

Bilingual Beowulf

Unknown

October 18, 2003

LO, praise of the prowess of people-kings
of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped,
we have heard, and what honor the athelings won!
Oft Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,
from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,
awing the earls. Since erst he lay
friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:
for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,
till before him the folk, both far and near,
who house by the whale-path, heard his mandate,
gave him gifts: a good king he!
To him an heir was afterward born,
a son in his halls, whom heaven sent
to favor the folk, feeling their woe
that erst they had lacked an earl for leader
so long a while; the Lord endowed him,
the Wielder of Wonder, with world's renown.
Famed was this Beowulf:¹ far flew the boast of him,
son of Scyld, in the Scandian lands.
So becomes it a youth to quit him well
with his father's friends, by fee and gift,
that to aid him, aged, in after days,
come warriors willing, should war draw nigh,
liegemen loyal: by lauded deeds
shall an earl have honor in every clan.
Forth he fared at the fated moment,
sturdy Scyld to the shelter of God.
Then they bore him over to ocean's billow,
loving clansmen, as late he charged them,
while wielded words the winsome Scyld,
the leader beloved who long had ruled....

Hwæt! We Gardena in geardagum,
þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon,
hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.
Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum,
5 monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah,
egsode eorlas. Syððan ærest wearð
feasceaft funden, he þæs frofre gebad,
weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah,
oðþæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra
10 ofer hronrade hyran scolde,
gomban gyldan. þæt wæs god cyning!
ðæm eafera wæs æfter cenned,
geong in geardum, þone god sende
folce to frofre; fyrendearfe ongeat
15 þe hie ær drugon aldorlease
lange hwile. Him þæs liffrea,
wuldres wealdend, woroldare forgeaf;
Beowulf wæs breme (blæd wide sprang),
Scyldes eafera Scedelandum in.
20 Swa sceal geong guma gode gewyrcean,
fromum feohgiftum on fæder bearne,
þæt hine on ylde eft gewunigen
wilgesipas, þonne wig cume,
leode gelæsten; lofdædum sceal
25 in mægþa gehwære man geþeon.
Him ða Scyld gewat to gescæphwile
felahror feran on frean wære.
Hi hyne þa ætbæron to brimes faroðe,
swæse gesipas, swa he selfa bæd,
30 þenden wordum weold wine Scyldinga;
leof landfruma lange ahte.

In the roadstead rocked a ring-dight vessel,
ice-flecked, outbound, atheling's barge:
there laid they down their darling lord
on the breast of the boat, the breaker-of-rings,²
by the mast the mighty one. Many a treasure
fetched from far was freighted with him.
No ship have I known so nobly dight
with weapons of war and weeds of battle,
with breastplate and blade: on his bosom lay
a heaped hoard that hence should go
far o'er the flood with him floating away.
No less these loaded the lordly gifts,
thanes' huge treasure, than those had done
who in former time forth had sent him
sole on the seas, a suckling child.
High o'er his head they hoist the standard,
a gold-wove banner; let billows take him,
gave him to ocean. Grave were their spirits,
mournful their mood. No man is able
to say in sooth, no son of the halls,
no hero 'neath heaven, – who harbored that freight!

Now Beowulf bode in the burg of the Scyldings,
leader beloved, and long he ruled
in fame with all folk, since his father had gone
away from the world, till awoke an heir,
haughty Healfdene, who held through life,
sage and sturdy, the Scyldings glad.
Then, one after one, there woke to him,
to the chieftain of clansmen, children four:
Heorogar, then Hrothgar, then Halga brave;
and I heard that – was –'s queen,
the Heathoscyfing's helpmate dear.
To Hrothgar was given such glory of war,
such honor of combat, that all his kin
obeyed him gladly till great grew his band
of youthful comrades. It came in his mind
to bid his henchmen a hall uprear,
a master mead-house, mightier far
than ever was seen by the sons of earth,
and within it, then, to old and young
he would all allot that the Lord had sent him,
save only the land and the lives of his men.

þær æt hyðe stod hringedstefna,
isig ond utfus, æþelinges fær.
Aledon þa leofne þeoden,
35 beaga bryttan, on bearm scipes,
mærne be mæste. þær wæs madma fela
of feorwegum, frætwa, gelæded;
ne hyrde ic cymlicor ceol gegyrwan
hildewæpnum ond heaðowædum,
40 billum ond byrnum; him on bearne læg
madma mænigo, þa him mid scoldon
on flodes æht feor gewitan.
Nalæs hi hine læssan lacum teodan,
þeodgestreonum, þon þa dydon
45 þe hine æt frumsceafte forðonsendon
ænne ofer yðe umborwesende.
þa gyt hie him asetton segen geldenne
heah ofer heafod, leton holm beran,
geafon on garsecg; him wæs geomor sefa,
50 murnende mod. Men ne cunnon
secgan to soðe, selerædende,
hæledunder heofenum, hwa þæm hlæste onfeng.
ða wæs on burgum Beowulf Scyldinga,
leof leodcyning, longe þrage
55 folcum gefræge (fæder ellor hwearf,
aldor of earde), oþþæt him eft onwoc
heah Healfdene; heold þenden lifde,
gamol ond guðreouw, glæde Scyldingas.
ðæm feower bearn forðgerimed
60 in worold wocun, weoroda ræswan,
Heorogar ond Hroðgar ond Halga til;
hyrde ic þæt wæs Onelan cwen,
Heaðoscilfingas healsgebedda.
þa wæs Hroðgare heresped gyfen,
65 wiges weorðmynd, þæt him his winemagas
georne hyrdon, oððþæt seo geogodgeweox,
magodriht micel. Him on mod bearn
þæt healreced hatan wolde,
medoærn micel, men gewyrcean
70 þonne ylde bearn æfre gefrunon,
ond þær on innan eall gedælan
geongum ond ealdum, swylc him god sealde,
buton folcscare ond feorum gumena.

¹Not, of course, Beowulf the Great, hero of the epic.

²Kenning for king or chieftain of a comitatus: he breaks off gold from the spiral rings – often worn on the arm – and so rewards his followers.

Wide, I heard, was the work commanded,
for many a tribe this mid-earth round,
to fashion the folkstead. It fell, as he ordered,
in rapid achievement that ready it stood there,
of halls the noblest: Heorot¹ he named it
whose message had might in many a land.
Not reckless of promise, the rings he dealt,
treasure at banquet: there towered the hall,
high, gabled wide, the hot surge waiting
of furious flame.² Nor far was that day
when father and son-in-law stood in feud
for warfare and hatred that woke again.³
With envy and anger an evil spirit
endured the dole in his dark abode,
that he heard each day the din of revel
high in the hall: there harps rang out,
clear song of the singer. He sang who knew⁴
tales of the early time of man,
how the Almighty made the earth,
fairest fields enfolded by water,
set, triumphant, sun and moon
for a light to lighten the land-dwellers,
and braided bright the breast of earth
with limbs and leaves, made life for all
of mortal beings that breathe and move.
So lived the clansmen in cheer and revel
a winsome life, till one began
to fashion evils, that field of hell.
Grendel this monster grim was called,
march-riever⁵ mighty, in moorland living,
in fen and fastness; fief of the giants
the hapless wight a while had kept
since the Creator his exile doomed.
On kin of Cain was the killing avenged
by sovran God for slaughtered Abel.
Ill fared his feud,⁶ and far was he driven,
for the slaughter's sake, from sight of men.
Of Cain awoke all that woful breed,
Etins⁷ and elves and evil-spirits,
as well as the giants that warred with God
weary while: but their wage was paid them!

ða ic wide gefrægn weorc gebannan
75 manigre mægþe geond þisne middangeard,
folcstede frætwan. Him on fyrste gelomp,
ædre mid yldum, þæt hit wearðealgearo,
healærna mæst; scop him Heort naman
se þe his wordes geweald wide hæfde.
80 He beot ne aleh, beagas dælde,
sinc æt symle. Sele hlifade,
heah ond horngeap, heaðowylma bad,
laðan liges; ne wæs hit lenge þa gen
þæt se ecghete aþumsweorum
85 æfter wælniðe wæcnan scolde.
ða se ellengæst earfoðlice
þrage geþolode, se þe in þystrum bad,
þæt he dogora gehwam dream gehyrde
hludne in healle; þær wæs hearpan sweg,
90 swutol sang scopes. Sægde se þe cuþe
frumsceaft fira feorran reccan,
cwæðþæt se ælmihtiga eorðan worhte,
wlitebeorhtne wang, swa wæter bebugeð,
gesette sigehreþig sunnan ond monan
95 leoman to leohte landbuendum
ond gefræt Wade foldan sceatas
leomum ond leafum, lif eac gesceop
cynna gehwylcum þara ðe cwice hwyrfaþ.
Swa ða drihtguman dreamum lifdon
100 eadiglice, oððæt an ongan
fyrene fremman feond on helle.
Wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten,
mære mearcstapa, se þe moras heold,
fen ond fæsten; fifelcynnes eard
105 wonsæli wer weardode hwile,
siþðan him scyppend forscifen hæfde
in Caines cynne. þone cwealm gewræc
ece drihten, þæs þe he Abel slog;
ne gefeah he þære fæhðe, ac he hine feor forwræc,
110 metod for þy mane, mancynne fram.
þanon untydras ealle onwocon,
eotenas ond ylfe ond orneas,
swylce gigantas, þa wiðgode wunnon
lange þrage; he him ðæs lean forgeald.

WENT he forth to find at fall of night
that haughty house, and heed wherever
the Ring-Danes, outrevelled, to rest had gone.
Found within it the atheling band
asleep after feasting and fearless of sorrow,
of human hardship. Unhallowed wight,
grim and greedy, he grasped betimes,
wrathful, reckless, from resting-places,
thirty of the thanes, and thence he rushed
fain of his fell spoil, faring homeward,
laden with slaughter, his lair to seek.
Then at the dawning, as day was breaking,
the might of Grendel to men was known;
then after wassail was wail uplifted,
loud moan in the morn. The mighty chief,
atheling excellent, unblithe sat,
labored in woe for the loss of his thanes,
when once had been traced the trail of the fiend,
spirit accurst: too cruel that sorrow,
too long, too loathsome. Not late the respite;
with night returning, anew began
ruthless murder; he recked no whit,
firm in his guilt, of the feud and crime.
They were easy to find who elsewhere sought
in room remote their rest at night,
bed in the bowers,¹ when that bale was shown,
was seen in sooth, with surest token, –
the hall-thane's² hate. Such held themselves
far and fast who the fiend outran!

115 Gewat ða neosian, syððan niht becom,
hean huses, hu hit Hringdene
æfter beorþege gebun hæfdon.
Fand þa ðær inne æþelinga gedriht
swefan æfter symble; sorge ne cuðon,
120 wonsceaft wera. Wiht unhælo,
grim ond grædig, gearo sona wæs,
reoc ond reþe, ond on ræste genam
þritig þegna, þanon eft gewat
huðe hremig to ham faran,
125 mid þære wælfylle wica neosan.
ða wæs on uhtan mid ærdæge
Grendles guðcræft gumum undyrne;
þa wæs æfter wiste wop up ahafen,
micel morgensweg. Mære þeoden,
130 æþeling ærgod, unbliðe sæt,
þolode ðryðswyð, þegnsorge dreah,
syðþan hie þæs laðan last sceawedon,
wergan gastes; wæs þæt gewin to strang,
laðond longsum. Næs hit lengra fyrst,
135 ac ymb ane niht eft gefremede
morðbeala mare ond no mearn fore,
fæhðe ond fyrene; wæs to fæst on þam.
þa wæs eaðfynde þe him elles hwær
gerumlicor ræste sohte,
140 bed æfter burum, ða him gebeacnod wæs,
gesægd soðlice sweotolan tacne
healdægnes hete; heold hyne syðþan
fyr ond fæstor se þæm feonde ætwand.

¹That is, "The Hart," or "Stag," so called from decorations in the gables that resembled the antlers of a deer. This hall has been carefully described in a pamphlet by Heyne. The building was rectangular, with opposite doors – mainly west and east – and a hearth in the middle of the single room. A row of pillars down each side, at some distance from the walls, made a space which was raised a little above the main floor, and was furnished with two rows of seats. On one side, usually south, was the high-seat midway between the doors. Opposite this, on the other raised space, was another seat of honor. At the banquet soon to be described, Hrothgar sat in the south or chief high-seat, and Beowulf opposite to him. The scene for a flying (see below, v.499) was thus very effectively set. Planks on trestles – the "board" of later English literature – formed the tables just in front of the long rows of seats, and were taken away after banquets, when the retainers were ready to stretch themselves out for sleep on the benches.

²Fire was the usual end of these halls. See v. 781 below. One thinks of the splendid scene at the end of the Nibelungen, of the Nialssaga, of Saxo's story of Amlethus, and many a less famous instance.

³It is to be supposed that all hearers of this poem knew how Hrothgar's hall was burnt, – perhaps in the unsuccessful attack made on him by his son-in-law Ingeld.

⁴A skilled minstrel. The Danes are heathens, as one is told presently; but this lay of beginnings is taken from Genesis.

⁵A disturber of the border, one who sallies from his haunt in the fen and roams over the country near by. This probably pagan nuisance is now furnished with biblical credentials as a fiend or devil in good standing, so that all Christian Englishmen might read about him. "Grendel" may mean one who grinds and crushes.

⁶Cain's.

⁷Giants.

Thus ruled unrighteous and raged his fill
 one against all; until empty stood
 that lordly building, and long it bode so.
 Twelve years' tide the trouble he bore,
 sovran of Scyldings, sorrows in plenty,
 boundless cares. There came unhidden
 tidings true to the tribes of men,
 in sorrowful songs, how ceaselessly Grendel
 harassed Hrothgar, what hate he bore him,
 what murder and massacre, many a year,
 feud unfading, – refused consent
 to deal with any of Daneland's earls,
 make pact of peace, or compound for gold:
 still less did the wise men ween to get
 great fee for the feud from his fiendish hands.
 But the evil one ambushed old and young
 death-shadow dark, and dogged them still,
 lured, or lurked in the livelong night
 of misty moorlands: men may say not
 where the haunts of these Hell-Runes³ be.
 Such heaping of horrors the hater of men,
 lonely roamer, wrought unceasing,
 harassings heavy. O'er Heorot he lorded,
 gold-bright hall, in gloomy nights;
 and ne'er could the prince⁴ approach his throne,
 – 'twas judgment of God, – or have joy in his hall.
 Sore was the sorrow to Scyldings'-friend,
 heart-rending misery. Many nobles
 sat assembled, and searched out counsel
 how it were best for bold-hearted men
 against harassing terror to try their hand.
 Whiles they vowed in their heathen fanes
 altar-offerings, asked with words⁵
 that the slayer-of-souls would succor give them
 for the pain of their people. Their practice this,
 their heathen hope; 'twas Hell they thought of
 in mood of their mind. Almighty they knew not,
 Doomsman of Deeds and dreadful Lord,
 nor Heaven's-Helmet heeded they ever,
 Wielder-of-Wonder. – Woe for that man
 who in harm and hatred haies his soul
 to fiery embraces; – nor favor nor change
 awaits he ever. But well for him
 that after death-day may draw to his Lord,
 and friendship find in the Father's arms!

Swa rixode ond wiðrihte wan,
 145 ana wiðeallum, oðþæt idel stod
 husa selest. Wæs seo hwil micel;
 XII wintra tid torn geþolode
 wine Scyldinga, weana gehwelcne,
 sidra sorga. Forðam secgum wearð,
 150 ylða bearnum, undyrne cuð,
 gyddum geomore, þætte Grendel wan
 hwile wiðHroþgar, heteniðas wæg,
 fyrene ond fæhðe fela missera,
 singale sæce, sibbe ne wolde
 155 wiðmanna hwone mægenes Deniga,
 feorhbealo feorran, fea þingian,
 ne þær nænig witena wenan þorfte
 beorhtre bote to banan folmum,
 ac se æglæca ehtende wæs,
 160 deorc deaþscua, duguþe ond geogoþe,
 seomade ond syrede, sinnihte heold
 mistige moras; men ne cunnon
 hwyder helrunan hwyrftum scriþað.
 Swa fela fyrena feond mancynnes,
 165 atol angengea, oft gefremede,
 heardra hynda. Heorot eardode,
 sincfage sel sweartum nihtum;
 no he þone gifstol gretan moste,
 maþðum for metode, ne his myne wisse.
 170 þæt wæs wræc micel wine Scyldinga,
 modes brecða. Monig oft gesæt
 rice to rune; ræd eahtedon
 hwæt swiðferhðum selest wære
 wiðfærgryrum to gefremmanne.
 175 Hwilum hie geheton æt hærgratrafum
 wigweorþunga, wordum bædon
 þæt him gastbona geoce gefremede
 wiðþeodþreaum. Swylc wæs þeaw hyra,
 hæþenra hyht; helle gemundon
 180 in modsefan, metod hie ne cuþon,
 dæda demend, ne wiston hie drihten god,
 ne hie huru heofena helm herian ne cuþon,
 wuldres waldend. Wa biðþæm ðe sceal
 þurh sliðne nið sawle bescufan
 185 in fyres fæþm, frofre ne wenan,
 wihte gewendan; wel biðþæm þe mot
 æfter deaðdæge drihten secean
 ond to fæder fæþmum freoðo wilnian.

THUS seethed unceasing the son of Healfdene
 with the woe of these days; not wisest men
 assuaged his sorrow; too sore the anguish,
 loathly and long, that lay on his folk,
 most baneful of burdens and bales of the night.
 This heard in his home Hygelac's thane,
 great among Geats, of Grendel's doings.
 He was the mightiest man of valor
 in that same day of this our life,
 stalwart and stately. A stout wave-walker
 he bade make ready. Yon battle-king, said he,
 far o'er the swan-road he fain would seek,
 the noble monarch who needed men!
 The prince's journey by prudent folk
 was little blamed, though they loved him dear;
 they whetted the hero, and hailed good omens.
 And now the bold one from bands of Geats
 comrades chose, the keenest of warriors
 e'er he could find; with fourteen men
 the sea-wood¹ he sought, and, sailor proved,
 led them on to the land's confines.
 Time had now flown;² afloat was the ship,
 boat under bluff. On board they climbed,
 warriors ready; waves were churning
 sea with sand; the sailors bore
 on the breast of the bark their bright array,
 their mail and weapons: the men pushed off,
 on its willing way, the well-braced craft.
 Then moved o'er the waters by might of the wind
 that bark like a bird with breast of foam,
 till in season due, on the second day,
 the curved prow such course had run
 that sailors now could see the land,
 sea-cliffs shining, steep high hills,
 headlands broad. Their haven was found,
 their journey ended. Up then quickly
 the Weders'³ clansmen climbed ashore,
 anchored their sea-wood, with armor clashing
 and gear of battle: God they thanked
 for passing in peace o'er the paths of the sea.

Swa ða mælceare maga Healfdenes
 190 singala seað, ne mihte snotor hæleð
 wean onwendan; wæs þæt gewin to swyð,
 laþond longsum, þe on ða leode becom,
 nydwracu niþgrim, nihtbealwa mæst.
 þæt fram ham gefrægn Higelaces þegn,
 195 god mid Geatum, Grendles dæda;
 se wæs moncynnes mægenes strengest
 on þæm dæge þysses lifes,
 æþele ond eacen. Het him yðlidan
 godne gegyrwan, cwæð, he guðcýning
 200 ofer swanrade secean wolde,
 mærne þeoden, þa him wæs manna þearf.
 ðone siðfæt him snotere ceorlas
 lythwon logon, þeah he him leof wære;
 hwetton higerofne, hæl sceawedon.
 205 Hæfde se goda Geata leoda
 cempa gecorone þara þe he cenoste
 findan mihte; XVna sum
 sundwudu sohte; secg wisade,
 lagucræftig mon, landgemyrcu.
 210 Fyrst forðgewat. Flota wæs on yðum,
 bat under beorge. Beornas gearwe
 on stefn stigon; streamas wundon,
 sund wiðsande; secgas bæron
 on bearm nacan beorhte frætwe,
 215 guðsearo geatolic; guman ut scufon,
 weras on wilsid, wudu bundenne.
 Gewat þa ofer wægholm, winde gefysed,
 flota famiheals fugle gelicost,
 oðþæt ymb antid oþres dogores
 220 wundenstefna gewaden hæfde
 þæt ða liðende land gesawon,
 brimclifu blican, beorgas steape,
 side sænæssas; þa wæs sund liden,
 eoletes æt ende. þanon up hraðe
 225 Wedera leode on wang stigon,
 sæwudu sældon (syrca hrysedon,
 guðgewædo), gode þancedon
 þæs þe him yþlade eaðe wurdon.

¹The smaller buildings within the main enclosure but separate from the hall.

²Grendel.

³"Sorcerers-of-hell."

⁴Hrothgar, who is the "Scyldings'-friend" of 170.

⁵That is, in formal or prescribed phrase.

Now saw from the cliff a Scylding clansman,
 a warden that watched the water-side,
 how they bore o'er the gangway glittering shields,
 war-gear in readiness; wonder seized him
 to know what manner of men they were.
 Straight to the strand his steed he rode,
 Hrothgar's henchman; with hand of might
 he shook his spear, and spake in parley.
 "Who are ye, then, ye armed men,
 mailed folk, that yon mighty vessel
 have urged thus over the ocean ways,
 here o'er the waters? A warden I,
 sentinel set o'er the sea-march here,
 lest any foe to the folk of Danes
 with harrying fleet should harm the land.
 No aliens ever at ease thus bore them,
 linden-wielders:⁴ yet word-of-leave
 clearly ye lack from clansmen here,
 my folk's agreement. – A greater ne'er saw I
 of warriors in world than is one of you, –
 yon hero in harness! No henchman he
 worthied by weapons, if witness his features,
 his peerless presence! I pray you, though, tell
 your folk and home, lest hence ye fare
 suspect to wander your way as spies
 in Danish land. Now, dwellers afar,
 ocean-travellers, take from me
 simple advice: the sooner the better
 I hear of the country whence ye came."

To him the stateliest spake in answer;
 the warriors' leader his word-ward unlocked:–
 "We are by kin of the clan of Geats,
 and Hygelac's own hearth-fellows we.
 To folk afar was my father known,
 noble atheling, Ecgtheow named.
 Full of winters, he fared away
 aged from earth; he is honored still
 through width of the world by wise men all.
 To thy lord and liege in loyal mood
 we hasten hither, to Healfdene's son,
 people-protector: be pleased to advise us!

þa of wealle geseah weard Scildinga,
 230 se þe holmclifu healdan scolde,
 beran ofer bolcan beorhte randas,
 fyrdsearu fuslicu; hine fyrwyt bræc
 modgehygdum, hwæt þa men wæron.
 Gewat him þa to waroðe wicge ridan
 235 þegn Hroðgares, þrymmum cwehte
 mægenwudu mundum, meþelwordum frægn:
 "Hwæt syndon ge searohæbbendra,
 byrnum werede, þe þus brontne ceol
 ofer lagustræte lædan cwomon,
 240 hider ofer holmas? ...le wæs
 endesæta, ægwearde heold,
 þe on land Dena laðra nænig
 mid scipherge sceoþan ne meahte.
 No her cuðlicor cuman ongunnon
 245 lindhæbbende; ne ge leafnesword
 guðfremmendra gearwe ne wisson,
 maga gemedu. Næfre ic maran geseah
 eorla ofer eorþan ðonne is eower sum,
 secg on searwum; nis þæt seldguma,
 250 wæpnum geweorðad, næfne him his wlite leoge,
 ænlic ansyn. Nu ic eower sceal
 frumcyn witan, ær ge fyr heonan,
 leassceaweras, on land Dena
 furþur feran. Nu ge feorbuend,
 255 mereliðende, minne gehyrað
 anfealdne gëpoht: Ofost is selest
 to gecyðanne hwanan eowre cyme syndon."
 Him se yldesta ondswarode,
 werodes wisa, wordhord onleac:
 260 "We synt gumcynnes Geata leode
 ond Higelaces heorðgeneatas.
 Wæs min fæder folcum gecyþed,
 æþele ordfruma, Ecgþeow haten.
 Gebad wintra worn, ær he on weg hwurfe,
 265 gamol of geardum; hine gearwe geman
 witena welhwylc wide geond eorþan.
 We þurh holdne hige hlaford þinne,
 sunu Healfdenes, secean cwomon,
 leodgebyrgean; wes þu us larena god.

¹Ship.

²That is, since Beowulf selected his ship and led his men to the harbor.

³One of the auxiliary names of the Geats.

⁴Or: Not thus openly ever came warriors hither; yet...

To that mighty-one come we on mickle errand,
 to the lord of the Danes; nor deem I right
 that aught be hidden. We hear – thou knowest
 if sooth it is – the saying of men,
 that amid the Scyldings a scathing monster,
 dark ill-doer, in dusky nights
 shows terrific his rage unmatched,
 hatred and murder. To Hrothgar I
 in greatness of soul would succor bring,
 so the Wise-and-Brave¹ may worst his foes, –
 if ever the end of ills is fated,
 of cruel contest, if cure shall follow,
 and the boiling care-waves cooler grow;
 else ever afterward anguish-days
 he shall suffer in sorrow while stands in place
 high on its hill that house unpeered!"
 Astride his steed, the strand-ward answered,
 clansman unquailing: "The keen-souled thane
 must be skilled to sever and sunder duly
 words and works, if he well intends.
 I gather, this band is graciously bent
 to the Scyldings' master. March, then, bearing
 weapons and weeds the way I show you.
 I will bid my men your boat meanwhile
 to guard for fear lest foemen come, –
 your new-tarred ship by shore of ocean
 faithfully watching till once again
 it waft o'er the waters those well-loved thanes,
 – winding-neck'd wood, – to Weders' bounds,
 heroes such as the hest of fate
 shall succor and save from the shock of war."
 They bent them to march, – the boat lay still,
 fettered by cable and fast at anchor,
 broad-bosomed ship. – Then shone the boars²
 over the cheek-guard; chased with gold,
 keen and gleaming, guard it kept
 o'er the man of war, as marched along
 heroes in haste, till the hall they saw,
 broad of gable and bright with gold:
 that was the fairest, 'mid folk of earth,
 of houses 'neath heaven, where Hrothgar lived,
 and the gleam of it lightened o'er lands afar.
 The sturdy shieldsman showed that bright
 burg-of-the-boldest; bade them go
 straightway thither; his steed then turned,

270 Habbaðwe to þæm mæran micel ærende,
 Deniga frean, ne sceal þær dyrne sum
 wesan, þæs ic wene. þu wast (gif hit is
 swa we soþlice secgan hyrdon)
 þæt mid Scyldingum sceaðona ic nat hwylc,
 275 deogol dædhata, deorcum nihtum
 eawedþurh egsan uncuðne nið,
 hynðu ond hrafyl. Ic þæs Hroðgar mæg
 þurh rumne sefan ræd gelæran,
 hu he frod ond god feond oferswyðeþ,
 280 gyf him edwendan æfre scolde
 bealuwa bisigu, bot eft cuman,
 ond þa cearwylmas colran wurðaþ;
 oððe a syþðan earfoðþrage,
 þreanyd þolað, þenden þær wunað
 285 on heahstede husa selest."
 Weard mæpelode, ðær on wicge sæt,
 ombeht unforht: "æghwæþres sceal
 scearp scyldwiga gescad witan,
 worda ond worca, se þe wel þenceð.
 290 Ic þæt gehyre, þæt þis is hold weorod
 frean Scyldinga. Gewitaþforðberan
 wæpen ond gewædu; ic eow wisige.
 Swylce ic maguþegnas mine hate
 wiðfeonda gehwone flotan eowerne,
 295 niwtyrwydne nacan on sande
 arum healdan, oþðæt eft byreð
 ofer lagustreamas leofne mannan
 wudu wundenhals to Wedermearce,
 godfremmendra swylcum gifeþe bið
 300 þæt þone hilderæs hal gedigeð."
 Gewiton him þa feran. Flota stille bad,
 seomode on sale sidfæþmed scip,
 on ancre fæst. Eoforlic scionon
 ofer hleorberan gehroden golde,
 305 fah ond fyrheard; ferhwearde heold
 guþmod grimmon. Guman onetton,
 sigon ætsomne, oþþæt hy sæl timbred,
 geatolic ond goldfah, ongyton mihton;
 þæt wæs foremærost foldbuendum
 310 receda under roderum, on þæm se rica bad;
 lixte se leoma ofer landa fela.
 Him þa hildedeor hof modigra
 torht getæhte, þæt hie him to mihton
 gegnum gangan; guðbeorna sum

hardy hero, and hailed them thus:-
 "Tis time that I fare from you. Father Almighty
 in grace and mercy guard you well,
 safe in your seekings. Seaward I go,
 'gainst hostile warriors hold my watch."

STONE-BRIGHT the street:¹ it showed the way
 to the crowd of clansmen. Corselets glistened
 hand-forged, hard; on their harness bright
 the steel ring sang, as they strode along
 in mail of battle, and marched to the hall.
 There, weary of ocean, the wall along
 they set their bucklers, their broad shields, down,
 and bowed them to bench: the breastplates clanged,
 war-gear of men; their weapons stacked,
 spears of the seafarers stood together,
 gray-tipped ash: that iron band
 was worthily weaponed! – A warrior proud
 asked of the heroes their home and kin.
 "Whence, now, bear ye burnished shields,
 harness gray and helmets grim,
 spears in multitude? Messenger, I,
 Hrothgar's herald! Heroes so many
 ne'er met I as strangers of mood so strong.
 'Tis plain that for prowess, not plunged into exile,
 for high-hearted valor, Hrothgar ye seek!"
 Him the sturdy-in-war bespake with words,
 proud earl of the Weders answer made,
 hardy 'neath helmet:—"Hygelac's, we,
 fellows at board; I am Beowulf named.
 I am seeking to say to the son of Healfdene
 this mission of mine, to thy master-lord,
 the doughty prince, if he deign at all
 grace that we greet him, the good one, now."
 Wulfgar spake, the Wendles' chieftain,
 whose might of mind to many was known,
 his courage and counsel: "The king of Danes,
 the Scyldings' friend, I fain will tell,
 the Breaker-of-Rings, as the boon thou askest,
 the famed prince, of thy faring hither,
 and, swiftly after, such answer bring
 as the doughty monarch may deign to give."

315 wicg gewende, word æfter cwæð:
 "Mæl is me to feran; fæder alwalda
 mid arstafum eowic gehealde
 siða gesunde. Ic to sæwille
 wiðwraðwerod wearde healdan."
 320 Stræt wæs stanfah, stig wisode
 gumum ætgædere. Guðbyrne scan
 heard hondlocen, hringiren scir
 song in searwum, þa hie to sele furðum
 in hyra gryregeatwum gangan cwomon.
 325 Setton særeþe side scyldas,
 rondas regnhearde, wiðþæs recedes weal,
 bugon þa to bence. Byrnan hringdon,
 guðsearo gumena; gas stodon,
 sæmanna searo, samod ætgædere,
 330 æscholt ufan græg; wæs se irenþreat
 wæpnum gewurþad. þa ðær wlonc hæleð
 oretmecgas æfter æþelum frægn:
 "Hwanon ferigeaðge fætte scyldas,
 græge syrcan ond grimhelmas,
 335 heresceafta heap? Ic eom Hroðgares
 ar ond ombiht. Ne seah ic elpeodige
 þus manige men modiglicran.
 Wen ic þæt ge for wlenco, nalles for wræcsiðum,
 ac for higeþrymmum Hroðgar sohton."
 340 Him þa ellenrof andswarode,
 wlanc Wedera leod, word æfter spræc,
 heard under helme: "We synt Higelaces
 beodgeneatas; Beowulf is min nama.
 Wille ic asecgan sunu Healfdenes,
 345 mærum þeodne, min ærende,
 aldre þinum, gif he us geunnan wile
 þæt we hine swa godne gretan moton."
 Wulfgar maþelode (þæt wæs Wendla leod;
 wæs his modsefa manegum gecyðed,
 350 wig ond wisdom): "Ic þæs wine Deniga,
 frean Scildinga, frinan wille,
 beaga bryttan, swa þu bena eart,
 þeoden mærne, ymb þinne sið,
 ond þe þa ondsware ædre gecyðan
 355 ðe me se goda agifan þenceð."

¹Hrothgar.

²Beowulf's helmet has several boar-images on it; he is the "man of war"; and the boar-helmet guards him as typical representative of the marching party as a whole. The boar was sacred to Freyr, who was the favorite god of the Germanic tribes about the North Sea and the Baltic. Rude representations of warriors show the boar on the helmet quite as large as the helmet itself.

Hied then in haste to where Hrothgar sat
white-haired and old, his earls about him,
till the stout thane stood at the shoulder there
of the Danish king: good courtier he!
Wulfgar spake to his winsome lord:—
"Hither have fared to thee far-come men
o'er the paths of ocean, people of Geatland;
and the stateliest there by his sturdy band
is Beowulf named. This boon they seek,
that they, my master, may with thee
have speech at will: nor spurn their prayer
to give them hearing, gracious Hrothgar!
In weeds of the warrior worthy they,
methinks, of our liking; their leader most surely,
a hero that hither his henchmen has led."
HROTHGAR answered, helmet of Scyldings:—
"I knew him of yore in his youthful days;
his aged father was Ecgtheow named,
to whom, at home, gave Hrethel the Geat
his only daughter. Their offspring bold
fares hither to seek the steadfast friend.
And seamen, too, have said me this, —
who carried my gifts to the Geatish court,
thither for thanks, — he has thirty men's
heft of grasp in the gripe of his hand,
the bold-in-battle. Blessed God
out of his mercy this man hath sent
to Danes of the West, as I ween indeed,
against horror of Grendel. I hope to give
the good youth gold for his gallant thought.
Be thou in haste, and bid them hither,
clan of kinsmen, to come before me;
and add this word, — they are welcome guests
to folk of the Danes."
and the word declared:—
"To you this message my master sends,
East-Danes' king, that your kin he knows,
hardy heroes, and hails you all
welcome hither o'er waves of the sea!
Ye may wend your way in war-attire,
and under helmets Hrothgar greet;
but let here the battle-shields bide your parley,
and wooden war-shafts wait its end."

Hwearf þa hrædlice þær Hroðgar sæt
eald ond anhar mid his eorla gedriht;
eode ellenrof, þæt he for eaxlum gestod
Deniga frean; cuþe he duguðe þeaw.
360 Wulfgar maðelode to his winedrihtne:
"Her syndon geferede, feorran cumene
ofer geofenes begang Geata leode;
þone yldestan oretmecgas
Beowulf nemnað. Hy benan synt
365 þæt hie, þeoden min, wiðþe moton
wordum wrixlan. No ðu him wearne geteoh
ðinra gegncwida, glædman Hroðgar.
Hy on wiggetawum wyrðe þinceað
eorla gæhtlan; huru se aldor deah,
370 se þæm heaðorincum hider wisade."
Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga:
"Ic hine cuðe cnihtwesende.
Wæs his ealdfæder Ecgþeo haten,
ðæm to ham forgeaf Hreþel Geata
375 angan dohtor; is his eafora nu
heard her cumen, sohte holdne wine.
ðonne sægdon þæt sæliþende,
þa ðe gifsceattas Geata fyredon
þyder to þance, þæt he XXXtiges
380 manna mægen-cræft on his mundgripe
heþorof hæbbe. Hine halig god
for arstafum us onsende,
to Westdenum, þæs ic wen hæbbe,
wiðGrendles gryre. Ic þæm godan sceal
385 for his modþræce madmas beodan.
Beo ðu on ofeste, hat in gan
seon sibbegedriht samod ætgædere;
gesaga him eac wordum þæt hie sint wilcuman
Deniga leodum."
390 word inne abead:
"Eow het secgan sigedrihten min,
aldor Eastdena, þæt he eower æþelu can,
ond ge him syndon ofer sæwylmas
heardhicgende hider wilcuman.
395 Nu ge moton gangan in eowrum guðgeatawum
under heregriman Hroðgar geseon;
lætaðhildebord her onbidan,
wudu, wælsceaftas, worda geþinges."

¹Either merely paved, the strata via of the Romans, or else thought of as a sort of mosaic, an extravagant touch like the reckless waste of gold on the walls and roofs of a hall.

