expectation have,

þē ūs sēceað tō Swēona lēoda,
that us will-seek to of-Swedes people,
 syððan hīe gefricgeað frēan ūserne
after they learn lord our
 ealdorlēasne, þone ðe ær gehēold
lifeless, him who before held
 wið hettendum hord ond rice,
against enemies hoard and kingdom,
 æfter hæleða hryre, hwate Sæ-Gēatas,
after of-heroes fall, bold Sea-Geats,
 folcrēd fremede, oððe furður gēn
people-benefit performed, or further still
 eorlscipe efnde. — Nū is ofost betost,
heroism did. Now is haste best,
 þæt wē þēodcynig þær scēawian,
that we people-king there see,
 ond þone gebringan, þē ūs bēagas geaf,
and him bring, who us rings gave,
 on ādfære. Ne scel ānes hwæt
on funeral-journey. Not shall of-one a-part
 meltan mid þām mōdigan, ac þær is mǣðma hord,
melt with the brave-one, but there is of-treasures hoard,
 gold unrime grimme gecēa(po)d,
gold countless grimly purchased,
 ond nū æt siðestan sylfes fēore
and now at last own with-life
 bēagas (geboh)te; þā sceall brond fretan,
rings bought; those shall fire devour,
 æled þeccean, — nalles eorl wegan
flame cover, not-at-all warrior wear

3005

3010

3015

māððum tō gemyndum, nē mægð scýne
treasure as memorial, nor maiden fair

habban on healse hringweorðunge,
have on neck ring-adornment,

ac sceal geōmormōd, golde berēafod
but shall sad-hearted, of-gold bereft

oft nalles āne elland tredan,
often not-at-all once foreign-land tread,

3020 nū se herewīsa hleahtor ālegde,
now the army-leader laughter has-laid-down,

gamen ond glēodrēam. Forðon sceall gār wesan
joy and glee-mirth. Therefore shall spear be

monig morgenceald mundum bewunden,
many morning-cold by-bands grasped,

hæfen on handa, nalles hearpan swēg
raised in hand, not-at-all of-harp sound

wigend weccean, ac se wonna hrefn
warriors wake, but the dark raven

3025 fūs ofer fægum fela reordian,
eager over doomed-ones much speak,

earne secgan, hū him æt āte spēow,
to-eagle tell, how him at meal sped,

þenden hē wið wulf[e] wæl rēafode.
while he with wolf corpses plundered.'

Swā se secg hwata secggende wæs
So the man bold telling was

lāðra spella; hē ne lēag fela
of-hateful tidings; he not lied much

3030 wyrda nē worda. Weorod eall ārās;
of-events nor of-words. Company all arose;

ēodon unbliðe under Earnanæs,

went joyless under Earnaness,

wollentēare wundur scēawian.

with-welling-tears wonder to-see.

Fundon ðā on sande sāwullēasne

Found then on sand soulless

hlimbed healdan þone þe him hringas geaf

bed-of-rest occupy him who them rings gave

ǣrran mǣlum; þā wæs endedæg

in-earlier times; then was end-day

gōdum gegongen, þæt se gūðcýning,

for-the-good-one come, that the war-king,

Wedra þēoden wundordēaðe swealt.

of-Weders prince by-wondrous-death died.

Ǽr hī þær gesēgan syllicran wiht,

Earlier they there saw stranger creature,

wyrm on wonge wiðerræhtes þær

serpent on plain opposite there

lāðne licgean; wæs se lēgdraca

bateful lie; was the fire-dragon

grimlic gry(refāh) glēdum beswæled;

grim terribly-colored with-embers scorched;

sē wæs fiftiges fōtgemearces

he was of-fifty of-foot-measure

lang on legere; lyftwynne hēold

long in bed; air-joy held

nihtes hwilum, nyðer eft gewāt

by-night at-times, down again went

dennes nīosian; wæs ðā dēaðe fæst,

den to-seek; was then in-death fast,

3035

3040

3045

hæfde eorðscrafa ende genyttod.

had of-earth-caves end used.

