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# BEOWULF

TRANSLATED BY

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Yale UNIVERSITY PRESS

New Haven and London

2017

Hwæt wē Gār-Dena in gēardagum,  
þēodcyninga þrym gefrūnon,  
hū ðā æþelingas ellen fremedon.

Oft Scyld Scēfing sceaþena þrēatum,  
monegum mægþum meodosetla oftēah,  
egsode eorl[as], syððan ærest wearð  
fēasceaft funden. Hē þæs frōfre gebād:  
wēox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þāh,  
oð þæt him æghwylc þāra ymsittendra  
10 ofer hronrāde hýran scolde,  
gomban gýldan. Þæt wæs gōd cyning.  
Ðām eafera wæs æfter cenned  
geong in gēardum, þone God sende  
folce tō frōfre; fyrenðearfe ongeat—  
þæt hie ær drugon aldor(l)ēase  
lange hwile. Him þæs liffrea,  
wuldres wealdend woroldāre forgeaf:  
Bēow wæs brēme —blæd wīde sprang—  
Scyldes eafera Scedelandum in.  
20 Swā sceal ge(ong) guma gōde gewyrcean,  
fromum feohgiftum on fæder (bea)rme,  
þæt hine on ylde eft gewunigen  
wilgesīþas, þonne wīg cume,  
lēode gelæsten; lofdædum sceal  
in mægþa gehwære man geþeon.  
Him ðā Scyld gewāt tō gescæphwile  
felahrōr fēran on frēan wære.  
Hi hyne þā ætbæron tō brimes faroðe,  
swāse gesīþas, swā hē selfa bæd  
30 þenden wordum wēold. Wīne Scyldinga,  
lēof landfruma lange āhte—  
þær æt hýðe stōd, hringedstefna

OF THE STRENGTH OF THE SPEAR-DANES in days gone by  
we have heard, and of their hero-kings:  
the prodigious deeds those princes performed!  
Often Scyld Scefing shattered the ranks  
of hostile tribes and filled them with terror.  
He began as a foundling but flourished later  
and grew to glory beneath the sky,  
until the countries on every coast  
over the waves where the whales ride  
yielded to him with yearly tribute  
to keep the peace. He was a good king.

10

Afterward he was granted an offspring;  
God sent a son to console the people,  
for He knew their anguish, how they ached  
from lack of a leader. The Lord therefore  
bestowed great honor on Beow, Scyld's son.  
The fame of this man spread far and wide,  
reaching throughout the northern realms.  
Thus, to be powerful, a prince  
should hand out gifts of his father's gold,  
20 in order that someday, when enemies strike,  
his friends and vassals will stand at his side.  
Through praiseworthy deeds a young man prospers.

20

Scyld went forth at the fated moment,  
still strong, into the Lord's safekeeping.  
His close companions carried him down  
to the edge of the sea, as he had ordered  
when in his long reign over the land  
he had governed them as their great protector.  
30 In the harbor the king's ship stood with curved prow,

30

isig ond útfūs— æþelinges fær;  
 ālēdon þā lēofne þēoden,  
 bēaga bryttan on bearm scipes,  
 mārne be mæste. Þær wæs mādma fela  
 of feorwegum frætwa gēlæded.  
 Ne hýrde ic cýmlicor cēol gēgyrwan  
 hildewæpnum ond heaðowædum,  
 40 billum ond byrnum; him on bearme læg  
 mādma mænigo, þā him mid scoldon  
 on flōdes æht feor gēwītan.  
 Nalæs hī hine læssan lācum tēodan,  
 þēodgēstrēonum, þonne þā dydon  
 þē hine æt frumscafte forð onsendon  
 ænne ofer yðe umborwesende.  
 Þā gýt hīe him āsetton sēgen gy(l)denne  
 hēah ofer hēafod, lēton holm beran,  
 gēafon on gārsecg; him wæs gēōmor sefa,  
 50 murnende mōd. Men ne cunnon  
 secgan tō sōðe, selerædende,  
 hælēð under heofenum, hwā þæm hlæste onfēng.  
 Ðā wæs on burgum Bēow Scyldinga,  
 lēof lēodcyning longe þrāge  
 folcum gefrāge — fæder ellor hwearf,  
 aldor of earde— oþ þæt him eft onwōc  
 hēah Healfdene; hēold þenden lifde  
 gamol ond gūðrēouw glæde Scyldingas.  
 Ðæm fēower bearn forðgerīmed  
 60 in worold wōcun, weoroda ræswa[n],  
 Heorogār ond Hrōðgār ond Hālgā til;  
 hýrde ic þæt Yrse wæs Onelan cwēn,  
 Heaðo-Scilfingas healsgēbedda.  
 Þā wæs Hrōðgāre herespēd gyfen,

