4   Place, Time, Manner and Reason

Review

In Chapter 3 we introduced some basic concepts that need to be grasped if we are to make sense of Old English literature. We looked at the way in which those Old English words that express people and things (namely pronouns and noun phrases) change their form according to *number* (singular and plural), *gender* (masculine, feminine and neuter) and *case*.

It is the concept of case that is probably least familiar to today's speakers of English. English today has lost most of the signals of case that were present in Old English; only the present-day pronoun system preserves the distinction between, for example, the Nominative forms *he/she/we/they* that express the Subject of a sentence, and the Accusative forms *him/her/us/them* that express the Object of a sentence. A full noun phrase like *the brave warrior* can be either Subject or Object in today's English:

The brave warrior killed the dragon.

The dragon killed *the brave warrior.*

In Old English, however, speakers and writers had to choose the appropriate case form. Depending on how the phrase as a whole is used in the sentence, all the individual words in the noun phrase could potentially change their form: the determiner *the*, the adjective *brave* and the noun *warrior*. Today, there is little evidence of this sophisticated case system in English nouns. Only the Genitive case of the noun, indicating possession, is still signalled, by the apostrophe -*s* found in words like *warrior's* and *brother's.*

In this chapter we look more closely at ways of expressing concepts like place, time, manner and reason in Old English texts. The words

and phrases that express these concepts give crucial or optional extra information in the sentences in which they appear. Grammatically, this kind of extra information is signalled in three main ways:

- Using a prepositional phrase, like *at midnight*
- Using an adverb, like *quickly*
- Using a subordinate clause, like *because he was angry*

In the sections that follow, we explain these grammatical features in more detail, and show how they work in further examples of Old English texts.

Place and time

The expressions used for place and time are similar; in fact some expressions can be used to communicate location either in time or in space. A good example is *hēr*, literally 'here', an adverb that begins many entries in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a record of the history of early England. In context, we can take the word to mean something like 'at this point'. Illustration 10 shows a page from the earliest surviving *Chronicle* manuscript, with the annals dated 752–5 each beginning with *hēr*. We shall look at one of these annals in detail in Part II (Text A).

One of the earlier entries in the *Chronicle* looks back at the year AD 47, and it deals largely with the relationship between Rome and Britain at that time. Read the passage and see if you can pick out answers to the following questions:

- Which Roman emperor ('king') came with an army to Britain in AD 47?
- Which tribes did he subject to Roman rule?
- In which year of his reign did he carry out this campaign?
- In the same year, what kind of catastrophe affected Syria?
- Which book of the Bible foretold this catastrophe?
- Which Roman emperor's neglect resulted in the loss of Britain to the Romans?

æt nȳstan	finally	*fore-witgod*	foretold
fēng	succeeded	*forlēt*	lost
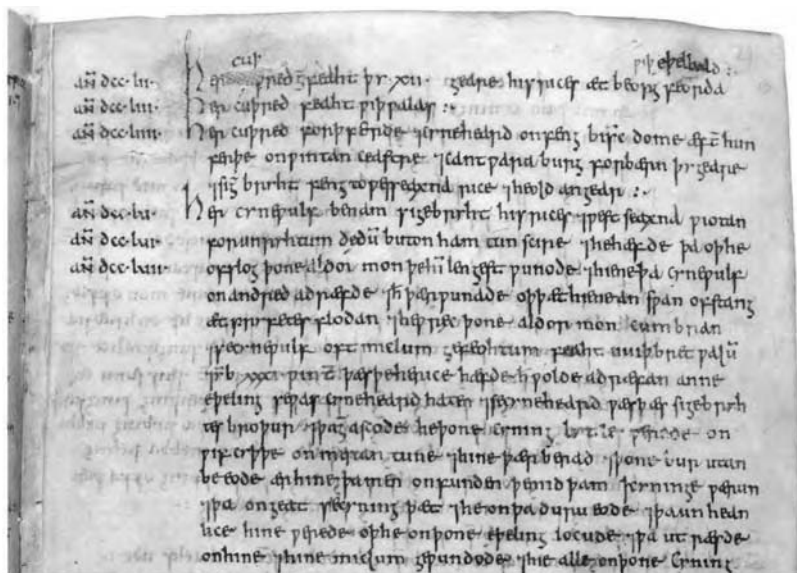
10   The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
MS 173, fol. 10^r (*detail*)

geēode conquered	*mycla* great
gefeoht military campaign	*under-þēodde* subjected
gefremede carried out	*uncāfscipe* neglect
gewāt went	*wītegan* prophet
gewearþ arose	*þe* which
here army	