Him big stōdan bunan ond orcas,

Him beside stood cups and vessels,

discas lāgon ond dýre swyrd,

dishes lay and precious swords,

ōmige þurhetone, swā hie wið eorðan fæðm

rusty eaten-through, as they in of-earth embrace

3050 þūsend wintra þār eardodon;

thousand winters there dwelt;

þonne wæs þæt yrfe ēacencræftig,

then was that heritage mightily-strong,

iūmonna gold galdre bewunden,

of-men-of-old gold with-spell wound,

þæt ðām hringsele hrinan ne mōste

so-that the ring-ball touch not might

gumena ænig, nefne God sylfa,

of-men any, unless God himself,

3055 sigora Sōðcýning sealde þām ðe hē wolde

of-victories True-King granted to-him whom he would

— hē is manna gehyld — hord openian,

he is of-men protection hoard to-open,

efne swā hwylcum manna, swā him gemet ðūhte.

even so to-whichever of-men, as to-him fitting seemed.

The venture did not prosper for the dragon, nor for Beowulf, who could not know how his death would come; the hoard was cursed until doomsday against whoever plundered it. Wiglaf says they could not persuade their lord to leave the dragon alone. He tells of Beowulf's last wish for a high barrow at the pyre, orders wood brought for the burning, and goes into the barrow with seven of the king's best thanes, one of them bearing a torch ahead. They carry out the treasure, push the dragon over the cliff into the sea, load the gold on a wagon, and bear the old king to Hronesness.

Þā wæs gesýne, þæt se sið ne ðāh
Then was evident, that the venture not prospered

þām ðe unrihte inne gehýdde
for-him who wrongfully within hid

wrāte under wealle. Weard ær ofslōh
ornaments under wall. Guardian before slew

fēara sumne; þā sio fāhð gewearð
of-few one; then the feud was

gewrecen wrāðlice. Wundur hwār þonne
avenged grievously. Wonder where then

eorl ellenrōf ende gefēre
warrior courage-famed end may-reach

lifgesceafta, þonne leng ne mæg
of-life-destinies, when longer not can

mon mid his (mā)gum meduseld būan.
man with his kinsmen mead-hall inhabit.

Swā wæs Biowulfe, þā hē biorges weard
So was for-Beowulf, when he of-barrow guardian

sōhte searoniðas; seolfa ne cūðe,
sought cunning-quarrels; himself not knew,

3060

3065

þurh hwæt his worulde gedāl weorðan sceolde.
through what of-his world parting come should.

Swā hit oð dōmes dæg diope benemdon
So it until of-doom day solemnly declared

3070 þēodnas mære, þā ðæt þær dydon,
princes famous, who that there put,

þæt se secg wære synnum scildig,
that the man would-be in-sins guilty,

hergum geheaðerod, hellbendum fæst,
in-idol-shrines confined, in-bell-bonds fast,

wommum gewitnad, sē ðone wong strude.
with-evils punished, who the place plundered.

Næs hē goldhwæte gearwor hæfde
Not-at-all he gold-bountiful [?] more-readily had

3075 āgendes ēst ær gescēawod.
of-owner grace before seen.

Wiglāf maðelode, Wihstānes sunu:
Wiglaf spoke, of-Weobstan son:

‘Oft sceall eorl monig ānes willan
‘Often must warrior many of-one will

wræc ādrēogan, swā ūs geworden is.
misery endure, as for-us happened is.