Uprose the mighty one, ringed with his men,
 brave band of thanes: some bode without,
 battle-gear guarding, as bade the chief.
 Then hied that troop where the herald led them,
 under Heorot's roof:
 hardy 'neath helm, till the hearth he neared.
 Beowulf spake, – his breastplate gleamed,
 war-net woven by wit of the smith:–
 "Thou Hrothgar, hail! Hygelac's I,
 kinsman and follower. Fame a plenty
 have I gained in youth! These Grendel-deeds
 I heard in my home-land heralded clear.
 Seafarers say how stands this hall,
 of buildings best, for your band of thanes
 empty and idle, when evening sun
 in the harbor of heaven is hidden away.
 So my vassals advised me well, –
 brave and wise, the best of men, –
 O sovran Hrothgar, to seek thee here,
 for my nerve and my might they knew full well.
 Themselves had seen me from slaughter come
 blood-flecked from foes, where five I bound,
 and that wild brood worsted. I' the waves I slew
 nicors¹ by night, in need and peril
 avenging the Weders,² whose woe they sought, –
 crushing the grim ones. Grendel now,
 monster cruel, be mine to quell
 in single battle! So, from thee,
 thou sovran of the Shining-Danes,
 Scyldings'-bulwark, a boon I seek, –
 and, Friend-of-the-folk, refuse it not,
 O Warriors'-shield, now I've wandered far, –
 that I alone with my liegemen here,
 this hardy band, may Heorot purge!
 More I hear, that the monster dire,
 in his wanton mood, of weapons recks not;
 hence shall I scorn – so Hygelac stay,
 king of my kindred, kind to me! –
 brand or buckler to bear in the fight,
 gold-colored targe: but with gripe alone
 must I front the fiend and fight for life,
 foe against foe. Then faith be his
 in the doom of the Lord whom death shall take.
 Fain, I ween, if the fight he win,
 in this hall of gold my Geatish band

Aras þa se rica, ymb hine rinc manig,
 400 þryðlic þegna heap; sume þær bidon,
 heaðoreaf heoldon, swa him se hearda bebead.
 Snyredon ætsomne, þa secg wisode,
 under Heorotes hrof
 heard under helme, þæt he on heoðe gestod.
 405 Beowulf maðelode (on him byrne scan,
 searonet seowed smiþes orþancum):
 "Wæs þu, Hroðgar, hal! Ic eom Higelaces
 mæg ond magoðegn; hæbbe ic mærdða fela
 ongunnen on geogoþe. Me wearð Grendles þing
 410 on minre eþeltyrf undyrne cuð;
 secgaðsæliðend þæt þæs sele stande,
 reced selesta, rinca gehwylcum
 idel ond unnyt, siððan æfenleoht
 under heofenes hador beholen weorþeð.
 415 þa me þæt gelærdon leode mine
 þa selestan, snotere ceorlas,
 þeoden Hroðgar, þæt ic þe sohte,
 forþan hie mægenes cræft minne cuþon,
 selfe ofersawon, ða ic of searwum cwom,
 420 fah from feondum, þær ic fife geband,
 yðde eotena cyn ond on yðum slog
 niceras nihtes, nearoþearfe dreah,
 wræc Wedera nið (wean ahsodon),
 forgrand gramum, ond nu wið Grendel sceal,
 425 wið þam aglæcan, ana gehegan
 ðing wið þyrse. Ic þe nu ða,
 brego Beorhtdena, biddan wille,
 eodor Scyldinga, anre bene,
 þæt ðu me ne forwyrne, wigendra hleo,
 430 freowine folca, nu ic þus feorran com,
 þæt ic mote ana ond minra eorla gedryht,
 þes hearda heap, Heorot fælsian.
 Hæbbe ic eac geahsod þæt se æglæca
 for his wonhydum wæpna ne recceð.
 435 Ic þæt þonne forhicge (swa me Higelac sie,
 min mondrihten, modes bliðe),
 þæt ic sweord bere oþðe sidne scyld,
 geolorand to guþe, ac ic mid grape sceal
 fon wiðfeonde ond ymb feorh sacan,
 440 laðwiðlaþum; ðær gelyfan sceal
 dryhtnes dome se þe hine deaðnimeð.
 Wen ic þæt he wille, gif he wealdan mot,
 in þæm guðsele Geotena leode

will he fearless eat, – as oft before, –
my noblest thanes. Nor need'st thou then
to hide my head;³ for his shall I be,
dyed in gore, if death must take me;
and my blood-covered body he'll bear as prey,
ruthless devour it, the roamer-lonely,
with my life-blood redden his lair in the fen:
no further for me need'st food prepare!
To Hygelac send, if Hild⁴ should take me,
best of war-weeds, warding my breast,
armor excellent, heirloom of Hrethel
and work of Wayland.⁵ Fares Wyrð⁶ as she must."

HROTHGAR spake, the Scyldings'-helmet:–
"For fight defensive, Friend my Beowulf,
to succor and save, thou hast sought us here.
Thy father's combat¹ a feud enkindled
when Heatholaf with hand he slew
among the Wylfings; his Weder kin
for horror of fighting feared to hold him.
Fleeing, he sought our South-Dane folk,
over surge of ocean the Honor-Scyldings,
when first I was ruling the folk of Danes,
wielded, youthful, this widespread realm,
this hoard-hold of heroes. Heorogar was dead,
my elder brother, had breathed his last,
Healfdene's bairn: he was better than I!
Straightway the feud with fee² I settled,
to the Wylfings sent, o'er watery ridges,
treasures olden: oaths he³ swore me.
Sore is my soul to say to any
of the race of man what ruth for me
in Heorot Grendel with hate hath wrought,
what sudden harrings. Hall-folk fail me,
my warriors wane; for Wyrð hath swept them
into Grendel's grasp. But God is able
this deadly foe from his deeds to turn!
Boasted full oft, as my beer they drank,
earls o'er the ale-cup, armed men,

etan unforhte, swa he oft dyde,
445 mægen Hreðmanna. Na þu minne þearft
hafalan hydan, ac he me habban wile
dreore fahne, gif mec deaðnimeð.
Byreðblodig wæl, byrgean þenceð,
eteðangenga unmunlice,
450 mearcaðmorhopu; no ðu ymb mines ne þearft
lices feorme leng sorgian.
Onsend Higelace, gif mec hild nime,
beaduscruða betst, þæt mine breost wereð,
hrægla selest; þæt is Hrædlan laf,
455 Welandes geweorc. Gæða wyrð swa hio scel."
Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga:
"For gewyrhtum þu, wine min Beowulf,
ond for arstafum usic sohtest.
Gesloh þin fæder fæhðe mæste;
460 wearþhe Heaþolafe to handbonan
mid Wilfingum; ða hine Wedera cyn
for herebrogan habban ne mihte.
þanon he gesohte Suðdena folc
ofer yða gewearc, Arscyldinga.
465 ða ic furþum weold folce Deniga
ond on geogode heold ginne rice,
hordburh hæleþa; ða wæs Heregar dead,
min yldra mæg unlifigende,
bearn Healfdenes; se wæs betera ðonne ic.
470 Siððan þa fæhðe feo þingode;
sende ic Wylfingum ofer wæteres hrycg
ealde madmas; he me aþas swor.
Sorh is me to secganne on sefan minum
gumena ængum hwæt me Grendel hafað
475 hyndo on Heorote mid his hetþancum,
færniða gefremed. Is min fletwerod,
wigheap gewanod; hie wyrð forsweop
on Grendles gryre. God eaþe mæg
þone dolsceaðan dæda getwæfan.
480 Ful oft gebeotedon beore druncne
ofer ealowæge oretmecgas

¹The nicor, says Bugge, is a hippopotamus; a walrus, says ten Brink. But that water-goblin who covers the space from Old Nick of jest to the Neckan and Nix of poetry and tale, is all one needs, and Nicor is a good name for him.

²His own people, the Geats.

³That is, cover it as with a face-cloth. "There will be no need of funeral rites."

⁴Personification of Battle.

⁵The Germanic Vulcan.

⁶This mighty power, whom the Christian poet can still revere, has here the general force of "Destiny."

that they would bide in the beer-hall here,
 Grendel's attack with terror of blades.
 Then was this mead-house at morning tide
 dyed with gore, when the daylight broke,
 all the boards of the benches blood-besprinkled,
 gory the hall: I had heroes the less,
 doughty dear-ones that death had reft.
 – But sit to the banquet, unbind thy words,
 hardy hero, as heart shall prompt thee."
 Gathered together, the Geatish men
 in the banquet-hall on bench assigned,
 sturdy-spirited, sat them down,
 hardy-hearted. A henchman attended,
 carried the carven cup in hand,
 served the clear mead. Oft minstrels sang
 blithe in Heorot. Heroes revelled,
 no dearth of warriors, Weder and Dane.

UNFERTH spake, the son of Ecglaf,
 who sat at the feet of the Scyldings' lord,
 unbound the battle-runes.¹ – Beowulf's quest,
 sturdy seafarer's, sorely galled him;
 ever he envied that other men
 should more achieve in middle-earth
 of fame under heaven than he himself. –
 "Art thou that Beowulf, Breca's rival,
 who emulous swam on the open sea,
 when for pride the pair of you proved the floods,
 and wantonly dared in waters deep
 to risk your lives? No living man,
 or lief or loath, from your labor dire
 could you dissuade, from swimming the main.
 Ocean-tides with your arms ye covered,
 with strenuous hands the sea-streets measured,
 swam o'er the waters. Winter's storm
 rolled the rough waves. In realm of sea
 a sennight strove ye. In swimming he topped thee,
 had more of main! Him at morning-tide
 billows bore to the Battling Reamas,
 whence he hied to his home so dear
 beloved of his liegemen, to land of Brondings,
 fastness fair, where his folk he ruled,

þæt hie in beorsele bidan woldon
 Grendles guþe mid gryrum ecga.
 ðonne wæs þeos medoheal on morgentid,
 485 drihtsele dreorfah, þonne dæg lixte,
 eal bencþelu blode bestymed,
 heall heorudreore; ahte ic holdra þy læs,
 deorre duguðe, þe þa deaðfornam.
 Site nu to symle ond onsæl meoto,
 490 sigehreðsecgum, swa þin sefa hwette."
 þa wæs Geatmæcgum geador ætsomne
 on beorsele benc gerymed;
 þær swiðferhþe sittan eodon,
 þryðum dealle. þegn nytte beheold,
 495 se þe on handa bær hroden ealowæge,
 scencte scir wered. Scop hwilum sang
 hador on Heorote. þær wæs hæleða dream,
 duguðunlytel Dena ond Wedera.
 Unferðmaþelode, Ecglafes bearn,
 500 þe æt fotum sæt frean Scyldinga,
 onband beadurune (wæs him Beowulfes sið,
 modges merefaran, micel æfþunca,
 forþon þe he ne uþe þæt ænig oðer man
 æfre mærdða þon ma middangeardes
 505 gehedde under heofenum þonne he sylfa):
 "Eart þu se Beowulf, se þe wiðBrecan wunne,
 on sidne sæ ymb sund flite,
 ðær git for wlence wada cunnedon
 ond for dolgilpe on deop wæter
 510 aldrum neþdon? Ne inc ænig mon,
 ne leof ne lað, belean mihte
 sorhfullne sið, þa git on sund reon.
 þær git eagorstream earmum þehton,
 mæton merestræta, mundum brugdon,
 515 glidon ofer garsecg; geofon yþum weol,
 wintrys wylmum. Git on wæteres æht
 seofon niht swuncon; he þe æt sunde oferflat,
 hæfde mare mægen. þa hine on morgentid
 on Heaþoræmas holm up ætbær;
 520 ðonon he gesohte swæsne þþOEþþ,
 leof his leodum, lond Brondinga,
 freoðoburh fægere, þær he folc ahte,

¹There is no irrelevance here. Hrothgar sees in Beowulf's mission a heritage of duty, a return of the good offices which the Danish king rendered to Beowulf's father in time of dire need.

²Money, for wergild, or man-price.

³Ecgtheow, Beowulf's sire.

town and treasure. In triumph o'er thee
 Beanstan's bairn² his boast achieved.
 So ween I for thee a worse adventure
 – though in buffet of battle thou brave hast been,
 in struggle grim, – if Grendel's approach
 thou darst await through the watch of night!"
 Beowulf spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:–
 "What a deal hast uttered, dear my Unferth,
 drunken with beer, of Breca now,
 told of his triumph! Truth I claim it,
 that I had more of might in the sea
 than any man else, more ocean-endurance.
 We twain had talked, in time of youth,
 and made our boast, – we were merely boys,
 striplings still, – to stake our lives
 far at sea: and so we performed it.
 Naked swords, as we swam along,
 we held in hand, with hope to guard us
 against the whales. Not a whit from me
 could he float afar o'er the flood of waves,
 haste o'er the billows; nor him I abandoned.
 Together we twain on the tides abode
 five nights full till the flood divided us,
 churning waves and chillest weather,
 darkling night, and the northern wind
 ruthless rushed on us: rough was the surge.
 Now the wrath of the sea-fish rose apace;
 yet me 'gainst the monsters my mailed coat,
 hard and hand-linked, help afforded, –
 battle-sark braided my breast to ward,
 garnished with gold. There grasped me firm
 and haled me to bottom the hated foe,
 with grimest gripe. 'Twas granted me, though,
 to pierce the monster with point of sword,
 with blade of battle: huge beast of the sea
 was whelmed by the hurly through hand of mine.

ME thus often the evil monsters
 thronging threatened. With thrust of my sword,
 the darling, I dealt them due return!
 Nowise had they bliss from their booty then
 to devour their victim, vengeful creatures,
 seated to banquet at bottom of sea;
 but at break of day, by my brand sore hurt,

burh ond beagas. Beot eal wiðþe
 sunu Beanstanes soðe gelæste.
 525 ðonne wene ic to þe wyrsan geþingea,
 ðeah þu heaðoræsa gehwær dohte,
 grimre guðe, gif þu Grendles dearest
 nihtlongne fyrst nean bidan."
 Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:
 530 "Hwæt! þu worn fela, wine min Unferð,
 beore druncen ymb Breca spræce,
 sægdest from his siðe. Soðic talige,
 þæt ic merestrengo maran ahte,
 earfeþo on yþum, ðonne ænig oþer man.
 535 Wit þæt gecwædon cnihtwesende
 ond gebeotedon (wæron begen þa git
 on geogoðfeore) þæt wit on garsecg ut
 aldrum neðdon, ond þæt geæfndon swa.
 Hæfdon swurd nacod, þa wit on sund reon,
 540 heard on handa; wit unc wiðhronfixas
 werian þohton. No he wiht fram me
 flodyþum feor fleotan meahte,
 hraþor on holme; no ic fram him wolde.
 ða wit ætsomne on sæwæron
 545 fif nihta fyrst, oþþæt unc flod todraf,
 wado weallende, wedera cealdost,
 nipende niht, ond norþanwind
 heaðogrim ondhwearf; hreo wæron yþa.
 Wæs merefixa mod onhrered;
 550 þær me wiðlaðum licsyrce min,
 heard, hondlocen, helpe gefremede,
 beadohrægl broden on breostum læg
 golde gegyrwed. Me to grunde teah
 fah feondscaða, fæste hæfde
 555 grim on grape; hwæþre me gyfeþe wearð
 þæt ic aglæcan orde geræhte,
 hildebille; heaþoræs fornam
 mihtig meredeor þurh mine hand.
 Swa mec gelome laðgeteonan
 560 þreatedon þearle. Ic him þenode
 deoran sweorde, swa hit gedefe wæs.
 Næs hie ðære fülle gefean hæfdon,
 manfordædlan, þæt hie me þegon,
 symbel ymbsæton sægrunde neah;
 565 ac on mergenne mecum wunde

¹"Began the fight."

²Breca.

on the edge of ocean up they lay,
 put to sleep by the sword. And since, by them
 on the fathomless sea-ways sailor-folk
 are never molested. – Light from east,
 came bright God's beacon; the billows sank,
 so that I saw the sea-cliffs high,
 windy walls. For Wyrð oft saveth
 earl undoomed if he doughty be!
 And so it came that I killed with my sword
 nine of the nicors. Of night-fought battles
 ne'er heard I a harder 'neath heaven's dome,
 nor adrift on the deep a more desolate man!
 Yet I came unharmed from that hostile clutch,
 though spent with swimming. The sea upbore me,
 flood of the tide, on Finnish land,
 the welling waters. No wise of thee
 have I heard men tell such terror of falchions,
 bitter battle. Breca ne'er yet,
 not one of you pair, in the play of war
 such daring deed has done at all
 with bloody brand, – I boast not of it! –
 though thou wast the bane¹ of thy brethren dear,
 thy closest kin, whence curse of hell
 awaits thee, well as thy wit may serve!
 For I say in sooth, thou son of Ecglaf,
 never had Grendel these grim deeds wrought,
 monster dire, on thy master dear,
 in Heorot such havoc, if heart of thine
 were as battle-bold as thy boast is loud!
 But he has found no feud will happen;
 from sword-clash dread of your Danish clan
 he vaunts him safe, from the Victor-Scyldings.
 He forces pledges, favors none
 of the land of Danes, but lustily murders,
 fights and feasts, nor feud he dreads
 from Spear-Dane men. But speedily now
 shall I prove him the prowess and pride of the Geats,
 shall bid him battle. Blithe to mead
 go he that listeth, when light of dawn
 this morrow morning o'er men of earth,
 ether-robed sun from the south shall beam!"
 Joyous then was the Jewel-giver,
 hoar-haired, war-brave; help awaited
 the Bright-Danes' prince, from Beowulf hearing,
 folk's good shepherd, such firm resolve.

be yðlafe uppe lægon,
 sweordum aswefede, þæt syðþan na
 ymb brontne ford brimliðende
 lade ne letton. Leoht eastan com,
 570 beorht beacen godes; brimu swaþredon,
 þæt ic sænæssas geseon mihte,
 windige weallas. Wyrð oft nereð
 unfægne eorl, þonne his ellen deah.
 Hwæþere me gesælde þæt ic mid sweorde ofsloh
 575 niceras nigene. No ic on niht gefrægn
 under heofones hwealf heardran feohtan,
 ne on egstreamum earmran mannon;
 hwæþere ic fara feng feore gedigde,
 siþes werig. ða mec sæoþbær,
 580 flod æfter faroðe on Finna land,
 wadu weallendu. No ic wiht fram þe
 swylcra searoniða secgan hyrde,
 billa brogan. Breca næfre git
 æt heaðolace, ne gehwæper incer,
 585 swa deorlice dæd gefremede
 fagum sweordum (no ic þæs fela gylpe),
 þeah ðu þinum broðrum to banan wurde,
 heafodmægum; þæs þu in helle scealt
 werhðo dreogan, þeah þin wit duge.
 590 Secge ic þe to soðe, sunu Ecglafes,
 þæt næfre Grendel swa fela gryra gefremede,
 atol æglæca, ealdre þinum,
 hynðo on Heorote, gif þin hige wære,
 sefa swa searogrim, swa þu self talast.
 595 Ac he hafaðonfunden þæt he þa fæhðe ne þearf,
 atole ecgþræce eower leode
 swiðe onsittan, Sigescyldinga;
 nymeðnydbade, nænegum arað
 leode Deniga, ac he lust wigeð,
 600 swefedond sendeþ, secce ne weneþ
 to Gardenum. Ac ic him Geata sceal
 eafodond ellen ungeara nu,
 guþe gebeodan. Gæpeft se þe mot
 to medo modig, siþþan morgenleoht
 605 ofer ylða bearn oþres dogores,
 sunne sweglwered suþan scineð."
 þa wæs on salum sinces brytta,
 gamolfeax ond guðrof; geoce gelyfde
 brego Beorhtdena, gehyrde on Beowulfe
 610 folces hyrde fæstrædne geþoht.

Then was laughter of liegemen loud resounding
with winsome words. Came Wealhtheow forth,
queen of Hrothgar, heedful of courtesy,
gold-decked, greeting the guests in hall;
and the high-born lady handed the cup
first to the East-Danes' heir and warden,
bade him be blithe at the beer-carouse,
the land's beloved one. Lustily took he
banquet and beaker, battle-famed king.
Through the hall then went the Helmings' Lady,
to younger and older everywhere
carried the cup, till come the moment
when the ring-graced queen, the royal-hearted,
to Beowulf bore the beaker of mead.
She greeted the Geats' lord, God she thanked,
in wisdom's words, that her will was granted,
that at last on a hero her hope could lean
for comfort in terrors. The cup he took,
hardy-in-war, from Wealhtheow's hand,
and answer uttered the eager-for-combat.
Beowulf spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:—
"This was my thought, when my thanes and I
bent to the ocean and entered our boat,
that I would work the will of your people
fully, or fighting fall in death,
in fiend's gripe fast. I am firm to do
an earl's brave deed, or end the days
of this life of mine in the mead-hall here."
Well these words to the woman seemed,
Beowulf's battle-boast. — Bright with gold
the stately dame by her spouse sat down.
Again, as erst, began in hall
warriors' wassail and words of power,
the proud-band's revel, till presently
the son of Healfdene hastened to seek
rest for the night; he knew there waited
fight for the fiend in that festal hall,
when the sheen of the sun they saw no more,
and dusk of night sank darkling nigh,
and shadowy shapes came striding on,
wan under welkin. The warriors rose.
Man to man, he made harangue,
Hrothgar to Beowulf, bade him hail,
let him wield the wine hall: a word he added:—
"Never to any man erst I trusted,

ðær wæs hæleþa hleahtor, hlyn swynsode,
word wæron wynsume. Eode Wealhþeow forð,
cwen Hroðgares, cynna gemyndig,
grette goldhroden guman on healle,
615 ond þa freolic wif ful gesealde
ærest Eastdena eþelwearde,
bæd hine bliðne æt þære beorþege,
leodum leofne. He on lust geþeah
symbel ond seleaf, sigerof kyning.
620 Ymbeode þa ides Helminga
duguþe ond geogoþe dæl æghwylcne,
sincfato sealde, oppæt sæl alamp
þæt hio Beowulfe, beaghroden cwen
mode geþungen, medoful ætbær;
625 grette Geata leod, gode þancode
wisfæst wordum þæs ðe hire se willa gelamp
þæt heo on ænigne eorl gelyfde
fyrena frofre. He þæt ful geþeah,
wælreow wiga, æt Wealhþeon,
630 ond þa gyddode guþe gefysed;
Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:
"Ic þæt hogode, þa ic on holm gestah,
sæbat gesæt mid minra secga gedriht,
þæt ic anunga eowra leoda
635 willan geworhte oþðe on wæl crunge,
feondgrapum fæst. Ic gefremman sceal
eorlic ellen, oþðe endedæg
on þisse meoduhealle minne gebidan."
ðam wife þa word wel licodon,
640 gilpcwide Geates; eode goldhroden
freolicu folccwen to hire frean sittan.
þa wæs eft swa ær inne on healle
þryðword sprecen, ðeod on sælum,
sigefolca sweg, oppæt semninga
645 sunu Healfdenes secean wolde
æfenræste; wiste þæm ahlæcan
to þæm heahsele hilde geþinged,
siððan hie sunnan leoht geseon ne meahton,
oþðe nipende niht ofer ealle,
650 scaduhelma gesceapu scriðan cwoman,
wan under wolcnum. Werod eall aras.
Gegrette þa guma oþerne,
Hroðgar Beowulf, ond him hæl ahead,
winærnes geweald, ond þæt word acwæð:
655 "Næfre ic ænegum men ær alyfde,

since I could heave up hand and shield,
 this noble Dane-Hall, till now to thee.
 Have now and hold this house unpeered;
 remember thy glory; thy might declare;
 watch for the foe! No wish shall fail thee
 if thou bidest the battle with bold-won life."

THEN Hrothgar went with his hero-train,
 defence-of-Scyldings, forth from hall;
 fain would the war-lord Wealhtheow seek,
 couch of his queen. The King-of-Glory
 against this Grendel a guard had set,
 so heroes heard, a hall-defender,
 who warded the monarch and watched for the monster.

In truth, the Geats' prince gladly trusted
 his mettle, his might, the mercy of God!
 Cast off then his corselet of iron,
 helmet from head; to his henchman gave, –
 choicest of weapons, – the well-chased sword,
 bidding him guard the gear of battle.

Spake then his Vaunt the valiant man,
 Beowulf Geat, ere the bed be sought:–
 "Of force in fight no feebler I count me,
 in grim war-deeds, than Grendel deems him.
 Not with the sword, then, to sleep of death
 his life will I give, though it lie in my power.

No skill is his to strike against me,
 my shield to hew though he hardy be,
 bold in battle; we both, this night,
 shall spurn the sword, if he seek me here,
 unweaponed, for war. Let wisest God,
 sacred Lord, on which side soever
 doom decree as he deemeth right."

Reclined then the chieftain, and cheek-pillows held
 the head of the earl, while all about him
 seamen hardy on hall-beds sank.

None of them thought that thence their steps
 to the folk and fastness that fostered them,
 to the land they loved, would lead them back!
 Full well they wist that on warriors many
 battle-death seized, in the banquet-hall,
 of Danish clan. But comfort and help,
 war-weal weaving, to Weder folk
 the Master gave, that, by might of one,
 over their enemy all prevailed,

siþðan ic hond ond rond hebban mihte,
 ðryþærn Dena buton þe nu ða.
 Hafa nu ond geheald husa selest,
 gemyne mærbō, mægenellen cyð,
 660 waca wiðwraþum. Ne biðþe wilna gad,
 gif þu þæt ellenweorc aldre gedigest."
 ða him Hroþgar gewat mid his hæleþa gedryht,
 eodur Scyldinga, ut of healle;
 wolde wigfruma Wealhþeo secan,
 665 cwen to gebeddan. Hæfde kyningwuldor
 Grendle togeanes, swa guman gefrungon,
 seleweard aseted; sundornytte beheold
 ymb aldor Dena, eotonweard ahead.
 Huru Geata leod georne truwode
 670 modgan mægnes, metoddes hyldo.
 ða he him of dyde isernbyrnan,
 helm of hafelan, sealde his hyrsted sweord,
 irena cyst, ombihtþegne,
 ond gehealdan het hildegeatwe.
 675 Gespræc þa se goda gylpworda sum,
 Beowulf Geata, ær he on bed stige:
 "No ic me an herewæsmun hnagran talige,
 guþgeweorca, þonne Grendel hine;
 forþan ic hine sweorde swebban nelle,
 680 aldre beneotan, þeah ic eal mæge.
 Nat he þara goda þæt he me ongean slea,
 rand geheawe, þeah ðe he rof sie
 niþgeweorca; ac wit on niht sculon
 secge ofersittan, gif he gesecean dear
 685 wig ofer wæpen, ond siþðan witig god
 on swa hwæþere hond, halig dryhten,
 mærdō deme, swa him gemet þince."
 Hylde hine þa heaþodeor, hleorbolster onfeng
 eorles andwlitan, ond hine ymb monig
 690 snellic særinc selereste gebeah.
 Nænig heora þohte þæt he þanon scolde
 eft eardlufan æfre gesecean,
 folc oþðe freoburh, þær he afeded wæs;
 ac hie hæfdon gefrunen þæt hie ær to fela micles
 695 in þæm winsele wældeaðfornam,
 Denigea leode. Ac him dryhten forgeaf
 wigspeda gewiofu, Wedera leodum,
 frofor ond fultum, þæt hie feond heora
 ðurh anes cræft ealle ofercomon,

¹Murder.

by single strength. In sooth 'tis told
 that highest God o'er human kind
 hath wielded ever! – Thro' wan night striding,
 came the walker-in-shadow. Warriors slept
 whose hest was to guard the gabled hall, –
 all save one. 'Twas widely known
 that against God's will the ghostly ravager
 him¹ could not hurl to haunts of darkness;
 wakeful, ready, with warrior's wrath,
 bold he bided the battle's issue.

THEN from the moorland, by misty crags,
 with God's wrath laden, Grendel came.
 The monster was minded of mankind now
 sundry to seize in the stately house.
 Under welkin he walked, till the wine-palace there,
 gold-hall of men, he gladly discerned,
 flashing with fretwork. Not first time, this,
 that he the home of Hrothgar sought, –
 yet ne'er in his life-day, late or early,
 such hardy heroes, such hall-thanes, found!
 To the house the warrior walked apace,
 parted from peace;¹ the portal opened,
 though with forged bolts fast, when his fists had struck it,
 and baleful he burst in his blatant rage,
 the house's mouth. All hastily, then,
 o'er fair-paved floor the fiend trod on,
 ireful he strode; there streamed from his eyes
 fearful flashes, like flame to see.
 He spied in hall the hero-band,
 kin and clansmen clustered asleep,
 hardy liegemen. Then laughed his heart;
 for the monster was minded, ere morn should dawn,
 savage, to sever the soul of each,
 life from body, since lusty banquet
 waited his will! But Wyrð forbade him
 to seize any more of men on earth
 after that evening. Eagerly watched
 Hygelac's kinsman his cursed foe,
 how he would fare in fell attack.
 Not that the monster was minded to pause!
 Straightway he seized a sleeping warrior
 for the first, and tore him fiercely asunder,
 the bone-frame bit, drank blood in streams,
 swallowed him piecemeal: swiftly thus

700 selfes mihtum. Soðis gecyþed
 þæt mihtig god manna cynnes
 weold wideferhð. Com on wanre niht
 scriðan sceadugenga. Sceotend swæfon,
 þa þæt hornreced healdan scoldon,
 705 ealle buton anum. þæt wæs yldum cuþ
 þæt hie ne moste, þa metod nolde,
 se scynscaþa under sceadu bregdan;
 ac he wæccende wraþum on andan
 bad bolgenmod beadwa geþinges.
 710 ða com of more under misthleoþum
 Grendel gongan, godes yrre bær;
 mynte se manscaða manna cynnes
 sumne besyrwan in sele þam hean.
 Wod under wolcnum to þæs þe he winreced,
 715 goldsele gumena, gearwost wisse,
 fættum fahne. Ne wæs þæt forma sið
 þæt he Hroþgares ham gesohte;
 næfre he on aldordagum ær ne siþðan
 heardran hæle, healðegnas fand.
 720 Com þa to recede rinc siðian,
 dreamum bedæled. Duru sona onarn,
 fyrbendum fæst, syþðan he hire folmum æthran;
 onbræd þa bealohydig, ða he gebolgen wæs,
 recedes muþan. Raþe æfter þon
 725 on fagne flor feond treddode,
 eode yrremod; him of eagum stod
 ligge gelicost leoht unfæger.
 Geseah he in recede rinca manige,
 swefan sibbegedriht samod ætgædere,
 730 magorinca heap. þa his mod ahlog;
 mynte þæt he gedælde, ærþon dæg cwome,
 atol aglæca, anra gehwylces
 lif wiðlice, þa him alumpen wæs
 wistfyllen wen. Ne wæs þæt wyrð þa gen
 735 þæt he ma moste manna cynnes
 ðicgean ofer þa niht. þryðswyðbeheold
 mæg Higelaces, hu se manscaða
 under færgripum gefaran wolde.
 Ne þæt se aglæca yldan þohte,
 740 ac he gefeng hraðe forman siðe
 slæpendne rinc, slat unwearnum,
 bat banlocan, blod edrum dranc,
 synsnædum swealh; sona hæfde

¹Beowulf, – the "one."

the lifeless corse was clear devoured,
 e'en feet and hands. Then farther he hied;
 for the hardy hero with hand he grasped,
 felt for the foe with fiendish claw,
 for the hero reclining, – who clutched it boldly,
 prompt to answer, propped on his arm.
 Soon then saw that shepherd-of-evils
 that never he met in this middle-world,
 in the ways of earth, another wight
 with heavier hand-gripe; at heart he feared,
 sorrowed in soul, – none the sooner escaped!
 Fain would he flee, his fastness seek,
 the den of devils: no doings now
 such as oft he had done in days of old!
 Then bethought him the hardy Hygelac-thane
 of his boast at evening: up he bounded,
 grasped firm his foe, whose fingers cracked.
 The fiend made off, but the earl close followed.
 The monster meant – if he might at all –
 to fling himself free, and far away
 fly to the fens, – knew his fingers' power
 in the gripe of the grim one. Gruesome march
 to Heorot this monster of harm had made!
 Din filled the room; the Danes were bereft,
 castle-dwellers and clansmen all,
 earls, of their ale. Angry were both
 those savage hall-guards: the house resounded.
 Wonder it was the wine-hall firm
 in the strain of their struggle stood, to earth
 the fair house fell not; too fast it was
 within and without by its iron bands
 craftily clamped; though there crashed from sill
 many a mead-bench – men have told me –
 gay with gold, where the grim foes wrestled.
 So well had weened the wisest Scyldings
 that not ever at all might any man
 that bone-decked, brave house break asunder,
 crush by craft, – unless clasp of fire
 in smoke engulfed it. – Again uprose
 din redoubled. Danes of the North
 with fear and frenzy were filled, each one,
 who from the wall that wailing heard,
 God's foe sounding his grisly song,
 cry of the conquered, clamorous pain
 from captive of hell. Too closely held him

unlyfigendes eal gefeormod,
 745 fet ond folma. Forðnear ætstop,
 nam þa mid handa higeþihtigne
 rinc on ræste, ræhte ongean
 feond mid folme; he onfeng hraþe
 inwitþancum ond wiðearm gesæt.
 750 Sona þæt onfunde fyrena hyrde
 þæt he ne mette middangeardes,
 eorþan sceata, on elran men
 mundgripe maran. He on mode wearð
 forht on ferhðe; no þy ær fram meahte.
 755 Hyge wæs him hinfus, wolde on heolster fleon,
 secan deofla gedræg; ne wæs his drohtodþær
 swylce he on ealderdagum ær gemette.
 Gemunde þa se goda, mæg Higelaces,
 æfenspræce, uplang astod
 760 ond him fæste wiðfeng; fingras burston.
 Eoten wæs utweard; eorl furþur stop.
 Mynte se mæra, þær he meahte swa,
 widre gewindan ond on weg þanon
 fleon on fenhopu; wiste his fingra geweald
 765 on grames grapum. þæt wæs geocor sið
 þæt se hearmscaþa to Heorute ateah.
 Dryhtsele dynede; Denum eallum wearð,
 ceasterbuendum, cenra gehwylcum,
 eorlum ealuscerwen. Yrre wæron begen,
 770 reþe renweardas. Reced hlynsode.
 þa wæs wundor micel þæt se winsele
 wiðhæfde heapodeorum, þæt he on hrusan ne feol,
 fæger foldbold; ac he þæs fæste wæs
 innan ond utan irenbendum
 775 searþoncum besmipod. þær fram sylle abeag
 medubenc monig, mine gefræge,
 golde geregnad, þær þa graman wunnon.
 þæs ne wendon ær witan Scyldinga
 þæt hit a mid gemete manna ænig,
 780 betlic ond banfag, tobrecan meahte,
 listum tolucan, nymþe liges fæþm
 swulge on swaþule. Sweg up astag
 niwe geneahhe; Norðenum stod
 atelic egesa, anra gehwylcum
 785 þara þe of wealle wop gehyrdon,
 gryreodgalan godes ondsacan,
 sigeleasne sang, sar wanigean
 helle hæfton. Heold hine fæste

he who of men in might was strongest
in that same day of this our life.