47. Hēr Claudius, Rōmāna cyning, gewāt mid here on Brytene, and
þæt īg-land geēode, and ealle Pihtas and Walas under-þēodde
Rōmāna rīce. Þis gefeoht hē gefremede þǣm fēorþan gēare his rīces.
On þǣm gēare gewearþ se mycla hungor on Siria, þe wæs fore-witgod
on þǣre bēc Actus Apostolorum þurh Agabum þone wītegan. Þā fēng
Neron tō rīce æfter Claudie, sē æt nȳstan forlēt Brytene īg-land for his
uncāfscipe.

Look at the passage again and focus on those expressions that convey
time and place:

Time
hēr   at this point
þǣm fēorþan gēare his rīces   the fourth year of his reign
on þǣm gēare   in that year
þā   then
æt nȳstan   at last, finally

Place
on Brytene   in Britain
on Siria   in Syria
on þǣre bēc Actus Apostolorum   in the book, the Acts of the Apostles

Other prepositional expressions in the passage tell us that Claudius
came to Britain with an army (*mid here*) and conquered the Picts and
Welsh, that the famine in Syria was foretold in the Acts of the Apostles
by the prophet, Agabus (*þurh Agabum þone wītegan*), and that Nero's
loss of Britain was due to his neglect (*for his uncāfscipe*). From these
examples, it is evident that prepositional phrases express concepts
such as accompaniment, agency and reason, as well as time and place.

Further practice

The entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year AD 787 details
events that were much closer in history to the era of the chroniclers.
This entry contains the first mention of the Viking ships of the Danes
that were to arrive in increasing numbers and terrorise the population
for centuries to come. Although it is short, this is quite a tricky little
passage to understand. Read the entry and check how much you can
figure out with the help of the words given beforehand. In particular,
can you answer the following questions?

- How many Danish ships were there?
- How did the sheriff (*gerēfa*) travel to meet the ships?
- Where did the Danes wish to go?

ǣrest, ǣrestan first	*man ofslōg* they killed (literally 'one slew')
drīfan drive	*nam* took (in marriage)
gerēfa sheriff	*nyste* did not know
gesōhton visited	*þȳ* because

787   Hēr nam Beorhtrīc cyning Offan dohtor Eadburge. And **on his dagum** cōmon **ǣrest** þrēo scipu; and þā se gerēfa **þǣr-tō** rād, and hīe wolde drīfan **tō þæs cyninges tūne**, þȳ hē nyste hwæt hīe wǣron; and hine man ofslōg. Þæt wǣron þā ǣrestan scipu Deniscra manna þe Angel-cynnes land gesōhton.

The first sentence of this entry can be difficult to decipher, again partly because the word order of Old English differs from that of English today. This is one reason why it is so important to pay attention to case endings. A literal translation, paying no attention to case endings, would be something like 'Here took in marriage Berhtric king Offa daughter Eadburg'. As we saw in the previous chapter, we can make sense of the relationship between people and things only by considering the case forms. In this sentence, *Beorhtric cyning* is the Nominative form, the *-n* of *Offan* shows that the phrase *Offan dohtor* is in the possessive or Genitive form ('Offa's daughter'), and the *-e* of *Ēadburge* indicates the Accusative case. So the sentence can be translated more idiomatically into today's English as 'In this year, King Berhtric took Offa's daughter, Eadburg, in marriage.' The next few sentences continue the story:

And **in his days** three ships **first** came; and **then** the sheriff rode **to them**, and wished to drive them **to the king's village**, because he did not know what (i.e. what kind of men) they were; and they killed him. These were the first ships of the Danish men that visited the land of the English people.