ice-laden and eager to sail.  
 They laid him down, their beloved lord,  
 the giver of gold, on the ship's deck,  
 majestic beside the mast. Great wealth  
 was piled around him, from faraway places—  
 I have never heard of a ship so heavy  
 with warrior's gear and battle weapons,  
 chain-mail and swords; on his chest lay  
 massive treasures to travel with him  
 far out into the ocean's realm—  
 40 much more lavish now than the little  
 they bestowed on him when he was sent forth  
 alone, as a child, on the chill waves.  
 High up they placed a golden pennant,  
 then offered him to the encircling sea  
 with heavy hearts. No one can tell—  
 wise man or warrior— where that ship landed.

Then Beow took over, and for a long time  
 he ruled the nation, greatly renowned,  
 admired by his men. To him was born  
 50 the large-hearted Healfdene, who all his life,  
 fearsome in war, defended his people.  
 He fathered four children into the world:  
 Heorogar, Hrothgar, Halga the Good,  
 and Yrse, who was Onela's queen,  
 the bedfellow of that battle-fierce Swede.

Then Hrothgar too was granted such glory

wīges weorðmynd, þæt him his winemāgas  
 ġeorne hýrdon, oðð þæt sēo ġeogoð ġewēox,  
 magodriht miçel. Him on mōd bearn  
 þæt healreçed hātan wolde,  
 medoærn miçel men ġewyrçean  
 70 þon[n]e yldo bearn æfre ġefrūnon,  
 ond þær on innan eall ġedælan  
 ġeongum ond ealdum swylç him God sealde,  
 būton folcscare ond feorum gumena.  
 Ðā ic wīde ġefræġn weorc ġebannan  
 manigre mæġþe ġeond þisne middangeard,  
 folcstede frætwan. Him on fyrste ġelomp,  
 ædre mid yldum, þæt hit wearð eal ġearo,  
 healærna mæst; scōp him Heort naman  
 sē þe his wordes ġeweald wīde hæfde.  
 80 Hē bēot ne ālēh: bēagas dælde,  
 sinc æt symle. Sele hlifade  
 hēah ond hornġeap; heaðowylma bād,  
 lādān liġes— ne wæs hit lenġe þā ġen  
 þæt se ecġhete āpumswēoran  
 æfter wælnīðe wæcnan scolde.  
 Ðā se ellengæst earfoðlice  
 þrāġe ġepolode, sē þe in þýstrum bād,  
 þæt hē dōgora ġehwām drēam ġehýrde  
 hlūdne in healle. Þær wæs hearpan swēġ,  
 90 swutol sang scopes. Sæġde sē þe cūþe  
 frumsceaft fira feorran recçan,  
 cwæð þæt se ælmihtiga eorðan worh(te),  
 wlitebeorhtne wang, swā wæter bebūġeð,  
 ġesette siġehrēþiġ sunnan ond mōnan,  
 lēoman tō lēohte landbūendum,  
 ond ġefrætwaðe foldan scēatas

and fortune in war that his friends and kinsmen  
 eagerly served him—strong young soldiers  
 who became a mighty army of men.  
 And then the ring-giver gave the order  
 60 to build a mighty mead-hall whose fame  
 would last forever while mortals lived,  
 and within that hall he would hand out  
 to young and old all that he had,  
 whatever God might grant him, except  
 for the common land and the lives of men.  
 Then, I have heard, all over the earth  
 the command was announced to many nations  
 that they should adorn it. And in due time—  
 70 quickly, as people count—it was finished,  
 the greatest of halls. He called it “Heorot,”  
 that king who ruled wide lands with his words.  
 And keeping his promise, he portioned out golden  
 bracelets and rings. The hall towered high  
 with wide-arched gables, awaiting the fire  
 that would devastate it; the days approached  
 when his son-in-law’s hatred and sword-sharp rage  
 would flare up, rekindling a deadly feud.