NOT in any wise would the earls'-defence¹
suffer that slaughterous stranger to live,
useless deeming his days and years
to men on earth. Now many an earl
of Beowulf brandished blade ancestral,
fain the life of their lord to shield,
their praised prince, if power were theirs;
never they knew, – as they neared the foe,
hardy-hearted heroes of war,
aiming their swords on every side
the accursed to kill, – no keenest blade,
no farest of falchions fashioned on earth,
could harm or hurt that hideous fiend!
He was safe, by his spells, from sword of battle,
from edge of iron. Yet his end and parting
on that same day of this our life
woful should be, and his wandering soul
far off flit to the fiends' domain.
Soon he found, who in former days,
harmful in heart and hated of God,
on many a man such murder wrought,
that the frame of his body failed him now.
For him the keen-souled kinsman of Hygelac
held in hand; hateful alive
was each to other. The outlaw dire
took mortal hurt; a mighty wound
showed on his shoulder, and sinews cracked,
and the bone-frame burst. To Beowulf now
the glory was given, and Grendel thence
death-sick his den in the dark moor sought,
noisome abode: he knew too well
that here was the last of life, an end
of his days on earth. – To all the Danes
by that bloody battle the boon had come.
From ravage had rescued the roving stranger
Hrothgar's hall; the hardy and wise one
had purged it anew. His night-work pleased him,
his deed and its honor. To Eastern Danes
had the valiant Geat his vaunt made good,
all their sorrow and ills assuaged,
their bale of battle borne so long,
and all the dole they erst endured

se þe manna wæs mægene strengest
790 on þæm dæge þysses lifes.
Nolde eorla hleo ænige þinga
þone cwealmcuman cwicne forlætan,
ne his lifdagas leoda ænigum
nytte tealde. þær genehost brægd
795 eorl Beowulfes ealde lafe,
wolde freadrihtnes feorh ealgian,
mæres þeodnes, ðær hie meahton swa.
Hie þæt ne wiston, þa hie gewin drugon,
heardhicgende hildemecgas,
800 ond on healfa gehwone heawan þohton,
sawle secan, þone synscaðan
ænig ofer eorþan irenna cyst,
guðbilla nan, gretan nolde,
ac he sigewæpnum forsworen hæfde,
805 ecga gehwylcre. Scolde his aldorgedal
on ðæm dæge þysses lifes
earmlíc wurðan, ond se ellorgast
on feonda geweald feor siðian.
ða þæt onfunde se þe fela æror
810 modes myrðe manna cynne,
fyrene gefremede (he wæs fag wiðgod),
þæt him se lichoma læstan nolde,
ac hine se modega mæg Hygelaces
hæfde be honda; wæs gehwæper oðrum
815 lifigende lað. Licsar gebad
atol æglæca; him on eaxle wearð
syndolh sweotol, seonowe onsprungon,
burston banlocan. Beowulfe wearð
guðhredgyfeþe; scolde Grendel þonan
820 feorhseoc fleon under fenhleoðu,
secean wynleas wic; wiste þe geornor
þæt his aldres wæs ende gegongen,
dogera dægrim. Denum eallum wearð
æfter þam wælræse willa gelumpen.
825 Hæfde þa gefælsod se þe ær feorran com,
snotor ond swyðferhð, sele Hroðgares,
genered wiðniðe; nihtweorce gefeh,
ellenmærpum. Hæfde Eastdenum
Geatmecga leod gilp gelæsted,
830 swylce oncyþde ealle gebette,
inwidsorge, þe hie ær drugon
ond for þreanydum þolian scoldon,

¹That is, he was a "lost soul," doomed to hell.

pain a-plenty. – 'Twas proof of this,
when the hardy-in-fight a hand laid down,
arm and shoulder, – all, indeed,
of Grendel's gripe, – 'neath the gabled roofū
MANY at morning, as men have told me,
warriors gathered the gift-hall round,
folk-leaders faring from far and near,
o'er wide-stretched ways, the wonder to view,
trace of the traitor. Not troublous seemed
the enemy's end to any man
who saw by the gait of the graceless foe
how the weary-hearted, away from thence,
baffled in battle and banned, his steps
death-marked dragged to the devils' mere.
Bloody the billows were boiling there,
turbid the tide of tumbling waves
horribly seething, with sword-blood hot,
by that doomed one dyed, who in den of the moor
laid forlorn his life adown,
his heathen soul,-and hell received it.
Home then rode the hoary clansmen
from that merry journey, and many a youth,
on horses white, the hardy warriors,
back from the mere. Then Beowulf's glory
eager they echoed, and all averred
that from sea to sea, or south or north,
there was no other in earth's domain,
under vault of heaven, more valiant found,
of warriors none more worthy to rule!
(On their lord beloved they laid no slight,
gracious Hrothgar: a good king he!)
From time to time, the tried-in-battle
their gray steeds set to gallop amain,
and ran a race when the road seemed fair.
From time to time, a thane of the king,
who had made many vaunts, and was mindful of verses,
stored with sagas and songs of old,
bound word to word in well-knit rime,
welded his lay; this warrior soon
of Beowulf's quest right cleverly sang,
and artfully added an excellent tale,
in well-ranged words, of the warlike deeds
he had heard in saga of Sigemund.
Strange the story: he said it all, –

torn unlytel. þæt wæs tacen sweotol,
syþðan hildedeor hond alegde,
835 earm ond eaxle (þær wæs eal geador
Grendles grape) under geapne hrof.
ða wæs on morgen mine gefræge
ymb þa gifhealle guðrinc monig;
ferdon folctogan feorran ond nean
840 geond widwegas wundor sceawian,
laþes lastas. No his lifgedal
sarlic þuhte secga ænegum
þara þe tirleases trode sceawode,
hu he werigmod on weg þanon,
845 niða ofercumen, on nicera mere
fæge ond geflymed feorhlastas bær.
ðær wæs on blode brim weallende,
atol yða geswing eal gemenged
haton heolfre, heorodreore weol.
850 Deaðfæge deog, siððan dreama leas
in fenfreoðo feorh alegde,
hæþene sawle; þær him hel onfeng.
þanon eft gewiton ealdgesiðas,
swylce geong manig of gomenwape
855 fram mere modge mearum ridan,
beornas on blancum. ðær wæs Beowulfes
mærdō mæned; monig oft gecwæð
þætte suðne norð be sæm tweonum
ofer eormengrund oþer nænig
860 under swegles begong selra nære
rondhæbbendra, rices wyrðra.
Ne hie huru winedrihten wiht ne logon,
glædne Hroðgar, ac þæt wæs god cyning.
Hwilum heaþorofe hleapan leton,
865 on geflit faran fealwe mearas
ðær him foldwegas fægere þuhton,
cystum cuðe. Hwilum cyninges þegn,
guma gilphlæden, gidda gemyndig,
se ðe ealfela ealdgesegena
870 worn gemunde, word oþer fand
soðe gebunden; secg eft ongan
siðBeowulfes snyttrum styrian
ond on sped wrecan spel grade,
wordum wrixlan. Welhwylc gecwæð
875 þæt he fram Sigemundes secgan hyrde
ellendædum, uncuþes fela,

¹Kenning for Beowulf.

the Waelsing's wanderings wide, his struggles,
 which never were told to tribes of men,
 the feuds and the frauds, save to Fitela only,
 when of these doings he deigned to speak,
 uncle to nephew; as ever the twain
 stood side by side in stress of war,
 and multitude of the monster kind
 they had felled with their swords. Of Sigemund grew,
 when he passed from life, no little praise;
 for the doughty-in-combat a dragon killed
 that herded the hoard:¹ under hoary rock
 the atheling dared the deed alone
 fearful quest, nor was Fitela there.
 Yet so it befell, his falchion pierced
 that wondrous worm, – on the wall it struck,
 best blade; the dragon died in its blood.
 Thus had the dread-one by daring achieved
 over the ring-hoard to rule at will,
 himself to pleasure; a sea-boat he loaded,
 and bore on its bosom the beaming gold,
 son of Waels; the worm was consumed.
 He had of all heroes the highest renown
 among races of men, this refuge-of-warriors,
 for deeds of daring that decked his name
 since the hand and heart of Heremod
 grew slack in battle. He, swiftly banished
 to mingle with monsters at mercy of foes,
 to death was betrayed; for torrents of sorrow
 had lamed him too long; a load of care
 to earls and athelings all he proved.
 Oft indeed, in earlier days,
 for the warrior's wayfaring wise men mourned,
 who had hoped of him help from harm and bale,
 and had thought their sovran's son would thrive,
 follow his father, his folk protect,
 the hoard and the stronghold, heroes' land,
 home of Scyldings. – But here, thanes said,
 the kinsman of Hygelac kinder seemed
 to all: the other² was urged to crime!
 And afresh to the race,³ the fallow roads
 by swift steeds measured! The morning sun
 was climbing higher. Clansmen hastened
 to the high-built hall, those hardy-minded,
 the wonder to witness. Warden of treasure,
 crowned with glory, the king himself,

Wælsinges gewin, wide siðas,
 þara þe gumena bearn gearwe ne wiston,
 fæhðe ond fyrena, buton Fitela mid hine,
 880 þonne he swulces hwæt secgan wolde,
 eam his nefan, swa hie a wæron
 æt niða gehwam nydgesteallan;
 hæfdon ealfela eotena cynnes
 sweordum gesæged. Sigemunde gesprong
 885 æfter deaðdæge dom unlytel,
 syþðan wiges heard wurm acwealde,
 hordes hyrde. He under harne stan,
 æþelinges bearn, ana geneðde
 frecne dæde, ne wæs him Fitela mid.
 890 Hwæpre him gesælde ðæt þæt swurd þurhwod
 wrætlicne wurm, þæt hit on wealle ætstod,
 dryhtlic iren; draca mordre swealt.
 Hæfde aglæca elne gegongen
 þæt he beahhordes brucan moste
 895 selfes dome; sæbat gehleod,
 bær on bearm scipes beorhte frætwa,
 Wælses eafera. Wurm hat gemealt.
 Se wæs wreccena wide mærost
 ofer werþeode, wigendra hleo,
 900 ellendædum (he þæs ær onðah),
 siððan Heremodes hild sweðrode,
 eafodond ellen. He mid Eotenum wearð
 on feonda gewæld forðforlacen,
 snude forsended. Hine sorhwylmas
 905 lemede to lange; he his leodum wearð,
 eallum æþellingum to aldorceare;
 swylce oft bemearn ærran mælum
 swiðferhþes sið snotor ceorl monig,
 se þe him bealwa to bote gelyfde,
 910 þæt þæt ðeodnes bearn geþeon scolde,
 fæderæþelum onfon, folc gehealdan,
 hord ond hleoburh, hælepa rice,
 þþOEþþScyldinga. He þær eallum wearð,
 mæg Higelaces, manna cynne,
 915 freondum gefægra; hine fyren onwod.
 Hwylum flitende fealwe stræte
 mearum mæton. ða wæs morgenleoht
 scofen ond scynded. Eode scealc monig
 swiðhicgende to sele þam hean
 920 searowundor seon; swylce self cyning
 of brydbure, beahhorda weard,

with stately band from the bride-bower strode;
and with him the queen and her crowd of maidens
measured the path to the mead-house fair.

HROTHGAR spake, – to the hall he went,
stood by the steps, the steep roof saw,
garnished with gold, and Grendel's hand:–
"For the sight I see to the Sovran Ruler
be speedy thanks! A throng of sorrows
I have borne from Grendel; but God still works
wonder on wonder, the Warden-of-Glory.
It was but now that I never more
for woes that weighed on me waited help
long as I lived, when, laved in blood,
stood sword-gore-stained this stateliest house, –
widespread woe for wise men all,
who had no hope to hinder ever
foes infernal and fiendish sprites
from havoc in hall. This hero now,
by the Wielder's might, a work has done
that not all of us erst could ever do
by wile and wisdom. Lo, well can she say
whoso of women this warrior bore
among sons of men, if still she liveth,
that the God of the ages was good to her
in the birth of her bairn. Now, Beowulf, thee,
of heroes best, I shall heartily love
as mine own, my son; preserve thou ever
this kinship new: thou shalt never lack
wealth of the world that I wield as mine!
Full oft for less have I largess showered,
my precious hoard, on a punier man,
less stout in struggle. Thyself hast now
fulfilled such deeds, that thy fame shall endure
through all the ages. As ever he did,
well may the Wielder reward thee still!"
Beowulf spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:–
"This work of war most willingly
we have fought, this fight, and fearlessly dared
force of the foe. Fain, too, were I
hadst thou but seen himself, what time

tryddode tīrfæst getrume micle,
cystum gecyþed, ond his cwen mid him
medostigge mæt mægþa hose.
925 Hroðgar maþelode (he to healle geong,
stod on stapole, geseah steapne hrof,
golde fahne, ond Grendles hond):
"ðisse ansyne alwealdan þanc
lungre gelimpe! Fela ic laþes gebad,
930 grynna æt Grendle; a mæg god wyrcean
wunder æfter wundre, wuldres hyrde.
ðæt wæs ungeara þæt ic ænigra me
weana ne wende to widan feore
bote gebidan, þonne blode fah
935 husa selest heorodreorig stod,
wea widscofen witena gehwylcum
ðara þe ne wendon þæt hie wideferhð
leoda landgeweorc laþum beweredon
scuccum ond scinum. Nu scealc hafað
940 þurh drihtnes miht dæd gefremede
ðe we ealle ær ne meahton
snyttrum besyrwan. Hwæt, þæt secgan mæg
efne swa hwylc mægþa swa ðone magan cende
æfter gumcynnum, gyf heo gyt lyfað,
945 þæt hyre ealdmetod este wære
bearngebyrdo. Nu ic, Beowulf, þec,
secg betsta, me for sunu wylle
freogan on ferhþe; heald forðtela
niwe sibbe. Ne biðþe nænigra gad
950 worolde wilna, þe ic geweald hæbbe.
Ful oft ic for læssan lean teohhode,
hordweorþunge hnahan rince,
sæmran æt sæcce. þu þe self hafast
dædum gefremed þæt þin dom lyfað
955 awa to aldre. Alwalda þec
gode forgylde, swa he nu gyt dyde!"
Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecþeowes:
"We þæt ellenweorc estum miclum,
feohtan fremedon, frecne geneðdon
960 eafoduncuþes. Uþe ic swiþor
þæt ðu hine selfne geseon moste,

¹"Guarded the treasure."

²Sc. Heremod.

³The singer has sung his lays, and the epic resumes its story. The time-relations are not altogether good in this long passage which describes the rejoicings of "the day after"; but the present shift from the riders on the road to the folk at the hall is not very violent, and is of a piece with the general style.

the fiend in his trappings tottered to fall!
 Swiftly, I thought, in strongest gripe
 on his bed of death to bind him down,
 that he in the hent of this hand of mine
 should breathe his last: but he broke away.
 Him I might not – the Maker willed not –
 hinder from flight, and firm enough hold
 the life-destroyer: too sturdy was he,
 the ruthless, in running! For rescue, however,
 he left behind him his hand in pledge,
 arm and shoulder; nor aught of help
 could the cursed one thus procure at all.
 None the longer liveth he, loathsome fiend,
 sunk in his sins, but sorrow holds him
 tightly grasped in gripe of anguish,
 in baleful bonds, where bide he must,
 evil outlaw, such awful doom
 as the Mighty Maker shall mete him out."¹
 More silent seemed the son of Ecglaf¹
 in boastful speech of his battle-deeds,
 since athelings all, through the earl's great prowess,
 beheld that hand, on the high roof gazing,
 foeman's fingers, – the forepart of each
 of the sturdy nails to steel was likest, –
 heathen's "hand-spear," hostile warrior's
 claw uncanny. 'Twas clear, they said,
 that him no blade of the brave could touch,
 how keen soever, or cut away
 that battle-hand bloody from baneful foe.
 THERE was hurry and hest in Heorot now
 for hands to bedeck it, and dense was the throng
 of men and women the wine-hall to cleanse,
 the guest-room to garnish. Gold-gay shone the hangings
 that were wove on the wall, and wonders many
 to delight each mortal that looks upon them.
 Though braced within by iron bands,
 that building bright was broken sorely;¹
 rent were its hinges; the roof alone
 held safe and sound, when, seared with crime,
 the fiendish foe his flight essayed,
 of life despairing. – No light thing that,
 the flight for safety, – essay it who will!
 Forced of fate, he shall find his way
 to the refuge ready for race of man,

feond on frætewum fylwerigne.
 Ic hine hrædlice heardan clammum
 on wælbedde wriþan þohte,
 965 þæt he for mundgripe minum scolde
 licgean lifbysig, butan his lic swice.
 Ic hine ne mihte, þa metod nolde,
 ganges getwæman, no ic him þæs georne ætfealh,
 feorhgeniðlan; wæs to foremihtig
 970 feond on feþe. Hwæþere he his folme forlet
 to lifwraþe last weardian,
 earm ond eaxle. No þær ænige swa þeah
 feasceaft guma frofre gebohte;
 no þy leng leofað laðgeteona,
 975 synnum geswenced, ac hyne sar hafað
 mid nydgripe nearwe befongen,
 balwon bendum. ðær abidan sceal
 maga mane fah miclan domes,
 hu him scir metod scrifan wille."¹
 980 ða wæs swigra secg, sunu Eclafes,
 on gylpspræce guðgeweorca,
 siþðan æþelingas eorles cræfte
 ofer heanne hrof hand sceawedon,
 feondes fingras. Foran æghwylc wæs,
 985 stiðra nægla gehwylc, style gelicost,
 hæþenes handsporu hilderinces,
 egl, unheoru. æghwylc gecwæð
 þæt him heardra nan hrinan wolde
 iren ærgod, þæt ðæs ahlæcan
 990 blodge beadufolme onberan wolde.
 ða wæs haten hreþe Heort innanweard
 folmum gefrætwod. Fela þæra wæs,
 wera ond wifa, þe þæt winreced,
 gestsele gyredon. Goldfag scinon
 995 web æfter wagum, wundorsiona fela
 secga gehwylcum þara þe on swylc starað.
 Wæs þæt beorhte bold tobrocen swiðe,
 eal inneward irenbendum fæst,
 heorras tohlidene. Hrof ana genæs,
 1000 ealles ansund, þe se aglæca,
 fyrendædum fag, on fleam gewand,
 aldres orwena. No þæt yðe byð
 to befeonne, fremme se þe wille,
 ac gesecan sceal sawlberendra,
 1005 nyde genydde, niþða bearna,

¹Unferth, Beowulf's sometime opponent in the flyting.

for soul-possessors, and sons of earth;
 and there his body on bed of death
 shall rest after revel. Arrived was the hour
 when to hall proceeded Healfdene's son:
 the king himself would sit to banquet.
 Ne'er heard I of host in haughtier throng
 more graciously gathered round giver-of-rings!
 Bowed then to bench those bearers-of-glory,
 fain of the feasting. Featly received
 many a mead-cup the mighty-in-spirit,
 kinsmen who sat in the sumptuous hall,
 Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Heorot now
 was filled with friends; the folk of Scyldings
 ne'er yet had tried the traitor's deed.
 To Beowulf gave the bairn of Healfdene
 a gold-wove banner, guerdon of triumph,
 broidered battle-flag, breastplate and helmet;
 and a splendid sword was seen of many
 borne to the brave one. Beowulf took
 cup in hall:² for such costly gifts
 he suffered no shame in that soldier throng.
 For I heard of few heroes, in heartier mood,
 with four such gifts, so fashioned with gold,
 on the ale-bench honoring others thus!
 O'er the roof of the helmet high, a ridge,
 wound with wires, kept ward o'er the head,
 lest the relict-of-files³ should fierce invade,
 sharp in the strife, when that shielded hero
 should go to grapple against his foes.
 Then the earls'-defence⁴ on the floor⁵ bade lead
 coursers eight, with carven head-gear,
 adown the hall: one horse was decked
 with a saddle all shining and set in jewels;
 'twas the battle-seat of the best of kings,
 when to play of swords the son of Healfdene
 was fain to fare. Ne'er failed his valor
 in the crush of combat when corpses fell.
 To Beowulf over them both then gave
 the refuge-of-Ingwines right and power,
 o'er war-steeds and weapons: wished him joy of them.
 Manfully thus the mighty prince,
 hoard-guard for heroes, that hard fight repaid
 with steeds and treasures contemned by none
 who is willing to say the sooth aright.

grundbuendra gearwe stowe,
 þær his lichoma legerbedde fæst
 swefepæfter symle. þa wæs sæl ond mæl
 þæt to healle gang Healfdenes sunu;
 1010 wolde self cyning symbol þicgan.
 Ne gefrægen ic þa mægþe maran weorode
 ymb hyra sincgyfan sel gebæran.
 Bugon þa to bence blædagande,
 fylle gefæggon; fægere geþæggon
 1015 medoful manig magas þara
 swiðhicgende on sele þam hean,
 Hroðgar ond Hroþulf. Heorot innan wæs
 freondum afylled; nalles facenstafas
 þeodscyldingas þenden fremedon.
 1020 Forgeaf þa Beowulfe bearn Healfdenes
 segen gyldenne sigores to leane;
 hroden hildecumbor, helm ond byrnan,
 mære maðþumsweord manige gesawon
 beforan beorn beran. Beowulf geþah
 1025 ful on flette; no he þære feohgyfte
 for sceotendum scamigan ðorfte.
 Ne gefrægn ic freondlicor feower madmas
 golde gegyrede gummanna fela
 in ealobence oðrum gesellan.
 1030 Ymb þæs helmes hrof heafodbeorge
 wirum bewunden walu utan heold,
 þæt him fela laf frecne ne meahton
 scurheard sceþðan, þonne scyldfrecra
 ongean gramum gangan scolde.
 1035 Heht ða eorla hleo eahta mearas
 fætedhleore on flet teon,
 in under eoderas. þara anum stod
 sadol searwum fah, since gewurþað;
 þæt wæs hildesetl heahcyninges,
 1040 ðonne sweorda gelac sunu Healfdenes
 efnan wolde. Næfre on ore læg
 widcupes wig, ðonne walu feollon.
 Ond ða Beowulfe bega gehwæþres
 eodor Ingwina onweald geteah,
 1045 wicga ond wæpna, het hine wel brucan.
 Swa manlice mære þeoden,
 hordweard hæleþa, heaþoræsas geald
 mearum ond madmum, swa hy næfre man lyhð,
 se þe secgan wile soðæfter rihte.

AND the lord of earls, to each that came
with Beowulf over the briny ways,
an heirloom there at the ale-bench gave,
precious gift; and the price¹ bade pay
in gold for him whom Grendel erst
murdered, – and fain of them more had killed,
had not wisest God their Wyrð averted,
and the man's² brave mood. The Maker then
ruled human kind, as here and now.
Therefore is insight always best,
and forethought of mind. How much awaits him
of lief and of loath, who long time here,
through days of warfare this world endures!
Then song and music mingled sounds
in the presence of Healfdene's head-of-armies³
and harping was heard with the hero-lay
as Hrothgar's singer the hall-joy woke
along the mead-seats, making his song
of that sudden raid on the sons of Finn.⁴
Healfdene's hero, Hnaef the Scylding,
was fated to fall in the Frisian slaughter.⁵
Hildeburh needed not hold in value
her enemies' honor!⁶ Innocent both
were the loved ones she lost at the linden-play,
bairn and brother, they bowed to fate,
stricken by spears; 'twas a sorrowful woman!
None doubted why the daughter of Hoc
bewailed her doom when dawning came,
and under the sky she saw them lying,
kinsmen murdered, where most she had kenned
of the sweets of the world! By war were swept, too,
Finn's own liegemen, and few were left;
in the parleying-place⁷ he could ply no longer
weapon, nor war could he wage on Hengest,
and rescue his remnant by right of arms
from the prince's thane. A pact he offered:
another dwelling the Danes should have,

1050 ða gyt æghwylcum eorla drihten
þara þe mid Beowulfe brimlade teah
on þære medubence maþðum gesealde,
yrfelafe, ond þone ænne heht
golde forgyldan, þone ðe Grendel ær
1055 mane acwealde, swa he hyra ma wolde,
nefne him witig god wyrð forstode
ond ðæs mannes mod. Metod eallum weold
gumena cynnes, swa he nu git deð.
Forþan biðandgit æghwær selest,
1060 ferhðes foreþanc. Fela sceal gebidan
leofes ond laþes se þe longe her
on ðyssum windagum worolde bruceð.
þær wæs sang ond sweg samod ætgædere
fore Healfdenes hildewisan,
1065 gomenwudu greted, gid oft wrecen,
ðonne healgamen Hroþgares scop
æfter medobence mænan scolde
be Finnes eaferum, ða hie se fær begeat,
hæleðHealfdena, Hnæf Scyldinga,
1070 in Freswæle feallan scolde.
Ne huru Hildeburh herian þorfte
Eotena treowe; unsynnum wearð
beloren leofum æt þam lindplegan,
bearnum ond broðrum; hie on gebyrd hruron,
1075 gare wunde. þæt wæs geomuru ides!
Nalles holinga Hoces dohtor
meotodsceaft bemearn, syþðan morgen com,
ða heo under swegle geseon meahte
morþorbealo maga, þær heo ær mæste heold
1080 worolde wynne. Wig ealle fornam
Finnes þegnas nemne feaum anum,
þæt he ne mehte on þæm meðelstede
wig Hengeste wiht gefeohtan,
ne þa wealafe wige forþringan
1085 þeodnes ðegna; ac hig him gepingo budon,
þæt hie him oðer flet eal gerymdon,

¹There is no horrible inconsistency here such as the critics strive and cry about. In spite of the ruin that Grendel and Beowulf had made within the hall, the framework and roof held firm, and swift repairs made the interior habitable. Tapestries were hung on the walls, and willing hands prepared the banquet.

²From its formal use in other places, this phrase, to take cup in hall, or "on the floor," would seem to mean that Beowulf stood up to receive his gifts, drink to the donor, and say thanks.

³Kenning for sword.

⁴Hrothgar. He is also the "refuge of the friends of Ing," below. Ing belongs to myth.

⁵Horses are frequently led or ridden into the hall where folk sit at banquet: so in Chaucer's Squire's tale, in the ballad of King Estmere, and in the romances.

hall and high-seat, and half the power
 should fall to them in Frisian land;
 and at the fee-gifts, Folcwald's son
 day by day the Danes should honor,
 the folk of Hengest favor with rings,
 even as truly, with treasure and jewels,
 with fretted gold, as his Frisian kin
 he meant to honor in ale-hall there.
 Pact of peace they plighted further
 on both sides firmly. Finn to Hengest
 with oath, upon honor, openly promised
 that woful remnant, with wise-men's aid,
 nobly to govern, so none of the guests
 by word or work should warp the treaty,⁸
 or with malice of mind bemoan themselves
 as forced to follow their fee-giver's slayer,
 lordless men, as their lot ordained.
 Should Frisian, moreover, with foeman's taunt,
 that murderous hatred to mind recall,
 then edge of the sword must seal his doom.
 Oaths were given, and ancient gold
 heaped from hoard. – The hardy Scylding,
 battle-thane best,⁹ on his balefire lay.
 All on the pyre were plain to see
 the gory sark, the gilded swine-crest,
 boar of hard iron, and athelings many
 slain by the sword: at the slaughter they fell.
 It was Hildeburh's hest, at Hnaef's own pyre
 the bairn of her body on brands to lay,
 his bones to burn, on the balefire placed,
 at his uncle's side. In sorrowful dirges
 bewept them the woman: great wailing ascended.
 Then wound up to welkin the wildest of death-fires,
 roared o'er the hillock:¹⁰ heads all were melted,
 gashes burst, and blood gushed out
 from bites¹¹ of the body. Balefire devoured,
 greediest spirit, those spared not by war
 out of either folk: their flower was gone.

healle ond heahsetl, þæt hie healfre geweald
 wið Eotena bearn agan moston,
 ond æt feohgyftum Folcwaldan sunu
 1090 dogra gehwylce Dene weorþode,
 Hengestes heap hringum wenede
 efne swa swiðe sincgestreonum
 fættan goldes, swa he Fresena cyn
 on beorsele byldan wolde.
 1095 ða hie getruwedon on twa healfa
 fæste frioðuware. Fin Hengeste
 elne, unflitme aðum benemde
 þæt he þa wealafe weotena dome
 arum heolde, þæt ðær ænig mon
 1100 wordum ne worcum wære ne bræce,
 ne þurh inwitsearo æfre gemænden
 ðeah hie hira beaggyfan banan folgedon
 ðeodenlease, þa him swa geþearfod wæs;
 gyf þonne Frysna hwylc frecnan spræce
 1105 ðæs morþorhetes myndgiend wære,
 þonne hit sweordes ecg seðan scolde.
 Ad wæs geæfned ond icge gold
 ahæfen of horde. Herescyldinga
 betst beadorinca wæs on bælgearu.
 1110 æt þæm ade wæs eþgesyne
 swatfah syrce, swyn ealgylden,
 eofer irenheard, æþeling manig
 wundum awyrded; sume on wæle crungon.
 Het ða Hildeburh æt Hnæfes ade
 1115 hire selfre sunu sweolode befæstan,
 banfatu bærnan ond on bælgdon
 eame on eaxle. Ides gnornode,
 geomrode giddum. Guðrinc astah.
 Wand to wolcnum wælfyra mæst,
 1120 hlynode for hlawe; hafelan multon,
 bengeato burston, ðonne blod ætspranc,
 laðbite lices. Lig ealle forswælg,
 gæsta gifrost, þara ðe þær guðfornam
 bega folces; wæs hira blæd scacen.

THEN hastened those heroes their home to see,
 friendless, to find the Frisian land,
 houses and high burg. Hengest still
 through the death-dyed winter dwelt with Finn,
 holding pact, yet of home he minded,
 though powerless his ring-decked prow to drive
 over the waters, now waves rolled fierce
 lashed by the winds, or winter locked them
 in icy fetters. Then fared another
 year to men's dwellings, as yet they do,
 the sunbright skies, that their season ever
 duly await. Far off winter was driven;
 fair lay earth's breast; and fain was the rover,
 the guest, to depart, though more gladly he pondered
 on wreaking his vengeance than roaming the deep,
 and how to hasten the hot encounter
 where sons of the Frisians were sure to be.
 So he escaped not the common doom,
 when Hun with "Lafing," the light-of-battle,
 best of blades, his bosom pierced:
 its edge was famed with the Frisian earls.
 On fierce-heart Finn there fell likewise,
 on himself at home, the horrid sword-death;
 for Guthlaf and Oslaf of grim attack
 had sorrowing told, from sea-ways landed,
 mourning their woes.¹ Finn's wavering spirit

1125 Gewiton him ða wigend wica neosian,
 freondum befeallen, Frysland geseon,
 hamas ond heaburh. Hengest ða gyt
 wælfagne winter wunode mid Finne
 eal unhlitme. Eard gemunde,
 1130 þeah þe he ne meahte on mere drifan
 hringedstefnan; holm storme weol,
 won wiðwinde, winter yþe beleac
 isgebinde, oþðæt oþer com
 gear in geardas, swa nu gyt deð,
 1135 þa ðe syngales sele bewitiað,
 wuldortorhtan weder. ða wæs winter scacen,
 fæger foldan bearm. Fundode wrecca,
 gist of geardum; he to gyrnwræce
 swiðor þohte þonne to sælade,
 1140 gif he torngemot þurhteon mihte
 þæt he Eotena bearn inne gemunde.
 Swa he ne forwyrnde woroldrædenne,
 þonne him Hunlafing hildeleoman,
 billa selest, on bearm dyde,
 1145 þæs wæron mid Eotenum ecge cuðe.
 Swylce ferhðfreca Fin eft begeat
 sweordbealo sliðen æt his selfes ham,
 siþðan grimne gripe Guðlaf ond Oslaf
 æfter sæsiðe, sorge, mændon,
 1150 æt witon weana dæl; ne meahte wæfre mod

¹Man-price, wergild.

²Beowulf's.

³Hrothgar.

⁴There is no need to assume a gap in the Ms. As before about Sigemund and Heremod, so now, though at greater length, about Finn and his feud, a lay is chanted or recited; and the epic poet, counting on his readers' familiarity with the story, – a fragment of it still exists, – simply gives the headings.

⁵The exact story to which this episode refers in summary is not to be determined, but the following account of it is reasonable and has good support among scholars. Finn, a Frisian chieftain, who nevertheless has a "castle" outside the Frisian border, marries Hildeburh, a Danish princess; and her brother, Hnaef, with many other Danes, pays Finn a visit. Relations between the two peoples have been strained before. Something starts the old feud anew; and the visitors are attacked in their quarters. Hnaef is killed; so is a son of Hildeburh. Many fall on both sides. Peace is patched up; a stately funeral is held; and the surviving visitors become in a way vassals or liegemen of Finn, going back with him to Frisia. So matters rest a while. Hengest is now leader of the Danes; but he is set upon revenge for his former lord, Hnaef. Probably he is killed in feud; but his clansmen, Guthlaf and Oslaf, gather at their home a force of sturdy Danes, come back to Frisia, storm Finn's stronghold, kill him, and carry back their kinswoman Hildeburh.

⁶The "enemies" must be the Frisians.

⁷Battlefield. – Hengest is the "prince's thane," companion of Hnaef. "Folcwald's son" is Finn.

⁸That is, Finn would govern in all honor the few Danish warriors who were left, provided, of course, that none of them tried to renew the quarrel or avenge Hnaef their fallen lord. If, again, one of Finn's Frisians began a quarrel, he should die by the sword.

⁹Hnaef.

¹⁰The high place chosen for the funeral: see description of Beowulf's funeral-pile at the end of the poem.

¹¹Wounds.

bode not in breast. The burg was reddened
with blood of foemen, and Finn was slain,
king amid clansmen; the queen was taken.
To their ship the Scylding warriors bore
all the chattels the chieftain owned,
whatever they found in Finn's domain
of gems and jewels. The gentle wife
o'er paths of the deep to the Danes they bore,
led to her land. The lay was finished,
the gleeman's song. Then glad rose the revel;
bench-joy brightened. Bearers draw
from their "wonder-vats" wine. Comes Wealhtheow forth,
under gold-crown goes where the good pair sit,
uncle and nephew, true each to the other one,
kindred in amity. Unferth the spokesman
at the Scylding lord's feet sat: men had faith in his spirit,
his keenness of courage, though kinsmen had found him
unsure at the sword-play. The Scylding queen spoke:
"Quaff of this cup, my king and lord,
breaker of rings, and blithe be thou,
gold-friend of men; to the Geats here speak
such words of mildness as man should use.
Be glad with thy Geats; of those gifts be mindful,
or near or far, which now thou hast.
Men say to me, as son thou wishest
yon hero to hold. Thy Heorot purged,
jewel-hall brightest, enjoy while thou canst,
with many a largess; and leave to thy kin
folk and realm when forth thou goest
to greet thy doom. For gracious I deem
my Hrothulf,² willing to hold and rule
nobly our youths, if thou yield up first,
prince of Scyldings, thy part in the world.
I ween with good he will well requite
offspring of ours, when all he minds
that for him we did in his helpless days
of gift and grace to gain him honor!"
Then she turned to the seat where her sons were placed,
Hrethric and Hrothmund, with heroes' bairns,
young men together: the Geat, too, sat there,
Beowulf brave, the brothers between.
A CUP she gave him, with kindly greeting

forhabban in hreþre. Ða wæs heal roden
feonda feorum, swilce Fin slægen,
cýning on corþre, ond seo cwen numen.
Sceotend Scyldinga to scypon feredon
1155 eal ingesteald eorðcýninges,
swylce hie æt Finnes ham findan meahton
sigla, searogimma. Hie on sælade
drihtlice wif to Denum feredon,
læddon to leodum. Leoðwæs asungen,
1160 gleomannes gyd. Gamen eft astah,
beorhtode bencswæg; byrelas sealdon
win of wunderfatum. þa cwom Wealhþeo forð
gan under gyldnum beage, þær þa godan twegen
sæton suhtergefæderan; þa gyt wæs hiera sib ætgædere,
1165 æghwylc oðrum trywe. Swylce þær Unferþþyle
æt fotum sæt frean Scyldinga; gehwylc hiora his ferhþe tr
þæt he hæfde mod micel, þeah þe he his magum nære
arfæst æt ecga gelacum. Spræc ða ides Scyldinga:
"Onfoh þissum fulle, freodrihten min,
1170 sinces brytta! þu on sælum wes,
goldwine gumena, ond to Geatum spræc
mildum wordum, swa sceal man don.
Beo wiðGeatas glæd, geofena gemyndig,
nean ond feorran þu nu hafast.
1175 Me man sægde þæt þu ðe for sunu wolde
hererinc habban. Heorot is gefælsod,
beahsele beorhta; bruc þenden þu mote
manigra medo, ond þinum magum læf
folc ond rice, þonne ðu forðscyle
1180 methodsceaft seon. Ic minne can
glædne Hroþulf, þæt he þa geogode wile
arum healdan, gyf þu ær þonne he,
wine Scildinga, worold oflættest;
wene ic þæt he mid gode gyldan wille
1185 uncran eaferan, gif he þæt eal gemon,
hwæt wit to willan ond to wordmyndum
umborwesendum ær arna gefremedon."
Hwearf þa bi bence þær hyre byre wæron,
Hreðric ond Hroðmund, ond hæleþa bearn,
1190 giogodætægædere; þær se goda sæt,
Beowulf Geata, be þæm gebroðrum twæm.
Him wæs ful boren ond freondlaþu

¹That is, these two Danes, escaping home, had told the story of the attack on Hnaef, the slaying of Hengest, and all the Danish woes. Collect- ing a force, they return to Frisia and kill Finn in his home.