Here location in time and place is given in two ways:

(i)   by adverbs *ǣrest, þā*

(ii)   by prepositional phrases *on his dagum, tō þæs cyninges tūne, þǣr-tō*

Adverbs of time and place

Adverbs of time and place in English today include words like 'first', 'then', 'before', 'here', 'afterwards' and so on. In Old English, common adverbs of time and place include:

ǣr before	*þā* then		
hēr here	*æfter* afterwards		

Of these words, *þā* is one of the most frequently used; it is, however, a deceptive word and one to observe carefully. It appears twice in the entry from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* given above:

> and **þā** se gerēfa þǣr-tō rād

> **þā** ǣrestan scipu

The first occurrence of *þā* means 'then'. However, in the second example, *þā* is part of a noun phrase: it is the Nominative plural form of 'the'. The form *þā* can also be the Accusative plural and the feminine Accusative singular form of 'the'. We need to look hard at how individual words function in the context of sentences. Indeed, when *þā* is closely followed by another *þā* their meaning corresponds to 'when . . . then'.

Prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases are made up of a preposition like *on* or *tō* plus a noun phrase like *his dagum* 'his days' and *þæs cyninges tūne* 'the king's town' or 'the king's village'. There is a small set of Old English prepositions, including:

on in, on	*ofer* on, over	*mid* with		*wiþ* against
of from	*fram* by	*ǣr* 'ere', before	*tō* to, at

Some have a range of meanings in different contexts. Note also that some words, like *ǣr*, sometimes work in a sentence as an adverb, at other times as a preposition. The grammatical label depends on whether or not the word is linked to a noun phrase: compare 'he went out *before*' (adverb) and 'he went out *before the dawn*' (preposition). It will also be clear from this list that the meanings of many of the prepositions have changed over the centuries, although some older meanings survive in particular phrases, e.g. 'he fought with (i.e. 'against') his brother all the time'.

In today's English, noun phrases follow prepositions – that is in fact why this group of words is called *pre*positions. However, in Old English prepositions can either precede or follow the noun phrases to which they are attached:

on his dagum   'in his days'

his dagum on

The relationship between the preposition and the noun phrase is signalled by the case: nouns that are linked to prepositions are usually found in the Dative case. Here *dagum* has the distinctive -*um* ending that signals the Dative plural 'days'. In *to þæs cyninges tūne*, the -*e* ending of *tūne* signals that this is a Dative singular. Certainly if you see a noun ending in the common Dative plural -*um* then you should be looking for a preposition close by; and you should also remember that the meaning of the preposition will probably be slightly different from its present-day meaning.

Prepositions expressing movement

There are, as usual, exceptions to the grammatical rule that prepositions are associated with noun phrases in the Dative case. A number of prepositions are associated with noun phrases in the Accusative case, not the Dative. These tend to be prepositions expressing movement, like *þurh* 'through'. There are also some special cases, like *þǣr-tō* in the extract given above. Here a pronoun signifying some kind of thing or things (here ships) has been replaced by *þǣr* and the pronoun *tō* has been added, to give the meaning, in this context, of 'to them'. Over time, of course, this phrase solidified into the single, now rather old-fashioned, English adverb 'thereto'.

To summarise thus far, then, time and place in English today and in Old English are usually expressed by adverbs and prepositional phrases. Prepositional phrases are made up of words like *in*, *tō*, *mid*, *æfter*, followed or preceded by noun phrases. To show their status as members of prepositional phrases, in Old English the noun phrases are usually found in the Dative case, although sometimes, especially when the preposition has the sense of motion, the noun phrase is found in the Accusative case.

Reading practice

Let us look particularly at how place and time are expressed in a
further short passage of Old English, another biblical story, this time
from the Old Testament: the tale of the fall of the city of Jericho.
Before we look at the passage in detail, try reading it and answering
the following questions.

• What surrounded the city of Jericho?
• What three things did God promise to put into Joshua's power?
• For how long did God tell Joshua to go around the city?
• How many priests did God say should blow upon the trumpets?
• What event happened to allow Joshua's army to enter the city?