Ne meahton wē gelæran lēofne þēoden,
Not could we persuade dear prince,

3080 rices hyrde ræd ænigne,
of-kingdom guardian counsel any,

þæt hē ne grētte goldweard þone,
that he not should-approach gold-guardian that,

lēte hyne licgean, þær hē longe wæs,
let him lie, where he long was,

wicum wunian oð woruldende,
in-dwellings dwell until world-end,
 healdon hēahgesceap. Hord ys gescēawod,
hold high-destiny. Hoard is seen,
 grimme gegongen; wæs þæt gifeðe tō swið, 3085
grimly won; was that fate too strong,
 þē ðone [mannan] þyder ontyhte.
which the man thither drew.
 Ic wæs þār inne ond þæt eall geondseh,
I was there within and that all looked-over,
 recedes geatwa, þā mē gerȳmed wæs,
of-building treasures, when to-me opened was,
 nealles swāslice sið ālyfed
not-at-all pleasantly journey allowed
 inn under eorðweall. Ic on ofoste gefēng 3090
in under earth-wall. I in haste seized
 micle mid mundum mægenbyrðenne
great with hands mighty-burden
 hordgestrēona, hider ūt ætbær
of-board-treasures, hither out carried
 cyninge minum. Cwico wæs þā gēna,
to-king my. Alive was then still,
 wis ond gewittig; worn eall gespræc
wise and conscious; much all spoke
 gomol on gehðo, ond ēowic grētan hēt, 3095
old in sorrow, and you to-greet commanded,
 bæd þæt gē geworhton æfter wines dædum
bade that you should-make for of-friend deeds
 in bælstede beorh þone hēan,
at pyre-place barrow the high,

- micelne ond mǣrne, swā hē manna wæs
great and famous, as he of-men was
 wīgend weorðfullost wide geond eorðan,
warrior most-honored widely throughout earth,
 3100 þenden hē burhwelan brūcan mōste.
while he city-wealth enjoy might.
 Uton nū efstan oðre [siðe],
Let-us now hasten on-second time,
 sēon ond sēcean searo[gimma] geþræc,
to-see and to-see of-curious-gems heap,
 wundur under wealle; ic ēow wisige,
wonder under wall; I you will-guide,
 þæt gē genōge nēon scēawiað
so-that you plenty from-near may-view
 3105 bēagas ond brād gold. Sie sio bār gearo,
rings and broad gold. Be the bier ready,
 ādre geāfned, þonne wē ūt cymen,
quickly made, when we out come,
 ond þonne geferian frēan ūserne,
and then carry lord our,
 lēofne mannan þār hē longe sceal
dear man where he long shall
 on ðæs Waldendes wære geþolian.
in of-the Ruler keeping remain.'
 3110 Hēt ðā gebēodan byre Wihstānes,
Commanded then to-order son of-Wēohstan,
 hæle hildedior hæleða monegum,
hero battle-brave of-heroes to-many,
 boldāgendra, þæt hie bælwudu
of-house-owners, that they pyre-wood

feorran feredon, folcāgende,
from-afar should-bring, folk-owners,
 gōdum tōgēnes: ‘Nū sceal glēd fretan
the-good-one toward: Now shall fire devour

(weaxan wonna lēg) wigena strengel,
grow dark flame of-warriors ruler,
 þone ðe oft gebād isernscūre,
him who often endured iron-shower,

þonne strāla storm strengum gebāded
when of-arrows storm by-strings impelled
 scōc ofer scildweall, sceft nytte hēold,
shot over shield-wall, shaft duty held,

fæðergearwum fūs flāne fullēode.
with-feather-gear eager to-arrow served.’

Hūru se snotra sunu Wihstānes
Indeed the wise son of-Weobstan

ācigde of corðre cyniges þegnas
summoned from troop of-king thanes

syfone (tō)somne, þā sēlestan,
seven together, the best,

ēode eahta sum under inwithrōf
went of-eight one under hostile-roof

hilderinc[a]; sum on handa bær
of-warriors; one in hand bore

æledlēoman, sē ðe on orde gēong.
fire-light, he who in front went.