²Nephew to Hrothgar, with whom he subsequently quarrels, and elder cousin to the two young sons of Hrothgar and Wealhtheow,

and winsome words. Of wunden gold,
she offered, to honor him, arm-jewels twain,
corselet and rings, and of collars the noblest
that ever I knew the earth around.
Ne'er heard I so mighty, 'neath heaven's dome,
a hoard-gem of heroes, since Hama bore
to his bright-built burg the Brisings' necklace,
jewel and gem casket. – Jealousy fled he,
Eormenric's hate: chose help eternal.
Hygelac Geat, grandson of Swerting,
on the last of his raids this ring bore with him,
under his banner the booty defending,
the war-spoil warding; but Wyrð o'erwhelmed him
what time, in his daring, dangers he sought,
feud with Frisians. Fairest of gems
he bore with him over the beaker-of-waves,
sovrán strong: under shield he died.
Fell the corpse of the king into keeping of Franks,
gear of the breast, and that gorgeous ring;
weaker warriors won the spoil,
after gripe of battle, from Geatland's lord,
and held the death-field. Din rose in hall.
Wealththeow spake amid warriors, and said:–
"This jewel enjoy in thy jocund youth,
Beowulf lov'd, these battle-weeds wear,
a royal treasure, and richly thrive!
Preserve thy strength, and these striplings here
counsel in kindness: requital be mine.
Hast done such deeds, that for days to come
thou art famed among folk both far and near,
so wide as washeth the wave of Ocean
his windy walls. Through the ways of life
prosper, O prince! I pray for thee
rich possessions. To son of mine
be helpful in deed and uphold his joys!
Here every earl to the other is true,
mild of mood, to the master loyal!
Thanes are friendly, the throng obedient,
liegemen are revelling: list and obey!"
Went then to her place. – That was proudest of feasts;
flowed wine for the warriors. Wyrð they knew not,

wordum bewægned, ond wunden gold
estum geeawed, earmreade twa,
1195 hrægl ond hringas, healsbeaga mæst
þara þe ic on foldan gefrægen hæbbe.
Nænigne ic under swegle selran hyrde
hordmaððum hæleþa, syþðan Hama ætwæg
to þære byrhtan byrig Brosinga mene,
1200 sigle ond sincefæt; searoniðas fleah
Eormenrices, geceas ecne ræd.
þone hring hæfde Higelac Geata,
nefa Swertinges, nyhstan siðe,
siðþan he under segne sinc ealgode,
1205 wælreaf werede; hyne wyrð fornam,
syþðan he for wlenco wean ahsode,
fæhðe to Frysum. He þa frætwe wæg,
eorclanstanas ofer yða ful,
rice þeoden; he under rande gecranc.
1210 Gehwearf þa in Francna fæþm feorh cyninges,
breostgewædu ond se beah somod;
wyrðsan wigfreca wæl reafedon
æfter guðsceare, Geata leode,
hreawic heoldon. Heal swege onfeng.
1215 Wealthðeo mapelode, heo fore þæm werede spræc:
"Bruc ðisses beages, Beowulf leofa,
hyse, mid hæle, ond þisses hrægles neot,
þeodgestreona, ond geþeoh tela,
cen þec mid cræfte ond þyssum cnyhtum wes
1220 lara liðe; ic þe þæs lean geman.
Hafast þu gefered þæt ðe feor ond neah
ealne wideferhþ weras ehtigað,
efne swa siðe swa sæbebugeð,
windgeard, weallas. Wes þenden þu lifige,
1225 æþeling, eadig. Ic þe an tela
sincgestreona. Beo þu suna minum
dædum gedefe, dreamhealdende.
Her is æghwylc eorl oþrum getrywe,
modes milde, mandrihtne hold;
1230 þegnas syndon geþwære, þeod ealgearo,
druncne dryhtguman doðswa ic bidde."
Eode þa to setle. þær wæs symbla cyst;
druncon win weras. Wyrð ne cuþon,

– their natural guardian in the event of the king's death. There is something finely feminine in this speech of Wealththeow's, apart from its somewhat irregular and irrelevant sequence of topics. Both she and her lord probably distrust Hrothulf; but she bids the king to be of good cheer, and, turning to the suspect, heaps affectionate assurances on his probity. "My own Hrothulf" will surely not forget these favors and benefits of the past, but will repay them to the orphaned boy.

destiny dire, and the doom to be seen
 by many an earl when eve should come,
 and Hrothgar homeward hasten away,
 royal, to rest. The room was guarded
 by an army of earls, as erst was done.
 They bared the bench-boards; abroad they spread
 beds and bolsters. – One beer-carouser
 in danger of doom lay down in the hall. –
 At their heads they set their shields of war,
 bucklers bright; on the bench were there
 over each atheling, easy to see,
 the high battle-helmet, the haughty spear,
 the corselet of rings. 'Twas their custom so
 ever to be for battle prepared,
 at home, or harrying, which it were,
 even as oft as evil threatened
 their sovran king. – They were clansmen good.
 THEN sank they to sleep. With sorrow one bought
 his rest of the evening, – as ofttime had happened
 when Grendel guarded that golden hall,
 evil wrought, till his end drew nigh,
 slaughter for sins. 'Twas seen and told
 how an avenger survived the fiend,
 as was learned afar. The livelong time
 after that grim fight, Grendel's mother,
 monster of women, mourned her woe.
 She was doomed to dwell in the dreary waters,
 cold sea-courses, since Cain cut down
 with edge of the sword his only brother,
 his father's offspring: outlawed he fled,
 marked with murder, from men's delights
 warded the wilds. – There woke from him
 such fate-sent ghosts as Grendel, who,
 war-wolf horrid, at Heorot found
 a warrior watching and waiting the fray,
 with whom the grisly one grappled amain.
 But the man remembered his mighty power,
 the glorious gift that God had sent him,
 in his Maker's mercy put his trust
 for comfort and help: so he conquered the foe,
 felled the fiend, who fled abject,
 reft of joy, to the realms of death,
 mankind's foe. And his mother now,
 gloomy and grim, would go that quest
 of sorrow, the death of her son to avenge.

geosceaft grimme, swa hit agangen wearð
 1235 eorla manegum, syþðan æfen cwom
 ond him Hroþgar gewat to hofe sinum,
 rice to ræste. Reced weardode
 unrim eorla, swa hie oft ær dydon.
 Bencþelu beredon; hit geondbræded wearð
 1240 beddum ond bolstrum. Beorscealca sum
 fus ond fæge fletræste gebeag.
 Setton him to heafdon hilderandas,
 bordwudu beorhtan; þær on bence wæs
 ofer æþelinge yþgesene
 1245 heaposteapa helm, hringed byrne,
 þrecwudu þrymlic. Wæs þeaw hyra
 þæt hie oft wæron an wig gearwe,
 ge æt ham ge on herge, ge gehwæper þara,
 efne swylce mæla swylce hira mandryhtne
 1250 þearf gesælde; wæs seo þeod tilu.
 Sigon þa to slæpe. Sum sare angeald
 æfenræste, swa him ful oft gelamp,
 siþðan goldsele Grendel warode,
 unriht æfnde, oþþæt ende becwom,
 1255 swylt æfter synnum. þæt gesyne wearþ,
 widcuþwerum, þætte wrecend þa gyt
 lifde æfter lapum, lange þrage,
 æfter guðceare. Grendles modor,
 ides, aglæcwif, yrmþe gemunde,
 1260 se þe wæteregesane wunian scolde,
 cealde streamas, siþðan Cain wearð
 to ecgbanan angan breþer,
 fæderenmæge; he þa fag gewat,
 morþre gemearcod, mandream fleon,
 1265 westen warode. þanon woc fela
 geosceaftgasta; wæs þæra Grendel sum,
 heorowearh hetelic, se æt Heorote fand
 wæccendne wer wiges bidan.
 þær him aglæca ætgræpe wearð;
 1270 hwæpre he gemunde mægenes strenge,
 gimfæste gife ðe him god sealde,
 ond him to anwaldan are gelyfde,
 frofre ond fultum; ðy he þone feond ofercwom,
 gehnægde helle gast. þa he hean gewat,
 1275 dreame bedæled, deaþwic seon,
 mancynnes feond, ond his modor þa gyt,
 gifre ond galgmod, gegane wolde
 sorhfulne sið, sunu deaðwrecan.

To Heorot came she, where helmeted Danes
slept in the hall. Too soon came back
old ills of the earls, when in she burst,
the mother of Grendel. Less grim, though, that terror,
e'en as terror of woman in war is less,
might of maid, than of men in arms
when, hammer-forged, the falchion hard,
sword gore-stained, through swine of the helm,
crested, with keen blade carves amain.
Then was in hall the hard-edge drawn,
the swords on the settles,¹ and shields a-many
firm held in hand: nor helmet minded
nor harness of mail, whom that horror seized.
Haste was hers; she would hie afar
and save her life when the liegemen saw her.
Yet a single atheling up she seized
fast and firm, as she fled to the moor.
He was for Hrothgar of heroes the dearest,
of trusty vassals betwixt the seas,
whom she killed on his couch, a clansman famous,
in battle brave. – Nor was Beowulf there;
another house had been held apart,
after giving of gold, for the Geat renowned. –
Uproar filled Heorot; the hand all had viewed,
blood-flecked, she bore with her; bale was returned,
dole in the dwellings: 'twas dire exchange
where Dane and Geat were doomed to give
the lives of loved ones. Long-tried king,
the hoary hero, at heart was sad
when he knew his noble no more lived,
and dead indeed was his dearest thane.
To his bower was Beowulf brought in haste,
dauntless victor. As daylight broke,
along with his earls the atheling lord,
with his clansmen, came where the king abode
waiting to see if the Wielder-of-All
would turn this tale of trouble and woe.
Strode o'er floor the famed-in-strife,
with his hand-companions, – the hall resounded, –
wishing to greet the wise old king,
Ingwines' lord; he asked if the night
had passed in peace to the prince's mind.
HROTHGAR spake, helmet-of-Scyldings:–
"Ask not of pleasure! Pain is renewed

Com þa to Heorote, ðær Hringdene
1280 geond þæt sæld swæfun. þa ðær sona wearð
edhwyrft eorlum, siþðan inne fealh
Grendles modor. Wæs se gryre læssa
efne swa micle swa biðmægþa cræft,
wiggryre wifes, be wæpnedmen,
1285 þonne heoru bunden, hamere gepuren,
sweord swate fah swin ofer helme
ecgum dyhttig andweard scireð.
þa wæs on healle heardecg togen
sweord ofer setlum, sidrand manig
1290 hafen handa fæst; helm ne gemunde,
byrnan side, þa hine se broga angeat.
Heo wæs on ofste, wolde ut þanon,
feore beorgan, þa heo onfunden wæs.
Hraðe heo æpelinga anne hæfde
1295 fæste befangen, þa heo to fenne gang.
Se wæs Hroþgare hæleþa leofost
on gesiðes had be sæm tweonum,
rice randwiga, þone ðe heo on ræste abreat,
blædfæstne beorn. Næs Beowulf ðær,
1300 ac wæs oþer in ær geteohhod
æfter maþðungife mærum Geate.
Hream wearðin Heorote; heo under heolfre genam
cuþe folme; cearu wæs geniwod,
geworden in wicun. Ne wæs þæt gewrixle til,
1305 þæt hie on ba healfa bicgan scoldon
freonda feorum. þa wæs frod cyning,
har hilderinc, on hreon mode,
syðþan he aldorþegn unlyfigendne,
þone deorestan deadne wisse.
1310 Hraþe wæs to bure Beowulf fetod,
sigoreadig secg. Samod ærdæge
eode eorla sum, æþele cempa
self mid gesiðum þær se snotera bad,
hwæþer him alwalda æfre wille
1315 æfter weaspelle wyrpe gefremman.
Gang ða æfter flore fyrdwyrðe man
mid his handscale (healwudu dynede),
þæt he þone wisan wordum nægde
freat Ingwina, frægn gif him wære
1320 æfter neodlaðum niht getæse.
Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga:
"Ne frin þu æfter sælum! Sorh is geniwod

¹They had laid their arms on the benches near where they slept.

to Danish folk. Dead is Aeschere,
of Yrmenlaf the elder brother,
my sage adviser and stay in council,
shoulder-comrade in stress of fight
when warriors clashed and we warded our heads,
hewed the helm-boars; hero famed
should be every earl as Aeschere was!
But here in Heorot a hand hath slain him
of wandering death-sprite. I wot not whither,¹
proud of the prey, her path she took,
fain of her fill. The feud she avenged
that yesternight, unyieldingly,
Grendel in grimmest grasp thou killedst, –
seeing how long these liegemen mine
he ruined and ravaged. Reft of life,
in arms he fell. Now another comes,
keen and cruel, her kin to avenge,
faring far in feud of blood:
so that many a thane shall think, who e'er
sorrows in soul for that sharer of rings,
this is hardest of heart-bales. The hand lies low
that once was willing each wish to please.
Land-dwellers here² and liegemen mine,
who house by those parts, I have heard relate
that such a pair they have sometimes seen,
march-stalkers mighty the moorland haunting,
wandering spirits: one of them seemed,
so far as my folk could fairly judge,
of womankind; and one, accursed,
in man's guise trod the misery-track
of exile, though huger than human bulk.
Grendel in days long gone they named him,
folk of the land; his father they knew not,
nor any brood that was born to him
of treacherous spirits. Untrod is their home;
by wolf-cliffs haunt they and windy headlands,
fenways fearful, where flows the stream
from mountains gliding to gloom of the rocks,
underground flood. Not far is it hence
in measure of miles that the mere expands,
and o'er it the frost-bound forest hanging,
sturdily rooted, shadows the wave.
By night is a wonder weird to see,
fire on the waters. So wise lived none
of the sons of men, to search those depths!

Denigea leodum. Dead is aeschere,
Yrmenlafes yldra broþor,
1325 min runwita ond min rædbora,
eaxlgestealla, ðonne we on orlege
hafelan weredon, þonne hniton feþan,
eoferas cnysedan. Swylc scolde eorl wesan,
æþeling ærgod, swylc aeschere wæs!
1330 Wearðhim on Heorote to handbanan
wælgæst wæfre; ic ne wat hwæder
atol aese wlanc eftsidas teah,
fylle gefægnod. Heo þa fæhðe wræc
þe þu gystran niht Grendel cwealdest
1335 þurh hæstne had heardum clammum,
forþan he to lange leode mine
wanode ond wyrde. He æt wige gecrang
ealdres scyldig, ond nu oþer cwom
mihtig manscaða, wolde hyre mæg wrecan,
1340 ge feor hafað fæhðe gestæled
(þæs þe þincean mæg þegne monegum,
se þe æfter sincgyfan on sefan greoteþ),
hreþerbealo hearde; nu seo hand ligeð,
se þe eow welhwylcra wilna dohte.
1345 Ic þæt londbuend, leode mine,
selerædende, secgan hyrde
þæt hie gesawon swylce twegen
micle mearcstapan moras healdan,
ellorgæstas. ðæra oðer wæs,
1350 þæs þe hie gewislicost gewitan meahton,
idese onlicnæs; oðer earmsceapen
on weres wæstmum wræclastas træd,
næfne he wæs mara þonne ænig man oðer;
þone on geardagum Grendel nemdon
1355 foldbuende. No hie fæder cunnon,
hwæþer him ænig wæs ær acenned
dymra gasta. Hie dygel lond
warigeað, wulfhleoþu, windige næssas,
frecne fengelad, ðær fyrgenstream
1360 under næssa genipu niþer gewiteð,
flod under foldan. Nis þæt feor heonon
milgearnas þæt se mere standeð;
ofer þæm hongiað hrinde bearwas,
wudu wyrtum fæst wæter oferhelmað.
1365 þær mæg nihta gehwæm niðwundor seon,
fyr on flode. No þæs frod leofað
gumena bearna, þæt þone grund wite;

Nay, though the heath-rover, harried by dogs,
the horn-proud hart, this holt should seek,
long distance driven, his dear life first
on the brink he yields ere he brave the plunge
to hide his head: 'tis no happy place!
Thence the welter of waters washes up
wan to welkin when winds bestir
evil storms, and air grows dusk,
and the heavens weep. Now is help once more
with thee alone! The land thou knowst not,
place of fear, where thou findest out
that sin-flecked being. Seek if thou dare!
I will reward thee, for waging this fight,
with ancient treasure, as erst I did,
with winding gold, if thou winnest back."
BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:
"Sorrow not, sage! It beseems us better
friends to avenge than fruitlessly mourn them.
Each of us all must his end abide
in the ways of the world; so win who may
glory ere death! When his days are told,
that is the warrior's worthiest doom.
Rise, O realm-warder! Ride we anon,
and mark the trail of the mother of Grendel.
No harbor shall hide her – heed my promise! –
enfolding of field or forested mountain
or floor of the flood, let her flee where she will!
But thou this day endure in patience,
as I ween thou wilt, thy woes each one."
Leaped up the graybeard: God he thanked,
mighty Lord, for the man's brave words.
For Hrothgar soon a horse was saddled
wave-maned steed. The sovran wise
stately rode on; his shield-armed men
followed in force. The footprints led
along the woodland, widely seen,
a path o'er the plain, where she passed, and trod
the murky moor; of men-at-arms
she bore the bravest and best one, dead,
him who with Hrothgar the homestead ruled.
On then went the atheling-born

ðeah þe hæðstapa hundum geswenced,
heorot hornum trum, holtwudu sece,
1370 feorran geflymed, ær he feorh seleð,
aldor on ofre, ær he in wille
hafelan hydan. Nis þæt heoru stow!
þonon yðgeblond up astigeð
won to wolcnum, þonne wind styreþ,
1375 laðgewidru, oðþæt lyft drysmaþ,
roderas reotað. Nu is se ræd gelang
eft æt þe anum. Eard git ne const,
frecne stowe, ðær þu findan miht
felasinnigne secg; sec gif þu dyrre.
1380 Ic þe þa fæhðe feo leanige,
ealdgestreonum, swa ic ær dyde,
wundnum golde, gyf þu on weg cymest."
Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:
"Ne sorga, snotor guma; selre biðæghwæm
1385 þæt he his freond wrece, þonne he fela murne.
Ure æghwylc sceal ende gebidan
worolde lifes; wyrce se þe mote
domes ær deaþe; þæt biðdrihtguman
unlifgendum æfter selest.
1390 Aris, rices weard, uton raþe feran
Grendles magan gang sceawigan.
Ic hit þe gehate, no he on helm losaþ,
ne on foldan fæþm, ne on fyrgeholt,
ne on gyfenes grund, ga þær he wille.
1395 ðys dogor þu geþyld hafa
weana gehwylces, swa ic þe wene to."
Ahleop ða se gomela, gode þancode,
mihtigan drihtne, þæs se man gespræc.
þa wæs Hroðgare hors gebæted,
1400 wicg wundenfeax. Wisa fengel
geatolic gende; gumfeþa stop
lindhæbbendra. Lastas wæron
æfter waldswaþum wide gesyne,
gang ofer grundas, þær heo gegnum for
1405 ofer myrcan mor, magoþegna bær
þone selestan sawolleasne
þara þe mid Hroðgare ham eahtode.
Ofereode þa æþelinga bearn

¹He surmises presently where she is.

²The connection is not difficult. The words of mourning, of acute grief, are said; and according to Germanic sequence of thought, inexorable here, the next and only topic is revenge. But is it possible? Hrothgar leads up to his appeal and promise with a skillful and often effective description of the horrors which surround the monster's home and await the attempt of an avenging foe.

o'er stone-cliffs steep and strait defiles,
 narrow passes and unknown ways,
 headlands sheer, and the haunts of the Nicors.
 Foremost he¹ fared, a few at his side
 of the wiser men, the ways to scan,
 till he found in a flash the forested hill
 hanging over the hoary rock,
 a woful wood: the waves below
 were dyed in blood. The Danish men
 had sorrow of soul, and for Scyldings all,
 for many a hero, 'twas hard to bear,
 ill for earls, when Aeschere's head
 they found by the flood on the foreland there.
 Waves were welling, the warriors saw,
 hot with blood; but the horn sang oft
 battle-song bold. The band sat down,
 and watched on the water worm-like things,
 sea-dragons strange that sounded the deep,
 and nicors that lay on the ledge of the ness –
 such as oft essay at hour of morn
 on the road-of-sails their ruthless quest, –
 and sea-snakes and monsters. These started away,
 swollen and savage that song to hear,
 that war-horn's blast. The warden of Geats,
 with bolt from bow, then balked of life,
 of wave-work, one monster, amid its heart
 went the keen war-shaft; in water it seemed
 less doughty in swimming whom death had seized.
 Swift on the billows, with boar-spears well
 hooked and barbed, it was hard beset,
 done to death and dragged on the headland,
 wave-roamer wondrous. Warriors viewed
 the grisly guest. Then girt him Beowulf
 in martial mail, nor mourned for his life.
 His breastplate broad and bright of hues,
 woven by hand, should the waters try;
 well could it ward the warrior's body
 that battle should break on his breast in vain
 nor harm his heart by the hand of a foe.
 And the helmet white that his head protected
 was destined to dare the deeps of the flood,
 through wave-whirl win: 'twas wound with chains,
 decked with gold, as in days of yore
 the weapon-smith worked it wondrously,
 with swine-forms set it, that swords nowise,

steap stanhliðo, stige nearwe,
 1410 enge anpaðas, uncuðgelad,
 neowle næssas, nicorhusa fela.
 He feara sum beforan gengde
 wisra monna wong sceawian,
 oþþæt he færinga fyrgenbeamas
 1415 ofer harne stan hleonian funde,
 wynleasne wudu; wæter under stod
 dreorig ond gedrefed. Denum eallum wæs,
 winum Scyldinga, weorce on mode
 to geþolianne, ðegne monegum,
 1420 oncyðeorla gehwæm, syðþan æscheres
 on þam holmclife hafelan metton.
 Flod blode weol (folc to sægon),
 hatan heolfre. Horn stundum song
 fuslic fyrdleoð. Feþa eal gesæt.
 1425 Gesawon ða æfter wætere wrymcynnes fela,
 sellice sædracan, sund cunnian,
 swylce on næshleoðum nicras licgean,
 ða on undernmæl oft bewitigað
 sorhfulne sið on segrlade,
 1430 wyrmas ond wildeor; hie on weg hruron,
 bitere ond gebolgne, bearhtm ongeaton,
 guðhorn galan. Sumne Geata leod
 of flanbogan feores getwæfde,
 yðgewinnes, þæt him on aldre stod
 1435 herestræl hearda; he on holme wæs
 sundes þe sænra, ðe hyne swylt fornam.
 Hræpe wearðon yðum mid eoferspreotum
 heorohocyhtum hearde gearwod,
 niða genæged, ond on næs togen,
 1440 wundorlic wægþora; weras sceawedon
 gryreligne gist. Gyrede hine Beowulf
 eorlgewædum, nalles for caldre mearn.
 Scolde herebyrne hondum gebroden,
 sid ond searofah, sund cunnian,
 1445 seo ðe bancofan beorgan cuþe,
 þæt him hildegrap hreþre ne mihte,
 eorres inwifeng, aldre gesceþðan;
 ac se hwita helm hafelan werede,
 se þe meregrundas mengan scolde,
 1450 secan sundgebland since geweorðad,
 befongen freawrasnum, swa hine fyrndagum
 worhte wæpna smið, wundrum teode,
 besette swinlicum, þæt hine syðþan no

brandished in battle, could bite that helm.
 Nor was that the meanest of mighty helps
 which Hrothgar's orator offered at need:
 "Hrunting" they named the hilted sword,
 of old-time heirlooms easily first;
 iron was its edge, all etched with poison,
 with battle-blood hardened, nor blenched it at fight
 in hero's hand who held it ever,
 on paths of peril prepared to go
 to folkstead² of foes. Not first time this
 it was destined to do a daring task.
 For he bore not in mind, the bairn of Ecglaf
 sturdy and strong, that speech he had made,
 drunk with wine, now this weapon he lent
 to a stouter swordsman. Himself, though, durst not
 under welter of waters wager his life
 as loyal liegeman. So lost he his glory,
 honor of earls. With the other not so,
 who girded him now for the grim encounter.

BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:-
 "Have mind, thou honored offspring of Healfdene
 gold-friend of men, now I go on this quest,
 sovran wise, what once was said:
 if in thy cause it came that I
 should lose my life, thou wouldst loyal bide
 to me, though fallen, in father's place!
 Be guardian, thou, to this group of my thanes,
 my warrior-friends, if War should seize me;
 and the goodly gifts thou gavest me,
 Hrothgar beloved, to Hygelac send!
 Geatland's king may ken by the gold,
 Hrethel's son see, when he stares at the treasure,
 that I got me a friend for goodness famed,
 and joyed while I could in my jewel-bestower.
 And let Unferth wield this wondrous sword,
 earl far-honored, this heirloom precious,
 hard of edge: with Hrunting I
 seek doom of glory, or Death shall take me."
 After these words the Weder-Geat lord
 boldly hastened, biding never
 answer at all: the ocean floods
 closed o'er the hero. Long while of the day
 fled ere he felt the floor of the sea.

brond ne beadomecas bitan ne meahton.
 1455 Næs þæt þonne mæstost mægenfultuma
 þæt him on ðearfe lah ðyle Hroðgares;
 wæs þæm hæftmece Hrunting nama.
 þæt wæs an foran ealdgestreona;
 ecg wæs iren, atertanum fah,
 1460 ahyrded heaþoswate; næfre hit æt hilde ne swac
 manna ængum þara þe hit mid mundum bewand,
 se ðe gryresiðas gegan dorste,
 folcstede fara; næs þæt forma sið
 þæt hit ellenweorc æfnan scolde.
 1465 Huru ne gemunde mago Ecglafes,
 eafopes cræftig, þæt he ær gespræc
 wine druncen, þa he þæs wæpnes onlah
 selran sweordfrecan. Selfa ne dorste
 under yða gewin aldre geneþan,
 1470 drihtscype dreogan; þær he dome forleas,
 ellenmærdum. Ne wæs þæm oðrum swa,
 syðþan he hine to guðe gegyred hæfde.
 Beowulf maðelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:
 "Geþenc nu, se mæra maga Healfdenes,
 1475 snottra fengel, nu ic eom siðes fus,
 goldwine gumena, hwæt wit geo spræcon,
 gif ic æt þearfe þinre scolde
 aldre linnan, þæt ðu me a wære
 forðgewitenum on fæder stæle.
 1480 Wes þu mundbora minum magoþegnum,
 hondgesellum, gif mec hild nime;
 swylce þu ða madmas þe þu me sealdest,
 Hroðgar leofa, Higelace onsend.
 Mæg þonne on þæm golde ongitan Geata dryhten,
 1485 geseon sunu Hrædles, þonne he on þæt sinc starað,
 þæt ic gumcystum godne funde
 beaga bryttan, breac þonne moste.
 Ond þu Unferðlæt ealde lafe,
 wrætlíc wægsweord, widcuðne man
 1490 heardecg habban; ic me mid Hruntinge
 dom gewyrce, oþðe mec deaðnimeð."
 æfter þæm wordum Wedergeata leod
 efste mid elne, nalas ondsware
 bidan wolde; brimwylm onfeng
 1495 hilderince. ða wæs hwil dæg
 ær he þone grundwong ongytan mehte.

¹Hrothgar is probably meant.

²Meeting place.

Soon found the fiend who the flood-domain
 sword-hungry held these hundred winters,
 greedy and grim, that some guest from above,
 some man, was raiding her monster-realm.
 She grasped out for him with grisly claws,
 and the warrior seized; yet scathed she not
 his body hale; the breastplate hindered,
 as she strove to shatter the sark of war,
 the linked harness, with loathsome hand.
 Then bore this brine-wolf, when bottom she touched,
 the lord of rings to the lair she haunted
 whiles vainly he strove, though his valor held,
 weapon to wield against wondrous monsters
 that sore beset him; sea-beasts many
 tried with fierce tusks to tear his mail,
 and swarmed on the stranger. But soon he marked
 he was now in some hall, he knew not which,
 where water never could work him harm,
 nor through the roof could reach him ever
 fangs of the flood. Firelight he saw,
 beams of a blaze that brightly shone.
 Then the warrior was ware of that wolf-of-the-deep,
 mere-wife monstrous. For mighty stroke
 he swung his blade, and the blow withheld not.
 Then sang on her head that seemly blade
 its war-song wild. But the warrior found
 the light-of-battle¹ was loath to bite,
 to harm the heart: its hard edge failed
 the noble at need, yet had known of old
 strife hand to hand, and had helmets cloven,
 doomed men's fighting-gear. First time, this,
 for the gleaming blade that its glory fell.
 Firm still stood, nor failed in valor,
 heedful of high deeds, Hygelac's kinsman;
 flung away fretted sword, featly jewelled,
 the angry earl; on earth it lay
 steel-edged and stiff. His strength he trusted,
 hand-gripe of might. So man shall do
 whenever in war he weens to earn him
 lasting fame, nor fears for his life!
 Seized then by shoulder, shrank not from combat,
 the Geatish war-prince Grendel's mother.
 Flung then the fierce one, filled with wrath,
 his deadly foe, that she fell to ground.
 Swift on her part she paid him back

Sona þæt onfunde se ðe floda begong
 heorogifre beheold hund missera,
 grim ond grædig, þæt þær gumena sum
 1500 ælwihta eard ufan cunnode.
 Grap þa togeanes, guðrinc gefeng
 atolan clommum. No þy ær in gescod
 halan lice; hring utan ymbbearh,
 þæt heo þone fyrðhom ðurhfon ne mihte,
 1505 locene leoðosyrca laþan fingrum.
 Bær þa seo brimwylf, þa heo to botme com,
 hringa þengel to hofe sinum,
 swa he ne mihte, no he þæs modig wæs,
 wæpna gewealdan, ac hine wundra þæs fela
 1510 swencte on sunde, sædeor monig
 hildetuxum heresyrcan bræc,
 ehton aglæcan. ða se eorl ongeat
 þæt he in niðsele nathwylcum wæs,
 þær him nænig wæter wihte ne sceþede,
 1515 ne him for hrofsele hrinan ne mehte
 færgripe flodes; fyrleoht geseah,
 blacne leoman, beorhte scinan.
 Ongeat þa se goda grundwyrgegne,
 merewif mihtig; mægenræs forgeaf
 1520 hildebille, hond sweng ne ofteah,
 þæt hire on hafelan hringmæl agol
 grædig guðleoð. ða se gist onfand
 þæt se beadoleoma bitan nolde,
 aldre sceþðan, ac seo ecg geswac
 1525 ðeodne æt þearfe; ðolode ær fela
 hondgemota, helm oft gescær,
 fæges fyrðhrægl; ða wæs forma sið
 deorum madme, þæt his dom alæg.
 Eft wæs anræd, nalas elnes læt,
 1530 mærdða gemyndig mæg Hylaces.
 Wearp ða wundenmæl wrættum gebunden
 yrreretta, þæt hit on eorðan læg,
 stiðond stylecg; strenge getruwode,
 mundgripe mægenes. Swa sceal man don,
 1535 þonne he æt guðe gegan þenceð
 longsumne lof, na ymb his lif cearað.
 Gefeng þa be eaxle (nalas for fæhðe mearn)
 Guðgeata leod Grendles modor;
 brægd þa beadwe heard, þa he gebolgen wæs,
 1540 feorhgeniðlan, þæt heo on flet gebeah.
 Heo him eft hraþe andlean forgeald

with grisly grasp, and grappled with him.
 Spent with struggle, stumbled the warrior,
 fiercest of fighting-men, fell adown.
 On the hall-guest she hurled herself, hent her short sword,
 broad and brown-edged,² the bairn to avenge,
 the sole-born son. – On his shoulder lay
 braided breast-mail, barring death,
 withstanding entrance of edge or blade.
 Life would have ended for Ecgtheow's son,
 under wide earth for that earl of Geats,
 had his armor of war not aided him,
 battle-net hard, and holy God
 wielded the victory, wisest Maker.
 The Lord of Heaven allowed his cause;
 and easily rose the earl erect.

'MID the battle-gear saw he a blade triumphant,
 old-sword of Eotens, with edge of proof,
 warriors' heirloom, weapon unmatched,
 – save only 'twas more than other men
 to bandy-of-battle could bear at all –
 as the giants had wrought it, ready and keen.
 Seized then its chain-hilt the Scyldings' chieftain,
 bold and battle-grim, brandished the sword,
 reckless of life, and so wrathfully smote
 that it gripped her neck and grasped her hard,
 her bone-rings breaking: the blade pierced through
 that fated-one's flesh: to floor she sank.
 Bloody the blade: he was blithe of his deed.
 Then blazed forth light. 'Twas bright within
 as when from the sky there shines unclouded
 heaven's candle. The hall he scanned.
 By the wall then went he; his weapon raised
 high by its hilts the Hygelac-thane,
 angry and eager. That edge was not useless
 to the warrior now. He wished with speed
 Grendel to guerdon for grim raids many,
 for the war he waged on Western-Danes
 oftener far than an only time,
 when of Hrothgar's hearth-companions
 he slew in slumber, in sleep devoured,
 fifteen men of the folk of Danes,
 and as many others outward bore,
 his horrible prey. Well paid for that

grimman grapum ond him togeanes feng;
 oferwearp þa werigmod wigena strengest,
 feþecempa, þæt he on fylle wearð.
 1545 Ofsæt þa þone selegyst ond hyre seax geteah,
 brad ond brunecg, wolde hire bearn wrecan,
 angan eaferan. Him on eaxle læg
 breostnet broden; þæt gebearh feore,
 wiðord ond wiðecge ingang forstod.
 1550 Hæfde ða forsiðod sunu Ecgþeowes
 under gynne grund, Geata cempa,
 nemne him heaðobyrne helpe gefremede,
 herenet hearde, ond halig god
 geweold wigsigor; witig drihten,
 1555 rodera rædend, hit on ryht gesced
 yðelice, syþðan he eft astod.
 Geseah ða on searwum sigeeadig bil,
 eald sweord eotensc, ecgum þyhtig,
 wigena weorðmynd; þæt wæs wæpna cyst,
 1560 buton hit wæs mare ðonne ænig mon oðer
 to beadulace ætberan meahte,
 god ond geatolic, gīganta geweorc.
 He gefeng þa fetelhilt, freca Scyldinga
 hreoh ond heorogrim hringmæl gebrægd,
 1565 aldres orwena, yrringa sloh,
 þæt hire wiðhalse heard grapode,
 banhringas bræc. Bil eal ðurhwod
 fægne flæschoman; heo on flet gecrong.
 Sweord wæs swatig, secg weorce gefeh.
 1570 Lixte se leoma, leoht inne stod,
 efne swa of hefene hadre scineð
 rodores candel. He æfter recede wlat;
 hwearf þa be wealle, wæpen hafenade
 heard be hiltum Higelaces ðegn,
 1575 yrre ond anræd. Næs seo ecg fracod
 hilderince, ac he hraþe wolde
 Grendle forgyldan guðræsa fela
 ðara þe he geworhte to Westdenum
 oftor micle ðonne on ænne sið,
 1580 þonne he Hroðgares heorðgeneatas
 sloh on sweofote, slæpende fræt
 folces Denigea fyftyne men
 ond oðer swylc ut offerede,
 laðlicu lac. He him þæs lean forgeald,

¹Kenning for "sword." Hrunting is bewitched, laid under a spell of uselessness, along with all other swords.