THEN THE FIERCE DEMON who prowled in darkness  
 80 suffered torment: it tore at his heart  
 to hear rejoicing inside the hall,  
 the sound of the harp, and the bard singing  
 day after day for people’s delight,  
 telling how humankind was created,  
 how the Almighty made the earth  
 a glistening plain girded by water  
 and in triumph set the sun and the moon  
 as lamps for earth-dwellers, adorned the world

leomum ond læafum, lif eac gesceop  
 cynna gehwylcum þara ðe twice hwyrfaþ.  
 Swā ðā drihtguman drēamum lifdon,  
 100 eadiġlice, oð ðæt ān ongan  
 fyrene fre(m)man fēond on helle;  
 wæs se grimma gæst Grendel hāten,  
 mære mearcstapa, sē þe mōras hēold,  
 fen ond fæsten; fifelcynnes eard  
 wonsæli wer weardode hwile,  
 siþðan him scyppen forscifen hæfde  
 in Caines cynne— þone cwealm ġewræc  
 ēce drihten, þæs þe hē Ābel slōg;  
 ne ġefeah hē þære fæhðe, ac hē hine feor forwræc,  
 110 metod for þy māne mancynne fram.  
 Þanon untýdras ealle onwōcon,  
 eotenas ond ylfe ond orcneas,  
 swylce ġi(ga)ntas, þā wið Gode wunnon  
 lange þrage; hē him ðæs lēan forġeald.

Ġewāt ða nēosian, syþðan niht becōm,  
 hean hūses, hū hit Hring-Dene  
 æfter bēorpeġe ġebūn hæfdon.  
 Fand þā ðær inne æpelinga ġedriht  
 swefan æfter symble; sorġe ne cūðon,  
 120 wonscaft wera. Wiht unhælo,  
 grim ond grædig, ġearo sōna wæs,  
 rēoc ond rēþe, ond on ræste ġenam  
 þritig þeġna; þanon eft ġewāt  
 hūðe hrēmig tō hām faran,  
 mid þære wælfylle wica nēosan.  
 Ðā wæs on ūhtan mid ærdæġe  
 Grendles ġiðcræft ġumum undyrne;

with branches and leaves, and then gave life  
 to every being under the sky. 90

The warriors lived in joy and laughter  
 until one creature unleashed his crimes.  
 "Grendel" they called that grim spirit,  
 a hellish fiend who haunted the wasteland,  
 unhappy soul, and stalked the fens.  
 He had lived long in the land of monsters,  
 condemned by the Lord with all Cain's clan  
 in revenge for the vicious murder of Abel.  
 Cain had no joy of that crime; the Creator  
 banished the brute far from mankind. 100  
 From him sprang many evil spirits,  
 ogres, elves, and the savage undead,  
 giants as well, who warred against God  
 until He killed them and all their kin.

Grendel went forth when darkness had fallen  
 to see how the Ring-Danes in the high hall  
 had bedded down when their beer-feast was done.  
 He found the noblemen on the floor  
 sound asleep, knowing no sadness  
 or human pain. That God-cursed creature  
 hurried over and horribly grabbed  
 thirty thanes; then he strode back  
 gloating, glutted with blood and slaughter,  
 dragging the dead to his dank lair. 110

In the dim light just before daybreak,  
 his violence was revealed to men.

