



BEOWULF

Context

The Beowulf Manuscript:

The Beowulf manuscript survives in one codex, the British Museum MS. Cotton Vitellius A. XV which contains five fantastic works in Old English including *The Passion of St. Christopher*, *The Wonders of the East*, *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*, *Beowulf*, and *Judith*. In 1731 the codex was scorched, damaging the last two thousand lines of the poem. The manuscript itself seems to be scribed by two different monks, the first scribing the first two thirds of the poem and the second abruptly taking over for the last third. The true author of *Beowulf* is unknown, although it is likely that *Beowulf* was an oral story copied by the monks. However, there is some evidence showing that the second scribe had an intimate relationship with the text and may have revised part of it. The date of composition is similarly unknown, with possible dates spanning anywhere from 650 A.D. to just before 1000 A.D. It is also possible that part of it was composed earlier and then reworked in written form by the author of the textual version. Today, the manuscript resides in the British Library and is well seeing for yourself.

Historical Analysis vs. Literary Analysis:

Originally, Beowulf was seen as mainly a text of historical curiosity, used to illuminate aspects of Anglo-Saxon life. It was not until J.R.R. Tolkien's groundbreaking essay, "The Monsters and the Critics," that scholars began to pay attention to *Beowulf*'s literary form. Today, we can read *Beowulf* for both historical curiosity and for appreciation of the poetic form.

Many of the historical aspects of the poem deal with weapons and drinks and the structure of the political system. *Aseax*, for instance, is a small short knife used as a dagger. Mead is an alcoholic beverage made of fermented honey, which is still made in parts of northern Europe. A meadhall was a place where all the warriors of a particular king would come together to listen to poems and drink. Kings were more like tribal leaders, without the vast power and control that later kings had.

The poetic form of *Beowulf* is different than today's popular epic poems. OE emphasized irregular rhythms and alliteration over rhyme and patterned verse. Overall, the most important aspect of the form of *Beowulf* is its repetition and parallel structures.

Why *Beowulf* is a relevant text:

Robert Jordan. David Eddings. Dungeons and Dragons. The Ultima Games. The vast majority of fantasy books and related games and culture are all based on the world that J.R.R. Tolkien created in his fantastical series, The Lord of the Rings. Tolkien did not only write fantasy books, he was a renown scholar of OE and wrote the first "modern" critical essay on *Beowulf* (very much worth reading): "The Monsters and the Critics." The runic alphabet he uses in the Lord of the Rings is a version of an alphabet, futhork, that was used to carve OE into stone (for more information see "The Dream of the Rood" which was written in runes on the Ruthwell cross). Much of the Tolkien world is lifted from *Beowulf* -- the name "middle earth" comes from the OE word "middangeard". The dragon in *Beowulf* is much like Smog. Although *Beowulf* does not have many of the other creatures that Tolkien used to populate his world, the poem reads as a precursor and thus an inspiration to much of today's fantasy-epic culture.

Another book that might be of interest is *Grendel* by John Gardner. It is the story of *Beowulf* from Grendel's point of view, written in a very post-modern style. It offers a fascinating contrast to *Beowulf*, *Grendel* begins before the poem, offering an interpretation of the historical events leading up to the building of Heorot, and explores the relationships between the three monsters, mostly focusing on the tortured inner-mind of Grendel.

Or if you are interested in the warrior culture of the Anglo-Saxons, *The Battle of Maldon* is an OE text that is relevant to *Beowulf*.

Characters

Note

Beowulf is **not** a novel and therefore does not contain much traditional character development or attention paid to what the characters think and feel when they act. There are only a few moments that give us a glimpse of the inner thoughts of the characters. The list below should act more as a summary of each of the characters' roles, rather than provide deep insight into their emotional life. While the emotional life of the characters can be an interesting creative exercise, it is important to remember that our expectations of insight, created by modern literature, must be modified for us to experience *Beowulf* on its own terms.

Main Characters

- Beowulf** - Beowulf is the hero of the poem. He is a Geat, the son of Ecgtheow and the nephew of Hygelac.
- Hrothgar** - Hrothgar is the respected and loved king of the Danes. He has a great mead hall that Grendel terrorizes.
- Hygelac** - Beowulf's uncle, the Geatish king during the first part of the poem. He is the one character in *Beowulf* whose existence is verified by outside sources.
- Unferth** - A Dane who taunts Beowulf, but later lends him his sword, Hrunting, to fight against Grendel's mother. Unferth is a cowardly man who slew his own brother.
- Wealhtheow** - Hrothgar's wife and queen, her name means "peaceweaver." She is the mother of Hrethric and Hrothmund, who will later betray Hrothgar.
- Wiglaf** - Beowulf's loyal retainer. He is the only warrior to stay and help Beowulf fight against the dragon, the last of his line.