Næs ðā on hlytme, hwā þæt hord strude,
Not-was then by lot, who that hoard plundered,

syððan orwearde ænigne dæl
since unguarded any part

3115

3120

3125

- seccas gesēgon on sele wunian,
men saw in hall remain,
- lāne licgan; lýt ænig mearn,
transitory lie; little any mourned,
- 3130 þæt hī ofostlic(e) ūt geferedon
that they bastily out carried
- dýre mādmas; dracan ēc scufun,
precious treasures; dragon also shoved,
- wyrm ofer weallclif, lēton wēg niman,
serpent over wall-cliff, let wave take,
- flōd fæðmian frætwa hyrde.
flood embrace of-treasures guardian.
- Ðā wæs wunden gold on wān hladen,
Then was twisted gold on wagon loaded,
- 3135 æghwæs unrīm, æþeling boren,
of-each countless, prince borne,
- hār hilde[rinc] tō Hronesnæsse.
gray warrior to Hronesness.

XLIII · THE FUNERAL

The Geats hang a pyre with helmets, shields, and mail-coats, lay Beowulf on it, and kindle it amid weeping; an old woman sings of the ruin she fears. In ten days they raise a high barrow on the headland and bury the treasure with him, as useless as it was before. Twelve warriors ride around it, calling him of all kings the mildest and kindest to his people, and the most eager for fame.

Him ðā gegiredan Gēata lēode
For-him then prepared of-Geats people

ād on eorðan unwāclīcne,
pyre on earth not-mean,

helm[um] behongen,	hildebordum,	
<i>with-helmets</i>	<i>hung,</i>	<i>with-war-shields,</i>
beorhtum byrnum,	swā hē bēna wæs;	3140
<i>with-bright</i>	<i>mail-coats,</i>	<i>as he petitioner was;</i>
ālegdon ðā tōmiddles	mārne þēoden	
<i>laid</i>	<i>then in-the-midst</i>	<i>famous prince</i>
hæleð hiofende,	hlāford lēofne.	
<i>heroes</i>	<i>lamenting,</i>	<i>lord dear.</i>
Ongunnon þā on beorge	bālfȳra mǣst	
<i>Began</i>	<i>then on hill</i>	<i>of-pyre-fires greatest</i>
wigend weccan;	wud(u)rēc āstāh	
<i>warriors</i>	<i>to-kindle;</i>	<i>wood-smoke rose</i>
sweart ofer swioðole,	swōgende lēg	3145
<i>black</i>	<i>over fire,</i>	<i>roaring flame</i>
wōpe bewunden	— windblond gelæg—,	
<i>with-weeping</i>	<i>mingled</i>	<i>wind-surge subsided,</i>
oð þæt hē ðā bānhūs	gebrocen hæfde	
<i>until that it the bone-house</i>	<i>broken had</i>	
hāt on hreðre.	Higum unrōte	
<i>hot at heart.</i>	<i>In-minds sad</i>	
mōdceare mǣndon,	mondryhtnes cw(e)alm;	
<i>heart-care</i>	<i>lamented,</i>	<i>of-liege-lord death;</i>
swylce giōmorgyd	(s)io g(eō)mēowle	3150
<i>likewise</i>	<i>sad-song</i>	<i>the old-woman</i>
(æfter Biowulfe	b)undenheorde	
<i>for Beowulf</i>	<i>bound-haired</i>	
(song) sorgcearig,	sāde geneahhe,	
<i>sang</i>	<i>sorrow-anxious,</i>	<i>said repeatedly,</i>
þæt hio hyre (hearmda)gas	hearde (ondrē)de,	
<i>that she for-herself</i>	<i>grief-days</i>	<i>hard feared,</i>