þā wæs æfter wiste wōp up āhafen,  
 miçel morgenswēg. Mære þeoden,  
 130 æpeling ærgōd, unbliðe sæt,  
 þolode ðrýðswýð, þegnsgorge drēah,  
 syðþan hie þæs lāðan lāst scēawedon,  
 werġan gāstes; wæs þæt ġewin tō strang,  
 lāð ond longsum. Næs hit lengra fyrst,  
 ac ymb āne niht eft ġefremede  
 morðbeala mære, ond nō mearn fore,  
 fāhðe ond fyrene; wæs tō fæst on þām.  
 Þā wæs ēaðfynde þē him elles hwær  
 ġerūmicor ræste [sōhte],  
 140 bed æfter būrum, ðā him ġebēacnod wæs,  
 ġesæġd sōðlice sweotolan tācne  
 healðeġnes hete; hēold hyne syðþan  
 fyr ond fæstor sē þām fēonde ætwand.  
 Swā rixode ond wið rihte wan,  
 āna wið eallum, oð þæt idel stōd  
 hūsa sēlest. Wæs sēo hwil miçel:  
 twelf wintra tīd torn ġepolode  
 wine Scyldinga, wēana ġehwelcne,  
 sīdra sorga. Forðām sōna wearð  
 150 ylða bearnum, undyrne cūð  
 ġyddum ġeōmore þætte Grendel wan  
 hwile wið Hrōþgār, heteniðas wæg,  
 fyrene ond fāhðe fela missera,  
 singāle sæce; sibbe ne wolde  
 wið manna hwone mæġenes Denīga,  
 feorhbealo feorran, fēa þingian,

Lamentation arose, loud wailing,  
 cries of horror. The king of the Danes  
 sat there stunned, stricken with grief,  
 120 overwhelmed by the loss of his liegemen,  
 with a blank stare at the bloody footprints  
 of that ghastly fiend—a hardship too great  
 for a man to endure. On the next day,  
 at nightfall, the monster returned, remorseless;  
 again he committed a savage slaughter,  
 without a grain of guilt for his crimes.  
 Afterward many went to sleep elsewhere,  
 out in the huts, when the bitter hatred  
 of the vicious hall-raider was fully revealed.  
 130 Whoever could escape from his clutches  
 kept far away from Hrothgar's hall.

So Grendel ruled and fought what was right,  
 one against all, till that tall house  
 stood there empty. It stayed deserted  
 for twelve long winters, while the Danes' lord  
 suffered from inconsolable grief,  
 an anguish beyond all human endurance.  
 The news soon spread to neighboring lands;  
 140 bards sang songs that were filled with sorrow,  
 telling of Grendel's gruesome acts,  
 how that dark spirit, malice-driven,  
 had fought against Hrothgar with cruel fury  
 and ravaged the kingdom, committing crimes  
 unmatched in ghastliness, drenched with gore,  
 not wishing peace with any person  
 in the Danish host, nor wanting to halt  
 his butchery or make blood-payment.

nē þær nænig witenā wēnan þorfte  
 beorhtre bōte tō banan folmum,  
 (ac se) æglæca ēhtende wæs,  
 160 deorc dēapscua, duguþe ond geogope,  
 seomade ond syrede; sinnihte hēold,  
 mistige mōras; men ne cunnon  
 hwyder helrūnan hwyrftum scrīþað.  
 Swā fela fyrena fēond mancynnes,  
 atol āngengea oft gefremede,  
 heardra hȳnða; Heorot eardode,  
 sincfāge sel sweartum nihtum.  
 Nō hē þone gifstōl grētan mōste,  
 māþðum for metode, nē his myne wisse.  
 170 Þæt wæs wræc micel wine Scyldinga,  
 mōdes brecca. Monig oft gesæt,  
 rīce tō rūne; ræd eahtedon,  
 hwæt swiðferhðum sēlest wære  
 wið færgryrum tō gefremmanne.  
 Hwīlum hīe gehēton æt hærgtrafum  
 wīgweorpunga, wordum bædon  
 þæt him gāstbona gēoce gefremede  
 wið þeodþrēaum. Swylc wæs þeaw hyra,  
 hāþenra hyht; helle gemundon  
 180 in mōdsefan, metod hīe ne cūpon,  
 dæda dēmend, ne wiston hīe drihten God,  
 nē hīe hūru heofena helm herian ne cūpon,  
 wuldres waldend. Wā bið þæm ðe sceal  
 þurh sliðne nið sāwle bescūfan  
 in fýres fæþm, frōfre ne wēnan,  
 wihte gewendan; wēl bið þæm þe mōt  
 æfter dēaðdæge drihten sēcean  
 ond tō fæder fæþmum freoðo wilnian.