Other Monsters

- Grendel** - Grendel terrorizes Heorot, Hrothgar's meadhall. He is a descendant of Cain and ordinary weapons cannot hurt him.
- Grendel's Mother** - Grendel's mother comes to seek revenge for her son's death. She lives in a cave in the bottom of a lake.
- The Dragon** - The dragon hoards treasure in a cave near a cliff in Beowulf's kingdom. When a man steals a cup from the dragon, it burns Beowulf's lands. The Old English word for dragon is *wyrm*, which conjures up a slithering creature more like a cross between a traditional dragon and a serpent.

Summary

Beowulf begins with the history of the Danish line, starting with the king Scyld Scaefing and continuing until we come to the current king--Hrothgar. Hrothgar has built a mead-hall, Heorot, which is known far and wide for the revelry, feasting and beer-drinking that takes place there. One night, after much celebration, a monster arrives named Grendel. Grendel eats thirty men, and returns the next two nights, forcing the warriors to refuse to sleep in the hall. Grendel causes the hall to be deserted for twelve years, and Hrothgar mourns the loss of the fame and the fun.

Grendel's legacy of savagery inspires stories that travel over the sea into the home of the Geats, where Beowulf (our hero) hears of the strife. He takes fifteen of his best men, travels across the ocean and tells Hrothgar that he will vanquish the hall from evil. That night, Beowulf and his men sleep in the hall and, as planned, Grendel arrives. Grendel snatches a soldier and eats him up, then reaches for Beowulf, his intended second course. Beowulf grabs his hand and twists, ripping off his gloved hand after much grappling. Grendel flees, and everyone (except for the eaten man) is happy.

The next night Grendel's mother comes to the hall, eats one of Hrothgar's men, and steals her son's hand. Hrothgar and Beowulf are outraged and Beowulf and some troops travel to a lake where Grendel's mother lives. He dives into the water and is snatched up by Grendel's mother and brought into a cave. He tries to stab her but the sword does not work. Grendel's mother goes on the offensive and Beowulf is hard-pressed until he sees a sword on the wall, takes it, and uses it to kill her. Beowulf looks around and sees Grendel lying dead in the corner. He chops off Grendel's head and swims back up to the surface where only his men are waiting. Hrothgar is happy and gives them gifts, then the Geats return to their home.

Fifty years later, Beowulf is king. A dragon starts to terrorize his land and so he goes to attack it and avenge his people. He brings a troop but tells them not to help him. When he attacks the dragon his sword breaks and one of his men, Wiglaf, comes to his aid (all the other men have run into the wood). With Wiglaf's help Beowulf kills the dragon, but not before the dragon bites his neck. Beowulf, after making quite a speech for having his throat ripped open, dies. Wiglaf reprimands the men and then, as Beowulf requested, they make a funeral pyre for their king.

Part I: Introduction

Summary

Long ago there was a king, Scyld Scaefing. He was first found as a helpless child but he then grew strong and became a good king -- seizing the mead-benches of other tribes, making the other people pay tribute to him. He had a son named Beowulf whose fame spread throughout the Danish land. When Scyld died, his people made a great boat filled with treasure and sent him off to sea, but no one knows who received the ship. Then Beowulf was the king and after his reign his son, Healfdene ruled. Healfdene had four children, Heorogar, Hrothgar, Halga, and Yrse. Hrothgar was given victory in his battles so men followed him. He decided to build a great mead hall, Heorot. The hall became known for its joy, Hrothgar gave gifts, even through one day (but not in the story of *Beowulf*) the hall would burn and his son-in-law would betray him.

The joy of Heorot is interrupted when Grendel, a monster descended from Cain, hears the sounds of joy, the clear song of the scop, the laughter of the men. Grendel listens as the scop tells the story of creation, but does not attack, yet. When night comes, the men all asleep in a drunken stupor, Grendel strikes. He snatches up thirty men and takes them to his lair for a private feast.

Just before daybreak the men realize what has happened and let out a mourning cry for the lost men. Grendel returns night after night until no more warriors come to the hall for feasting and drinking. Grendel, the fiend, makes Heorot his lair, and for twelve years attacks Hrothgar's people. The Danes, terrorized by this night-walker, turn again to idols, know not God, returning to their ancient religions. Hrothgar broods, wishes for some deliverance.

Commentary

This section sets up the poem as a whole, both in parallel structure and themes. The story of Scyld Scaefing (pronounced Shield Shefing) echoes the story of Beowulf, with the motif of a helpless child turning into a great king. Similarly, Scyld Scaefing arrives from the water to the Danish lands, in the same way that Beowulf arrives. Throughout *Beowulf*, one should look for these similarities and parallel structures. Part of the beauty of oral poetry is the repetition of motifs--a scop might have a repertoire of certain motifs that in each poem appear in different ways, but help bring the poem together as an artistic piece.