æt-foran before	*hrȳmde* shouted
bǣron carried	*rǣdde* advised
belocen enclosed	*sācerdas* priests
bȳmum trumpets	*scrīn* shrine
ēodon went	*wuniaþ* live
faraþ go	*ymb* around
gewealde power	*ymb-trymed* surrounded

> Hierichō sēo burh wæs **mid weallum** ymb-trymed and fæste belocen.
> Drihten cwæþ **þā tō Iōsue**, 'Ic dō þās burh Hierichō **on þīnum**
> **gewealde** and þone cyning samod and þā strengstan weras þe wuniaþ
> **in Hierichō**. Faraþ **nū** siex dagas **ymb þā burh**, **þā** hwīle þe seofon
> sācerdas mid bȳmum **ēow æt-foran** blāwaþ.' Iōsue **þā** swā dyde and
> sācerdas bǣron þæt Godes scrīn **ymbe þā burh**. Þā þā sācerdas
> blēwon, and þæt folc eall hrȳmde, swā swā Iōsue rǣdde, **þā** burston
> þā weallas and hīe **þā in** ēodon.

In the above passage there are several prepositional phrases, high-
lighted. Their form and meaning can be summarised as follows:

Old English phrase	Preposition	Case of noun phrase	Meaning
mid weallum	*mid*	Dative plural	with walls
tō Iōsue	*tō*	Dative singular	to Joshua
on þīnum gewealde	*on*	Dative singular	in your power
in Hierichō	*in*	Dative singular	in Jericho
ymb(e) þā burh	*ymb, ymbe*	Accusative singular	round the city
ēow æt-foran	*æt-foran*	Dative plural	in front of you (pl.)

The passage also highlights some adverbs of time and place:

Old English adverb	Meaning
þā	then
nū	now
in	in

There are various points to note about these prepositional phrases and adverbs. First, note that the phrases which are made up of a prepositional phrase and an Accusative noun phrase indeed imply motion – Joshua's army goes *round the city* for six days. The case of the noun phrase is most easily seen from the determiner *þā*, the feminine Accusative singular form. The majority of phrases, however, consist of a preposition and a noun phrase in the Dative case. Dative plural nouns can be identified by the distinctive ending -*um* as in *weallum* 'walls'. Finally, there is an example of the preposition following a noun – or, in this case, a pronoun, *ēow æt-foran* literally 'you in front of', meaning 'in front of you'.

A fairly literal translation of the passage is:

> Jericho the city was surrounded by walls and firmly enclosed. The Lord then said to Joshua, 'I shall put this city Jericho in your power and also the king and the strongest men who live in Jericho. Go now six days round the city, while seven priests blow with trumpets in front of you.' Joshua then did so and priests carried the shrine of God round the city. When the priests blew, and all the people shouted, just as Joshua advised, the walls then burst and they then went in.

Manner

Prepositional phrases and adverbs are also used to express *manner,* or how things were done. Some good examples of prepositional phrases expressing manner can be seen in Ælfric's story of the Incarnation, which we looked at in Chapter 3:

> Hē āwende wæter tō wīne, and ēode ofer sǣ **mid drīum fōtum**, and hē gestilde windas **mid his hǣse**, and hē forgēaf blindum mannum gesihþe.

Here we are told that Jesus went over the sea *mid drīum fōtum* 'with dry feet' and that he stilled the winds *mid his hǣse* 'with his command'. The noun phrases are Datives; the first is a plural, as can again be seen by the distinctive *-um* ending of the Old English words for both 'dry' and 'feet'. (Remember that this ending is also found in *blindum mannum* 'to blind men', although the preposition 'to' is absent in Old English.) The *-e* ending of the singular noun *hǣse* 'command' indicates that it is a Dative singular.

Adverbs of manner also tell us how things were done. A common way of forming this group of adverbs is to add *-līce* to the adjective. In today's English this ending has been reduced to *-ly.* Examples include:

blīþelīce	gladly, 'blithely'
fæstlīce	firmly, strictly, resolutely
geornlīce	eagerly, zealously

What do you deduce the Old English adjectives *blīþe, fæst* and *georn* mean?