No counselor had cause to expect  
 a man-price from that murderer's hands;  
 the monster kept up his crimes, devouring  
 150 young and old, a dark death-shadow  
 slinking through the mists of the moorland  
 in the long nights. Men cannot know  
 where hell's servants hover and roam.

So Grendel continued his vile attacks,  
 stalking the fens alone, inflicting  
 hideous pain on all the people.  
 He took over Heorot's jewel-rich hall  
 and camped there during the hours of darkness  
 160 (because he was cast out from God's love  
 he could not approach the precious throne).  
 This caused the king of the Danes great torment  
 and heart-heaviness. Many wise men  
 worried over what should be done  
 to save the land from these savage onslaughts.  
 Some of them even prayed to idols,  
 made pagan sacrifices, and pledged  
 themselves to the Slayer of Souls, to gain  
 170 help from this horror. That was the thing  
 those heathens hoped for; deep in their hearts  
 they served the devil. They did not know  
 God Almighty, the Judge of Men,  
 and could not give praise to the Prince of Heaven,  
 the King of the World. Woe unto him  
 who in times of turmoil has thrust his soul  
 into the fire's embrace, not begging  
 for heaven's mercy. But blessed is he  
 who after his death-day goes to God  
 180 and finds peace in the Father's bosom.

Swā ðā mælceare maga Healfdenes  
 190 singāla sēað; ne mihte snotor haeleð  
 wēan onwendan; wæs þæt ġewin tō swyð,  
 lāþ ond longsum, þē on ðā lēode becōm,  
 nýdwracu niþgrim, nihtbealwa mæst.

þæt fram hām ġefræġn Higelāces þeġn  
 ġōd mid Ġeatum, Grendles dāda;  
 sē wæs moncynnes mæġenes strengest  
 on þām dæġe þyses lifes,  
 æþele ond ēacen. Hēt him yðlidan  
 ġōdne ġeġyrwan; cwæð, hē ġūðcýning  
 200 ofer swanrāde sēcean wolde,  
 mārne þēoden, þā him wæs manna þearf.  
 Ðone siðfæt him snotere ceorlas  
 lýthwōn lōgon, þeah hē him lēof wære;  
 hwetton hige(r)ōfne, hæl scēawedon.  
 Hæfde se ġōda Ġeata lēoda  
 cempan ġecorone, þāra þe hē cēnoste  
 findan mihte. Fiftýna sum  
 sundwudu sōhte; secġ wisade,  
 lagucræftig mon landġemyrcu.  
 210 Fyrst forð ġewāt; flota wæs on yðum,  
 bāt under beorge. Beornas ġearwe  
 on stefn stigon. Strēamas wundon,  
 sund wið sande. Secġas bæron  
 on bearm nacan beorhte frætwe,  
 ġūðsearo ġeatolić; guman üt scufon,  
 weras on wilsid wudu bundenne.  
 Ġewāt þā ofer wæġholm winde ġefýsed  
 flota fāmiheals fugle ġelicost,  
 oð þæt ymb āntid oþres dōgores  
 220 wundenstefna ġewaden hæfde,

The son of Healfdene ceaselessly brooded  
 over his cares, nor was that king  
 able to ward off anguish; too deep  
 was the pain endured by his people, an endless  
 terror caused by the foul night-fiend.

FAR OFF IN HIS HOMELAND, Hygelac's thane,  
 the Geats' champion, heard about Grendel.  
 He was the mightiest man of that age,  
 tall, brave, and noble in bearing.  
 He told his men to make a ship ready;  
 over the sea where the swans ride  
 he would fight on behalf of that harried king.  
 The councilmen approved of the plan;  
 they were well aware of its danger, but when  
 they inspected the omens, they urged him on.  
 The great man chose fourteen of the Geats,  
 the boldest fighters that he could find,  
 and then that commander skilled in seaways  
 marched his valiant men to the shore.