Thematically, this section also brings up a lot of questions about religion. Throughout the poem, references are made to old testament stories - the flood, the story of Cain and Able, yet it is not quite clear what the religious culture of the Danes is - the writer of *Beowulf* is definitely familiar with the Bible, but the Danes do not seem to be. However, they seem to be a monotheistic people, talking about both fate and *Dryten*, the Lord. The "backsliding" in this chapter seems to be used to show how desperate the people are and how terrible Grendel's influence is upon them. It gives weight to the "Christian" reading of *Beowulf* - that he comes across the sea to "save" the people, to allow them to reaffirm their belief in the Lord.

Part II: Beowulf's Arrival

Summary

Across the sea, Beowulf hears of the strife of the Danes and takes fifteen of his men across the ocean to the land of the Danes. The Scylding watchman sees the sun glinting off the shields and rides his horse down the cliff to meet the boat, telling the men that he has never seen an armed band disembark so openly. Beowulf answers him, explaining that he comes from the nation of Hygelac and his father, a well-known battle-leader, is named Ecgtheow. He says that they have heard of the problems with Grendel and wish to offer help to Hrothgar. The watchman takes them to Heorot, and Wulfgar, one of Hrothgar's nobles, introduces them to Hrothgar, explaining that they have come to help. Hrothgar says that he knew Beowulf's father and actually has heard of Beowulf's famous strength. Beowulf tells Hrothgar that he will face Grendel with only his strength and that God will decide the outcome -- but that Hrothgar should send his war-shirt back to Hygelac if he dies. Hrothgar tells Beowulf that he once helped his father and describes the gore and blood that has always been the result of attempting to vanquish Grendel.

After this speech, the warriors sit back and drink a little mead and listen to the scop sing. Then Unferth rises up and challenges Beowulf -- asking him if he is the same Beowulf that got into a swimming match with Brecca and lost, then saying that he expects worse results in this fight. Beowulf replies, calling him his full-of-beer friend, and explains that they swam out into the open sea together for five days until they were driven apart by a storm in the night. Then Beowulf was attacked by water-monsters and he killed nine of them before the sun rose. He continues by telling Unferth that he's never heard such stories of bravery about him, although he did hear that he killed his brothers. He finishes by telling Unferth that if he was as brave as he is implying, Grendel would be dead by now.

The king is pleased by Beowulf's response and Wealhtheow, the queen, comes around to the men, offering them mead. Beowulf makes a boast, saying that he will fight Grendel or die. The queen is pleased and goes to sit by Hrothgar. The revelry continues, but Hrothgar knows that Grendel will attack that night and tells Beowulf that he has never entrusted his hall to another man before Beowulf. Then Hrothgar and his men leave the hall and Beowulf and his men, who doubt they will ever see their land again, lay down to sleep. Beowulf stays awake, watching, waiting.

Commentary

Some bit of character development of Beowulf happens in this section. He follows the code of the warriors, showing his valor, boasting just as he is expected to do. The contest between Unferth and Beowulf is probably a stylized "test" that a newcomer would encounter - especially a newcomer that came to rid the people of a monster. Unferth is taunting Beowulf in order to test him, to see if he can think quickly as well as fight. Beowulf does a remarkable job, he has prior knowledge of Unferth, and shows that he is able to insult him in a civilized manner. For instance, when he first replies, he calls Unferth his friend, then remarks that Unferth has drunk quite a bit of beer. Later, he slips a bit in about how Unferth will have to suffer in hell for killing his brothers, using these facts to undermine what Unferth said about him.

The story that Unferth tells is thus revised by Beowulf. This telling and retelling of stories is an important part of *Beowulf*. Throughout the poem we have stories that are told, then retold or alluded to, the details changing somewhat with each telling. This shows us that first, there were probably stories that the listeners of the people would be very familiar with and would enjoy allusions or retellings of throughout *Beowulf*. In this story of the sea monsters, it is probably not a familiar story, yet the telling and retelling is still important because it sets up this continuum that will last throughout the poem. Also, it shows how this was important within the culture - not only were there poems that had stories told and retold within them, part of the social structure of the Danish world revolved around this telling and retelling of stories to prove someone's worth.

One last note about the story about Brecca and Beowulf in the water. The Old English word *sund* can mean either "swimming" or "sea," and the word *reon* can mean rowed or swam, both depending on context. Some translators translate this story to mean that Beowulf swam for five days in a swimming contest - the more "super-hero" interpretation, while others, preferring a more realistic poem, translate the words and sea and rowing, which makes Beowulf much more human.