Further reading practice

To see how some prepositional phrases and adverbs of manner work in context, let us look at two slightly longer passages based on the Anglo-Saxon epic poem *Beowulf.* We shall return to this poem in more detail when we compare translations in Chapter 7, and again when we read an excerpt from the original text in Part II of this book. In the meantime, the following passages are taken from a simplified prose version written by Henry Sweet expressly to teach Old English

to beginners. At this point in the story, the hero Beowulf encounters and fights a monster, Grendel, who is terrorising the land of the Geats, or Goths, by attacking King Hrothgar's men in their great hall, Heorot.

In this episode, Grendel comes to Heorot by night. Some useful vocabulary is given beforehand, and the comprehension questions are intended to guide you through this passage.

āhlōg	laughed	*ielde*	delayed
ǣdrum	veins	*līc-haman*	body
ealne	all	*māran*	greater
faran	go, act	*mōd*	heart, mind
forswelgan	devour, swallow	*ongeat*	understood
forswolgen	devoured, swallowed	*oþ-þæt*	until
gefēng, fēng	seized	*siþþan*	then
gelæhte	seized	*sōna*	immediately
gemētte	met with	*stycce-mǣlum*	little pieces
gesæt	sat up	*tōbræc*	broke in pieces
geseah	saw	*tōbrægd*	tore
hraþe	quickly	*tōgēanes*	towards

Text 1

- Where did Grendel see the Geats sleeping?
- What did Grendel intend to do to the Geats before daybreak?
- Was Beowulf awake or asleep at this point?
- How did Grendel break the bones of the first man he seized?
- What did Grendel drink?
- Where was Beowulf lying as Grendel went further into the hall?
- What did Beowulf seize hold of?
- What did Grendel immediately understand?

> Þā geseah hē þā Geatas on þǣre healle slǣpan. Þā āhlōg his mōd: þōhte þæt hē hīe forswelgan wolde ānne æfter ōþrum ǣr dæg cōme. Ac Bēowulf wacode: behēold hū se fēond faran wolde.
>
> Ne ielde Grendel nā lange, ac hē hraþe gefēng slǣpendne mann, and hine siþþan stycce-mǣlum tōbrægd: tōbræc þā bān mid his tuscum, and þæt blōd of þǣm ǣdrum dranc, oþ-þæt hē ealne þone līc-haman forswolgen hæfde mid handum mid fōtum mid ealle.
>
> Hē ēode þā furþor, and Bēowulf gelæhte, on his bedde licgende. Þā gesæt Bēowulf wiþ earm, and him tōgēanes fēng. Þā ongeat Grendel sōna þæt hē ne gemētte ǣr on ǣnigum menn māran hand-gripe!

You will probably need to read through the passage several times, referring where necessary to the unfamiliar vocabulary, before you make sense of it. Again, do not worry if you do not understand every single word. If you can answer most of the comprehension questions, you are doing well. Once you have completed this passage, try reading further to find out how the hand-to-hand combat between man and monster continues. Vocabulary and comprehension questions are once more given to support you, although some of the relevant vocabulary is explained before Text 1 above. Both passages are discussed briefly following Text 2.

ābugon were pulled	*īsen-bendum* iron bands
āhrure fell	*nīþe* violence, hostility
benca benches	*scuccum* demons
besmiþod fitted (with metal)	*swelce* as
drohtoþ condition	*swīþe* very
dynede resounded	*syllum* foundations, settings
fēoll fell	*þēah* though
for-þǣm þe because	*þȳ* the
forht afraid	*ungemetlice* excessive
ful-nēah very nearly	*ūtweard* outwards
gemunde remembered	*wearþ* became
gielp-worda boasting words	*winnende* fighting
grundlunga completely	*wiste* knew
innan and ūtan inside and out	*wununge* dwelling

- After meeting Beowulf, how did Grendel's mood change?
- Where did Grendel wish to flee?
- Who lived there?
- Why could Grendel not escape?
- How did Beowulf's fingers feel?
- What helped the great hall, Heorot, to survive the ferocity of the battle?

Text 2

Þā wearþ hē forht on mōde: wolde flēon tō þǣm mōrum, þǣr hē his wununge wiste mid þǣm ōþrum scuccum. Næs his drohtoþ on Heorote swelce hē ǣr gemētte!