Time moved quickly. The ship was moored  
 under the cliffs; the warriors, eager,  
 climbed aboard it, the surf crashed  
 onto the sand, the men stowed  
 weapons and war-gear, then shoved off  
 with oars out into the open sea.  
 Over the waves, with the wind in her sails  
 and her prow in foam, she flew like a bird  
 till in due time on the second day



þæt ða liðende land gesāwon,  
 brimclifu blican, beorgas stēape,  
 side sēnæssas; þā wæs sund liden,  
 eoletes æt ende. Þanon up hraðe  
 Wedera lēode on wang stigon,  
 sǣwudu sǣldon, syrčan hrysedon,  
 gūðgewædo; Gode þancedon  
 þæs þe him yplāde ēaðe wurdon.  
 þā of wealle geseah weard Scildinga,  
 230 sē þe holmclifu healdan scolde,  
 beran ofer bolcan beorhte randas,  
 fyrdsearu fūslicu; hine fyrwyt bræc  
 mōdġehyġdum hwæt þā men wæron.  
 Ġewāt him þā tō waroðe wicġe rīdan  
 þeġn Hrōðġares, þrymmum cwehte  
 mæġenwudu mundum, meþelwordum fræġn:  
 'Hwæt syndon ġe searohæbbendra,  
 byrnum werede, þe þus brontne cēol  
 ofer lagustræte lædan cwōmon,  
 240 hider ofer holmas? [Ic hwī]le wæs  
 endesǣta, æġwearde hēold,  
 þe on land Dena lāðra nāniġ  
 mid scipherġe sceðþan ne meahte.  
 Nō hēr cūðlicor cuman ongunnon  
 lindhæbbende, nē ġe lēafnesword  
 gūðfremmendra ġearwe ne wisson,  
 māġa ġemēdu. Nāfre ic māran geseah  
 eorla ofer eorþan ðonne is ēower sum,  
 secġ on searwum; nis þæt seldguma,  
 250 wǣpnum ġeweorðad, nāfne him his wlite lēoge,  
 ænlic ansyn. Nū ic ēower sceal  
 frumcyn witan, ær ġe fyr heonan

the bold seafarers sighted land:  
 shimmering cliffs, sheer crags,  
 and jutting headlands. The journey was done. 210  
 Lightly they leaped out onto the shore  
 and secured the ship with a strong cable.  
 Then they shook out their heavy mail-shirts  
 and battle-gear, and gave thanks to God  
 for the smooth crossing on a calm sea.

FROM THE HIGH SHORE the Scyldings' lookout,  
 whose duty it was to watch the coast,  
 saw them unload their sparkling weapons  
 over the gangway. Anxiety gripped 220  
 his heart, as he wondered who they might be.  
 So Hrothgar's watchman mounted his horse,  
 and riding down to the beach, he brandished  
 his mighty spear-shaft and spoke this challenge:  
 "Who are you, strangers, who come here armed,  
 sailing your tall ship over the sea-roads?  
 I have long kept my watch at land's-end  
 so that no raiders who reach our shore  
 should pillage and plunder the Danish homeland.  
 Never have armed men come to this coast 230  
 so impudently, without a password  
 or the permission of king and court.  
 Nor have I seen a mightier man  
 on this wide earth than one of you is;  
 he must be not just a simple soldier  
 wielding a nobleman's weapons, unless  
 his princely look and manner are lies.  
 But before I permit you to move along  
 I must learn your lineage and your intent.

lēasscēaweras on land Dena  
 furpur fēran. Nū gē feorbūend,  
 mereliðende, mīn[n]e gehȳrað  
 ānfealdne gēþōht: ofost is sēlest  
 tō gēcȳðanne hwanan ēowre cyme syndon.'

Him se yldesta andswarode,  
 werodes wīsa, wordhord onlēac:  
 260 'Wē synt gumcynnes Gēata lēode  
 ond Higelāces heorðgenēatas.  
 Wæs mīn fæder folcum gēcȳped,  
 æþele ordfruma, Ecgbēow hāten;  
 gēbād wintra worn, ær hē on weg hwurfe,  
 gamol of geardum; hine gearwe geman  
 witena wēlhwylc wīde geond eorþan.  
 Wē þurh holdne hiġe hlāford þinne,  
 sunu Healfdenes sēcean cwōmon,  
 lēodgebyrgēan. Wes þū ūs lārena gōd.  
 270 Habbað wē tō þām mæran micel ærende  
 Deniġa frean. Ne sceal þær dyrne sum  
 wesan, þæs ic wēne: þū wāst, ġif hit is  
 swā wē sōþlice secgan hȳrdon,  
 þæt mid Scyldingum sceaðona ic nāt hwylc,  
 dēogol dædhata deorcum nihtum  
 ēawed þurh eġsan uncūðne nið,  
 hȳnðu ond hrāfyl. Ic þæs Hrōðġār mæg  
 þurh rūmne sefan ræd ġelæran  
 hū hē frōd ond gōd fēond oferswȳðeþ—  
 280 ġyf him edwenden æfre scolde  
 bealuwa bisigu, bōt eft cuman—  
 ond þā cearwylmas cōlran wurðað;  
 oððe ā syþðan earfoðþrāge,