Part III: Beowulf vs. Grendel

Summary

Grendel comes, from the misty cliffs, across the moors, comes walking, stalking, bearing God's wrath. He comes to the door and rips it open, even though it is held tight by iron. His eyes shine with evil light, he looks and sees all the men and his heart laughs, thinking of the feast that he will have tonight. He seizes a warrior, the first of his planned binge, and rips him apart, sinking his teeth into the muscles, tearing off gobs of flesh. When he eats up all of the warrior, including his hands and feet, he reaches for his next victim; Beowulf. Beowulf catches Grendel's hand in his tight grasp and Grendel realizes that he has never met a man so strong before. Grendel wants to flee, but Beowulf hangs on, remembering his boasts in the meadhall, grasping tight as Grendel's fingers snap. Grendel tries to get away but Beowulf hangs on and the mead-benches are lifted up, the warriors awake and watch the struggle between Beowulf and Grendel. The warriors try to help Beowulf and attack Grendel with their swords, but no sword can harm Grendel. Then, after such struggle, Grendel's arm tears from its socket and he runs free, his empty arm socket dripping, returning to his den to seek death.

The next morning the warriors convene in the hall and then follow Grendel's bloody prints to the lake. The warriors sing and praise Beowulf, racing their horses, praising both Beowulf and their king. Then the scop also begins to sing of Beowulf, then sings of Sigemund and how he once killed a dragon and pillaged its treasure. This was after the reign of Heremod, who was a bad king, but everyone likes Beowulf now. Hrothgar comes when they return, standing beside his queen.

Commentary

The lines telling of Grendel advancing across the moors are some of the most dramatic lines of Old English poetry. The poet sets up the image of the moors, the mist, then writes of Grendel advancing closer and closer to Beowulf. The poem also uses sophisticated point of view switches between Beowulf and Grendel to give us an idea of the thoughts behind their actions. Grendel steps forward and laughs in his heart, thinking of the blood he will spill that night in lines 730 through 734. With one sentence, the poet is back with Beowulf, foretelling that the monster will *not* get to do all that he wishes, and using the time in Beowulf's mind to show us that he is not calmly waiting - he watches Grendel to understand how he can best attack, a mark of a good warrior. When they fight, the point of view switches to those who watch - how they cannot use swords and how Beowulf and Grendel grapple in the great hall. The changing of point of view gives us a way to see the different characters of the poem, but, more importantly, they enable the poet to build suspense and forward the plot.

The next morning, when the warriors go to the lake, the scop sings a song of Sigemund. This song provides a web of heroes for Beowulf to exist within, as well as showing what he may someday be capable of: killing a dragon. Also, the song gives the people a way to compare good and bad, to say that Heremod was a bad king and to advise Beowulf against turning bad himself. These poems within the larger poem might also be an explanation of how poems were used in the Anglo-Saxon culture - oral traditions passed down for entertainment and education.

Symbolically, the heaviest images in this section are the comparisons between light (Beowulf) and dark (Grendel). Traditionally, light means good and dark means evil (think of *Star Wars* if there is any confusion) and *Beowulf* fits right into that scheme. Grendel comes in from the dark, the moors; Beowulf waits in the light of the fire. From the very first introduction of Heorot, the inside light is emphasized. When Grendel attacks, the house sits in darkness. Light, especially light glinting off gold, are shown as the counterbalance to Grendel and his dark ways. One thing to keep in mind when writing about all contrasts, especially that between light and dark, is that without one, there is not as strong of a sense of the other. Beowulf appears only because Grendel attacks. Grendel is dark only in contrast to the lightness of the house. These two opposites, and the resolution between them is what moves a plot.

Part IV: The post-Grendel party

Summary

Hrothgar begins to speak, giving thanks to God, praising Beowulf's mother, and asking God to reward Beowulf with good fortune. Beowulf answers him, saying that he wishes Hrothgar could have seen the battle, that he could have killed Grendel there, but God did not will it. Unferth, who challenged Beowulf before, remains silent. All of the nobles look at the arm, agreeing that no sword could pierce Grendel's hand. The people refurnish Heorot, hanging tapestries on the walls. All the men then sit for the party, Beowulf drinks mead, and Hrothgar gives Beowulf and his troops some gifts.

The scop then sings of part of the Finnsburg story (see Commentary below), tells of the battle between Finn and Hnaef, the marriage between Hildeburh and Finn and how the Danes carried Hildeburh, who was given in marriage as a object of peace, back over the sea after Hnaef's murder. After the story, the warriors drink and Wealtheow offers the cup to the king, saying that her son Hrothulf would rule well. Beowulf sits between her other two sons. Hrothgar gives more riches to Beowulf, including a huge gold collar that Wealtheow presents; the collar is equaled only by the Brosing's necklace, which Hama, a Norse warrior, took from Eormanric, a Goth. After the scop finishes his story (which goes on to tell of Hygelac fighting the Frisians), everyone cheers for Beowulf.