²This brown of swords, evidently meaning burnished, bright, continues to be a favorite adjective in the popular ballads.

the wrathful prince! For now prone he saw
 Grendel stretched there, spent with war,
 spoiled of life, so scathed had left him
 Heorot's battle. The body sprang far
 when after death it endured the blow,
 sword-stroke savage, that severed its head.
 Soon,¹ then, saw the sage companions
 who waited with Hrothgar, watching the flood,
 that the tossing waters turbid grew,
 blood-stained the mere. Old men together,
 hoary-haired, of the hero spake;
 the warrior would not, they weened, again,
 proud of conquest, come to seek
 their mighty master. To many it seemed
 the wolf-of-the-waves had won his life.
 The ninth hour came. The noble Scyldings
 left the headland; homeward went
 the gold-friend of men.² But the guests sat on,
 stared at the surges, sick in heart,
 and wished, yet weened not, their winsome lord
 again to see. Now that sword began,
 from blood of the fight, in battle-droppings,³
 war-blade, to wane: 'twas a wondrous thing
 that all of it melted as ice is wont
 when frosty fetters the Father loosens,
 unwinds the wave-bonds, wielding all
 seasons and times: the true God he!
 Nor took from that dwelling the duke of the Geats
 precious things, though a plenty he saw,
 save only the head and that hilt withal
 blazoned with jewels: the blade had melted,
 burned was the bright sword, her blood was so hot,
 so poisoned the hell-sprite who perished within there.
 Soon he was swimming who safe saw in combat
 downfall of demons; up-dove through the flood.
 The clashing waters were cleansed now,
 waste of waves, where the wandering fiend
 her life-days left and this lapsing world.
 Swam then to strand the sailors'-refuge,
 sturdy-in-spirit, of sea-booty glad,
 of burden brave he bore with him.
 Went then to greet him, and God they thanked,
 the thane-band choice of their chieftain blithe,
 that safe and sound they could see him again.
 Soon from the hardy one helmet and armor

1585 reþe cempa, to ðæs þe he on ræste geseah
 guðwerigne Grendel licgan
 aldorleasne, swa him ær gescod
 hild æt Heorote. Hra wide sprong,
 syþðan he æfter deaðe drepe þrowade,
 1590 heorosweng heardne, ond hine þa heafde becearf.
 Sona þæt gesawon snottre ceorlas,
 þa ðe mid Hroðgare on holm wliton,
 þæt wæs yðgeblond eal gemenged,
 brim blode fah. Blondenfeaxe,
 1595 gomele ymb godne, ongeador spræcon
 þæt hig þæs ædelinges eft ne wendon
 þæt he sigehredig secean come
 mærne þeoden; þa ðæs monige gewearð
 þæt hine seo brimwylf abroten hæfde.
 1600 ða com non dæg. Næs ofgeafon
 hwate Scyldingas; gewat him ham þonon
 goldwine gumena. Gistas setan
 modes seoce ond on mere staredon,
 wiston ond ne wendon þæt hie heora winedrihten
 1605 selfne gesawon. þa þæt sweord ongan
 æfter heaþoswate hildegicelum,
 wigbil wanian. þæt wæs wundra sum,
 þæt hit eal gemealt ise gelicost,
 ðonne forstes bend fæder onlæteð,
 1610 onwindeðwælrapas, se geweald hafað
 sæla ond mæla; þæt is soðmetod.
 Ne nom he in þæm wicum, Wedergeata leod,
 maðmæhta ma, þeh he þær monige geseah,
 buton þone hafelan ond þa hilt somod
 1615 since fage. Sweord ær gemealt,
 forbarn brodenmæl; wæs þæt blod to þæs hat,
 ættren ellorgæst se þær inne swealt.
 Sona wæs on sunde se þe ær æt sæcce gebad
 wighryre wraðra, wæter up þurhdeaf.
 1620 Wæron yðgebland eal gefælsod,
 eacne eardas, þa se ellorgast
 oflet lifdagas ond þas lænan gesceaft.
 Com þa to lande lidmanna helm
 swiðmod swymman; sælace gefeah,
 1625 mægenbyrþenne þara þe he him mid hæfde.
 Eodon him þa togeanes, gode þancodon,
 ðryðlic þegna heap, þeodnes gefegon,
 þæs þe hi hyne gesundne geseon moston.
 ða wæs of þæm hroran helm ond byrne

deftly they doffed: now drowsed the mere,
 water 'neath welkin, with war-blood stained.
 Forth they fared by the footpaths thence,
 merry at heart the highways measured,
 well-known roads. Courageous men
 carried the head from the cliff by the sea,
 an arduous task for all the band,
 the firm in fight, since four were needed
 on the shaft-of-slaughter⁴ strenuously
 to bear to the gold-hall Grendel's head.
 So presently to the palace there
 foemen fearless, fourteen Geats,
 marching came. Their master-of-clan
 mighty amid them the meadow-ways trod.
 Strode then within the sovran thane
 fearless in fight, of fame renowned,
 hardy hero, Hrothgar to greet.
 And next by the hair into hall was borne
 Grendel's head, where the henchmen were drinking,
 an awe to clan and queen alike,
 a monster of marvel: the men looked on.

BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:—
 "Lo, now, this sea-booty, son of Healfdene,
 Lord of Scyldings, we've lustily brought thee,
 sign of glory; thou seest it here.
 Not lightly did I with my life escape!
 In war under water this work I essayed
 with endless effort; and even so
 my strength had been lost had the Lord not shielded me.
 Not a whit could I with Hrunting do
 in work of war, though the weapon is good;
 yet a sword the Sovran of Men vouchsafed me
 to spy on the wall there, in splendor hanging,
 old, gigantic, — how oft He guides
 the friendless wight! — and I fought with that brand,
 felling in fight, since fate was with me,
 the house's wardens. That war-sword then
 all burned, bright blade, when the blood gushed o'er it,
 battle-sweat hot; but the hilt I brought back
 from my foes. So avenged I their fiendish deeds
 death-fall of Danes, as was due and right.

1630 lungre alysed. Lagu drusade,
 wæter under wolcnum, wældreore fag.
 Ferdon forðþonon feþelastum
 ferhþum fægne, foldweg mæton,
 cuþe stræte. Cyningbalde men
 1635 from þæm holmclife hafelan bæron
 earfoðlice heora æghwæþrum,
 felamodigra; feower scoldon
 on þæm wælstenge weorcum geferian
 to þæm goldsele Grendles heafod,
 1640 oþðæt semninga to sele comon
 frome fyrðhwate feowertyne
 Geata gongan; gumdryhten mid
 modig on gemonge meodowongas træd.
 ða com in gan ealdor ðegna,
 1645 dædcene mon dome gewurþad,
 hæle hildedeor, Hroðgar gretan.
 þa wæs be feaxe on flet boren
 Grendles heafod, þær guman druncon,
 egeslic for eorlum ond þære idese mid,
 1650 wliteseon wrætlic; weras on sawon.
 Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:
 "Hwæt! we þe þas sælac, sunu Healfdenes,
 leod Scyldinga, lustum brohton
 tires to tacne, þe þu her to locast.
 1655 Ic þæt unsofte ealdre gedigde
 wigge under wætere, weorc geneþde
 earfoðlice; ætrihte wæs
 guðgetwæfed, nymðe mec god scylde.
 Ne meahte ic æt hilde mid Hruntinge
 1660 wiht gewyrcan, þeah þæt wæpen duge;
 ac me geuðe ylða waldend
 þæt ic on wage geseah wlitig hangian
 eald sweord eacen (oftost wisode
 winigea leasum), þæt ic ðy wæpne gebræd.
 1665 Ofsloh ða æt þære sæcce, þa me sæl ageald,
 huses hyrdas. þa þæt hildebil
 forbarn brogdenmæl, swa þæt blod gesprang,
 hatost heaþoswata. Ic þæt hilt þanan
 feondum ætferede, fyrendæda wræc,
 1670 deaðcwealm Denigea, swa hit gedefe wæs.

¹After the killing of the monster and Grendel's decapitation.

²Hrothgar.

³The blade slowly dissolves in blood-stained drops like icicles.

⁴Spear.

And this is my hest, that in Heorot now
 safe thou canst sleep with thy soldier band,
 and every thane of all thy folk
 both old and young; no evil fear,
 Scyldings' lord, from that side again,
 aught ill for thy earls, as erst thou must!"
 Then the golden hilt, for that gray-haired leader,
 hoary hero, in hand was laid,
 giant-wrought, old. So owned and enjoyed it
 after downfall of devils, the Danish lord,
 wonder-smiths' work, since the world was rid
 of that grim-souled fiend, the foe of God,
 murder-marked, and his mother as well.
 Now it passed into power of the people's king,
 best of all that the oceans bound
 who have scattered their gold o'er Scandia's isle.
 Hrothgar spake – the hilt he viewed,
 heirloom old, where was etched the rise
 of that far-off fight when the floods o'erwhelmed,
 raging waves, the race of giants
 (fearful their fate!), a folk estranged
 from God Eternal: whence guerdon due
 in that waste of waters the Wielder paid them.
 So on the guard of shining gold
 in runic staves it was rightly said
 for whom the serpent-traced sword was wrought,
 best of blades, in bygone days,
 and the hilt well wound. – The wise-one spake,
 son of Healfdene; silent were all:–
 "Lo, so may he say who sooth and right
 follows 'mid folk, of far times mindful,
 a land-warden old,¹ that this earl belongs
 to the better breed! So, borne aloft,
 thy fame must fly, O friend my Beowulf,
 far and wide o'er folksteads many. Firmly thou
 shalt all maintain, mighty strength with mood of wisdom.
 Love of mine will I assure thee,
 as, awhile ago, I promised; thou shalt prove a stay in future,
 in far-off years, to folk of thine,
 to the heroes a help. Was not Heremod thus
 to offspring of Ecgwela, Honor-Scyldings,
 nor grew for their grace, but for grisly slaughter,
 for doom of death to the Danishmen.
 He slew, wrath-swollen, his shoulder-comrades,
 companions at board! So he passed alone,

Ic hit þe þonne gehate, þæt þu on Heorote most
 sorhleas swefan mid þinra secga gedryht
 ond þegna gehwylc þinra leoda,
 duguðe ond iogoþe, þæt þu him ondrædan ne þearft,
 1675 þeoden Scyldinga, on þa healfe,
 aldorbealu eorlum, swa þu ær dydest."
 ða wæs gylden hilt gamelum rince,
 harum hildfruman, on hand gyfen,
 enta ærgeweorc; hit on æht gehwearf
 1680 æfter deofla hryre Denigea frean,
 wundorsmiþa geweorc, ond þa þas worold ofgeaf
 gromheort guma, godes ondsaca,
 morðres scyldig, ond his modor eac,
 on gewæld gehwearf woroldcýninga
 1685 ðæm selestan be sæm tweonum
 ðara þe on Scedenigge sceattas dælde.
 Hroðgar maðelode, hylt sceawode,
 ealde lafe, on ðæm wæs or writen
 fyrngewinnes, syðþan flod ofsloh,
 1690 gifen geotende, giganta cyn
 (frecne geferdon); þæt wæs fremde þeod
 ecean dryhtne; him þæs endelea
 þurh wæteres wylm waldend sealde.
 Swa wæs on ðæm scennum sciran goldes
 1695 þurh runstafas rihte gemearcod,
 geseted ond gesæd hwam þæt sweord geworht,
 irena cyst, ærest wære,
 wreopenhilt ond wýrmfah. ða se wisa spræc
 sunu Healfdenes (swigedon ealle):
 1700 "þæt, la, mæg secgan se þe soðond riht
 fremedon folce, feor eal gemon,
 eald þþOEþþweard, þæt ðes eorl wære
 geboren betera! Blæd is aræred
 geond widwegas, wine min Beowulf,
 1705 ðin ofer þeoda gehwylce. Eal þu hit geþyldum heald
 mægen mid modes snyttrum. Ic þe sceal mine gelæstan
 freode, swa wit furðum spræcon. ðu scealt to frofre weorþ
 eal langtwidig leodum þinum,
 hæledum to helpe. Ne wearðHeremod swa
 1710 eaforum Ecgwelan, Arscyldingum;
 ne geweox he him to willan, ac to wælfæalle
 ond to deaðcwalum Deniga leodum;
 breat bolgenmod beodgeneatas,
 eaxlgesteallan, oþþæt he ana hwearf,
 1715 mære þeoden, mondreamum from.

chieftain haughty, from human cheer.
 Though him the Maker with might endowed,
 delights of power, and uplifted high
 above all men, yet blood-fierce his mind,
 his breast-hoard, grew, no bracelets gave he
 to Danes as was due; he endured all joyless
 strain of struggle and stress of woe,
 long feud with his folk. Here find thy lesson!
 Of virtue advise thee! This verse I have said for thee,
 wise from lapsed winters. Wondrous seems
 how to sons of men Almighty God
 in the strength of His spirit sendeth wisdom,
 estate, high station: He swayeth all things.
 Whiles He letteth right lustily fare
 the heart of the hero of high-born race, –
 in seat ancestral assigns him bliss,
 his folk's sure fortress in fee to hold,
 puts in his power great parts of the earth,
 empire so ample, that end of it
 this wanter-of-wisdom weeneth none.
 So he waxes in wealth, nowise can harm him
 illness or age; no evil cares
 shadow his spirit; no sword-hate threatens
 from ever an enemy: all the world
 wends at his will, no worse he knoweth,
 till all within him obstinate pride
 waxes and wakes while the warden slumbers,
 the spirit's sentry; sleep is too fast
 which masters his might, and the murderer nears,
 stealthily shooting the shafts from his bow!
 "UNDER harness his heart then is hit indeed
 by sharpest shafts; and no shelter avails
 from foul behest of the hellish fiend.¹
 Him seems too little what long he possessed.
 Greedy and grim, no golden rings
 he gives for his pride; the promised future
 forgets he and spurns, with all God has sent him,
 Wonder-Wielder, of wealth and fame.
 Yet in the end it ever comes
 that the frame of the body fragile yields,
 fated falls; and there follows another
 who joyously the jewels divides,
 the royal riches, nor recks of his forebear.

ðeah þe hine mihtig god mægenes wynnum,
 eafeþum steppe, ofer ealle men
 forðgefremede, hwæþere him on ferhþe greow
 breosthord blodreow. Nallas beagas geaf
 1720 Denum æfter dome; dreamleas gebad
 þæt he þæs gewinnes weorc þrowade,
 leodbealo longsum. ðu þe lær be þon,
 gumcyste ongit; ic þis gid be þe
 awræc wintrum frod. Wundor is to secganne
 1725 hu mihtig god manna cynne
 þurh sidne sefan snyttru bryttað,
 eard ond eorlscipe; he ah ealra geweald.
 Hwilum he on lufan læteðhworfan
 monnes modgeþonc mæran cynnes,
 1730 seleðhim on eþle eorþan wynne
 to healdanne, hleoburh weras,
 gededeðhim swa gewealdene worolde dælas,
 side rice, þæt he his selfa ne mæg
 for his unsnyttrum ende geþencean.
 1735 Wunaðhe on wiste; no hine wiht dweleð
 adl ne ylde, ne him inwitsorh
 on sefan sweorceð, ne gesacu ohwær
 ecghete eoweð, ac him eal worold
 wendeðon willan (he þæt wyrse ne con),
 1740 oðþæt him on innan oferhygda dæl
 weaxeðond wridað. þonne se weard swefeð,
 sawele hyrde; biðse slæp to fæst,
 bisgum gebunden, bona swiðe neah,
 se þe of flanbogan fyrenum sceoteð.
 1745 þonne biðon hreþre under helm drepem
 biteran stræle (him beþeorgan ne con),
 wom wundorþebodum wergan gastes;
 þinceðhim to lytel þæt he lange heold,
 gytsaðgromhydig, nallas on gylp seleð
 1750 fædde beagas, ond he þa forðgesceaft
 forgyteðond forgymed, þæs þe him ær god sealde,
 wuldres waldend, weorðmynda dæl.
 Hit on endestæf eft gelimpeð
 þæt se lichoma læne gedreoseð,
 1755 fæge gefealleð; fehðoþer to,
 se þe unmurnlice madmas dæleþ,
 eorles ærgestreon, egesan ne gymed.
 Beþeorh þe ðone bealonið, Beowulf leofa,

¹That is, "whoever has as wide authority as I have and can remember so far back so many instances of heroism, may well say, as I say, that no better hero ever lived than Beowulf."

Ban, then, such baleful thoughts, Beowulf dearest,
 best of men, and the better part choose,
 profit eternal; and temper thy pride,
 warrior famous! The flower of thy might
 lasts now a while: but erelong it shall be
 that sickness or sword thy strength shall minish,
 or fang of fire, or flooding billow,
 or bite of blade, or brandished spear,
 or odious age; or the eyes' clear beam
 wax dull and darken: Death even thee
 in haste shall o'erwhelm, thou hero of war!
 So the Ring-Danes these half-years a hundred I ruled,
 wielded 'neath welkin, and warded them bravely
 from mighty-ones many o'er middle-earth,
 from spear and sword, till it seemed for me
 no foe could be found under fold of the sky.
 Lo, sudden the shift! To me seated secure
 came grief for joy when Grendel began
 to harry my home, the hellish foe;
 for those ruthless raids, unresting I suffered
 heart-sorrow heavy. Heaven be thanked,
 Lord Eternal, for life extended
 that I on this head all hewn and bloody,
 after long evil, with eyes may gaze!
 – Go to the bench now! Be glad at banquet,
 warrior worthy! A wealth of treasure
 at dawn of day, be dealt between us!"
 Glad was the Geats' lord, going betimes
 to seek his seat, as the Sage commanded.
 Afresh, as before, for the famed-in-battle,
 for the band of the hall, was a banquet dight
 nobly anew. The Night-Helm darkened
 dusk o'er the drinkers. The doughty ones rose:
 for the hoary-headed would hasten to rest,
 aged Scylding; and eager the Geat,
 shield-fighter sturdy, for sleeping yearned.
 Him wander-weary, warrior-guest
 from far, a hall-thane heralded forth,
 who by custom courtly cared for all
 needs of a thane as in those old days
 warrior-wanderers wont to have.
 So slumbered the stout-heart. Stately the hall
 rose gabled and gilt where the guest slept on
 till a raven black the rapture-of-heaven²
 blithe-heart boded. Bright came flying

secg betsta, ond þe þæt selre geceos,
 1760 ece rædas; oferhyda ne gym,
 mære cempa. Nu is þines mæignes blæd
 ane hwile. Eft sona bið
 þæt þec adl oððe ecg eafþes getwæfed,
 oððe fyres feng, oððe flodes wylm,
 1765 oððe gripe meces, oððe gares fliht,
 oððe atol ylðo; oððe eagenas bearht
 forsitedond forsworced; semninga bið
 þæt ðec, dryhtguma, deaðoferswyðeð.
 Swa ic Hringdena hund missera
 1770 weold under wolcnum ond hig wigge beleac
 manigum mægþa geond þysne middangeard,
 æscum ond ecgum, þæt ic me ænigne
 under swegles begong gesacan ne tealde.
 Hwæt, me þæs on eþle edwenden cwom,
 1775 gyrn æfter gomene, seopðan Grendel wearð,
 ealdgewinna, ingenga min;
 ic þære socne singales wæg
 modceare micle. þæs sig metode þanc,
 ecean dryhtne, þæs ðe ic on aldre gebad
 1780 þæt ic on þone hafelan heorodreorigne
 ofer ealdgewin eagam starige!
 Ga nu to setle, symbelwynne dreoh
 wigge weorþad; unc sceal worn fela
 maþma gemænra, sibðan morgen bið."
 1785 Geat wæs glædmod, geong sona to
 setles neosan, swa se snottra heht.
 þa wæs eft swa ær ellenrofum
 fletsittendum fægere gereorded
 niowan stefne. Nihthelm geswearc
 1790 deorc ofer dryhtgumum. Duguðeal aras.
 Wolde blondenfeax beddes neosan,
 gamela Scylding. Geat unigmetes wel,
 rofne randwigan, restan lyste;
 sona him seleþegn siðes wergum,
 1795 feorrancundum, forðwisade,
 se for andrysnum ealle beweotede
 þegnes þearfe, swylce þy dogore
 heaþoliðende habban scoldon.
 Reste hine þa rumheort; reced hliuade
 1800 geap ond goldfah; gæst inne swæf
 oppæt hrefn blaca heofones wynne
 bliðheort bodode. ða com beorht scacan
 scaþan onetton,

shine after shadow. The swordsmen hastened,
athelings all were eager homeward
forth to fare; and far from thence
the great-hearted guest would guide his keel.
Bade then the hardy-one Hrunting be brought
to the son of Ecglaf, the sword bade him take,
excellent iron, and uttered his thanks for it,
quoth that he counted it keen in battle,
"war-friend" winsome: with words he slandered not
edge of the blade: 'twas a big-hearted man!
Now eager for parting and armed at point
warriors waited, while went to his host
that Darling of Danes. The doughty atheling
to high-seat hastened and Hrothgar greeted.

BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:-
"Lo, we seafarers say our will,
far-come men, that we fain would seek
Hygelac now. We here have found
hosts to our heart: thou hast harbored us well.
If ever on earth I am able to win me
more of thy love, O lord of men,
aught anew, than I now have done,
for work of war I am willing still!
If it come to me ever across the seas
that neighbor foemen annoy and fright thee, -
as they that hate thee erewhile have used, -
thousands then of thanes I shall bring,
heroes to help thee. Of Hygelac I know,
ward of his folk, that, though few his years,
the lord of the Geats will give me aid
by word and by work, that well I may serve thee,
wielding the war-wood to win thy triumph
and lending thee might when thou lackest men.
If thy Hrethric should come to court of Geats,
a sovran's son, he will surely there
find his friends. A far-off land
each man should visit who vaunts him brave."
Him then answering, Hrothgar spake:-
"These words of thine the wisest God
sent to thy soul! No sager counsel
from so young in years e'er yet have I heard.
Thou art strong of main and in mind art wary,

wæron æþelingas eft to leodum
1805 fuse to farenne; wolde feor þanon
cuma collenferhð ceoles neosan.
Heht þa se hearda Hrunting beran
sunu Ecglafes, heht his sweord niman,
leoflic iren; sægde him þæs leanes þanc,
1810 cwæð, he þone guðwine godne tealde,
wigcræftigne, nales wordum log
meces ecge; þæt wæs modig secg.
Ond þa siðfreme, searwum gearwe
wigend wæron; eode weorðDenum
1815 æþeling to yppan, þær se oþer wæs,
hæle hildedeor Hroðgar grette.
Beowulf maþelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:
"Nu we sæliðend secgan wyllað,
feorran cumene, þæt we fundiaþ
1820 Higelac secan. Wæron her tela
willum bewenede; þu us wel dohtest.
Gif ic þonne on eorþan owihte mæg
þinre modlufan maran tilian,
gumena dryhten, ðonne ic gyt dyde,
1825 guðgeweorca, ic beo gearo sona.
Gif ic þæt gefricge ofer floda begang,
þæt þec ymbsittend egesan þywað,
swa þec hetende hwilum dydon,
ic ðe þusenda þegna bringe,
1830 hæleþa to helpe. Ic on Higelac wat,
Geata dryhten, þeah ðe he geong sy,
folces hyrde, þæt he mec fremman wile
wordum ond worcum, þæt ic þe wel herige
ond þe to geoce garholt bere,
1835 mægenes fultum, þær ðe biðmanna þearf.
Gif him þonne Hreþric to hofum Geata
geþinged, þeodnes bearn, he mæg þær fela
freonda findan; feorcyþðe beoð
selran gesohte þæm þe him selfa deah."
1840 Hroðgar maþelode him on ondsware:
"þe þa wordcwidas wigtig drihten
on sefan sende; ne hyrde ic snotorlicor
on swa geongum feore guman þingian.
þu eart mægenes strang ond on mode frod,
1845 wis wordcwida. Wen ic talige,

¹That is, he is now undefended by conscience from the temptations (shafts) of the devil.

²Kenning for the sun. - This is a strange role for the raven. He is the warrior's bird of battle, exults in slaughter and carnage; his joy here is a compliment to the sunrise.

art wise in words! I ween indeed
 if ever it hap that Hrethel's heir
 by spear be seized, by sword-grim battle,
 by illness or iron, thine elder and lord,
 people's leader, – and life be thine, –
 no seemlier man will the Sea-Geats find
 at all to choose for their chief and king,
 for hoard-guard of heroes, if hold thou wilt
 thy kinsman's kingdom! Thy keen mind pleases me
 the longer the better, Beowulf loved!
 Thou hast brought it about that both our peoples,
 sons of the Geat and Spear-Dane folk,
 shall have mutual peace, and from murderous strife,
 such as once they waged, from war refrain.
 Long as I rule this realm so wide,
 let our hoards be common, let heroes with gold
 each other greet o'er the gannet's-bath,
 and the ringed-prow bear o'er rolling waves
 tokens of love. I trow my landfolk
 towards friend and foe are firmly joined,
 and honor they keep in the olden way."
 To him in the hall, then, Healfdene's son
 gave treasures twelve, and the trust-of-earls
 bade him fare with the gifts to his folk beloved,
 hale to his home, and in haste return.
 Then kissed the king of kin renowned,
 Scyldings' chieftain, that choicest thane,
 and fell on his neck. Fast flowed the tears
 of the hoary-headed. Heavy with winters,
 he had chances twain, but he clung to this,¹ –
 that each should look on the other again,
 and hear him in hall. Was this hero so dear to him.
 his breast's wild billows he banned in vain;
 safe in his soul a secret longing,
 locked in his mind, for that loved man
 burned in his blood. Then Beowulf strode,
 glad of his gold-gifts, the grass-plot o'er,
 warrior blithe. The wave-roamer bode
 riding at anchor, its owner awaiting.
 As they hastened onward, Hrothgar's gift
 they lauded at length. – 'Twas a lord unpeered,
 every way blameless, till age had broken
 – it spareth no mortal – his splendid might.
 CAME now to ocean the ever-courageous

gif þæt geganged, þæt ðe gar nymed,
 hild heorugrimme, Hreþles eaferan,
 adl oþðe iren ealdor ðinne,
 folces hyrde, ond þu þin feorh hafast,
 1850 þæt þe Sægeatas selran næbben
 to geceosenne cyning ænigne,
 hordweard hæleþa, gyf þu healdan wylt
 maga rice. Me þin modsefa
 licaðleng swa wel, leofa Beowulf.
 1855 Hafast þu gefered þæt þam folcum sceal,
 Geata leodum ond Gardenum,
 sib gemæne, ond sacu restan,
 inwitniþas, þe hie ær drugon,
 wesan, þenden ic wealde widan rices,
 1860 maþmas gemæne, manig oþerne
 godum gegretan ofer ganotes bæð;
 sceal hringnaca ofer heafu bringan
 lac ond luftacen. Ic þa leode wat
 ge wiðfeond ge wiðfreond fæste geworhte,
 1865 æghwæs untæle ealde wisan."
 ða git him eorla hleo inne gesealde,
 mago Healfdenes, maþmas XII;
 het hine mid þæm lacum leode swæse
 secean on gesyntum, snude eft cuman.
 1870 Gecyste þa cyning æþelum god,
 þeoden Scyldinga, ðegn betstan
 ond be healse genam; hruron him tearas,
 blondenfeaxum. Him wæs bega wen,
 ealdum infrodum, oþres swiðor,
 1875 þæt hie seoððan no geseon moston,
 modige on meþle. Wæs him se man to þon leof
 þæt he þone breostwylm forberan ne mehte,
 ac him on hreþre hygebendum fæst
 æfter deorum men dyrne langað
 1880 beorn wiðblode. Him Beowulf þanan,
 guðrinc goldwanc, græsmoldan træd
 since hremig; sægenga bad
 agendfreat, se þe on ancre rad.
 þa wæs on gange gifu Hroðgares
 1885 oft geæhted; þæt wæs an cyning,
 æghwæs orleahre, oþþæt hine yldo benam
 mægenes wynnum, se þe oft manegum scod.
 Cwom þa to flode felamodigra,
 hægstealdra heap, hringnet bæron,

¹That is, he might or might not see Beowulf again. Old as he was, the latter chance was likely; but he clung to the former, hoping

hardy henchmen, their harness bearing,
woven war-sarks. The warden marked,
trusty as ever, the earl's return.
From the height of the hill no hostile words
reached the guests as he rode to greet them;
but "Welcome!" he called to that Weder clan
as the sheen-mailed spoilers to ship marched on.
Then on the strand, with steeds and treasure
and armor their roomy and ring-dight ship
was heavily laden: high its mast
rose over Hrothgar's hoarded gems.
A sword to the boat-guard Beowulf gave,
mounted with gold; on the mead-bench since
he was better esteemed, that blade possessing,
heirloom old. – Their ocean-keel boarding,
they drove through the deep, and Daneland left.
A sea-cloth was set, a sail with ropes,
firm to the mast; the flood-timbers moaned;¹
nor did wind over billows that wave-swimmer blow
across from her course. The craft sped on,
foam-necked it floated forth o'er the waves,
keel firm-bound over briny currents,
till they got them sight of the Geatish cliffs,
home-known headlands. High the boat,
stirred by winds, on the strand updrove.
Helpful at haven the harbor-guard stood,
who long already for loved companions
by the water had waited and watched afar.
He bound to the beach the broad-bosomed ship
with anchor-bands, lest ocean-billows
that trusty timber should tear away.
Then Beowulf bade them bear the treasure,
gold and jewels; no journey far
was it thence to go to the giver of rings,
Hygelac Hrethling: at home he dwelt
by the sea-wall close, himself and clan.
Haughty that house, a hero the king,
high the hall, and Hygd² right young,
wise and wary, though winters few
in those fortress walls she had found a home,
Haereth's daughter. Nor humble her ways,
nor grudged she gifts to the Geatish men,
of precious treasure. Not Thryth's pride showed she,
folk-queen famed, or that fell deceit.

1890 locene leoðosyrca. Landweard onfand
eftsiðeorla, swa he ær dyde;
no he mid hearme of hliðes nosan
gæstas grette, ac him togeanes rad,
cwæðþæt wilcuman Wedera leodum
1895 scaþan scirhame to scipe foron.
þa wæs on sande sægeap naca
hladen herewædum, hringedstefna,
mearum ond maðmum; mæst hlifade
ofer Hroðgares hordgestreonum.
1900 He þæm batwearde bunden golde
swurd gesealde, þæt he syðþan wæs
on meodubence maþme þy weorþra,
yrfelafe. Gewat him on naca
drefan deop wæter, Dena land ofgeaf.
1905 þa wæs be mæste merehrægla sum,
segl sale fæst; sundwudu þunede.
No þær wegflotan wind ofer yðum
siðes getwæfde; sægenga for,
fleaht famigheals forðofer yðe,
1910 bundenstefna ofer brimstreamas,
þæt hie Geata clifu ongitan meahton,
cuþe næssas. Ceol up geþrang
lyftgeswenced, on lande stod.
Hraþe wæs æt holme hyðweard geara,
1915 se þe ær lange tid leofra manna
fus æt faroðe feor wlatode;
sælde to sande sidfæþme scip,
oncerbendum fæst, þy læs hym yþa ðrym
wudu wynsuman forwrecan meahte.
1920 Het þa up beran æþelinga gestreon,
frætwe ond fætgold; næs him feor þanon
to gesecanne sinces bryttan,
Higelac Hreþling, þær æt ham wunað
selfa mid gesiðum sæwealle neah.
1925 Bold wæs betlic, bregorof cyning,
heah in healle, Hygd swiðe geong,
wis, welþungen, þeah ðe wintra lyt
under burhlocan gebiden hæbbe,
Hæreþes dohtor; næs hio hnah swa þeah,
1930 ne to gneaðgifa Geata leodum,
maþmgestreona. Mod þryðo wæg,
fremu folces cwen, firen ondrysne.
Nænig þæt dorste deor geneþan

to see his young friend again "and exchange brave words in the hall."

Was none so daring that durst make bold
 (save her lord alone) of the liegemen dear
 that lady full in the face to look,
 but forged fetters he found his lot,
 bonds of death! And brief the respite;
 soon as they seized him, his sword-doom was spoken,
 and the burnished blade a baleful murder
 proclaimed and closed. No queenly way
 for woman to practise, though peerless she,
 that the weaver-of-peace³ from warrior dear
 by wrath and lying his life should reave!
 But Hemming's kinsman hindered this. –
 For over their ale men also told
 that of these folk-horrors fewer she wrought,
 onslaughts of evil, after she went,
 gold-decked bride, to the brave young prince,
 atheling haughty, and Offa's hall
 o'er the fallow flood at her father's bidding
 safely sought, where since she prospered,
 royal, throned, rich in goods,
 fain of the fair life fate had sent her,
 and leal in love to the lord of warriors.
 He, of all heroes I heard of ever
 from sea to sea, of the sons of earth,
 most excellent seemed. Hence Offa was praised
 for his fighting and feeing by far-off men,
 the spear-bold warrior; wisely he ruled
 over his empire. Eomer woke to him,
 help of heroes, Hemming's kinsman,
 Grandson of Garmund, grim in war.

HASTENED the hardy one, henchmen with him,
 sandy strand of the sea to tread
 and widespread ways. The world's great candle,
 sun shone from south. They strode along
 with sturdy steps to the spot they knew
 where the battle-king young, his burg within,
 slayer of Ongentheow, shared the rings,
 shelter-of-heroes. To Hygelac
 Beowulf's coming was quickly told, –
 that there in the court the clansmen's refuge,
 the shield-companion sound and alive,
 hale from the hero-play homeward strode.

swæsra gesiða, nefne sinfrea,
 1935 þæt hire an dæg eagam starede,
 ac him wælbende weotode tealde
 handgewriþene; hraþe seoþðan wæs
 æfter mundgripe mece geþinged,
 þæt hit sceadenmæl scyran moste,
 1940 cwealmbealu cyðan. Ne biðswylc cwenlic þeaw
 idese to efnanne, þeah ðe hio ænlicu sy,
 þætte freoðuwebbe feores onsæce
 æfter ligetorne leofne mannan.
 Huru þæt onhohsnode Hemminges mæg;
 1945 ealodrincende oðer sædan,
 þæt hio leodbealewa læs gefremede,
 inwitniða, syððan ærest wearð
 gyfen goldhroden geongum cempan,
 æðelum diore, syððan hio Offan flet
 1950 ofer fealone flod be fæder lare
 siðe gesohte; ðær hio syððan well
 in gumstole, gode, mære,
 lifgesceafta lifigende breac,
 hiold heahlufan wiðhæleþa brego,
 1955 ealles moncynnes mine gefræge
 þone selestan bi sãm tweonum,
 eormencynnes. Forðam Offa wæs
 geofum ond guðum, garcene man,
 wide geweordod, wisdomes heold
 1960 eðel sinne; þonon Eomer woc
 hæledum to helpe, Hemminges mæg,
 nefa Garmundes, niða cræftig.
 Gewat him ða se hearda mid his hondscole
 sylf æfter sande sæwong tredan,
 1965 wide waroðas. Woruldcandel scan,
 sigel suðan fus. Hi siðdrugon,
 elne geeodon, to ðæs ðe eorla hleo,
 bonan Ongenþeoes burgum in innan,
 geongne guðcýning godne gefrunon
 1970 hringas dælan. Higelace wæs
 siðBeowulfes snude gecyðed,
 þæt ðær on wordig wigendra hleo,
 lindgestealla, lifigende cwom,
 heaðolaces hal to hofe gongan.
 1975 Hraðe wæs gerymed, swa se rica bebead,

¹With the speed of the boat.

²Queen to Hygelac. She is praised by contrast with the antitype, Thryth, just as Beowulf was praised by contrast with Heremod.

³Kenning for "wife."