You may be spies. Quickly now, state  
 why you have sailed here across the sea.  
 The sooner you tell me the truth, the better."

240

The warrior then unlocked his word-board:  
 "We are all Geats by birth and breeding,  
 hearth-companions of Hygelac.  
 My father was famous far and wide,  
 the bravest man in the battle lines.  
 His name was Ecgtheow; after many  
 winters he took his leave from the world.  
 Everywhere men remember his deeds  
 and think kindly of him. We come in good faith,  
 250 with loyal intentions, to see your lord,  
 Hrothgar, the Danes' fearless defender.  
 Trust us now. We will try to help you;  
 we have come to fight for your noble king.  
 There is no mystery to our mission;  
 we can answer any questions you ask.  
 So tell us if what we have heard is true:  
 that some deadly thing is slaughtering Danes,  
 a hidden hater in the dark night  
 260 who brings you terror, a brute's rage,  
 and sudden death. I am here to save you.  
 I will offer all my strength to your king;  
 I will conquer this cruel fiend for him  
 and assuage the heartache that burns in his breast—  
 if any man can ever assuage it.  
 Otherwise he will suffer untold

260

brēanȳd þolað þenden þær wunað  
on hēahstede hūsa sēlest.

Weard mapelode ðær on wicge sæt,  
ombeht unforht: 'Æghwæpres sceal  
scearp scyldwiga ġescād witan,  
worda ond worca, sē þe wēl þenceð.  
290 Ic þæt ġehȳre, þæt þis is hold weorod  
frēan Scyldinga. Ġewitap forð beran  
wæpen ond ġewædu; ic ēow wisiġe.  
Swylce ic maguþeġnas mīne hāte  
wið fēonda ġehwone flotan ēowerne,  
nīwtȳrwydne nacan on sande  
ārum healdan, oþ ðæt eft byreð  
ofer lagustrēamas lēofne mannan  
wudu wundenhals tō Wedermearce,  
ġōdfremmendra swylcum ġifeþe bið  
300 þæt þone hilderæs hāl ġedigeð.  
Ġewiton him þā fēran; flota stille bād,  
seomode on sāle sīdfæpmed scip,  
on ancre fæst; eoforlic scionon  
ofer hlēorber[ġ]an ġehroden golde,  
fāh ond fȳrheard; ferhwearde hēold  
ġūþmōd ġrimmon. Guman ōnetton,  
sigon ætsomne, oþ þæt hȳ [s]æl timbred  
ġeatolic ond goldfāh onġyton mihton;  
þæt wæs foremærost foldbūendum  
310 receda under roderum, on þæm se riċa bād;  
lixte se lēoma ofer landa fela.  
Him þā hildedēor [h]of mōdiġra  
torht ġetæhte, þæt hīe him tō mihton  
ġeġnum gangan; ġūðbeorna sum  
wicġ ġewende, word æfter cwæð:

anguish of spirit, ceaseless torment,  
for as long as Heorot remains on its heights."

Astride his horse, the officer answered,  
"A clear-minded questioner always knows  
270 when a man's words and deeds are one.  
I believe what you told me: that your troop  
is loyal to the lord of the Scyldings.  
So I will permit you to move along  
with your weapons and war-gear. I will lead you,  
and also I will tell my retainers  
to stand on the shore and guard your ship,  
keeping her safe until the time comes  
for her to sail home over the sea-roads,  
280 bearing the warrior back to his land.  
A man so noble will never fail  
to return unharmed from the harshest battle."