Then Wealtheow speaks, asking Beowulf to be good to her sons, saying that everyone is loyal in the kingdom. Then everyone drinks and eats, reveling once again.

Everyone falls asleep. In the dark, Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son and snatches up both Grendel's arm and Hrothgar's favorite warrior. When the other fighters realize that she is there, they leap up with swords ready, but she has already fled into the night. All the men hear the shout and come to the hall; Beowulf is summoned. He asks Hrothgar if he slept well, Hrothgar tells him not to ask of happiness, for troubles have once again descended upon Heorot. Hrothgar's men have seen two creatures walking on the moors; one was the same woman that visited them that evening. Hrothgar then tells of the lake where she lives, a place so horrible that even a deer running from the dogs would rather die than plunge into the dank waters. "You are our only hope," Hrothgar tells Beowulf.

Commentary

The Anglo-Saxon world seems to have worked on a very basic cycle: death, war, party, death, war, party. The warriors all party after the death of Grendel, but within this party there are the foreboding of death. In lines 1240-1241, the poet tells of a warrior: "one beer drinker / ready and doomed to die lay down on bed." This sleep is a sleep prepared, and will lead to death.

"Sum sare angeald / æfenræste," writes the poet of Beowulf in lines 1251b and 1252a. One paid a dear price for the evening's rest. Throughout Beowulf there is this idea of a price that must be paid, whether it be gold for followers or fighting for rejoicing. In this passage, death is connected to sleep; death is the price of trying to take a night's rest. Grendel's mother returns to avenge the life of her son, the warriors must fight her after the night of revelry and sleep and a life is lost.

The last section contains a lengthy description of the warriors' preparations for bed. Sleep for the warriors is a sleep prepared--they place the shields above their heads to be ready for battle at any moment (1242-1257). Thus, sleep seems connected to battle. In line 1240, the poet mentions a man, "beor-scealca," who lies down on his bed, ready and doomed to die. This is the same man that is mentioned in the first lines of this passage, the one who pays the price of a night's rest. In both lines the words of death--"fæge" and "sare angeald"--are directly linked to the words of rest--"flet-ræste" (which alliterates with fæge) and "æfen-ræste." In the overall plot of *Beowulf*, and in the battle with Grendel, only by pretending to sleep--and tempting death--can Beowulf kill Grendel. Thus, we see the link between sleep and death.

This connection can be explained in part by the order in which events happen in Beowulf. In this passage feast leads to rest which leads to death. Feasting has already been shown to have some connection with death, be it before or after a death. For instance, when Beowulf talks of the sea monsters on the bottom of the sea, he points out that they did not eat him by creating the image of a negative feast, the monsters glorying in his flesh (562-4). Similarly, Grendel takes a feast-like pleasure in the crunching of man-bones (734). In a more subtle way, the feast that the warriors have after Beowulf kills Grendel is not only a feast of celebration but, in the larger vision of the poem, the first step in the cycle that leads to death.

In lines 1251 through 1262, we see more than just the warriors' connection to the death cycle. We should also look at Grendel's mother's connection with death. When she finds that her son is dead, she "yrmþe gemunde," dwells in this misery that leads her to revenge (1259). But Grendel's mother has a previous connection between death and misery. The lines tell of the icy waters in which she must dwell since Cain killed his brother. Thus, her whole miserable existence results from this earlier death. But the cycle that comes into conflict with the warriors relates to Grendel's death. In this cycle, Grendel's death leads to misery, which leads to revenge.

Imagine these two cycles in conflict. For the warriors, Grendel's death follows this pattern: death, feasting, sleep. For Grendel's mother, the death follows this pattern: death, misery, revenge. When these two patterns come into conflict, as they do when Grendel's mother comes back to the hall, revenge meets with sleep, which causes death. Thus, the complete warrior cycle is: death, feasting, sleep, death. In line 1255 the poet writes of Grendel, "swylt æfter synnum," dies after sins. Sins lead to death. Feasting leads to death. Misery leads to death. In short, everything leads to death, the price that all men pay for life.

Part V: Beowulf vs. Grendel's mother

Summary

Beowulf agrees, and before dawn they go to the lake, following a twisting path with narrow passageways. When they reach the lake, they see strange creatures crawling in the water, water beasts that slither away at daybreak. Beowulf shoots one with an arrow and it writhes and dies. Beowulf then puts on his armor, his mail-shirt, and his boar-plated helmet. Unferth lends him a sword, called Hrunting, for he is not brave enough to fight the monster himself.

