

The Opening of *Beowulf*

Lo! We Spear-Danes	in days-of-yore
Hwæt! Wē Gār-Dena	in geārdagum,
of-kings of the people	glory have heard-of
þēod-cyninga,	þrym gefrūnon,
how those princes	deeds-of-courage accomplished.
hū ðā æþelingas	ellen fremedon.
Often Scyld Scefing	of-foes hosts
Oft Scyld Scefing	sceaþena þrēatum,
many peoples	of-mead-benches deprived
monegum mægþum,	meodo-setla oftēah,
terrified warriors,	after he first was
egsode eorlas,	syððan árest wearð
destitute discovered;	he awaited comfort for this,
fēasceaft funden;	hē þæs frōfre gebād,
grew under the clouds,	in-glory prospered
wēox under wolcnum,	weorðmyndum þāh,
until to him each	of those neighbors
oðþæt him ághwylc	þāra ymsittendra
over the whale's-riding	obey had-to
ofer hron-rāde	hýran scolde,
pay tribute.	That was a good king.
gomban gylðan.	Þæt wæs gōd cyning.

London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A.xv: The sole manuscript of *Beowulf*