So they all left, while the ship lay there  
riding its mooring-rope close to shore.  
Boar-figures glittered above their cheek-guards,  
inlaid intricately with gold,  
fire-hardened, on the fierce war-masks  
that guarded their lives. The company quickly  
strode on together until they saw  
290 the hall where the king lived, with its high timbers,  
the noblest house under the heavens;  
its golden light shone through the land.  
Then the guard who had guided them there  
pointed them toward that bright building,  
wheeled on his horse, and spoke these words:

oð þæt hē ðā bānhūs gebrocen hæfd(e)  
 hāt on hreðre. Hīgum unrōte  
 mōdceare mændon, mondryhtnes cw(e)alm;  
 3150 swylce giōmorgyd (Ġē)at(isc) meowle  
 (æfter Bīowulfe b)undenheorde  
 (sang) sorgceariġ, sæ(id)e (ġe)neah(he)  
 þæt hīo hyre (here)ġ(eon)gas hearde ond(r)ēde,  
 wælfylla wo(r)n, (w)erudes eġesan,  
 hȳ[n]ðo ond hæf(t)nȳd. Heofon rēce swealg.  
 Geworhton ðā Wedra lēode  
 hlæ(w) on h(ō)e, sē wæs hēah ond brād,  
 (w)ēġliðendum wīde ġesȳne,  
 ond beti(m)bredon on tȳndagum  
 3160 beadurōf(e)s bēcn, bronda lāfe  
 wealle beworhton, swā hyt weorðlicost  
 foresnotre men findan mihton.  
 Hī on beorg dydon bēġ ond siġlu,  
 eall swylce hyrsta swylce on horde ær  
 niðhēdiġe men ġenumen hæfdon;  
 forlēton eorla ġestrēon eorðan healdan,  
 gold on grēote, þær hit nū ġēn lifað,  
 eldum swā unnyt swā hyt (æro)r wæs.  
 Þā ymbe hlæw riordan hildediore,  
 3170 æþelinga bearn, ealra twelf(e),  
 woldon (care) cwīðan (ond c)ȳning mænan,  
 wordġyd wrecan, ond ymb w(er) sprecaŋ;  
 eahtodan eorlscipe ond his ellenweorc  
 duguðum dēmdon— swā hit ġedē(fe) bið  
 þæt mon his winedryhten wordum herġe,  
 ferhðum frēoġe, þonne hē forð scile  
 of l(i)čhaman (læ)ded weorðan.

The wind settled; the searing fire  
 consumed the body; the heartsick thanes  
 grieved for the death of their dear lord.  
 A woman started to sing a dirge  
 for Beowulf, with her hair bound up;  
 over and over she voiced her dread  
 of conquering soldiers, cruelty, terror,  
 massive killing, mayhem, shame,  
 slavery. Heaven swallowed the smoke.

Then they built, high up on the headland,  
 a barrow that was lofty and broad;  
 sailors could see it from far away.  
 It took them ten days to finish that task.  
 They first surrounded the funeral ashes  
 with a stone wall skillfully fashioned,  
 as splendid as master craftsmen could make it.  
 Within this barrow they buried the riches,  
 the precious rings and finely wrought jewels,  
 which the thanes had carried out of the cave;  
 they gave that brilliance back to the earth,  
 leaving the golden hoard in the ground  
 where it remains, as useless to men  
 as it was before. Twelve warriors rode  
 around Beowulf's barrow, chanting  
 solemn dirges and mourning his death.  
 They praised his nobility and his war-prowess  
 with the highest praise, as was only proper,  
 for a man should honor his own lord  
 on the day when he journeys forth from the flesh.

Beowulf

3180 Swā begnornodon Ġēata lēode  
hlāfordes (hry)re, heorðgenēatas;  
cwædon þæt hē wære wyruldcyning[a]  
manna mildust ond mon(ðw)ærust,  
lēodum liðost ond lofgeornost.

Beowulf

3060 Thus the Geats all grieved and lamented  
the noble lord whom they so loved.  
They cried out that he was, of all the world's kings,  
the kindest and the most courteous man,  
the most gracious to all, and the keenest for glory.