With haste in the hall, by highest order,
 room for the rovers was readily made.
 By his sovran he sat, come safe from battle,
 kinsman by kinsman. His kindly lord
 he first had greeted in gracious form,
 with manly words. The mead dispensing,
 came through the high hall Haereth's daughter,
 winsome to warriors, wine-cup bore
 to the hands of the heroes. Hygelac then
 his comrade fairly with question plied
 in the lofty hall, sore longing to know
 what manner of sojourn the Sea-Geats made.
 "What came of thy quest, my kinsman Beowulf,
 when thy yearnings suddenly swept thee yonder
 battle to seek o'er the briny sea,
 combat in Heorot? Hrothgar couldst thou
 aid at all, the honored chief,
 in his wide-known woes? With waves of care
 my sad heart seethed; I sore mistrusted
 my loved one's venture: long I begged thee
 by no means to seek that slaughtering monster,
 but suffer the South-Danes to settle their feud
 themselves with Grendel. Now God be thanked
 that safe and sound I can see thee now!"
 Beowulf spake, the bairn of Ecgtheow:-
 "'Tis known and unhidden, Hygelac Lord,
 to many men, that meeting of ours,
 struggle grim between Grendel and me,
 which we fought on the field where full too many
 sorrows he wrought for the Scylding-Victors,
 evils unending. These all I avenged.
 No boast can be from breed of Grendel,
 any on earth, for that uproar at dawn,
 from the longest-lived of the loathsome race
 in fleshly fold! – But first I went
 Hrothgar to greet in the hall of gifts,
 where Healfdene's kinsman high-renowned,
 soon as my purpose was plain to him,
 assigned me a seat by his son and heir.
 The liegemen were lusty; my life-days never
 such merry men over mead in hall
 have I heard under heaven! The high-born queen,
 people's peace-bringer, passed through the hall,
 cheered the young clansmen, clasps of gold,
 ere she sought her seat, to sundry gave.

feðgestum flet innanweard.
 Gesæt þa wiðsylvne se ða sæcce genæs,
 mæg wiðmæge, syððan mandryhten
 þurh hleoðorcwyde holdne gegrette,
 1980 meaglum wordum. Meoduscencum hwearf
 geond þæt healreced Hæreðes dohtor,
 lufode ða leode, liðwæge bær
 hæledum to handa. Higelac ongan
 sinne geseldan in sele þam hean
 1985 fægre fricgean (hyne fyrwet bræc,
 hwylce Sægeata siðas wæron):
 "Hu lomp eow on lade, leofa Biowulf,
 þa ðu færinga feorr gehogodest
 sæcce secean ofer sealt wæter,
 1990 hilde to Hiorote? Ac ðu Hroðgare
 widcuðne wean wihte gebettest,
 mærum ðeodne? Ic ðæs modceare
 sorhwylmum seað, siðe ne truwoðe
 leofes mannes; ic ðe lange bæd
 1995 þæt ðu þone wælgæst wihte ne grette,
 lete Suðdene sylfe geweorðan
 guðe wiðGrendel. Gode ic þanc secge
 þæs ðe ic ðe gesundne geseon moste."
 Biowulf maðelode, bearn Ecgðioes:
 2000 "þæt is undyrne, dryhten Higelac,
 micel gemeting, monegum fira,
 hwylc orleghwil uncer Grendles
 wearðon ðam wange, þær he worna fela
 Sigescyldingum sorge gefremede,
 2005 yrmðe to aldre. Ic ðæt eall gewræc,
 swa begylpan ne þearf Grendeles maga
 ænig ofer eorðan uhtlem þone,
 se ðe lengest leofað laðan cynnes,
 facne bifongen. Ic ðær furðum cwom
 2010 to ðam hringsele Hroðgar gretan;
 sona me se mæra mago Healfdenes,
 syððan he modsefan minne cuðe,
 wiðhis sylfes sunu setl getæhte.
 Weorod wæs on wynne; ne seah ic widan feorh
 2015 under heofones hwealf healsittendra
 medudream maran. Hwylum mæru cwen,
 friðusibb folca, flet eall geonðhwearf,
 bædde byre geonge; oft hio beahwriðan
 secge sealde, ær hie to setle geong.
 2020 Hwylum for duguðe dohtor Hroðgares

Oft to the heroes Hrothgar's daughter,
to earls in turn, the ale-cup tendered, –
she whom I heard these hall-companions
Freawaru name, when fretted gold
she proffered the warriors. Promised is she,
gold-decked maid, to the glad son of Froda.
Sage this seems to the Scylding's-friend,
kingdom's-keeper: he counts it wise
the woman to wed so and ward off feud,
store of slaughter. But seldom ever
when men are slain, does the murder-spear sink
but briefest while, though the bride be fair!¹
"Nor haply will like it the Heathobard lord,
and as little each of his liegemen all,
when a thane of the Danes, in that doughty throng,
goes with the lady along their hall,
and on him the old-time heirlooms glisten
hard and ring-decked, Heathobard's treasure,
weapons that once they wielded fair
until they lost at the linden-play²
liegeman leal and their lives as well.
Then, over the ale, on this heirloom gazing,
some ash-wielder old who has all in mind
that spear-death of men,³ – he is stern of mood,
heavy at heart, – in the hero young
tests the temper and tries the soul
and war-hate wakens, with words like these:–
Canst thou not, comrade, ken that sword
which to the fray thy father carried
in his final feud, 'neath the fighting-mask,
dearest of blades, when the Danish slew him
and wielded the war-place on Withergild's fall,
after havoc of heroes, those hardy Scyldings?
Now, the son of a certain slaughtering Dane,
proud of his treasure, paces this hall,
joys in the killing, and carries the jewel⁴
that rightfully ought to be owned by thee!
Thus he urges and eggs him all the time
with keenest words, till occasion offers
that Freawaru's thane, for his father's deed,
after bite of brand in his blood must slumber,
losing his life; but that liegeman flies
living away, for the land he kens.
And thus be broken on both their sides
oaths of the earls, when Ingeld's breast

eorlum on ende ealuwæge bær;
þa ic Freaware fletsittende
nemnan hyrde, þær hio nægled sinc
hæleðum sealde. Sio gehaten is,
2025 geong, goldhroden, gladum suna Frodan;
hafaðþæs geworden wine Scyldinga,
rices hyrde, ond þæt ræd talað,
þæt he mid ðy wife wælfæhða dæl,
sæcca gesette. Oft seldan hwær
2030 æfter leodhryre lytle hwile
bongar bugeð, þeah seo bryd duge!
Mæg þæs þonne ofþyncan ðeodne Heaðobeardna
ond þegna gehwam þara leoda,
þonne he mid fæmnan on flett gæð,
2035 dryhtbearn Dena, duguða biwenede;
on him gladiað gomelra lafe,
heard ond hringmæl Heaðabeardna gestreon
þenden hie ðam wæpnum wealdan moston,
oððæt hie forlæddan to ðam lindplegan
2040 swæse gesiðas ond hyra sylfra feorh.
þonne cwidæt beore se ðe beah gesyhð,
eald æscwiga, se ðe eall geman,
garcwealm gumena (him biðgrim sefa),
onginnedgeomormod geongum ceman
2045 þurh hreðra gehygd higas cunnian,
wigbealu weccan, ond þæt word acwyð:
'Meaht ðu, min wine, mece gecnawan
þone þin fæder to gefeohte bær
under heregriman hindeman siðe,
2050 dyre iren, þær hyne Dene slogon,
weoldon wælstowe, syððan Wiðergyld læg,
æfter hæleþa hryre, hwate Scyldungas?
Nu her þara banena byre nathwylces
frætwum hremig on flet gæð,
2055 morðres gylpeð, ond þone maðpum byreð,
þone þe ðu mid rihte rædan sceoldest.'
Manaðswa ond myndgað mæla gehwylce
sarum wordum, oððæt sæl cymeð
þæt se fæmnan þegn fore fæder dædum
2060 æfter billes bite blodfag swefeð,
ealdres scyldig; him se oðer þonan
losaðlifigende, con him land geara.
þonne bioðabrocene on ba healfe
aðsweord eorla; syððan Ingelde
2065 weallaðwælniðas, ond him wifufan

wells with war-hate, and wife-love now
after the care-billows cooler grows.
"So⁵ I hold not high the Heathobards' faith
due to the Danes, or their during love
and pact of peace. – But I pass from that,
turning to Grendel, O giver-of-treasure,
and saying in full how the fight resulted,
hand-fray of heroes. When heaven's jewel
had fled o'er far fields, that fierce sprite came,
night-foe savage, to seek us out
where safe and sound we sentried the hall.
To Hondscio then was that harassing deadly,
his fall there was fated. He first was slain,
girded warrior. Grendel on him
turned murderous mouth, on our mighty kinsman,
and all of the brave man's body devoured.
Yet none the earlier, empty-handed,
would the bloody-toothed murderer, mindful of bale,
outward go from the gold-decked hall:
but me he attacked in his terror of might,
with greedy hand grasped me. A glove hung by him⁶
wide and wondrous, wound with bands;
and in artful wise it all was wrought,
by devilish craft, of dragon-skins.
Me therein, an innocent man,
the fiendish foe was fain to thrust
with many another. He might not so,
when I all angrily upright stood.
'Twere long to relate how that land-destroyer
I paid in kind for his cruel deeds;
yet there, my prince, this people of thine
got fame by my fighting. He fled away,
and a little space his life preserved;
but there staid behind him his stronger hand
left in Heorot; heartsick thence
on the floor of the ocean that outcast fell.
Me for this struggle the Scyldings'-friend
paid in plenty with plates of gold,
with many a treasure, when morn had come
and we all at the banquet-board sat down.
Then was song and glee. The gray-haired Scylding,
much tested, told of the times of yore.
Whiles the hero his harp bestirred,
wood-of-delight; now lays he chanted
of sooth and sadness, or said aright

æfter cearwælmum colran weorðað.
þy ic Heaðobeardna hyldo ne telge,
dryhtsibbe dæl Denum unfæcne,
freondscipe fæstne. Ic sceal forðsprecan
2070 gen ymbe Grendel, þæt ðu geara cunne,
sinces brytta, to hwan syððan wearð
hondræs hæleða. Syððan heofones gim
glad ofer grundas, gæst yrre cwom,
eatol, æfengrom, user neosan,
2075 ðær we gesunde sæl weardodon.
þær wæs Hondscio hild onsæge,
feorhbealu fægum; he fyrrest læg,
gyrded cempa; him Grendel wearð,
mærum maguþegne to muðbonan,
2080 leofes mannes lic eall forswalg.
No ðy ær ut ða gen idelhende
bona blodigtoð, bealewa gemyndig,
of ðam goldsele gongan wolde,
ac he mægnes rof min costode,
2085 grapode gearofolm. Glof hangode
sid ond syllic, searobendum fæst;
sio wæs orðoncum eall gegyrwed
deofles cræftum ond dracan fellum.
He mec þær on innan unsynnigne,
2090 dior dædfroma, gedon wolde
manigra sumne; hyt ne mihte swa,
syððan ic on yrre uppriht astod.
To lang ys to reccenne hu ic ðam leodsceaðan
yfla gehwylces ondlean forgeald;
2095 þær ic, þeoden min, þine leode
weorðode weorcum. He on weg losade,
lytle hwile lifwynna breac;
hwæþre him sio swiðre swaðe weardade
hand on Hiorte, ond he hean ðonan
2100 modes geomor meregrund gefeoll.
Me þone wælræs wine Scildunga
fættan golde fela leanode,
manegum maðmum, syððan mergen com
ond we to symble geseten hæfdon.
2105 þær wæs gidd ond gleo. Gomela Scilding,
felafricgende, feorran rehte;
hwilum hildedeor hearpan wynne,
gomenwudu grette, hwilum gyd awræc
soðond sarlic, hwilum syllic spell
2110 rehte æfter rihte rumheort cyning.

legends of wonder, the wide-hearted king;
 or for years of his youth he would yearn at times,
 for strength of old struggles, now stricken with age,
 hoary hero: his heart surged full
 when, wise with winters, he wailed their flight.
 Thus in the hall the whole of that day
 at ease we feasted, till fell o'er earth
 another night. Anon full ready
 in greed of vengeance, Grendel's mother
 set forth all doleful. Dead was her son
 through war-hate of Weders; now, woman monstrous
 with fury fell a foeman she slew,
 avenged her offspring. From Aeschere old,
 loyal councillor, life was gone;
 nor might they e'en, when morning broke,
 those Danish people, their death-done comrade
 burn with brands, on balefire lay
 the man they mourned. Under mountain stream
 she had carried the corpse with cruel hands.
 For Hrothgar that was the heaviest sorrow
 of all that had laden the lord of his folk.
 The leader then, by thy life, besought me
 (sad was his soul) in the sea-waves' coil
 to play the hero and hazard my being
 for glory of prowess: my guerdon he pledged.
 I then in the waters – 'tis widely known –
 that sea-floor-guardian savage found.
 Hand-to-hand there a while we struggled;
 billows welled blood; in the briny hall
 her head I hewed with a hardy blade
 from Grendel's mother, – and gained my life,
 though not without danger. My doom was not yet.
 Then the haven-of-heroes, Healfdene's son,
 gave me in guerdon great gifts of price.

Hwylum eft ongan, eldo gebunden,
 gomel guðwiga gioguðe cwiðan,
 hildestrengo; hreðer inne weoll,
 þonne he wintrum frod worn gemunde.
 2115 Swa we þær inne ondlangne dæg
 niode naman, oððæt niht becwom
 oðer to yldum. þa wæs eft hraðe
 gearo gynwræce Grendeles modor,
 siðode sorhfull; sunu deaðfornam,
 2120 wighete Wedra. Wif unhyre
 hyre bearn gewræc, beorn acwealde
 ellenlice; þær wæs æschere,
 frodan fyrnwitan, feorh uðgenge.
 Noder hy hine ne moston, syððan mergen cwom,
 2125 deaðwerigne, Denia leode,
 bronde forbærnan, ne on bel hladan
 leofne mannan; hio þæt lic ætbær
 feondes fæðmum under firgenstream.
 þæt wæs Hroðgare hreowa tornost
 2130 þara þe leodfruman lange begeate.
 þa se ðeoden mec ðine life
 healsode hreohmod, þæt ic on holma geþring
 eorlscipe efnde, ealdre geneðde,
 mærdō fremede; he me mede gehet.
 2135 Ic ða ðæs wælmes, þe is wide cuð,
 grimne gryreligne grundhyrde fond;
 þær unc hwile wæs hand gemæne,
 holm heolfre weoll, ond ic heafde becearf
 in ðam guðsele Grendeles modor
 2140 eacnum ecgum, unsofte þonan
 feorh oðferede. Næs ic fæge þa gyt,
 ac me eorla hleo eft gesealde
 maðma menigeo, maga Healfdenes.
 Swa se ðeodkyning þeawum lyfde.

"So held this king to the customs old,
that I wanted for nought in the wage I gained,
the meed of my might; he made me gifts,
Healfdene's heir, for my own disposal.
Now to thee, my prince, I proffer them all,
gladly give them. Thy grace alone
can find me favor. Few indeed
have I of kinsmen, save, Hygelac, thee!"
Then he bade them bear him the boar-head standard,
the battle-helm high, and breastplate gray,
the splendid sword; then spake in form:—
"Me this war-gear the wise old prince,
Hrothgar, gave, and his hest he added,
that its story be straightway said to thee. —
A while it was held by Heorogar king,
for long time lord of the land of Scyldings;
yet not to his son the sovran left it,
to daring Heorowearde, — dear as he was to him,
his harness of battle. — Well hold thou it all!"
And I heard that soon passed o'er the path of this treasure,
all apple-fallow, four good steeds,
each like the others, arms and horses
he gave to the king. So should kinsmen be,
not weave one another the net of wiles,
or with deep-hid treachery death contrive
for neighbor and comrade. His nephew was ever
by hardy Hygelac held full dear,
and each kept watch o'er the other's weal.
I heard, too, the necklace to Hygd he presented,
wonder-wrought treasure, which Wealhtheow gave him
sovran's daughter: three steeds he added,

2145 Nealles ic ðam leanum forloren hæfde,
mægnes mede, ac he me maðmas geaf,
sunu Healfdenes, on minne sylfes dom;
ða ic ðe, beorncyning, bringan wylle,
estum geywan. Gen is eall æt ðe
2150 lissa gelong; ic lyt hafo
heafodmaga nefne, Hygelac, ðec."
Het ða in beran eaforheafodsegn,
heaðosteapne helm, hare byrnan,
guðsweord geatolic, gyd æfter wræc:
2155 "Me ðis hildesceorp Hroðgar sealde,
snotra fengel, sume worde het
þæt ic his ærest ðe est gesægde;
cwæðþæt hyt hæfde Hiorogar cyning,
leod Scyldunga lange hwile;
2160 no ðy ær suna sinum syllan wolde,
hwatum Heorowearde, þeah he him hold wære,
breostgewædu. Bruc ealles well!"
Hyrde ic þæt þam frætstum feower mearas
lungre, gelice, last weardode,
2165 æppelfealuwe; he him est geteah
meara ond maðma. Swa sceal mæg don,
nealles inwitnet oðrum bregdon
dyrnum cræfte, deaðrenian
hondgesteallan. Hygelace wæs,
2170 niða heardum, nefa swyðe hold,
ond gehwæðer oðrum hroþra gemyndig.
Hyrde ic þæt he ðone healsbeah Hygde gesealde,
wrætlicne wundurmaðdum, ðone þe him Wealhðeo geaf,
ðeodnes dohtor, þrio wigc somod
2175 swancor ond sadolbeorht; hyre syððan wæs

¹Beowulf gives his uncle the king not mere gossip of his journey, but a statesmanlike forecast of the outcome of certain policies at the Danish court. Talk of interpolation here is absurd. As both Beowulf and Hygelac know, — and the folk for whom the Beowulf was put together also knew, — Froda was king of the Heathobards (probably the Langobards, once near neighbors of Angle and Saxon tribes on the continent), and had fallen in fight with the Danes. Hrothgar will set aside this feud by giving his daughter as "peace-weaver" and wife to the young king Ingeld, son of the slain Froda. But Beowulf, on general principles and from his observation of the particular case, foretells trouble.

²Play of shields, battle. A Danish warrior cuts down Froda in the fight, and takes his sword and armor, leaving them to a son. This son is selected to accompany his mistress, the young princess Freawaru, to her new home when she is Ingeld's queen. Heedlessly he wears the sword of Froda in hall. An old warrior points it out to Ingeld, and eggs him on to vengeance. At his instigation the Dane is killed; but the murderer, afraid of results, and knowing the land, escapes. So the old feud must break out again.

³That is, their disastrous battle and the slaying of their king.

⁴The sword.

⁵Beowulf returns to his forecast. Things might well go somewhat as follows, he says; sketches a little tragic story; and with this prophecy by illustration returns to the tale of his adventure.

⁶Not an actual glove, but a sort of bag.

slender and saddle-gay. Since such gift
the gem gleamed bright on the breast of the queen.
Thus showed his strain the son of Ecgtheow
as a man remarked for mighty deeds
and acts of honor. At ale he slew not
comrade or kin; nor cruel his mood,
though of sons of earth his strength was greatest,
a glorious gift that God had sent
the splendid leader. Long was he spurned,
and worthless by Geatish warriors held;
him at mead the master-of-clans
failed full oft to favor at all.
Slack and shiftless the strong men deemed him,
profitless prince; but payment came,
to the warrior honored, for all his woes. –
Then the bulwark-of-earls¹ bade bring within,
hardy chieftain, Hrethel's heirloom
garnished with gold: no Geat e'er knew
in shape of a sword a statelier prize.
The brand he laid in Beowulf's lap;
and of hides assigned him seven thousand,²
with house and high-seat. They held in common
land alike by their line of birth,
inheritance, home: but higher the king
because of his rule o'er the realm itself.
Now further it fell with the flight of years,
with harrings horrid, that Hygelac perished,³
and Heardred, too, by hewing of swords
under the shield-wall slaughtered lay,
when him at the van of his victor-folk
sought hardy heroes, Heatho-Scilfings,
in arms o'erwhelming Hereric's nephew.
Then Beowulf came as king this broad
realm to wield; and he ruled it well
fifty winters,⁴ a wise old prince,
warding his land, until One began
in the dark of night, a Dragon, to rage.
In the grave on the hill a hoard it guarded,
in the stone-barrow steep. A strait path reached it,
unknown to mortals. Some man, however,
came by chance that cave within
to the heathen hoard.⁵ In hand he took
a golden goblet, nor gave he it back,
stole with it away, while the watcher slept,
by thievish wiles: for the warden's wrath

æfter beahðege breost geweorðod.
Swa bealdode bearn Ecgðeowes,
guma gudum cuð, godum dædum,
dread æfter dome, nealles druncne slog
2180 heorðgeneatas; næs him hreoh sefa,
ac he mancynnes mæste cræfte
ginfæstan gife, þe him god sealde,
heold hildedeor. Hean wæs lange,
swa hyne Geata bearn godne ne tealdon,
2185 ne hyne on medobence micles wyrðne
drihten Wedera gedon wolde;
swyðe wendon þæt he sleac wære,
æðeling unfrom. Edwenden cwom
treadigum menn torna gehwylces.
2190 Het ða eorla hleo in gefetian,
heaðorof cyning, Hreðles lafe
golde gegyrede; næs mid Geatum ða
sincmaðbum selra on sweordes had;
þæt he on Biowulfes bearm alegde
2195 ond him gesealde seofan þusendo,
bold ond bregostol. Him wæs bam samod
on ðam leodscipe lond gecynde,
eard, eðelriht, oðrum swiðor
side rice þam ðær selra wæs.
2200 Eft þæt geiode ufaran dogrum
hildehlæmmum, syððan Hygelac læg
ond Heardrede hildemeceas
under bordhreoda to bonan wurdon,
ða hyne gesohtan on sigeþeode
2205 hearde hildefreca, Heaðoscilfingas,
niða genægðan nefan Hererices,
syððan Beowulfe brade rice
on hand gehwearf; he geheold tela
fiftig wintra (wæs ða frod cyning,
2210 eald eþelweard), oððæt an ongan
deorcum nihtum draca ricsian,
se ðe on heaum hofe hord beweotode,
stanbeorh steapne; stig under læg,
eldum uncuð. þær on innan giong
2215 niða nathwylc, se ðe neh gefeng
hæðnum horde, hond,
since fahne. He þæt syððan,
þeah ðe he slæpende besyred wurde
þeofes cræfte; þæt sie ðiod onfand,
2220 bufolc beorna, þæt he gebolgen wæs.

prince and people must pay betimes!

THAT way he went with no will of his own,
in danger of life, to the dragon's hoard,
but for pressure of peril, some prince's thane.
He fled in fear the fatal scourge,
seeking shelter, a sinful man,
and entered in. At the awful sight
tottered that guest, and terror seized him;
yet the wretched fugitive rallied anon
from fright and fear ere he fled away,
and took the cup from that treasure-hoard.
Of such besides there was store enough,
heirlooms old, the earth below,
which some earl forgotten, in ancient years,
left the last of his lofty race,
heedfully there had hidden away,
dearest treasure. For death of yore
had hurried all hence; and he alone
left to live, the last of the clan,
weeping his friends, yet wished to bide
warding the treasure, his one delight,
though brief his respite. The barrow, new-ready,
to strand and sea-waves stood anear,
hard by the headland, hidden and closed;
there laid within it his lordly heirlooms
and heaped hoard of heavy gold
that warden of rings. Few words he spake:
"Now hold thou, earth, since heroes may not,
what earls have owned! Lo, erst from thee
brave men brought it! But battle-death seized
and cruel killing my clansmen all,
robbed them of life and a liegeman's joys.
None have I left to lift the sword,

Nealles mid gewældum wýrmhord abræc
sylfes willum, se ðe him sare gesceod,
ac for þreanedlan þeow nathwylces
hæleða bearna heteswengeas fleah,
2225 ærnes þearfa, ond ðær inne fealh,
secg synbysig, sona onfunde
þæt þær ðam gyste gryrebrogga stod;
hwæðre earmsceapen
...sceapen
2230 þa hyne se fær begeat.
Sincfæt; þær wæs swylcra fela
in ðam eorðhuse ærgestreona,
swa hy on geardagum gumena nathwylc,
eormenlafe æþelan cynnes,
2235 þanchycgende þær gehydde,
deore maðmas. Ealle hie deaðfornam
ærran mælum, ond se an ða gen
leoda duguðe, se ðær lengest hwearf,
weard winegeomor, wende þæs ylcan,
2240 þæt he lytel fæc longgestreona
brucan moste. Beorh eallgearo
wunode on wonge wæteryðum neah,
niwe be næsse, nearocræftum fæst.
þær on innan bær eorlgestreona
2245 hringa hyrde hordwyrðne dæl,
fættan goldes, fea worda cwæð:
"Heald þu nu, hruse, nu hæleðne moston,
eorla æhte! Hwæt, hyt ær on ðe
gode begeaton. Guðdeaðfornam,
2250 feorhbealo frecne, fyra gehwylcne
leoda minra, þara ðe þis lif ofgeaf,
gesawon seledream. Ic nah hwa sweord wege
oððe feormie fæted wæge,

¹Hygelac.

²This is generally assumed to mean hides, though the text simply says "seven thousand." A hide in England meant about 120 acres, though "the size of the acre varied."

³On the historical raid into Frankish territory between 512 and 520 A.D. The subsequent course of events, as gathered from hints of this epic, is partly told in Scandinavian legend.

⁴The chronology of this epic, as scholars have worked it out, would make Beowulf well over ninety years of age when he fights the dragon. But the fifty years of his reign need not be taken as historical fact.

⁵The text is here hopelessly illegible, and only the general drift of the meaning can be rescued. For one thing, we have the old myth of a dragon who guards hidden treasure. But with this runs the story of some noble, last of his race, who hides all his wealth within this barrow and there chants his farewell to life's glories. After his death the dragon takes possession of the hoard and watches over it. A condemned or banished man, desperate, hides in the barrow, discovers the treasure, and while the dragon sleeps, makes off with a golden beaker or the like, and carries it for propitiation to his master. The dragon discovers the loss and exacts fearful penalty from the people round about.

or to cleanse the carven cup of price,
 beaker bright. My brave are gone.
 And the helmet hard, all haughty with gold,
 shall part from its plating. Polishers sleep
 who could brighten and burnish the battle-mask;
 and those weeds of war that were wont to brave
 over bicker of shields the bite of steel
 rust with their bearer. The ringed mail
 fares not far with famous chieftain,
 at side of hero! No harp's delight,
 no glee-wood's gladness! No good hawk now
 flies through the hall! Nor horses fleet
 stamp in the burgstead! Battle and death
 the flower of my race have reft away."
 Mournful of mood, thus he moaned his woe,
 alone, for them all, and unblithe wept
 by day and by night, till death's fell wave
 o'erwhelmed his heart. His hoard-of-bliss
 that old ill-doer open found,
 who, blazing at twilight the barrows haunteth,
 naked foe-dragon flying by night
 folded in fire: the folk of earth
 dread him sore. 'Tis his doom to seek
 hoard in the graves, and heathen gold
 to watch, many-wintered: nor wins he thereby!
 Powerful this plague-of-the-people thus
 held the house of the hoard in earth
 three hundred winters; till One aroused
 wrath in his breast, to the ruler bearing
 that costly cup, and the king implored
 for bond of peace. So the barrow was plundered,
 borne off was booty. His boon was granted
 that wretched man; and his ruler saw
 first time what was fashioned in far-off days.
 When the dragon awoke, new woe was kindled.
 O'er the stone he snuffed. The stark-heart found
 footprint of foe who so far had gone
 in his hidden craft by the creature's head. –
 So may the undoomed easily flee
 evils and exile, if only he gain
 the grace of The Wielder! – That warden of gold
 o'er the ground went seeking, greedy to find
 the man who wrought him such wrong in sleep.
 Savage and burning, the barrow he circled
 all without; nor was any there,

dryncfæt deore; duguðellor sceoc.
 2255 Sceal se hearda helm hyrsted golde
 fætum befeallen; feormynd swefað,
 þa ðe beadogriman bywan sceoldon,
 ge swylce seo herepad, sio æt hilde gebad
 ofer borda gebræc bite irena,
 2260 brosnadæfter beorne. Ne mæg byrnan hring
 æfter wigfruman wide feran,
 hæledum be healfe. Næs hearpan wyn,
 gomen gleobeames, ne god hafoc
 geond sæl swingeð, ne se swiftra mearh
 2265 burhstede beateð. Bealocwealm hafað
 fela feorhcynna forðonsended!"
 Swa giomormod gιοhðo mænde
 an æfter eallum, unbliðe hwearf
 dægес ond nihtes, oððæt deaðes wylm
 2270 hran æt heortan. Hordwynne fond
 eald uhtsceada opene standan,
 se ðe byrnende biorgas seceð,
 nacod niðdraca, nihtes fleogeð
 fyre befangen; hyne foldbuend
 2275 swiðe ondrædað. He gesecean sceall
 hord on hrusan, þær he hæden gold
 waraðwintrum frod, ne byðhim wihte ðy sel.
 Swa se ðeodsceaða þreo hund wintra
 heold on hrusan hordærna sum,
 2280 eacencræftig, oððæt hyne an abealch
 mon on mode; mandryhtne bær
 fæted wæge, friðowære bæd
 hlaford sinne. ða wæs hord rasod,
 onboren beaga hord, bene getiðad
 2285 feasceaftum men. Frea sceawode
 fira fyrngeweorc forman siðe.
 þa se wurm onwoc, wroht wæs geniwad;
 stonc ða æfter stane, stearcheort onfand
 feondes fotlast; he to forðgestop
 2290 dyrnan cræfte draacan heafde neah.
 Swa mæg unfæge eaðe gedigan
 wean ond wræcsið, se ðe waldendes
 hyldo gehealdeþ! Hordweard sohte
 georne æfter grunde, wolde guman findan,
 2295 þone þe him on sweofote sare geteode,
 hat ond hreohmod hlæw oft ymbehwearf
 ealne utanweardne, ne ðær ænig mon
 on þære westenne; hwæðre wiges gefeh,

none in the waste.... Yet war he desired,
 was eager for battle. The barrow he entered,
 sought the cup, and discovered soon
 that some one of mortals had searched his treasure,
 his lordly gold. The guardian waited
 ill-enduring till evening came;
 boiling with wrath was the barrow's keeper,
 and fain with flame the foe to pay
 for the dear cup's loss. – Now day was fled
 as the worm had wished. By its wall no more
 was it glad to bide, but burning flew
 folded in flame: a fearful beginning
 for sons of the soil; and soon it came,
 in the doom of their lord, to a dreadful end.
 THEN the baleful fiend its fire belched out,
 and bright homes burned. The blaze stood high
 all landsfolk frightening. No living thing
 would that loathly one leave as aloft it flew.
 Wide was the dragon's warring seen,
 its fiendish fury far and near,
 as the grim destroyer those Geatish people
 hated and hounded. To hidden lair,
 to its hoard it hastened at hint of dawn.
 Folk of the land it had lapped in flame,
 with bale and brand. In its barrow it trusted,
 its battling and bulwarks: that boast was vain!
 To Beowulf then the bale was told
 quickly and truly: the king's own home,
 of buildings the best, in brand-waves melted,
 that gift-throne of Geats. To the good old man
 sad in heart, 'twas heaviest sorrow.
 The sage assumed that his sovran God
 he had angered, breaking ancient law,
 and embittered the Lord. His breast within
 with black thoughts welled, as his wont was never.
 The folk's own fastness that fiery dragon
 with flame had destroyed, and the stronghold all
 washed by waves; but the warlike king,
 prince of the Weders, plotted vengeance.
 Warriors'-bulwark, he bade them work
 all of iron – the earl's commander –
 a war-shield wondrous: well he knew
 that forest-wood against fire were worthless,
 linden could aid not. – Atheling brave,
 he was fated to finish this fleeting life,¹

beaduwe weorces, hwilum on beorh æthwearf,
 2300 sincfæt sohte. He þæt sona onfand
 ðæt hæfde gumena sum goldes gefandod,
 heahgestreona. Hordweard onbad
 earfoðlice oððæt æfen cwom;
 wæs ða gebolgen beorges hyrde,
 2305 wolde se laða lige forgyldan
 drincfæt dyre. þa wæs dæg sceacen
 wyrme on willan; no on wealle læg,
 bidan wolde, ac mid bæle for,
 fyre gefysed. Wæs se fruma egeslic
 2310 leodum on lande, swa hyt lungre wearð
 on hyra sincgifan sare geendod.
 ða se gæst ongan gledum spiwan,
 beorht hofu bærnan; bryneleoma stod
 eldum on andan. No ðær aht cwices
 2315 laðlyftfloga læfan wolde.
 Wæs þæs wyrmes wig wide gesyne,
 nearofages nið nean ond feorran,
 hu se guðsceaða Geata leode
 hatode ond hynde; hord eft gesceat,
 2320 dryhtsele dyrnne, ær dæges hwile.
 Hæfde landwara lige befangen,
 bæle ond bronde, beorges getruwode,
 wiges ond wealles; him seo wen geleah.
 þa wæs Biowulfe broga gecyðed
 2325 snude to soðe, þæt his sylfes ham,
 bolda selest, brynewylmum mealt,
 gifstol Geata. þæt ðam godan wæs
 hreow on hreðre, hygesorga mæst;
 wende se wisa þæt he wealdende
 2330 ofer ealde riht, ecean dryhtne,
 bitre gebulge. Breost innan weoll
 þeostrum geþoncum, swa him geþywe ne wæs.
 Hæfde ligdraca leoda fæsten,
 ealond utan, eorðweard ðone
 2335 gledum forgrunden; him dæs guðkyning,
 Wedera þioden, wræce leornode.
 Heht him þa gewyrcean wigendra hleo
 eallirenne, eorla dryhten,
 wigbord wrætlic; wisse he gearwe
 2340 þæt him holtwudu helpa ne meahte,
 lind wiðlige. Sceolde lændaga
 æþeling ærgod ende gebidan,
 worulde lifes, ond se wyrm somod,

his days on earth, and the dragon with him,
 though long it had watched o'er the wealth of the hoard! –
 Shame he reckoned it, sharer-of-rings,
 to follow the flyer-afar with a host,
 a broad-flung band; nor the battle feared he,
 nor deemed he dreadful the dragon's warring,
 its vigor and valor: ventures desperate
 he had passed a-plenty, and perils of war,
 contest-crash, since, conqueror proud,
 Hrothgar's hall he had wholly purged,
 and in grapple had killed the kin of Grendel,
 loathsome breed! Not least was that
 of hand-to-hand fights where Hygelac fell,
 when the ruler of Geats in rush of battle,
 lord of his folk, in the Frisian land,
 son of Hrethel, by sword-draughts died,
 by brands down-beaten. Thence Beowulf fled
 through strength of himself and his swimming power,
 though alone, and his arms were laden with thirty
 coats of mail, when he came to the sea!
 Nor yet might Hetwaras² haughtily boast
 their craft of contest, who carried against him
 shields to the fight: but few escaped
 from strife with the hero to seek their homes!
 Then swam over ocean Ecgtheow's son
 lonely and sorrowful, seeking his land,
 where Hygd made him offer of hoard and realm,
 rings and royal-seat, reckoning naught
 the strength of her son to save their kingdom
 from hostile hordes, after Hygelac's death.
 No sooner for this could the stricken ones
 in any wise move that atheling's mind
 over young Heardred's head as lord
 and ruler of all the realm to be:
 yet the hero upheld him with helpful words,
 aided in honor, till, older grown,
 he wielded the Weder-Geats. – Wandering exiles
 sought him o'er seas, the sons of Ohtere,
 who had spurned the sway of the Scylfings'-helmet,
 the bravest and best that broke the rings,
 in Swedish land, of the sea-kings' line,
 haughty hero.³ Hence Heardred's end.
 For shelter he gave them, sword-death came,
 the blade's fell blow, to bairn of Hygelac;
 but the son of Ongentheow sought again

beah ðe hordwelan heolde lange.
 2345 Oferhogode ða hringa fengel
 þæt he þone widflogan weorode gesohte,
 sidan herge; no he him þa sæcce ondred,
 ne him þæs wyrmes wig for wiht dyde,
 eafodond ellen, forðon he ær fela
 2350 nearo neðende niða gedigde,
 hildehlemma, syððan he Hroðgares,
 sigoreadig secg, sele fælsode
 ond æt guðe forgrap Grendeles mægum
 laðan cynnes. No þæt læsest wæs
 2355 hondgemota, þær mon Hygelac sloh,
 syððan Geata cyning guðe ræsum,
 freawine folca Freslundum on,
 Hreðles eafora hiorodryncum swealt,
 bille gebeaten. þonan Biowulf com
 2360 sylfes cræfte, sundnytte dreaht;
 hæfde him on earme ana XXX
 hildegeatwa, þa he to holme beag.
 Nealles Hetware hremge þorfton
 feðewiges, þe him foran ongean
 2365 linde bæron; lyt eft becwom
 fram þam hildfrecan hames niosan.
 Oferswam ða sioleða bigong sunu Ecgðeowes,
 earm anhaga, eft to leodum;
 þær him Hygd gebead hord ond rice,
 2370 beagas ond bregostol, bearne ne truwoðe
 þæt he wiðælfylcum eþelstolas
 healdan cuðe, ða wæs Hygelac dead.
 No ðy ær feasceafte findan meahton
 æt ðam æðelinge ænige ðinga,
 2375 þæt he Heardrede hlaforð wære
 oððe þone cynedom ciosan wolde;
 hwæðre he him on folce freondlarum heold,
 estum mid are, oððæt he yldra wearð,
 Wedergeatum weold. Hyne wræcmæccgas
 2380 ofer sæsohtan, suna Ohteres;
 hæfdon hy forhealden helm Scylfinga,
 þone selestan sæcyninga
 þara ðe in Swiorice sinc brytnade,
 mærne þeoden. Him þæt to mearce wearð;
 2385 he þær for feorme feorhwunde hleat
 sweordes swengum, sunu Hygelaces,
 ond him eft gewat Ongendioes bearn
 hames niosan, syððan Heardred læg,

house and home when Heardred fell,
 leaving Beowulf lord of Geats
 and gift-seat's master. – A good king he!
 THE fall of his lord he was fain to requite
 in after days; and to Eadgils he proved
 friend to the friendless, and forces sent
 over the sea to the son of Ohtere,
 weapons and warriors: well repaid he
 those care-paths cold when the king he slew.¹
 Thus safe through struggles the son of Ecgtheow
 had passed a plenty, through perils dire,
 with daring deeds, till this day was come
 that doomed him now with the dragon to strive.
 With comrades eleven the lord of Geats
 swollen in rage went seeking the dragon.
 He had heard whence all the harm arose
 and the killing of clansmen; that cup of price
 on the lap of the lord had been laid by the finder.
 In the throng was this one thirteenth man,
 starter of all the strife and ill,
 care-laden captive; cringing thence
 forced and reluctant, he led them on
 till he came in ken of that cavern-hall,
 the barrow delved near billowy surges,
 flood of ocean. Within 'twas full
 of wire-gold and jewels; a jealous warden,
 warrior trusty, the treasures held,
 lurked in his lair. Not light the task
 of entrance for any of earth-born men!
 Sat on the headland the hero king,
 spake words of hail to his hearth-companions,
 gold-friend of Geats. All gloomy his soul,
 wavering, death-bound. Wyrð full nigh
 stood ready to greet the gray-haired man,
 to seize his soul-ward, sunder apart
 life and body. Not long would be
 the warrior's spirit enwound with flesh.
 Beowulf spake, the bairn of Ecgtheow:–
 "Through store of struggles I strove in youth,
 mighty feuds; I mind them all.
 I was seven years old when the sovrán of rings,

let ðone bregostol Biowulf healdan,
 2390 Geatum wealdan. þæt wæs god cyning!
 Se ðæs leodhryres lean gemunde
 uferan dogrum, Eadgilse wearð
 feasceaftum freond, folce gestepte
 ofer sæside sunu Ohteres,
 2395 wigum ond wæpnum; he gewræc syððan
 cealdum cearsiðum, cyning ealdre bineat.
 Swa he niða gehwane genesen hæfde,
 sliðra geslyhta, sunu Ecgðiwes,
 ellenweorca, oððone anne dæg
 2400 þe he wiðþam wyrme gewegan sceolde.
 Gewat þa XIIa sum torne gebolgen
 dryhten Geata dracan sceawian.
 Hæfde þa gefrunen hwanan sio fæhðaras,
 bealoniðbiorna; him to bearme cwom
 2405 maðþumfæt mære þurh ðæs meldan hond.
 Se wæs on ðam ðreate þreotteoda secg,
 se ðæs orleges or onstealde,
 hæft hygegiomor, sceolde hean ðonon
 wong wisian. He ofer willan giong
 2410 to ðæs ðe he eorðsele anne wisse,
 hlæw under hrusan holmwylme neh,
 yðgewinne; se wæs innan full
 wrætta ond wira. Weard unhiore,
 gearo guðfreca, goldmaðmas heold,
 2415 eald under eorðan. Næs þæt yðe ceap
 to gegangenne gumena ænigum!
 Gesæt ða on næsse niðheard cyning,
 þenden hælo abead heorðgeneatum,
 goldwine Geata. Him wæs geomor sefa,
 2420 wæfre ond wælfus, wyrd ungemete neah,
 se ðone gomelan gretan sceolde,
 secean sawle hord, sundur gedælan
 lif wiðlice, no þon lange wæs
 feorh æþelinges flæsce bewunden.
 2425 Biowulf maþelade, bearn Ecgðeowes:
 "Fela ic on giogoðe guðræsa genæs,
 orleghwila; ic þæt eall gemon.
 Ic wæs syfanwintre, þa mec sinca baldor,
 freawine folca, æt minum fæder genam;

¹Literally "loan-days," days loaned to man.