Beowulf stands on the edge of the shore, asking them to send back the treasures to Hygelac if he dies, adding that Unferth should receive his wave-patterned sword. He declares that he will fight Grendel's mother or death will take him, and he plunges into the water. He swims down until she sees him and snatches him out of the water (he is protected by his chain mail) and swims with him up and into the cave. He sees a fire behind her and attempts to plunge his sword into her but the edge fails. He tries to rely on his strength, gripping her shoulder, but he stumbles and fails. She sits upon him and draws her seax, trying to stab him but his chain-mail once again protects him.

Then Beowulf sees a sword on the wall, shining brightly, a blade forged by the giants; he takes it and kills Grendel's mother with one swoop. A light shines from within the cave and he sees Grendel's corpse; he stabs it several times and finally chops off the head.

Meanwhile, the troops standing beside the mere see the blood welling up and decide that Beowulf is dead. The Scyldings leave after nine hours, but the Geats stay, heartsick.

Beowulf plunges his sword into Grendel, but somehow the hot blood of the monster reacts with the blade, causing it to melt away like ice. After killing both Grendel and his mother, the sword blade has melted away and Beowulf swims to the surface. The Geats are overjoyed and they all return to the mead-hall as Beowulf drags Grendel's head.

Commentary

Unferth lends Beowulf a sword, yet he is not brave enough to fight the monster himself. Unferth's sword does not work against Grendel's mother, but it is a nice gesture all the same. This is important because Beowulf's interactions with Unferth tell us more about his character than perhaps any other interactions within the poem. Beowulf always fits the code of the honorable warrior, graciously accepting the sword. Even, when he returns it to Unferth, he explains that it was not Unferth's fault that it did not work. Their original argument is also an example of the warrior code, which Beowulf must embody in order to show his worth to the other warriors.

Since the sword fails, Beowulf can only kill Grendel with the grace of God: another sword appears for his use. Each fight in *Beowulf* follows a progression of difficulty. In the first fight against Grendel, Beowulf uses no extra weapons and has help from no men—it is just him and the monster. In this fight, Beowulf must turn to a sword, and only luck and the grace of God bring him the sword that kills Grendel's mother. Finally, when Beowulf fights the dragon, he must use a sword, a short knife, and rely on the help of another man.

The light that Beowulf sees in the cave is most likely a Christian motif, similar to the light shining down from heaven when a saint, like Saint Anthony, has done a wondrous deed. We might interpret this section as a Christian metaphor: Beowulf is going down into the dark, into hell, and battling one of the denizens of the devil. When he succeeds, a light from heaven shines down. This brings us to the question of realism in *Beowulf*. There are two main readings of *Beowulf*: one treats it as a realistic adventure story, and another views it as a metaphorical super-hero poem. The first reading would interrupt the contest between Brecca and Beowulf as rowing, the second, swimming. In a similar way, the swim to the cave can be interrupted in two different ways. The first, realistic interpretation, is that Beowulf was swimming down at the break of day and was snatched from the water by Grendel's mother. She then brought him into an air-filled underwater cave. The second interpretation is that Beowulf swims for a day to reach the underwater cave, making him into a super-hero. Much of the difference between the two interpretations is grammatical in nature and does not change the basic plot, although it can have an effect on the symbolic significance of the poem.

Part VI: After the fight with Grendel's mother

Summary

Beowulf talks to Hrothgar and tells him that he could not use Hrunting to kill Grendel's mother. Instead, he instead had to use the sword on the wall that God guided him to use. He cut down the monsters with it, revenging the Danes. He then promises Hrothgar that he and his men will be able to sleep in peace in Heorot, not fearing the man-killer.

Next Beowulf places the hilt of the sword in Hrothgar's hand. Hrothgar lifts it up and sees that it was made by giants. He notices the story of the great flood inscribed in runes on the hilt, telling of the great giants and how they were unknown to God. Then all is quiet and Hrothgar tells all the people that Beowulf is a good man and that his name will spread all over the world. Then he tells Beowulf that he shall be a help to his people, with wisdom to govern his strength, unlike Heremod who ruled the sons of Ecgwela and killed Danish men in his own hall. He attacked his companions until he was banished, even though God had given him great strength. He was so stingy that he never even gave a ring to his people. Then Hrothgar tells Beowulf that God gives things to all people, sometimes giving noble men good things, kingdoms and victory in war. But sometimes those men become proud, not realizing their own mortality, and begin to want more time to rule. Then they no longer give rings to their companions and soon fall out of God's favor, leaving their bodies to decay. "Oh Beowulf," Hrothgar says, "turn not to pride!" He tells him sickness or war will break his strength, or fire, or wave, or the blow of a sword, a thrown spear, or hateful old age will make him go blind.

For fifty years, Hrothgar ruled his people and all went well until Grendel came to haunt his people. Hrothgar tells him to sit, to eat and drink and divide the treasure in the morning.