Þā gemunde Bēowulf þāra gielp-worda þe hē ǣr gespræc: stōd þā ūp-

lang and him fæstlīce wiþ-fēng. Þā wæs Grendel ūt-weard. Ac
Bēowulf him fram nolde: gefēng hine þȳ fæstor, þēah him þā fingras
fulnēah bursten. Swā hīe mid ungemetlice nīþe winnende wǣron, oþ-
þæt sēo heall dynede, and manige þāra benca fram þǣm syllum
ābugon. Þæt wæs micel wundor þæt sēo heall ne āhrure grundlunga.
Ac hēo ne fēoll nā, for þǣm þe hēo wæs swīþe fæste mid īsen-
bendum besmiþod innan and ūtan.

Discussion

In this chapter so far, we have been looking mainly at the way prepo-
sitional phrases and adverbs are used to express time, place and loca-
tion. Let us now focus on how some of these concepts are expressed
in Text 1:

> Þā geseah hē þā Geatas **on þǣre healle** slǣpan. Þā āhlōg his mōd:
> þōhte þæt hē hīe forswelgan wolde ānne **æfter ōþrum** ǣr dæg cōme.
> Ac Bēowulf wacode: behēold hū se fēond faran wolde.

> Ne ielde Grendel nā lange, ac hē **hraþe** gefēng slǣpendne mann, and
> hine **siþþan stycce-mǣlum** tōbrægd: tōbræc þā bān **mid his tuscum**,
> and þæt blōd **of þǣm ǣdrum** dranc, oþ-þæt hē ealne þone līc-haman
> forswolgen hæfde **mid handum mid fōtum mid ealle.**

> Hē ēode **þā furþor**, and Bēowulf gelæhte, **on his bedde** licgende. Þā
> gesæt Bēowulf **wiþ earm**, and him tōgēanes fēng. Þā ongeat Grendel
> **sōna** þæt hē ne gemētte **ǣr on ǣnigum menn** māran hand-gripe!

Notice that many of the sentences begin with the adverb *þā* 'then'.
Other adverbs in this passage give a sense of time or urgency:

hraþe	quickly
siþþan	afterwards, then
sōna	immediately
ǣr	before, previously

The adverb *sōna* is an interesting word; it corresponds to present-
day 'soon' but its meaning has clearly weakened – 'soon' does not
mean 'immediately'. This process of weakening happens systemati-
cally through time to many adverbs expressing urgency.

Some of the prepositional phrases give additional but crucial infor-
mation about location in space (*on þǣre healle* 'in the hall', *of þǣm
ǣdrum* 'from the veins', *on his bedde* 'in his bed', *on ǣnigum menn* 'on

any man'). Other prepositional phrases tell us about manner *(mid his tuscum* 'with his tusks', *mid handum mid fōtum mid ealle* 'with (his) hands, with (his) feet, with everything', *wiþ earm* 'against (his) arm').

Text 2 also has its share of prepositional phrases and adverbs:

> Þā wearþ hē forht **on mōde**: wolde flēon **tō þǣm mōrum**, þǣr hē his wununge wiste **mid þǣm ōþrum scuccum**. Næs his drohtoþ **on Heorote** swelce hē **ǣr** gemētte!

> Þā gemunde Bēowulf þāra gielp-worda þe hē **ǣr** gespræc: stōd þā **ūp-lang** and him **fæstlīce** wiþ-fēng. Þā wæs Grendel **ūt-weard.** Ac Bēowulf **him fram** nolde: gefēng hine þȳ fæstor, þēah him þā fingras ful-nēah bursten. Swā hīe **mid ungemetlice nīþe** winnende wǣron, oþ-þæt sēo heall dynede, and manige þāra benca **fram þǣm syllum** ābugon. Þæt wæs micel wundor þæt sēo heall ne āhrure grundlunga. Ac hēo ne fēoll nā, for þǣm þe hēo wæs swīþe fæste **mid īsen-bendum** besmiþod **innan and ūtan**.