- wælfylla worn, (wigen)des egesan,
of-slaughter-falls multitude, of-warrior terror,
- 3155 hȳ[n]ðo (ond) h(æftnȳ)d. Heofon rēce swe(a)lg.
humiliation and captivity. Heaven smoke swallowed.
- Geworhton ðā Wedra lēode
Made then of-Wēders people
- hl(ǣw) on [h]liðe, sē wæs hēah ond brād,
mound on slope, that was high and broad,
- (wǣ)gliðendum wide g(e)sȳne,
to-wave-farers widely visible,
- ond betimbredon on tȳn dagum
and built in ten days
- 3160 beadurōfes bēcn, bronda lāfe
of-battle-brave-one monument, of-fires leavings
- wealle beworhton, swā hyt weorðlicost
with-wall surrounded, as it most-worthy
- foresnotre men findan mihton.
very-wise men devise could.
- Hi on beorg dydon bēg ond siglu,
They in barrow put rings and jewels,
- eall swylce hyrsta, swylce on horde ǣr
all such ornaments, as from board before
- 3165 niðhēdige men genumen hæfdon;
hostile-minded men taken bad;
- forlēton eorla gestrēon eorðan healdan,
left of-warriors treasure earth to-bold,
- gold on grēote, þær hit nū gēn lifað
gold in dust, where it now still lives
- eldum swā unnyt, swā hi(t ǣro)r wæs.
to-men as useless, as it before was.

Ðā ymbe hlāw riodan hildedēore,
Then around mound rode battle-brave,
 æþelinga bearn, ealra twelfe,
of-princes sons, of-all twelve,
 woldon (care) cwiðan, [ond] kyning mǣnan,
wished sorrow lament, and king mourn,
 wordgyd wrecan, ond ymb w(er) spreca;
word-song utter, and about man speak;
 eahtodan eorlscipe ond his ellenweorc
praised heroism and his courage-work
 duguðum dēmdon, — swā hit gedē(fe) bið,
with-might judged, as it fitting is,
 þæt mon his winedryhten wordum herge,
that one his friend-lord with-words praise,
 ferhðum frēoge, þonne hē forð scile
in-hearts love, when he forth must
 of lichaman (lāded) weorðan.
from body led become.
 Swā begnornodon Gēata lēode
So lamented of-Geats people
 hlāfordes (hry)re, heorðgenēatas;
of-lord fall, hearth-companions;
 cwædon þæt hē wære wyruldcyning[a]
said that he was of-world-kings
 manna mildust ond mon(ðw)ǣrust,
of-men mildest and kindest,
 lēodum liðost ond lofgeornost.
to-people gentlest and most-eager-for-fame.

3170

3175

3180

The Fight at Finnsburg

THE FIGHT AT FINNSBURG

The fragment begins in the middle of a speech. A young king, Hnaef, wakes his men: the light they see is not dawn, nor a dragon, nor the hall's gables burning, but the gleam of weapons as enemies approach. His warriors take the doors. Guthere tries to hold Garulf back, but Garulf calls out to ask who holds the door, and Sigefēth names himself and dares him on; Garulf is the first to fall. Sixty warriors fight so well that five days pass without one of them falling, until a wounded man withdraws and the lord asks how the others are faring; there the fragment breaks off.

*** (hor)nas byrnað nǣfre.’

(lacuna) gables burn never.’

Hlēoþrode ðā heaþogeong cyning:

Called-out then battle-young king:

‘Nē ðis ne dagað ēastan, nē hēr draca ne flēogeð,

‘Nor this — dawns from-east, nor here dragon — flies,

nē hēr ðisse healle hornas ne byrnað;

nor here of-this hall gables — burn;

ac hēr forþ berað, fugelas singað,

but here forth they-bear, birds sing,

gylleð græghama, gūðwudu hlynneð,

yells gray-coat, war-wood resounds,

scyld scefte oncwýð. Nū scýneð þes mōna

shield to-shaft answers. Now shines this moon

waðol under wolcnum; nū ārisað wēadāda,

wandering under clouds; now arise woe-deeds,

ðē ðisne folces nīð fremman willað.

which this of-people hostility perform wish.