All of the people feast and in the morning Beowulf decides to leave. Then Beowulf gives Hrunting back to Unferth and tells him that it was a good sword, even if it failed him in his fight against Grendel's mother.

Beowulf tells the Danes that he is going to go back to Hygelac, but that if they ever need help again, he will send thanes to help them. Or, if Hrethric wants to come, he would be welcome.

Hrothgar answers Beowulf, telling him that he is the wisest man he has ever heard and that he would make a good king for the Geats. He then brings him gifts and kisses Beowulf, tears running down his cheeks as he realizes that he will never see him again. Beowulf and his men ride away.

Commentary

This section is about the responsibility of leadership. Hrothgar's speech to Beowulf does not focus on the glory of battle or the honor of war. Instead, he seems to be saying: trust in God, be generous and humble. Beowulf, in this section at least, is the model for this kind of advice--he is benevolent to Unferth, kills evil monsters, and promises peace to the Danes. Throughout *Beowulf*, we should look at the advice that the different people give about what it means to be a good ruler. "He was a good king," the poet says again and again about Hrothgar.

One interesting way to look at the meaning of *Beowulf* involves comparing the kingship of Beowulf with the kingship of Hrothgar. They are not opposites in the way that Heremod and Hrothgar are, they are simply different examples of good men. Beowulf is a warrior, while Hrothgar is a king. Hrothgar freely admits that he does not have the strength of his youth; Beowulf boasts about his undiminished great power. Both roles are important in *Beowulf*. Beowulf himself seems to fall into three categories of life: the three ages of man. He begins as a young lad, and, although this is outside of the narrative plot of the poem, a clumsy man of little promise. He seems to blossom--as we can see from his tales of exploits with Brecca, then, when we are introduced to him he is in stage two of his life: Beowulf the great warrior. Many adventure stories stop at this point: the knight saves the princess (or the meadhall in this case) and all live happily ever after. *Beowulf* is intriguing, in part, because it deals with the resolution: what happens when a great warrior becomes a king but doesn't stop fighting his own battles? It is difficult to decide if the poem is a criticism or a tribute to Beowulf; like all complex literary works, it is probably both, although it seems to have an emphasis on the tribute.

The feelings between Hrothgar and Beowulf are also complex. As readers, we feel sympathy for Hrothgar when he sheds tears at Beowulf's departure. This reminds us of the real feelings that happen in heroic situations, especially in this example of a metaphorical father-son relationship. Throughout *Beowulf*, the poet returns to the theme of heirs, telling of Hrethel and how he wasted away with sadness, and returning again and again to the fact that Beowulf has no heirs.

Part VII: Beowulf's return home

Summary

The men ride to the shore and board the boat, after giving a sword to the ship-guard. They sail across the sea back to Geatland. The harbor-guard sees them and they unload the treasure before going to Hygelac, their king. His wife Hygd was very generous, unlike the queen Modthrytho who killed whomever looked at her.

Then Beowulf and his companions walk up the shore and go to Hygelac. Hygelac prepares the hall and the two talk, while the queen pours mead for the warriors. Hygelac asks Beowulf about his journey, reminding him that he urged Beowulf not to go, but gives thanks that he is back.

Beowulf tells about Hrothgar, and tells of his queen, the peace-weaver. He makes allusions to the fight between the Heathobards and the Danes and wonders aloud if marriage can ever bring peace. Then he retells the fight with Grendel, describing the bag made of tough dragon skins that Grendel carried. Then he tells how Grendel's mother killed Aeschere and how they did not even have a chance to burn him on the funeral pyre since she took his body. Then he tells of how he dove down under the waves and killed Grendel's mother.

Beowulf has no heirs or family, so he gives all of his treasure to Hygelac, his king. The retainers bring in a helmet, an iron shirt, and an ornamented war-sword, all battle-gear that Hrothgar gave him. Then he calls in four swift horses. Beowulf gave all of this to Hygelac freely, out of his love, then gives Queen Hygd a necklace and three horses.

So Beowulf shows the people of the court of his greatness, even though when he was young he seemed like he was not going to amount to much. They thought he was slow and lazy, but then in battle he found victory.

Then they bring out a great blade and give it to Beowulf before awarding him lands, seven thousand hides, and a hall and gift throne.

Commentary

In this section, which chronicles Beowulf's return, we learn things that were not formerly revealed in the first two thirds of the poem. First, we learn that not everyone encouraged Beowulf to fight Grendel. Then we learn that Beowulf was a clumsy child, as we discussed in the Commentary on the last section. In Beowulf's retelling of his fight with Grendel, he also adds details not included in the poem-narration of the battle. The bag of tough dragon skins is an interesting addition--perhaps Grendel had some relation to the dragons, or had killed a dragon at some point. John Gardener's book, *Grendel* expounds upon the relationship between Grendel and the dragons. The retelling of these stories also probably owes itself to the oral nature of the tale--it's been over a thousand lines since the battle, which means a few hours, or even a few days, so the audience would need to be refreshed. The extra facts that have been added about Beowulf's life could also be for the benefit of the audience--the clumsy oaf turned hero is a popular motif in many fantastic tales.