Again some of these prepositional phrases and adverbs express location in time and physical or metaphorical space: *on mōde* 'in spirit', *tō þǣm mōrum* 'to the moors', *on Heorote* 'in Heorot', *him fram* 'from him', and *fram þǣm syllum* 'from the foundations'. Others again express manner: *mid ungemetlice nīþe* 'with extreme violence'. Still others express other types of prepositional meaning, including accompaniment, e.g. *mid þǣm ōþrum scuccum* 'with the other demons', and *mid īsen-bendum* 'with iron bands'.

The adverbs cover meanings of time, manner and place in a similar way to those we have encountered before:

ǣr	before, previously
fæstlīce	firmly
innan and ūtan	inside and out
þā	then
ūp-lang	upright
ūt-weard	literally 'outward'; here 'at the door/exit'

Summary of the texts

The first text, then, tells us that Grendel saw the Geats sleeping in the hall; he laughed inwardly as he planned to kill them, one after the

other, before daybreak. But Beowulf was awake and he watched to see how Grendel would act. Without delay, Grendel seized one sleeping man, tore him to bits, broke his bones with his tusks and drank his blood from his veins. Then he went further into the hall and seized Beowulf, lying in his bed. Then Beowulf sat up against his arm and seized him. Grendel immediately understood that he had never before encountered a greater handgrip in any man.

The second text continues the story. Grendel was afraid, and wished to flee to the moors where he had his dwelling with the other demons. His experience in Heorot was not as he had encountered before. Then Beowulf remembered the words that he had previously spoken, he stood upright and held him firmly. Then Grendel made for the door. But Beowulf would not let him go: he held him more securely although his fingers were very nearly bursting. They were fighting with such extreme violence that the hall resounded and many benches came apart from the foundations. It was a great wonder that the hall did not completely collapse. But it did not fall, because it was fitted very securely with iron bands, inside and out.

Expressing reason

So far we have focused mainly on the way that noun phrases express people and things, and adverbs and prepositional phrases express time, place and manner. You have started to build up your Old English vocabulary, and by now you should be getting a 'feel' for reading short, simple texts in Old English. Even short, simple texts present their challenges, as we have seen. For example:

• We must expect the order of words to be different in Old English.
• We have to pay attention to the endings of words in Old English in order to spot clues that tell us about the number, gender and case of words.

As we move towards the conclusion of this chapter, let us look at some common ways in which sentences are extended, specifically by giving *reasons* or *causes* for events. Some of the words and phrases commonly used to signal reasons have been used in the reading passages already; some are new:

for-þǣm, for-þǣm þe	because
þȳ	therefore, because
(*tō þǣm*) *þæt*, (*tō þon*) *þæt*	in order that, so that

Here are some sentences – some of which you have already encountered – in which these expressions of reason are used. Take this opportunity to refresh your memory of the vocabulary you have already met. Since we are unfolding the means of expression in Old English gradually, whilst developing our reading skills, it is a good idea frequently to revisit the texts in the earlier chapters of this book as you read through it, and to consider in turn how different aspects of the language – for example, its ways of articulating people and things, places, time, manner and reason – are realised in the different texts.

Hwæt dēst þū ymb þīnne huntoþ?
Ic selle þǣm cyninge swā hwæt swā ic gefō, **for-þǣm** ic eom his hunta.

Ēalā gē cild, hū līcaþ ēow þēos sprǣc?
Wel hēo ūs līcaþ; ac þearle dēoplīce þū spricst and ofer ūre mǣþ. Ac sprec wiþ ūs æfter ūrum andgiete, **þæt** wē mægen understandan þā þing þe þū spricst.

Ic ascige ēow, 'For hwȳ leornige gē swā geornlīce?'
For-þǣm wē nyllaþ bēon swā-swā stunt nīetenu, þe nān þing nyton būton gærs and wæter.

Fela wundra wurdon geworhte þurh þone hālgan Cūþberht. Þā cōm him tō sum abbudysse, sēo wæs Ælflǣd gehāten, þæs cyninges sweostor Ecgfrides. Þā begann hēo tō halsigenne þone hālgan wer **þæt** he sceolde hire secgan hū lange hire brōþor Ecgfridus mōste his rīces brūcan.