Ac onwacnigeað nū, wīgend mīne,

But awake now, warriors my,

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10

habbað ēowre linda, hicgeaþ on ellen,

take your linden-shields, think of courage,

þindað on orde, wesað onmōde!

rage [?] in front, be resolute!

Ðā ārās mænig goldhladen ðegn, gyrde hine his swurde;

Then rose many gold-ladenthane, girt him with-his sword;

ðā tō dura ēodon drihtlice cempa,

then to door went lordly champions,

15 Sigeferð and Ēaha, hyra sword getugon,

Sigeferth and Eaha, their sword drew,

and æt oþrum durum Ordlāf and Gūplāf,

and at other door Ordlaf and Gutblaf,

and Hengest sylf, hwearf him on lāste.

and Hengest himself, turned him on (their)-track.

Ðā gýt Gārulf[e] Gūðere stýrde,

Then still Garulf Guthere restrained,

ðæt hē swā frēolic feorh forman sipe

that he so noble life on-first time

20 tō ðære healle durum hyrsta ne bære,

to of-the hall door armor not should-bear,

nū hyt nīpa heard ānyman wolde;

now it of-hostilities hard-one take-away wished;

ac hē frægn ofer eal undearninga,

but he asked over all openly,

dēormōd hæleþ, hwā ðā duru hēolde.

bold-hearted hero, who the door held.

‘Sigeferþ is min nama (cweþ hē), ic eom Secgena lēod,

‘Sigeferth is my name said he, I am of-Secgan prince,

25 wreccea wīde cūð; fæla ic wēana gebād,

adventurer widely known; many I of-woes endured,

heordra hilda; ðē is gýt hēr witod,

of-hard battles; for-thee is still here appointed,

swæþer ðū sylf tō mē sēcean wylle.

whichever thou thyself from me seek wilt.

Ðā wæs on healle wælslihta gehlyn,

Then was in hall of-slaughter-blows din,

sceolde cellod bord cēnum on handa,

had-to hollow [?] shield for-bold-men in hand,

bānhelm berstan, buruhðelu dynede, —

bone-helmet burst, strongbold-floor resounded,

oð æt ðære gūðe Gārulf gecrang

until at the battle Garulf fell

ealra ārest eorðbūendra,

of-all first of-earth-dwellers,

Gūðlāfes sunu, ymbe hyne gōdra fæla,

of-Gutblaf son, around him of-good-men many,

hwearflicra hræw. Hræfen wandrode

of-active-ones [?] corpses. Raven wandered

sweart and sealobrūn. Swurdlēoma stōd,

black and dark-brown. Sword-light stood,

swylce eal Finnsburuh fýrenu wære.

as-if all Finnsburg afire were.

Ne gefrægn ic nāfre wurþlicor æt wera hilde

Not heard-of I ever more-worthily at of-men battle

sixtig sigebeorna sēl gebāran,

sixty of-victory-warriors better bear-themselves,

nē nēfre swānas hwitne medo sēl forgyldan,

nor ever youths white mead better repay,

ðonne Hnæfe guldan his hægstealdas.

than to-Hnaef paid his young-warriors.

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Hig fuhton fif dagas, swā hyra nān ne fēol,

They fought five days, so-that of-them none — fell,

drihtgesīða, ac hig ðā duru hēoldon.

of-retainers, but they the door held.

Ðā gewāt him wund hæleð on wæg gangan,

Then went himself wounded hero on way going,

sæde þæt his byrne ābrocen wære,

said that his mail-coat broken were,

45 heresceorp unhrōr, and ēac wæs his helm ðȳr[e]l.

war-dress useless, and also was his helmet pierced.

Ðā hine sōna frægn folces hyrde,

Then him at-once asked of-people guardian,

hū ðā wīgend hyra wunda genāson,

how the warriors their wounds survived,

oððe hwæper ðāra hyssa * * *

or which of-the young-men (lacuna)