²Chattuarii, a tribe that dwelt along the Rhine, and took part in repelling the raid of (Hygelac) Chocilaicus.

³Onela, son of Ongentheow, who pursues his two nephews Eanmund and Eadgils to Heardred's court, where they have taken refuge after their un-successful rebellion. In the fighting Heardred is killed.

friend-of-his-folk, from my father took me,
had me, and held me, Hrethel the king,
with food and fee, faithful in kinship.
Ne'er, while I lived there, he loathlier found me,
bairn in the burg, than his birthright sons,
Herebeald and Haethcyn and Hygelac mine.
For the eldest of these, by unmeet chance,
by kinsman's deed, was the death-bed strewn,
when Haethcyn killed him with horny bow,
his own dear liege laid low with an arrow,
missed the mark and his mate shot down,
one brother the other, with bloody shaft.
A feeless fight,² and a fearful sin,
horror to Hrethel; yet, hard as it was,
unavenged must the atheling die!
Too awful it is for an aged man
to bide and bear, that his bairn so young
rides on the gallows. A rime he makes,
sorrow-song for his son there hanging
as rapture of ravens; no rescue now
can come from the old, disabled man!
Still is he minded, as morning breaks,
of the heir gone elsewhere;³ another he hopes not
he will bide to see his burg within
as ward for his wealth, now the one has found
doom of death that the deed incurred.
Forlorn he looks on the lodge of his son,
wine-hall waste and wind-swept chambers
reft of revel. The rider sleepeth,
the hero, far-hidden;⁴ no harp resounds,
in the courts no wassail, as once was heard.

"THEN he goes to his chamber, a grief-song chants
alone for his lost. Too large all seems,
homestead and house. So the helmet-of-Weders
hid in his heart for Herebeald
waves of woe. No way could he take
to avenge on the slayer slaughter so foul;
nor e'en could he harass that hero at all
with loathing deed, though he loved him not.
And so for the sorrow his soul endured,

2430 heold mec ond hæfde Hreðel cyning,
geaf me sinc ond symbel, sibbe gemunde.
Næs ic him to life laðra owihte,
beorn in burgum, þonne his bearna hwylc,
Herebeald ond Hæðcyn oððe Hygelac min.
2435 Wæs þam yldestan ungedefelice
mæges dædum morþorbed stred,
syððan hyne Hæðcyn of hornbogan,
his freawine, flane geswencte,
miste mercelses ond his mæg ofscet,
2440 broðor oðerne blodigan gare.
þæt wæs feohleas gefeoht, fyrenum gesyngad,
hreðre hygemeðe; sceolde hwæðre swa þeah
æðeling unwrecen ealdres linnan.
Swa biðgeomorlic gomelum ceorle
2445 to gebidanne, þæt his byre ride
giong on galgan, þonne he gyd wrece,
sarigne sang, þonne his sunu hangað
hrefne to hroðre, ond he him helpe ne mæg,
eald ond infrod, ænige gefremman.
2450 Symble biðgemyndgad morna gehwylce
eaforan ellorsið; oðres ne gymeð
to gebidanne burgum in innan
yrfewardas, þonne se an hafað
þurh deaðes nyd dæda gefondad.
2455 Gesyhðsorghcearig on his suna bure
winsele westne, windge reste
reote berofene. Ridend swefað,
hæledin hoðman; nis þær hearpan sweg,
gomen in geardum, swylce ðær iu wæron.
2460 Gewiteðþonne on sealman, sorhleoðgæled
an æfter anum; þuhte him eall to rum,
wongas ond wicstede. Swa Wedra helm
æfter Herebealde heortan sorge
weallende wæg. Wihte ne meahte
2465 on ðam feorhbonan fæghðe gebetan;
no ðy ær he þone heaðorinc hatian ne meahte
laðum dædum, þeah him leof ne wæs.
He ða mid þære sorhge, þe him swa sar belamp,
gumdream ofgeaf, godes leoht geceas,

¹That is, Beowulf supports Eadgils against Onela, who is slain by Eadgils in revenge for the "care-paths" of exile into which Onela forced him.

²That is, the king could claim no wergild, or man-price, from one son for the killing of the other.

³Usual euphemism for death.

⁴Sc. in the grave.

men's gladness he gave up and God's light chose.
 Lands and cities he left his sons
 (as the wealthy do) when he went from earth.
 There was strife and struggle 'twixt Swede and Geat
 o'er the width of waters; war arose,
 hard battle-horror, when Hrethel died,
 and Ongentheow's offspring grew
 strife-keen, bold, nor brooked o'er the seas
 pact of peace, but pushed their hosts
 to harass in hatred by Hreosnabeorh.
 Men of my folk for that feud had vengeance,
 for woful war ('tis widely known),
 though one of them bought it with blood of his heart,
 a bargain hard: for Haethcyn proved
 fatal that fray, for the first-of-Geats.
 At morn, I heard, was the murderer killed
 by kinsman for kinsman,¹ with clash of sword,
 when Ongentheow met Eofor there.
 Wide split the war-helm: wan he fell,
 hoary Scylfing; the hand that smote him
 of feud was mindful, nor flinched from the death-blow.
 – "For all that he² gave me, my gleaming sword
 repaid him at war, – such power I wielded, –
 for lordly treasure: with land he entrusted me,
 homestead and house. He had no need
 from Swedish realm, or from Spear-Dane folk,
 or from men of the Gifths, to get him help, –
 some warrior worse for wage to buy!
 Ever I fought in the front of all,
 sole to the fore; and so shall I fight
 while I bide in life and this blade shall last
 that early and late hath loyal proved
 since for my doughtiness Daeghrefn fell,
 slain by my hand, the Hugas' champion.
 Nor fared he thence to the Frisian king
 with the booty back, and breast-adornments;
 but, slain in struggle, that standard-bearer
 fell, atheling brave. Not with blade was he slain,
 but his bones were broken by brawny gripe,
 his heart-waves stilled. – The sword-edge now,
 hard blade and my hand, for the hoard shall strive."
 Beowulf spake, and a battle-vow made
 his last of all: "I have lived through many
 wars in my youth; now once again,
 old folk-defender, feud will I seek,

2470 eaferum laefde, swa deðeadig mon,
 lond ond leodbyrig, þa he of life gewat.
 þa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata
 ofer wid wæter, wroht gemæne,
 hereniðhearda, syððan Hreðel swealt,
 2475 oððe him Ongendeowes eaferan wæran
 frome, fyrdhwate, freode ne woldon
 ofer heafo healdan, ac ymb Hreosnabeorh
 eatolne inwitscear oft gefremedon.
 þæt mægwine mine gewræcan,
 2480 fæhðe ond fyrene, swa hyt gefræge wæs,
 þeah ðe oðer his ealdre gebohte,
 heardan ceape; Hæðcynne wearð,
 Geata dryhtne, guðonsæge.
 þa ic on morgne gefrægn mæg oðerne
 2485 billes ecgum on bonan stælan,
 þær Ongenþeow Eofores niosað.
 Guðhelm toglad, gomela Scylfing
 hreas hildeblac; hond gemunde
 fæhðo genoge, feorhsweng ne ofteah.
 2490 Ic him þa maðmas, þe he me sealde,
 geald æt guðe, swa me gifede wæs,
 leohtan sweorde; he me lond forgeaf,
 eard, eðelwyn. Næs him ænig þearf
 þæt he to Gifðum oððe to Gardenum
 2495 oððe in Swiorice secean þurfe
 wyrsan wigfreca, weorðe gecypan.
 Symle ic him on feðan beforan wolde,
 ana on orde, ond swa to aldre sceall
 sæcce fremman, þenden þis sword þolað,
 2500 þæt mec ær ond sið oft gelæste.
 Syððan ic for dugeðum Dæghrefne wearð
 to handbonan, Huga cempan;
 nalles he ða frætwe Frescyninge,
 breostweorðunge, bringan moste,
 2505 ac in compe gecrong cumbles hyrde,
 æþeling on elne; ne wæs ecg bona,
 ac him hildegrap heortan wylmas,
 banhus gebræc. Nu sceall billes ecg,
 hond ond heard sword, ymb hord wigan."
 2510 Beowulf maðelode, beotwordum spræc
 niehstan siðe: "Ic geneðde fela
 guða on geogode; gyt ic wylle,
 frod folces wearð, fæhðe secan,
 mærdū fremman, gif mec se mansceaða

do doughty deeds, if the dark destroyer
 forth from his cavern come to fight me!"
 Then hailed he the helmeted heroes all,
 for the last time greeting his liegemen dear,
 comrades of war: "I should carry no weapon,
 no sword to the serpent, if sure I knew
 how, with such enemy, else my vows
 I could gain as I did in Grendel's day.
 But fire in this fight I must fear me now,
 and poisonous breath; so I bring with me
 breastplate and board.³ From the barrow's keeper
 no footbreadth flee I. One fight shall end
 our war by the wall, as Wyrð allots,
 all mankind's master. My mood is bold
 but forbears to boast o'er this battling-flyer.
 – Now abide by the barrow, ye breastplate-mailed,
 ye heroes in harness, which of us twain
 better from battle-rush bear his wounds.
 Wait ye the finish. The fight is not yours,
 nor meet for any but me alone
 to measure might with this monster here
 and play the hero. Hardily I
 shall win that wealth, or war shall seize,
 cruel killing, your king and lord!"
 Up stood then with shield the sturdy champion,
 stayed by the strength of his single manhood,
 and hardy 'neath helmet his harness bore
 under cleft of the cliffs: no coward's path!
 Soon spied by the wall that warrior chief,
 survivor of many a victory-field
 where foemen fought with furious clashings,
 an arch of stone; and within, a stream
 that broke from the barrow. The brooklet's wave
 was hot with fire. The hoard that way
 he never could hope unharmed to near,
 or endure those deeps,⁴ for the dragon's flame.
 Then let from his breast, for he burst with rage,
 the Weder-Geat prince a word outgo;
 stormed the stark-heart; stern went ringing
 and clear his cry 'neath the cliff-rocks gray.
 The hoard-guard heard a human voice;
 his rage was enkindled. No respite now
 for pact of peace! The poison-breath
 of that foul worm first came forth from the cave,
 hot reek-of-fight: the rocks resounded.

2515 of eorðsele ut geseceð."
 Gegrette ða gumena gehwylcne,
 hwate helmberend, hindeman siðe,
 swæse gesiðas: "Nolde ic sweord beran,
 wæpen to wyrme, gif ic wiste hu
 2520 wiððam aglæcean elles meahte
 gylpe wiðgripan, swa ic gio wiðGrendle dyde.
 Ac ic ðær heaðufyres hates wene,
 oredes ond attres; forðon ic me on hafu
 bord ond byrnan. Nelle ic beorges weard
 2525 forfleon fotes trem, ac unc furður sceal
 weorðan æt wealle, swa unc wyrð geteod,
 metod manna gehwæs. Ic eom on mode from
 þæt ic wiðþone guðflogan gylp ofersitte.
 Gebide ge on beorge byrnum werede,
 2530 secgas on searwum, hwæðer sel mæge
 æfter wælræse wunde gedygan
 uncer twega. Nis þæt eower sið
 ne gemet mannes, nefne min anes,
 þæt he wiðaglæcean eofodo dæle,
 2535 eorlscype efne. Ic mid elne sceall
 gold gegangan, oððe guðnimeð,
 feorhbealu frecne, frean eowerne!"
 Aras ða bi ronde rof oretta,
 heard under helme, hiorosercean bær
 2540 under stancleofu, strengo getruwode
 anes mannes. Ne biðswylc earges sið!
 Geseah ða be wealle se ðe worna fela,
 gumcystum god, guða gedigde,
 hildehlemma, þonne hnitan feðan,
 2545 stondan stanbogan, stream ut þonan
 breacan of beorge. Wæs þære burnan wælm
 heaðofyrum hat; ne meahte horde neah
 unbyrnende ænige hwile
 deop gedygan for dracan lege.
 2550 Let ða of breostum, ða he gebolgen wæs,
 Wedergeata leod word ut faran,
 stearcheort styrnde; stefn in becom
 heaðotorht hlynnan under harne stan.
 Hete wæs onhrered, hordweard oncnio
 2555 mannes reorde; næs ðær mara fyrst
 freode to friclan. From ærest cwom
 oruðaglæcean ut of stane,
 hat hildeswat. Hruse dynede.
 Biorn under beorge bordrand onswaf

Stout by the stone-way his shield he raised,
 lord of the Geats, against the loathed-one;
 while with courage keen that coiled foe
 came seeking strife. The sturdy king
 had drawn his sword, not dull of edge,
 heirloom old; and each of the two
 felt fear of his foe, though fierce their mood.
 Stoutly stood with his shield high-raised
 the warrior king, as the worm now coiled
 together amain: the mailed-one waited.
 Now, spire by spire, fast sped and glided
 that blazing serpent. The shield protected,
 soul and body a shorter while
 for the hero-king than his heart desired,
 could his will have wielded the welcome respite
 but once in his life! But Wyrd denied it,
 and victory's honors. – His arm he lifted
 lord of the Geats, the grim foe smote
 with atheling's heirloom. Its edge was turned
 brown blade, on the bone, and bit more feebly
 than its noble master had need of then
 in his baleful stress. – Then the barrow's keeper
 waxed full wild for that weighty blow,
 cast deadly flames; wide drove and far
 those vicious fires. No victor's glory
 the Geats' lord boasted; his brand had failed,
 naked in battle, as never it should,
 excellent iron! – 'Twas no easy path
 that Ecgtheow's honored heir must tread
 over the plain to the place of the foe;
 for against his will he must win a home
 elsewhere far, as must all men, leaving
 this lapsing life! – Not long it was
 ere those champions grimly closed again.
 The hoard-guard was heartened; high heaved his breast
 once more; and by peril was pressed again,
 enfolded in flames, the folk-commander!
 Nor yet about him his band of comrades,
 sons of athelings, armed stood
 with warlike front: to the woods they bent them,
 their lives to save. But the soul of one
 with care was cumbered. Kinship true
 can never be marred in a noble mind!

2560 wiððam gryregieste, Geata dryhten;
 ða wæs hringbogan heorte gefysed
 sæcce to seceanne. Sweord ær gebræd
 god guðcýning, gomele lafe,
 ecgum unslaw; æghwæðrum wæs
 2565 bealohycgendra broga fram oðrum.
 Stiðmod gestod wiðsteapne rond
 winia bealdor, ða se wyrm gebeah
 snude tosomne; he on searwum bad.
 Gewat ða byrnende gebogen scriðan,
 2570 to gescipe scýndan. Scýld wel gebearg
 life ond lice læssan hwile
 mærum þeodne þonne his myne sohte,
 ðær he þy fyrste, forman dogore
 wealdan moste swa him wyrd ne gescraf
 2575 hreðæt hilde. Hond up abraed
 Geata dryhten, gryrefahne sloh
 incgelafe, þæt sio ecg gewac
 brun on bane, bat unswiðor
 þonne his ðiodcýning þearfe hæfde,
 2580 bysigum gebæded. þa wæs beorges weard
 æfter heaðuswenge on hreoum mode,
 wearp wælfyre; wide sprungon
 hildeleoman. Hreðsigora ne gealp
 goldwine Geata; guðbill geswac,
 2585 nacod æt niðe, swa hyt no sceolde,
 iren ærgod. Ne wæs þæt eðe sið,
 þæt se mæra maga Ecgðeowes
 grundwong þone ofgyfan wolde;
 sceolde ofer willan wic eardian
 2590 elles hwergen, swa sceal æghwylc mon
 alætan lændagas. Næs ða long to ðon
 þæt ða aglæcean hy eft gemetton.
 Hyrte hyne hordweard (hreðer æðme weoll)
 niwan stefne; nearo ðrowode,
 2595 fyre befangen, se ðe ær folce weold.
 Nealles him on heape handgesteallan,
 æðelinga bearn, ymbe gestodon
 hildecystum, ac hy on holt bugon,
 ealdre burgan. Hiora in anum weoll
 2600 sefa wiðsorgum; sibb æfre ne mæg
 wiht onwendan þam ðe wel þenceð.
 Wiglaf wæs haten Weoxstanes sunu,

WIGLAF his name was, Weohstan's son,
 linden-thane loved, the lord of Scylfings,
 Aelfhere's kinsman. His king he now saw
 with heat under helmet hard oppressed.
 He minded the prizes his prince had given him,
 wealthy seat of the Waegmunding line,
 and folk-rights that his father owned
 Not long he lingered. The linden yellow,
 his shield, he seized; the old sword he drew: –
 as heirloom of Eanmund earth-dwellers knew it,
 who was slain by the sword-edge, son of Ohtere,
 friendless exile, erst in fray
 killed by Weohstan, who won for his kin
 brown-bright helmet, breastplate ringed,
 old sword of Eotens, Onela's gift,
 weeds of war of the warrior-thane,
 battle-gear brave: though a brother's child
 had been felled, the feud was unfelt by Onela.¹
 For winters this war-gear Weohstan kept,
 breastplate and board, till his bairn had grown
 earlship to earn as the old sire did:
 then he gave him, mid Geats, the gear of battle,
 portion huge, when he passed from life,
 fared aged forth. For the first time now
 with his leader-lord the liegeman young
 was bidden to share the shock of battle.
 Neither softened his soul, nor the sire's bequest
 weakened in war.² So the worm found out
 when once in fight the foes had met!
 Wiglaf spake, – and his words were sage;
 sad in spirit, he said to his comrades:–
 "I remember the time, when mead we took,
 what promise we made to this prince of ours
 in the banquet-hall, to our breaker-of-rings,
 for gear of combat to give him requital,
 for hard-sword and helmet, if hap should bring
 stress of this sort! Himself who chose us
 from all his army to aid him now,
 urged us to glory, and gave these treasures,
 because he counted us keen with the spear

leoflic lindwiga, leod Scylfinga,
 mæg ælfheres; geseah his mondryhten
 2605 under heregriman hat þrowian.
 Gemunde ða ða are þe he him ær forgeaf,
 wicstede weligne Wægmunðinga,
 folcrihta gehwylc, swa his fæder ahte.
 Ne mihte ða forhabban; hond rond gefeng,
 2610 geolwe linde, gomel swyrd geteah,
 þæt wæs mid eldum Eanmundes laf,
 suna Ohteres. þam æt sæcce wearð,
 wræccan wineleasum, Weohstan bana
 meces ecgum, ond his magum ætbær
 2615 brunfagne helm, hringde byrnan,
 eald sweord etonisc; þæt him Onela forgeaf,
 his gædelinges guðgewædu,
 fyrðsearo fuslic, no ymbe ða fæhðe spræc,
 þeah ðe he his broðor bearn abredwade.
 2620 He frætwe geheold fela missera,
 bill ond byrnan, oððæt his byre mihte
 eorlscipe efnan swa his ærfæder;
 geaf him ða mid Geatum guðgewæda,
 æghwæs unrim, þa he of ealdre gewat,
 2625 frod on forðweg. þa wæs forma sið
 geongan cempan, þæt he guðe ræs
 mid his freodryhtne fremman sceolde.
 Ne gemealt him se modsefa, ne his mæges laf
 gewac æt wige; þæt se wyrm onfand,
 2630 syððan hie togædre gegan hæfdon.
 Wiglaf maðelode, wordrihta fela
 sægde gesiðum (him wæs sefa geomor):
 "Ic ðæt mæl geman, þær we medu þegun,
 þonne we geheton ussum hlaforde
 2635 in biorsele, ðe us ðas beagas geaf,
 þæt we him ða guðgetawa gyldan woldon
 gif him þyslicu þearf gelumpe,
 helmas ond heard sweord. ðe he usic on herge geceas
 to ðyssum siðfate sylfes willum,
 2640 onmunde usic mærða, ond me þas maðmas geaf,
 þe he usic garwigend gode tealde,
 hwate helmberend, þeah ðe hlaford us

¹Eofor for Wulf. – The immediate provocation for Eofor in killing "the hoary Scyfling," Ongentheow, is that the latter has just struck Wulf down; but the king, Haethcyn, is also avenged by the blow. See the detailed description below.

²Hygelac.

³Shield.

⁴The hollow passage.

and hardy 'neath helm, though this hero-work
our leader hoped unhelped and alone
to finish for us, – folk-defender
who hath got him glory greater than all men
for daring deeds! Now the day is come
that our noble master has need of the might
of warriors stout. Let us stride along
the hero to help while the heat is about him
glowing and grim! For God is my witness
I am far more fain the fire should seize
along with my lord these limbs of mine!³
Unsuited it seems our shields to bear
homeward hence, save here we essay
to fell the foe and defend the life
of the Weders' lord. I wot 'twere shame
on the law of our land if alone the king
out of Geatish warriors woe endured
and sank in the struggle! My sword and helmet,
breastplate and board, for us both shall serve!"
Through slaughter-reek strode he to succor his chieftain,
his battle-helm bore, and brief words spake:–
"Beowulf dearest, do all bravely,
as in youthful days of yore thou vowedst
that while life should last thou wouldst let no wise
thy glory droop! Now, great in deeds,
atheling steadfast, with all thy strength
shield thy life! I will stand to help thee."
At the words the worm came once again,
murderous monster mad with rage,
with fire-billows flaming, its foes to seek,
the hated men. In heat-waves burned
that board⁴ to the boss, and the breastplate failed
to shelter at all the spear-thane young.
Yet quickly under his kinsman's shield
went eager the earl, since his own was now
all burned by the blaze. The bold king again
had mind of his glory: with might his glaive
was driven into the dragon's head, –
blow nerved by hate. But Naegling⁵ was shivered,
broken in battle was Beowulf's sword,
old and gray. 'Twas granted him not
that ever the edge of iron at all
could help him at strife: too strong was his hand,
so the tale is told, and he tried too far
with strength of stroke all swords he wielded,

þis ellenweorc ana ađohte
to gefremmanne, folces hyrde,
2645 for đam he manna mæst mærdā gefremede,
dæda dollicra. Nu is se dæg cumen
þæt ure mandryhten mægenes behofað,
godra guðrinca; wutun gongan to,
helpan hildfruman, þenden hyt sy,
2650 gledegesa grim. God wat on mec
þæt me is micle leofre þæt minne lichaman
mid minne goldgyfan gled fæðmie.
Ne þyncedme gerysne þæt we rondas beren
eft to earde, nemne we æror mægen
2655 fane gefyllan, feorh ealgian
Wedra ðeodnes. Ic wat geare
þæt næron ealdgewyrht, þæt he ana scyle
Geata duguðe gnorn þrowian,
gesigan æt sæcce; urum sceal sweord ond helm,
2660 byrne ond beaduscud, bam gemæne."
Wod þa þurh þone wælrec, wigheafolan bær
frean on fultum, fea worda cwæð:
"Leofa Biowulf, læst eall tela,
swa ðu on geoguðfeore geara gecwæde
2665 þæt ðu ne alæte be ðe lifigendum
dom gedreosan. Scealt nu dædum rof,
æðeling anhydig, ealle mægene
feorh ealgian; ic ðe fullæstu."
æfter đam wordum wyrm yrre cwom,
2670 atol inwitgæst, oðre siðe
fyrwylmum fah fionda niosian,
laðra manna; liguðum for.
Born bord wiðrond, byrne ne meahte
geongum garwigan geoce gefremman,
2675 ac se maga geonga under his mæges scyld
elne geeode, þa his agen wæs
gledum forgrunden. þa gen guðcyning
mærdā gemunde, mægenstrengo sloh
hildebille, þæt hyt on heafolan stod
2680 niþe genyded; Nægling forbærst,
geswac æt sæcce sweord Biowulfes,
gomol ond grægmæl. Him þæt gifedne ne wæs
þæt him irenna ecge mihton
helpan æt hilde; wæs sio hond to strong,
2685 se ðe meca gehwane, mine gefræge,
swenge ofersohte, þonne he to sæcce bær
wæpen wundrum heard; næs him wihte ðe sel.

though sturdy their steel: they steeled him nought.
 Then for the third time thought on its feud
 that folk-destroyer, fire-dread dragon,
 and rushed on the hero, where room allowed,
 battle-grim, burning; its bitter teeth
 closed on his neck, and covered him
 with waves of blood from his breast that welled.

'TWAS now, men say, in his sovran's need
 that the earl made known his noble strain,
 craft and keenness and courage enduring.
 Heedless of harm, though his hand was burned,
 hardy-hearted, he helped his kinsman.
 A little lower the loathsome beast
 he smote with sword; his steel drove in
 bright and burnished; that blaze began
 to lose and lessen. At last the king
 wielded his wits again, war-knife drew,
 a biting blade by his breastplate hanging,
 and the Weders'-helm smote that worm asunder,
 felled the foe, flung forth its life.
 So had they killed it, kinsmen both,
 athelings twain: thus an earl should be
 in danger's day! – Of deeds of valor
 this conqueror's-hour of the king was last,
 of his work in the world. The wound began,
 which that dragon-of-earth had erst inflicted,
 to swell and smart; and soon he found
 in his breast was boiling, baleful and deep,
 pain of poison. The prince walked on,
 wise in his thought, to the wall of rock;
 then sat, and stared at the structure of giants,
 where arch of stone and steadfast column
 upheld forever that hall in earth.
 Yet here must the hand of the henchman peerless
 lave with water his winsome lord,
 the king and conqueror covered with blood,
 with struggle spent, and unspan his helmet.
 Beowulf spake in spite of his hurt,

þa wæs þeodsceaða þriddan siðe,
 frecne fyrdraca, fæhða gemyndig,
 2690 ræsde on ðone rofan, þa him rum ageald,
 hat ond heaðogrim, heals ealne ymbefeng
 biteran banum; he geblodegod wearð
 sawuldriore, swat yðum weoll.
 ða ic æt þearfe gefrægn þeodcyniges
 2695 andlongne eorl ellen cyðan,
 cræft ond cenðu, swa him gecynde wæs.
 Ne hedde he þæs heafolan, ac sio hand gebarn
 modiges mannes, þær he his mæges healp,
 þæt he þone niðgæst niðor hwene sloh,
 2700 secg on searwum, þæt ðæt sword gedeaf,
 fah ond fæted, þæt ðæt fyr ongon
 sweðrian syððan. þa gen sylf cyning
 geweold his gewitte, wællseaxe gebræd
 biter ond beaduscearp, þæt he on byrnan wæg;
 2705 forwrat Wedra helm wyrm on middan.
 Feond gefyldan (ferh ellen wræc),
 ond hi hyne þa begen abroten hæfdon,
 sibædelingas. Swylc sceolde secg wesan,
 þegn æt ðearfe! þæt ðam þeodne wæs
 2710 siðast sigehwila sylfes dædum,
 worlde geweorces. ða sio wund ongon,
 þe him se eorðdraca ær geworhte,
 swelan ond swellan; he þæt sona onfand,
 þæt him on breostum bealonide weoll
 2715 attor on innan. ða se ædeling giong
 þæt he bi wealle wishycgende
 gesæt on sesse; seah on enta geweorc,
 hu ða stanbogan stapulum fæste
 ece eorðreced innan healde.
 2720 Hyne þa mid handa heorodreorigne,
 þeoden mærne, þegn ungemete till
 winedryhten his wætere gelafede,
 hilde sædne, ond his helm onspeon.
 Biowulf mapelode (he ofer benne spræc,
 2725 wunde wælbleate; wisse he gearwe

¹That is, although Eanmund was brother's son to Onela, the slaying of the former by Weohstan is not felt as cause of feud, and is rewarded by gift of the slain man's weapons.

²Both Wiglaf and the sword did their duty. – The following is one of the classic passages for illustrating the comitatus as the most conspicuous Germanic institution, and its underlying sense of duty, based partly on the idea of loyalty and partly on the practical basis of benefits received and repaid.

³Sc. "than to bide safely here," – a common figure of incomplete comparison.

⁴Wiglaf's wooden shield.

⁵Gering would translate "kinsman of the nail," as both are made of iron.

his mortal wound; full well he knew
his portion now was past and gone
of earthly bliss, and all had fled
of his file of days, and death was near:
"I would fain bestow on son of mine
this gear of war, were given me now
that any heir should after me come
of my proper blood. This people I ruled
fifty winters. No folk-king was there,
none at all, of the neighboring clans
who war would wage me with 'warriors'-friends'¹
and threat me with horrors. At home I bided
what fate might come, and I cared for mine own;
feuds I sought not, nor falsely swore
ever on oath. For all these things,
though fatally wounded, fain am I!
From the Ruler-of-Man no wrath shall seize me,
when life from my frame must flee away,
for killing of kinsmen! Now quickly go
and gaze on that hoard 'neath the hoary rock,
Wiglaf loved, now the worm lies low,
sleeps, heart-sore, of his spoil bereaved.
And fare in haste. I would fain behold
the gorgeous heirlooms, golden store,
have joy in the jewels and gems, lay down
softlier for sight of this splendid hoard
my life and the lordship I long have held."
I HAVE heard that swiftly the son of Weohstan
at wish and word of his wounded king, –
war-sick warrior, – woven mail-coat,
battle-sark, bore 'neath the barrow's roof.
Then the clansman keen, of conquest proud,
passing the seat,¹ saw store of jewels
and glistening gold the ground along;
by the wall were marvels, and many a vessel
in the den of the dragon, the dawn-flier old:
unburnished bowls of bygone men
reft of richness; rusty helms
of the olden age; and arm-rings many
wondrously woven. – Such wealth of gold,
booty from barrow, can burden with pride
each human wight: let him hide it who will! –
His glance too fell on a gold-wove banner
high o'er the hoard, of handiwork noblest,

þæt he dæghwila gedrogen hæfde,
eorðan wynne; ða wæs eall sceacen
dogorgerimes, deaðungemete neah):
"Nu ic suna minum syllan wolde
2730 guðgewædu, þær me gifeðe swa
ænig yrfeweard æfter wurde
lice gelenge. Ic ðas leode heold
fiftig wintra; næs se folccyning,
ymbesittendra ænig ðara,
2735 þe mec guðwinum gretan dorste,
egesan ðeon. Ic on earde bad
mælgescrafta, heold min tela,
ne sohte searoniðas, ne me swor fela
aða on unriht. Ic ðæs ealles mæg
2740 feorhbennum seoc gefean habban;
for ðam me witan ne ðearf waldend fira
mordorbealo maga, þonne min sceaceð
lif of lice. Nu ðu lungre geong
hord sceawian under harne stan,
2745 Wiglaf leofa, nu se wyrm ligeð,
swefeðsare wund, since bereafod.
Bio nu on ofoste, þæt ic ærwelan,
goldæht ongite, gearo sceawige
swegle searogimmas, þæt ic ðy seft mæge
2750 æfter maððumwelan min alætan
lif ond leodscipe, þone ic longe heold."
ða ic snude gefrægn sunu Wihstanes
æfter wordcwydum wundum dryhtne
hyran heaðosiocum, hringnet beran,
2755 brogdne beadusercean under beorges hrof.
Geseah ða sigehreðig, þa he bi sesse geong,
magoþegn modig maððumsigla fealo,
gold glitnian grunde getenge,
wundur on wealle, ond þæs wyrmes denn,
2760 ealdes uhtflogan, orcas stondan,
fyrnmanfa fatu feormendlease,
hyrstum behrorene; þær wæs helm monig
eald ond omig, earmbeaga fela
searwum gesæled. Sinc eaðe mæg,
2765 gold on grunde, gumcynnes gehwone
oferhigian, hyde se ðe wylle.
Swylce he siomian geseah segn eallgylden
heah ofer horde, hondwundra mæst,
gelocen leoðocræftum; of ðam leoma stod,

¹That is, swords.

brilliantly broidered; so bright its gleam,
all the earth-floor he easily saw
and viewed all these vessels. No vestige now
was seen of the serpent: the sword had ta'en him.
Then, I heard, the hill of its hoard was reft,
old work of giants, by one alone;
he burdened his bosom with beakers and plate
at his own good will, and the ensign took,
brightest of beacons. – The blade of his lord
– its edge was iron – had injured deep
one that guarded the golden hoard
many a year and its murder-fire
spread hot round the barrow in horror-billows
at midnight hour, till it met its doom.
Hasted the herald, the hoard so spurred him
his track to retrace; he was troubled by doubt,
high-souled hero, if haply he'd find
alive, where he left him, the lord of Weders,
weakening fast by the wall of the cave.
So he carried the load. His lord and king
he found all bleeding, famous chief
at the lapse of life. The liegeman again
plashed him with water, till point of word
broke through the breast-hoard. Beowulf spake,
sage and sad, as he stared at the gold. –
"For the gold and treasure, to God my thanks,
to the Wielder-of-Wonders, with words I say,
for what I behold, to Heaven's Lord,
for the grace that I give such gifts to my folk
or ever the day of my death be run!
Now I've bartered here for booty of treasure
the last of my life, so look ye well
to the needs of my land! No longer I tarry.
A barrow bid ye the battle-fanned raise
for my ashes. 'Twill shine by the shore of the flood,
to folk of mine memorial fair
on Hrones Headland high uplifted,
that ocean-wanderers oft may hail
Beowulf's Barrow, as back from far
they drive their keels o'er the darkling wave."
From his neck he unclasped the collar of gold,
valorous king, to his vassal gave it
with bright-gold helmet, breastplate, and ring,
to the youthful thane: bade him use them in joy.
"Thou art end and remnant of all our race

2770 þæt he þone grundwong ongitan meakte,
wræte giondwilitan. Næs ðæs wyrmes þær
onsyn ænig, ac hyne ecg fornam.
ða ic on hlæwe gefrægn hord reafian,
eald enta geweorc, anne mannan,
2775 him on bearm hladon bunan ond discas
sylfes dome; segn eac genom,
beacna beorhtost. Bill ær gescod
(ecg wæs iren) ealdhlaforðes
þam ðara maðma mundbora wæs
2780 longe hwile, ligeges an wæg
hatne for horde, hioroweallende
middelnihtum, oðþæt he mordre swealt.
Ar wæs on ofoste, eftsides georn,
fræt wum gefyrðred; hyne fyrwet bræc,
2785 hwæðer collenferð cwicne gemette
in ðam wongstede Wedra þeoden
ellensiocne, þær he hine ær forlet.
He ða mid þam maðmum mærne þioden,
dryhten sinne, driorigne fand
2790 ealdres æt ende; he hine eft ongon
wæteres weorpan, oðþæt wordes ord
breosthord þurhbræc.
gomel on gihðe (gold sceawode):
"Ic ðara frætwa frean ealles ðanc,
2795 wuldurcynige, wordum secge,
ecum dryhtne, þe ic her on starie,
þæs ðe ic moste minum leodum
ær swyltdæge swylc gestrynan.
Nu ic on maðma hord mine bebohte
2800 frode feorhlege, fremmaðgena
leoda þearfe; ne mæg ic her leng wesan.
Hataðheadomære hlæw gewyrcean
beorhtne æfter bæle æt brimes nosan;
se scel to gemyndum minum leodum
2805 heah hlifian on Hronesnæsse,
þæt hit sæliðend syððan hatan
Biowulfes biorh, ða ðe brentingas
ofer floda genipu feorran drifað."
Dyde him of healse hring gyldenre
2810 þioden þristhydig, þegne gesealde,
geongum garwigan, goldfahne helm,
beah ond byrnan, het hyne brucan well:
"þu eart endelaf usses cynnes,
Wægmunðinga. Ealle wyrd forsweop

the Waegmunding name. For Wyrð hath swept them,
all my line, to the land of doom,
earls in their glory: I after them go."