Hēr nam Beorhtrīc cyning Offan dohtor Ēadburge. And on his dagum cōmon ǣrest þrēo scipu; and þā se gerēfa þǣr tō rād, and hīe wolde drīfan to þæs cyninges tūne, þȳ hē nyste hwæt hīe wǣron; and hine man ofslōg.

Þæt wæs micel wundor þæt sēo heall ne āhrure grundlunga. Ac hēo ne fēoll nā, **for-þǣm þe** hēo wæs swīþe fæste mid īsen-bendum besmiþod innan and ūtan.

Further reading

Let us look now at how Beowulf's battle with Grendel concludes, in Henry Sweet's prose adaptation. Some of the vocabulary is given below; other items have already been encountered and some items you should be able to guess, with a little thought. Again, some comprehension questions are interspersed among the extracts and should help to guide you through the climax of this episode.

ǣlce each
āsette set up
æt-berstan burst away
bēgen both
burge save, protect
cempan warriors, champions
drugon endured
dura door
drȳ-cræfte sorcery, witchcraft
eaxle shoulder
egeslīce terribly
fǣlsode cleansed
fæstenne stronghold
feorh life
furþum even
ge and
gebētte amended
gefēran comrades
gefrēdde felt
gehīerdon heard
gelǣste kept
gesīenu visible

gewundod wounded
gielp vow
grētan literally 'greet'; here 'harm'
hēowon hewed, cut
hrīemde shouted, roared
nyston did not know
onsprungon cracked
sēcende seeking
sina sinews
stapole flight of steps
sweotol clear
tācen token, i.e. sign, proof
tōburston burst
tugon tugged, pulled, drew
þanon from there, thence
þēah however
urnon ran
wǣfer-sīene spectacle
weardas guards
wereden protect
wund wound
ymb-þrungon crowded round, surrounded

- Why did Beowulf's comrades draw their swords?
- What did they do to Grendel?
- What protected Grendel?

Þā tugon Bēowulfes gefēran hire sweord þæt hīe hira hlāford wereden. Hīe þā þider urnon ealle, and þā cempan bēgen ymb-þrungon, and on ǣlce healfe hēowon, Grendles feorh sēcende. Hīe nyston þæt nān sweord ne mihte þone fēond grētan, for þǣm hē hæfde eallum wǣpnum forsworen mid his drȳ-cræfte.

- What did Grendel realise?
- What then did he do?
- How did the guards on the walls feel when this happened?

Hē þā Grendel, siþþan hē ongeat þæt hē þanon æt-berstan ne mihte, þā hrīemde hē egeslīce, swā þæt ealle Dene hit gehīerdon, ge furþum þā weardas on þǣm wealle āfyrhte wǣron.

- Where exactly was Grendel wounded?
- How serious was the wound?
- Where did he flee – and why?
- What was he aware of?

Þā wearþ wund gesīenu on Grendles eaxle, oþ-þæt þā sina onsprun-gon and þā bān tōburston. Hē þā ætbærst þanon, tō dēaþe gewun-dod: flēah tō þǣm mōrum, þæt hē him on his fæstenne burge. Hē gefrēdde þēah þæt his līf wæs æt ende.

- How had Beowulf kept his word?
- What did he take as a sign of his victory?
- Where did he put them?
- Who would see them there?

Swā Bēowulf gelǣste his gielp: fǣlsode þæs cyninges healle, and Denum þā yfel gebētte þe hīe lange drugon. Þæt wæs sweotol tācen þā Bēowulf genam Grendles earm and eaxle, and hīe on þǣm stapole āsette æt þǣre healle dura, eallum mannum tō wǣfer-sīene.

We shall return to *Beowulf*, both in the original text and in transla-tions, in greater detail in later chapters of this book. However, Henry Sweet's simplified adaptation of the most famous episode in the story gives an early taste of what many regard as the foundational work in English literature. By the end of this book, you will be able to read some of this masterpiece in its original poetic form, and you should

be able to compare and comment on the many translations that have been made of it.

Still, we have come this far in our exploration of Old English without focusing on one of the most important aspects of the language: its means of expressing actions and events. That is the subject of the next chapter.