This word was the last which the wise old man
harbored in heart ere hot death-waves
of balefire he chose. From his bosom fled
his soul to seek the saints' reward.

IT was heavy hap for that hero young
on his lord beloved to look and find him
lying on earth with life at end,
sorrowful sight. But the slayer too,
awful earth-dragon, empty of breath,
lay felled in fight, nor, fain of its treasure,
could the writhing monster rule it more.
For edges of iron had ended its days,
hard and battle-sharp, hammers' leaving;¹
and that flier-afar had fallen to ground
hushed by its hurt, its hoard all near,
no longer lusty aloft to whirl
at midnight, making its merriment seen,
proud of its prizes: prone it sank
by the handiwork of the hero-king.
Forsooth among folk but few achieve,
– though sturdy and strong, as stories tell me,
and never so daring in deed of valor, –
the perilous breath of a poison-foe
to brave, and to rush on the ring-board hall,
whenever his watch the warden keeps
bold in the barrow. Beowulf paid
the price of death for that precious hoard;
and each of the foes had found the end
of this fleeting life. Befell erelong
that the laggards in war the wood had left,
trothbreakers, cowards, ten together,
fearing before to flourish a spear
in the sore distress of their sovran lord.
Now in their shame their shields they carried,
armor of fight, where the old man lay;
and they gazed on Wiglaf. Wearied he sat
at his sovran's shoulder, shieldsman good,
to wake him with water.² Nowise it availed.
Though well he wished it, in world no more
could he barrier life for that leader-of-battles
nor baffle the will of all-wielding God.

2815 mine magas to metodscafte,
eorlas on elne; ic him æfter sceal."
þæt wæs þam gomelan gingæste word
breostgehygdum, ær he bælcure,
hate heaðowylmas; him of hreðre gewat
2820 sawol secean soðfæstra dom.
ða wæs gegongen guman unfroðum
earfoðlice, þæt he on eorðan geseah
þone leofestan lifes æt ende
bleate gebæran. Bona swylce læg,
2825 egeslic eorðdraca ealdre bereafod,
bealwe gebæded. Beahhordum leng
wyrm wohbogen wealdan ne moste,
ac hine irenna ecga fornamon,
hearde, heaðoscearde homera lafe,
2830 þæt se widfloga wundum stille
hreas on hrusan hordærne neah.
Nalles æfter lyfte lacende hwearf
middelnihum, maðmæhta wlanc
ansyn ywde, ac he eorðan gefeoll
2835 for ðæs hildfruman hondgeweorce.
Huru þæt on lande lyt manna ðah,
mægenagenda, mine gefræge,
þeah ðe he dæda gehwæs dyrstig wære,
þæt he wiðattorsceaðan orede geræsde,
2840 oððe hringsele hondum styrede,
gif he wæccende weard onfunde
buon on beorge. Biowulfe wearð
dryhtmaðma dæl deaðe forgolden;
hæfde æghwæðer ende gefered
2845 lænan lifes. Næs ða lang to ðon
þæt ða hildlatan holt ofgefan,
tydre treowlogan tyne ætsomne.
ða ne dorston ær dareðum lacan
on hyra mandryhtnes miclan þearfe,
2850 ac hy scamiende scyldas bæran,
guðgewædu, þær se gomela læg,
wlitan on Wilaf. He gewergad sæt,
feðecempa, frean eaxlum neah,
wehte hyne wætre; him wiht ne speow.
2855 Ne meahte he on eorðan, ðeah he ude wel,
on ðam frumgare feorh gehealdan,
ne ðæs wealdendes wiht oncirran;
wolde dom godes dædum rædan

¹Where Beowulf lay.

Doom of the Lord was law o'er the deeds
of every man, as it is to-day.
Grim was the answer, easy to get,
from the youth for those that had yielded to fear!
Wiglaf spake, the son of Weohstan, –
mournful he looked on those men unloved:–
"Who sooth will speak, can say indeed
that the ruler who gave you golden rings
and the harness of war in which ye stand
– for he at ale-bench often-times
bestowed on hall-folk helm and breastplate,
lord to liegemen, the likeliest gear
which near of far he could find to give, –
threw away and wasted these weeds of battle,
on men who failed when the foemen came!
Not at all could the king of his comrades-in-arms
venture to vaunt, though the Victory-Wielder,
God, gave him grace that he got revenge
sole with his sword in stress and need.
To rescue his life, 'twas little that I
could serve him in struggle; yet shift I made
(hopeless it seemed) to help my kinsman.
Its strength ever waned, when with weapon I struck
that fatal foe, and the fire less strongly
flowed from its head. – Too few the heroes
in throe of contest that thronged to our king!
Now gift of treasure and girding of sword,
joy of the house and home-delight
shall fail your folk; his freehold-land
every clansman within your kin
shall lose and leave, when lords highborn
hear afar of that flight of yours,
a fameless deed. Yea, death is better
for liegemen all than a life of shame!"

THAT battle-toil bade he at burg to announce,
at the fort on the cliff, where, full of sorrow,
all the morning earls had sat,
daring shieldsmen, in doubt of twain:
would they wail as dead, or welcome home,
their lord beloved? Little¹ kept back
of the tidings new, but told them all,
the herald that up the headland rode. –
"Now the willing-giver to Weder folk

gumena gehwylcum, swa he nu gen deð.
2860 þa wæs æt ðam geongan grim ondswaru
eðbegete þam ðe ær his elne forleas.
Wiglaf maðelode, Weohstanes sunu,
sec, sarigferð (seah on unleofe):
"þæt, la, mæg secgan se ðe wyle soðsþecan
2865 þæt se mondryhten se eow ða maðmas geaf,
eoredgeatwe, þe ge þær on standað,
þonne he on ealubence oft gesealde
healsittendum helm ond byrnan,
þeoden his þegnum, swylce he þrydlicost
2870 ower feor oððe neah findan meahte,
þæt he genunga guðgewædu
wraðe forwurpe, ða hyne wig beget.
Nealles folccýning fyrdgesteallum
gylpan þorfte; hwæðre him god uðe,
2875 sigora waldend, þæt he hyne sylfne gewræc
ana mid ecge, þa him wæs elnes þearf.
Ic him lifwraðe lytle meahte
ætgifan æt guðe, ond ongan swa þeah
ofer min gemet mæges helpan;
2880 symle wæs þy sæmra, þonne ic sweorde drep
ferhðgeniðlan, fyr unswiðor
weoll of gewitte. Wergendra to lyt
þrong ymbe þeoden, þa hyne sio þrag becwom.
Nu sceal sincþego ond swyrdgifu,
2885 eall eðelwyn eowrum cynne,
lufen alicgean; londrihtes mot
þære mægburge monna æghwylc
idel hweorfan, syððan æðelingas
feorran gefricgean fleam eowerne,
2890 domleasan dæd. Deaðbiðsella
eorla gehwylcum þonne edwitlif!"
Heht ða þæt heaðoweorc to hagan biodan
up ofer ecgclif, þær þæt eorlweorod
morgenlongne dæg modgiomor sæt,
2895 bordhæbbende, bega on wenum,
endedogores ond eftcymes
lofes monnes. Lyt swigode
niwra spella se ðe næs gerad,
ac he soðlice sægde ofer ealle:
2900 "Nu is wilgeofa Wedra leoda,
dryhten Geata, deaðbedde fæst,

¹What had been left or made by the hammer; well-forged.

²Trying to revive him.

in death-bed lies; the Lord of Geats
 on the slaughter-bed sleeps by the serpent's deed!
 And beside him is stretched that slayer-of-men
 with knife-wounds sick:² no sword availed
 on the awesome thing in any wise
 to work a wound. There Wiglaf sitteth,
 Weohstan's bairn, by Beowulf's side,
 the living earl by the other dead,
 and heavy of heart a head-watch³ keeps
 o'er friend and foe. – Now our folk may look
 for waging of war when once unhidden
 to Frisian and Frank the fall of the king
 is spread afar. – The strife began
 when hot on the Hugas⁴ Hygelac fell
 and fared with his fleet to the Frisian land.
 Him there the Hetwaras humbled in war,
 plied with such prowess their power o'erwhelming
 that the bold-in-battle bowed beneath it
 and fell in fight. To his friends no wise
 could that earl give treasure! And ever since
 the Merowings' favor has failed us wholly.
 Nor aught expect I of peace and faith
 from Swedish folk. 'Twas spread afar
 how Ongentheow reft at Ravenswood
 Haethcyn Hrethling of hope and life,
 when the folk of Geats for the first time sought
 in wanton pride the Warlike-Scylfings.
 Soon the sage old sire⁵ of Ohtere,
 ancient and awful, gave answering blow;
 the sea-king⁶ he slew, and his spouse redeemed,
 his good wife rescued, though robbed of her gold,
 mother of Ohtere and Onela.
 Then he followed his foes, who fled before him
 sore beset and stole their way,
 bereft of a ruler, to Ravenswood.
 With his host he besieged there what swords had left,
 the weary and wounded; woes he threatened
 the whole night through to that hard-pressed throng:
 some with the morrow his sword should kill,
 some should go to the gallows-tree
 for rapture of ravens. But rescue came
 with dawn of day for those desperate men
 when they heard the horn of Hygelac sound,
 tones of his trumpet; the trusty king
 had followed their trail with faithful band.

wunaðwælreste wyrmes dædum.
 Him on efn ligeð ealdorgewinna
 sexbennum seoc; sweorde ne meahthe
 2905 on ðam aglæcean ænige þinga
 wunde gewyrcean. Wiglaf siteð
 ofer Biowulfe, byre Wihstanes,
 eorl ofer oðrum unlifigendum,
 healdeðhigemæðum heafodwearde
 2910 leofes ond laðes. Nu ys leodum wen
 orleghwile, syððan underne
 Froncum ond Frysum fyll cyninges
 wide weorðeð. Wæs sio wroht scepen
 heard wiðHugas, syððan Higelac cwom
 2915 faran flotherge on Fresna land,
 þær hyne Hetware hilde genægdon,
 elne geeodon mid ofermægene,
 þæt se byrnwiga bugan sceolde,
 feoll on feðan, nalles frætwe geaf
 2920 ealdor dugode. Us wæs a syððan
 Merewioingas milts ungyfeðe.
 Ne ic to Sweoðeode sibbe oððe treowe
 wihte ne wene, ac wæs wide cuð
 þætte Ongendio ealdre besnyðede
 2925 Hæðcen Hreþling wiðHrefnawudu,
 þa for onmedlan ærest gesohton
 Geata leode Guðscilfingas.
 Sona him se froda fæder Ohtheres,
 eald ond egesfull, ondslyht ageaf,
 2930 abreot brimwisan, bryd ahredde,
 gomela iomeowlan golde berofene,
 Onelan modor ond Ohtheres,
 ond ða folgode feorhgeniðlan,
 oððæt hi oðeodon earfoðlice
 2935 in Hrefnesholt hlafordlease.
 Besæt ða sinherge sweorda lafe,
 wundum werge, wean oft gehet
 earmre teohhe ondlonge niht,
 cwæð, he on mergenne meces ecgum
 2940 getan wolde, sum on galgtreowum
 fuglum to gamene. Frofor eft gelamp
 sarigmodum somod ærdæge,
 syððan hie Hygelaces horn ond byman,
 gealdor ongeaton, þa se goda com
 2945 leoda dugode on last faran.
 Wæs sio swatswaðu Sweona ond Geata,

"THE bloody swath of Swedes and Geats
and the storm of their strife, were seen afar,
how folk against folk the fight had wakened.
The ancient king with his atheling band
sought his citadel, sorrowing much:
Ongentheow earl went up to his burg.
He had tested Hygelac's hardihood,
the proud one's prowess, would prove it no longer,
defied no more those fighting-wanderers
nor hoped from the seamen to save his hoard,
his bairn and his bride: so he bent him again,
old, to his earth-walls. Yet after him came
with slaughter for Swedes the standards of Hygelac
o'er peaceful plains in pride advancing,
till Hrethelings fought in the fenced town.¹
Then Ongentheow with edge of sword,
the hoary-bearded, was held at bay,
and the folk-king there was forced to suffer
Eofor's anger. In ire, at the king
Wulf Wonreding with weapon struck;
and the chieftain's blood, for that blow, in streams
flowed 'neath his hair. No fear felt he,
stout old Scylfing, but straightway repaid
in better bargain that bitter stroke
and faced his foe with fell intent.
Nor swift enough was the son of Wonred
answer to render the aged chief;
too soon on his head the helm was cloven;
blood-bedecked he bowed to earth,
and fell adown; not doomed was he yet,
and well he waxed, though the wound was sore.
Then the hardy Hygelac-thane,²
when his brother fell, with broad brand smote,
giants' sword crashing through giants'-helm
across the shield-wall: sank the king,
his folk's old herdsman, fatally hurt.
There were many to bind the brother's wounds
and lift him, fast as fate allowed
his people to wield the place-of-war.

wælræs weora wide gesyne,
hu ða folc mid him fæhðe towehton.
Gewat him ða se goda mid his gædelingum,
2950 frod, felageomor, fæsten secean,
eorl Ongenþio, ufor oncirde;
hæfde Higelaces hilde gefrunen,
wlonces wigcræft, wiðres ne truwoðe,
þæt he sæmannum onsacan mihte,
2955 heaðoliðendum hord forstandan,
bearn ond bryde; beah eft þonan
eald under eorðweall. þa wæs æht boden
Sweona leodum, segn Higelaces
freoðowong þone forðofereodon,
2960 syððan Hreðlingas to hagan þrungon.
þær wearð Ongenðiow eegum sweorda,
blondenfexa, on bid wrecen,
þæt se þeodcýning ðafian sceolde
Eafores anne dom. Hyne yrringa
2965 Wulf Wonreding wæpne geræhte,
þæt him for swenge swat ædrum sprong
forðunder fexe. Næs he forht swa ðeh,
gomela Scilfing, ac forgeald hraðe
wyrsan wrixle wælhlem þone,
2970 syððan ðeodcýning þyder oncirde.
Ne meahte se snella sunu Wonredes
ealdum ceorle ondslyht giofan,
ac he him on heafde helm ær gescer,
þæt he blode fah bugan sceolde,
2975 feoll on foldan; næs he fæge þa git,
ac he hyne gewyrpte, þeah ðe him wund hrine.
Let se hearda Higelaces þegn
bradne mece, þa his broðor læg,
eald sweord eotonisc, entiscne helm
2980 breacan ofer bordweal; ða gebeah cýning,
folces hyrde, wæs in feorh dropen.
ða wæron monige þe his mæg wriðon,
ricone arærdon, ða him gerymed wearð
þæt hie wælstowe wealdan moston.
2985 þenden reafode rinc oðerne,

¹Nothing.

²Dead.

³Death-watch, guard of honor, "lyke-wake."

⁴A name for the Franks.

⁵Ongentheow.

⁶Haethcyn.

But Eofor took from Ongentheow,
 earl from other, the iron-breastplate,
 hard sword hilted, and helmet too,
 and the hoar-chief's harness to Hygelac carried,
 who took the trappings, and truly promised
 rich fee 'mid folk, – and fulfilled it so.
 For that grim strife gave the Geatish lord,
 Hrethel's offspring, when home he came,
 to Eofor and Wulf a wealth of treasure,
 Each of them had a hundred thousand³
 in land and linked rings; nor at less price reckoned
 mid-earth men such mighty deeds!
 And to Eofor he gave his only daughter
 in pledge of grace, the pride of his home.
 "Such is the feud, the foeman's rage,
 death-hate of men: so I deem it sure
 that the Swedish folk will seek us home
 for this fall of their friends, the fighting-Scylfings,
 when once they learn that our warrior leader
 lifeless lies, who land and hoard
 ever defended from all his foes,
 furthered his folk's weal, finished his course
 a hardy hero. – Now haste is best,
 that we go to gaze on our Geatish lord,
 and bear the bountiful breaker-of-rings
 to the funeral pyre. No fragments merely
 shall burn with the warrior. Wealth of jewels,
 gold untold and gained in terror,
 treasure at last with his life obtained,
 all of that booty the brands shall take,
 fire shall eat it. No earl must carry
 memorial jewel. No maiden fair
 shall wreath her neck with noble ring:
 nay, sad in spirit and shorn of her gold,
 oft shall she pass o'er paths of exile
 now our lord all laughter has laid aside,
 all mirth and revel. Many a spear
 morning-cold shall be clasped amain,
 lifted aloft; nor shall lilt of harp
 those warriors wake; but the wan-hued raven,
 fain o'er the fallen, his feast shall praise
 and boast to the eagle how bravely he ate
 when he and the wolf were wasting the slain."
 So he told his sorrowful tidings,
 and little⁴ he lied, the loyal man

nam on Ongendio irenbyrnan,
 heard swyrd hilted ond his helm somod,
 hares hyrste Higelace bær.
 He ðam frætsum feng ond him fægre gehet
 2990 leana mid leodum, ond gelæste swa;
 geald þone guðræs Geata dryhten,
 Hreðles eafora, þa he to ham becom,
 Iofore ond Wulfe mid ofermaðmum,
 sealde hiora gehwæðrum hund þusenda
 2995 landes ond locenra beaga (ne ðorfte him ða lean oðw
 mon on middangearde), syððan hie ða mærdæ geslogon,
 ond ða Iofore forgeaf angan dohtor,
 hamweorðunge, hylde to wedde.
 þæt ys sio fæhðo ond se feondscipe,
 3000 wælniðwera, ðæs ðe ic wen hafo,
 þe us seceaðto Sweona leoda,
 syððan hie gefricgeað frean userne
 ealdorleasne, þone ðe ær geheold
 wiðhettendum hord ond rice
 3005 æfter hæleða hryre, hwate Scildingas,
 folcred fremede oððe furður gen
 eorlscipe efnde. Nu is ofost betost
 þæt we þeodcyning þær sceawian
 ond þone gebringan, þe us beagas geaf,
 3010 on adfære. Ne scel anes hwæt
 meltan mid þam modigan, ac þær is maðma hord,
 gold unrime grimme geceapod,
 ond nu æt siðestan sylfes feore
 beagas gebohte. þa sceall brond fretan,
 3015 æled þeccean, nalles eorl wegan
 maðdum to gemyndum, ne mægðscyne
 habban on healse hringweorðunge,
 ac sceal geomormod, golde bereafod,
 oft nalles æne elland tredan,
 3020 nu se herewisa hleahtor alegde,
 gamen ond gleodream. Forðon sceall gar wesan
 monig, morgenceald, mundum bewunden,
 hæfen on handa, nalles hearpan sweg
 wigend weccean, ac se wonna hrefn
 3025 fus ofer fægum fela reordian,
 earne secgan hu him æt æte speow,
 þenden he wiðwulf wæl reafode."
 Swa se secg hwata secgende wæs
 laðra spella; he ne leag fela
 3030 wyrda ne worda. Weorod eall aras;

of word or of work. The warriors rose;
 sad, they climbed to the Cliff-of-Eagles,
 went, welling with tears, the wonder to view.
 Found on the sand there, stretched at rest,
 their lifeless lord, who had lavished rings
 of old upon them. Ending-day
 had dawned on the doughty-one; death had seized
 in woful slaughter the Weders' king.
 There saw they, besides, the strangest being,
 loathsome, lying their leader near,
 prone on the field. The fiery dragon,
 fearful fiend, with flame was scorched.
 Reckoned by feet, it was fifty measures
 in length as it lay. Aloft erewhile
 it had revelled by night, and anon come back,
 seeking its den; now in death's sure clutch
 it had come to the end of its earth-hall joys.
 By it there stood the stoups and jars;
 dishes lay there, and dear-decked swords
 eaten with rust, as, on earth's lap resting,
 a thousand winters they waited there.
 For all that heritage huge, that gold
 of bygone men, was bound by a spell,⁵
 so the treasure-hall could be touched by none
 of human kind, – save that Heaven's King,
 God himself, might give whom he would,
 Helper of Heroes, the hoard to open, –
 even such a man as seemed to him meet.

A PERILOUS path, it proved, he¹ trod
 who heinously hid, that hall within,
 wealth under wall! Its watcher had killed
 one of a few,² and the feud was avenged
 in woful fashion. Wondrous seems it,
 what manner a man of might and valor
 oft ends his life, when the earl no longer
 in mead-hall may live with loving friends.
 So Beowulf, when that barrow's warden
 he sought, and the struggle; himself knew not

eodon unbliðe under Earnanæs,
 wollenteare wundur sceawian.
 Fundon ða on sande sawulleasne
 hlimbed healdan þone þe him hringas geaf
 3035 ærran mælum; þa wæs endedæg
 godum gegongen, þæt se guðcýning,
 Wedra þeoden, wundordeaðe swealt.
 ær hi þær gesegan syllicran wiht,
 wyrm on wonge wiðerræhtes þær
 3040 laðne licgean; wæs se legdraca
 grimlic, gryrefah, gledum beswæled.
 Se wæs fiftiges fotgemearces
 lang on legere, lyftwynne heold
 nihtes hwilum, nyðer eft gewat
 3045 dennes niosian; wæs ða deaðe fæst,
 hæfde eorðscrafa ende genyttod.
 Him big stodan bunan ond orcas,
 discas lagon ond dyre swyrd,
 omige, þurhetone, swa hie wiðeorðan fæðm
 3050 þusend wintra þær eardodon.
 þonne wæs þæt yrfe, eacencræftig,
 iumonna gold galdre bewunden,
 þæt ðam hringsele hrinan ne moste
 gumena ænig, nefne god sylfa,
 3055 sigora soðcýning, sealde þam ðe he wolde
 (he is manna gehyld) hord openian,
 efne swa hwylcum manna swa him gemet ðuhte.
 þa wæs gesyne þæt se siðne ðah
 þam ðe unrihte inne gehydde
 3060 wræte under wealle. Weard ær ofsloh
 feara sumne; þa sio fæhðgewearð
 gewrecen wraðlice. Wundur hwar þonne
 eorl ellenrof ende gefere
 lifgesceafta, þonne leng ne mæg
 3065 mon mid his magum meduseld buan.
 Swa wæs Biowulfe, þa he biorges weard
 sohte, searoniðas; seolfa ne cuðe
 þurh hwæt his worulde gedal weorðan sceolde.

¹The line may mean: till Hrethelings stormed on the hedged shields, – i.e. the shield-wall or hedge of defensive war – Hrethelings, of course, are Geats.

²Eofor, brother to Wulf Wonreding.

³Sc. "value in" hides and the weight of the gold.

⁴Not at all.

⁵Laid on it when it was put in the barrow. This spell, or in our days the "curse," either prevented discovery or brought dire ills on the finder and taker.

in what wise he should wend from the world at last.
 For³ princes potent, who placed the gold,
 with a curse to doomsday covered it deep,
 so that marked with sin the man should be,
 hedged with horrors, in hell-bonds fast,
 racked with plagues, who should rob their hoard.
 Yet no greed for gold, but the grace of heaven,
 ever the king had kept in view.⁴
 Wiglaf spake, the son of Weohstan:–
 "At the mandate of one, oft warriors many
 sorrow must suffer; and so must we.
 The people's-shepherd showed not aught
 of care for our counsel, king beloved!
 That guardian of gold he should grapple not, urged we,
 but let him lie where he long had been
 in his earth-hall waiting the end of the world,
 the hest of heaven. – This hoard is ours
 but grievously gotten; too grim the fate
 which thither carried our king and lord.
 I was within there, and all I viewed,
 the chambered treasure, when chance allowed me
 (and my path was made in no pleasant wise)
 under the earth-wall. Eager, I seized
 such heap from the hoard as hands could bear
 and hurriedly carried it hither back
 to my liege and lord. Alive was he still,
 still wielding his wits. The wise old man
 spake much in his sorrow, and sent you greetings
 and bade that ye build, when he breathed no more,
 on the place of his balefire a barrow high,
 memorial mighty. Of men was he
 worthiest warrior wide earth o'er
 the while he had joy of his jewels and burg.
 Let us set out in haste now, the second time
 to see and search this store of treasure,
 these wall-hid wonders, – the way I show you, –
 where, gathered near, ye may gaze your fill
 at broad-gold and rings. Let the bier, soon made,
 be all in order when out we come,
 our king and captain to carry thither
 – man beloved – where long he shall bide
 safe in the shelter of sovran God."
 Then the bairn of Weohstan bade command,
 hardy chief, to heroes many
 that owned their homesteads, hither to bring

Swa hit oðdomes dæg diope benemdon
 3070 þeodnas mære, þa ðæt þær dydon,
 þæt se secg wære synnum scildig,
 hergum geheaðerod, hellbendum fæst,
 wommum gewitnad, se ðone wong strude,
 næs he goldhwæte gearwor hæfde
 3075 agendes est ær gesceawod.
 Wiglaf maðelode, Wihstanes sunu:
 "Oft sceall eorl monig anes willan
 wræc adreogan, swa us geworden is.
 Ne meahton we gelæran leofne þeoden,
 3080 rices hyrde, ræd ænigne,
 þæt he ne grette goldweard þone,
 lete hyne licgean þær he longe wæs,
 wicum wunian oðworuldende;
 heold on heahgesceap. Hord ys gesceawod,
 3085 grimme gegongen; wæs þæt gifede to swið
 þe ðone þeodcýning þyder ontyhte.
 Ic wæs þær inne ond þæt eall geondseh,
 recedes geatwa, þa me gerymed wæs,
 nealles swæslice siðalyfed
 3090 inn under eorðweall. Ic on ofoste gefeng
 micle mid mundum mægenbyrðenne
 hordgestreona, hider ut ætbær
 cýninge minum. Cwico wæs þa gena,
 wis ond gewittig; worn eall gespræc
 3095 gomol on gehðo ond eowic gretan het,
 bæd þæt ge geworhton æfter wines dædum
 in bælstede beorh þone hean,
 micelne ond mærne, swa he manna wæs
 wigend weorðfullost wide geond eorðan,
 3100 þenden he burhwelan brucan moste.
 Uton nu efstan oðre siðe,
 seon ond secean searogimma geþræc,
 wundur under wealle; ic eow wisige,
 þæt ge genoge neon sceawiað
 3105 beagas ond brad gold. Sie sio bær gearo,
 ædre geæfned, þonne we ut cymen,
 ond þonne gefeferian frean userne,
 leofne mannan, þær he longe sceal
 on ðæs waldendes wære geþolian."
 3110 Het ða gebeodan byre Wihstanes,
 hæle hildedior, hæleða monegum,
 boldagendra, þæt hie bælwudu
 feorran feredon, folcagende,

firewood from far – o’er the folk they ruled –
 for the famed-one’s funeral. " Fire shall devour
 and wan flames feed on the fearless warrior
 who oft stood stout in the iron-shower,
 when, sped from the string, a storm of arrows
 shot o’er the shield-wall: the shaft held firm,
 feately feathered, followed the barb."

And now the sage young son of Weohstan
 seven chose of the chieftain’s thanes,
 the best he found that band within,
 and went with these warriors, one of eight,
 under hostile roof. In hand one bore
 a lighted torch and led the way.

No lots they cast for keeping the hoard
 when once the warriors saw it in hall,
 altogether without a guardian,
 lying there lost. And little they mourned
 when they had hastily haled it out,
 dear-bought treasure! The dragon they cast,
 the worm, o’er the wall for the wave to take,
 and surges swallowed that shepherd of gems.
 Then the woven gold on a wain was laden –
 countless quite! – and the king was borne,
 hoary hero, to Hrones-Ness.

THEN fashioned for him the folk of Geats
 firm on the earth a funeral-pile,
 and hung it with helmets and harness of war
 and breastplates bright, as the boon he asked;
 and they laid amid it the mighty chieftain,
 heroes mourning their master dear.
 Then on the hill that hugest of balefires
 the warriors wakened. Wood-smoke rose
 black over blaze, and blent was the roar
 of flame with weeping (the wind was still),
 till the fire had broken the frame of bones,
 hot at the heart. In heavy mood
 their misery moaned they, their master’s death.
 Wailing her woe, the widow¹ old,

godum togenes: "Nu sceal gled fretan,
 3115 weaxan wonna leg wigena strengel,
 þone ðe oft gebad isernscure,
 þonne stræla storm strengum gebæded
 scoc ofer scildweall, sceft nytte heold,
 feðergearwum fus flane fulleode."
 3120 Huru se snotra sunu Wihstanes
 acigde of corðre cyninges þegnas
 syfone tosomne, þa selestan,
 eode eahta sum under inwithrof
 hilderinca; sum on handa bær
 3125 æledleoman, se ðe on orde geong.
 Næs ða on hlytme hwa þæt hord strude,
 syððan orwearde ænigne dæl
 secgas gesegon on sele wunian,
 læne licgan; lyt ænig mearn
 3130 þæt hi ofostlice ut geferedon
 dyre maðmas. Dracan ec scufun,
 wurm ofer weallclif, leton weg niman,
 flod fæðmian frætwa hyrde.
 þa wæs wunden gold on wæn hladen,
 3135 æghwæs unrim, æþeling boren,
 har hilderinc to Hronesnæsse.
 Him ða gegiredan Geata leode
 ad on eorðan unwacligne,
 helmum behongen, hildebordum,
 3140 beorhtum byrnum, swa he bena wæs;
 alegdon ða tomiddes mærne þeoden
 hæleðhiofende, hlaford leofne.
 Ongunnon þa on beorge bælfyra mæst
 wigend weccan; wudurec astah,
 3145 sweart ofer swioðole, swogende leg
 wope bewunden (windblond gelæg),
 oðþæt he ða banhus gebrocen hæfde,
 hat on hreðre. Higum unrote
 modceare mændon, mondryhtnes cwealm;
 3150 swylce giomorgyd Geatisc meowle
 bundenheorde

¹Probably the fugitive is meant who discovered the hoard. Ten Brink and Gering assume that the dragon is meant. "Hid" may well mean here "took while in hiding."

²That is "one and a few others." But Beowulf seems to be indicated.

³Ten Brink points out the strongly heathen character of this part of the epic. Beowulf’s end came, so the old tradition ran, from his unwitting interference with spell-bound treasure.

⁴A hard saying, variously interpreted. In any case, it is the somewhat clumsy effort of the Christian poet to tone down the heathenism of his material by an edifying observation.

her hair upbound, for Beowulf's death
 sung in her sorrow, and said full oft
 she dreaded the doleful days to come,
 deaths enow, and doom of battle,
 and shame. – The smoke by the sky was devoured.
 The folk of the Weders fashioned there
 on the headland a barrow broad and high,
 by ocean-farers far descried:
 in ten days' time their toil had raised it,
 the battle-brave's beacon. Round brands of the pyre
 a wall they built, the worthiest ever
 that wit could prompt in their wisest men.
 They placed in the barrow that precious booty,
 the rounds and the rings they had reft erewhile,
 hardy heroes, from hoard in cave, –
 trusting the ground with treasure of earls,
 gold in the earth, where ever it lies
 useless to men as of yore it was.
 Then about that barrow the battle-keen rode,
 atheling-born, a band of twelve,
 lament to make, to mourn their king,
 chant their dirge, and their chieftain honor.
 They praised his earlship, his acts of prowess
 worthily witnessed: and well it is
 that men their master-friend mightily laud,
 heartily love, when hence he goes
 from life in the body forlorn away.
 Thus made their mourning the men of Geatland,
 for their hero's passing his hearth-companions:
 quoth that of all the kings of earth,
 of men he was mildest and most beloved,
 to his kin the kindest, keenest for praise.

song sorgcearig swiðe geneahhe
 þæt hio hyre heofungdagas hearde ondrede,
 wælfylla worn, werudes egesan,
 3155 hynðo ond hæftnyd. Heofon rece swealg.
 Geworhton ða Wedra leode
 hleo on hoe, se wæs heah ond brad,
 wægliðendum wide gesyne,
 ond betimbredon on tyn dagum
 3160 beadurofes becn, bronda lafe
 wealle beworhton, swa hyt weorðlicost
 foresnotre men findan mihton.
 Hi on beorg dydon beg ond siglu,
 eall swylce hyrsta, swylce on horde ær
 3165 niðhedige men genumen hæfdon,
 forleton eorla gestreon eorðan healdan,
 gold on greote, þær hit nu gen lifað
 eldum swa unnyt swa hit æror wæs.
 þa ymbe hlæw riðan hildediore,
 3170 æþelinga bearn, ealra twelfe,
 woldon ceare cwīðan ond kyning mænan,
 wordgyd wrecan ond ymb wer sprecan;
 eahtodan eorlscipe ond his ellenweorc
 duguðum demdon, swa hit gedefe bið
 3175 þæt mon his winedryhten wordum herge,
 ferhðum freoge, þonne he forðscile
 of lichaman læded weorðan.
 Swa begnornodon Geata leode
 hlaforðes hryre, heorðgeneatas,
 3180 cwædon þæt he wære wyruldcyninga
 manna mildust ond monðwærust,
 leodum liðost ond lofgeornost.

¹Nothing is said of Beowulf's wife in the poem, but Bugge surmises that Beowulf finally accepted Hygd's offer of kingdom and hoard, and, as was usual, took her into the bargain.