The giving of gifts is a common action throughout *Beowulf*. The kings give gifts to the warriors, who in turn protect the kings and give them the loot that they collect. There is a very deep honor code at work--a good king is called a ring-giver and again and again examples are drawn of stingy and therefore bad kings. Beowulf is showing his compliance with the code in this section, as is Hygelac. But more than this, *Beowulf* hints at a deeper feeling between the kings and their subjects. Beowulf gives the treasures to his king because he *loves* him, just as Hrothgar loves Beowulf, making him cry when Beowulf leaves. This love between men, a mighty warrior love, appears again in the next section between Wiglaf and Beowulf, and is perhaps the substitute for the heirs that Beowulf lacks.

Part VIII: 50 years later. . .

Summary

Hygelac is killed, then his son is killed by Scylfings and after a dark time the throne passes to Beowulf. Hygd actually offers him the throne before her son is killed, but Beowulf lets her son take the throne and supports him. After her son is killed, Beowulf takes the throne. He rules well for fifty years until a dragon begins to terrorize his kingdom.

A man, escaping from his master, had crept inside the dragon's lair and taken a golden cup. The dragon's hoard was full of ancient treasures assembled from the coffers of the dead. The last man alive buried all the treasure before he died, mourning the loss of all he knew. Then the dragon found all the treasure and hoarded it. But then the man took the cup, avoided the snoring dragon, and escaped. He gave the cup to his lord and was reunited with him; but when the dragon awoke, he realized that the cup was missing, his treasure hoard incomplete. Snuffling and snorting, the dragon sniffs at the tracks angrily. He waits until night falls and then flies over Beowulf's land, belching fire and burning the land. The Geats see the fire destroying everything and become afraid.

When Beowulf realizes what is happening, he becomes quite sad. For fifty years all has been peaceful, but now the fire-beast is spoiling his land. He wonders if he has angered God. He knows he must do something, so he finds a metal shield--the linden-wood shields will burn in the dragon flame. Beowulf does not fear the fight with the serpent, for it seems small compared to all he has achieved in his time. He approaches the cave with just twelve men, as the man who stole the cup leads them to the lair.

Beowulf tells everyone that he was close to Hrethel. One of Hrethel's sons killed the other and the price was unpaid so Hrethel died of mourning. How sad it is, says Beowulf, for a man to see his son killed--grief overwhelms his heart. Beowulf tells of the battles fought after Hrethel's death and tells all that he earned the treasures that Hygelac gave him with valor in battle. Then he vows to fight the dragon and tells his retainers to let him fight the dragon alone--he will let fate decide between him and the dragon.

Commentary

Unfortunately, the folios included in this section of the manuscript are in the worst condition of all *Beowulf* folios. The word that tells who stole the treasure is almost entirely faded, mostly from wear, as is most of that section. Sadly, this section could illuminate religious aspects of the poem--the wear on the section means that it was probably read the most frequently by the monks, although there are other theories that one can read about in the section on the *Beowulf* manuscript. This may have been a retelling of a biblical story, but these words have been lost.

If we look at Beowulf instead, and examine his development as a character, we will find much more room for analysis. This is the first section of "Beowulf the king," where we witness the greatness of the third stage of his life. He has ruled well for fifty years, meaning that he is at least in his late seventies, yet is still strong enough to attempt to face a dragon on his own. Beowulf is not without doubts, however. His fear that he has angered God in some way echoes Hrothgar's sadness; this also shows how intrinsic religion was to the belief of fate--*Dryten*, the lord, is connected to the idea of *wyrd*, fate. God is seen as responsible for the shift of fate.

Here Beowulf might be remembering Hrothgar's words--that a king will have his fate turn in his old age, especially if he is not generous to his people. This is the first clue that Beowulf might falter, and it presages a shift in his character. No longer can he be the foolhardy hero; he is a king and his people are important to him. However, he differs from Hrothgar in his attack against the dragon. It is hard to tell if the poet is criticizing Beowulf for acting as a hero, or if this is another example of Beowulf's bravery. One could compare Hrothgar to Beowulf: one dies of treachery, the other dies in a heroic act. But Beowulf's heroic act, an attempt to kill the dragon on his own, belies a certain type of hero that must be respected, even if it does mean his death.

We know that Beowulf is going to die--the foreboding is very obvious. Past, present, and future all seem to blend as Beowulf makes his last stand. This moves the battle from the literal battle of Beowulf and the dragon to a larger view of all kings and all heroes. Death is inevitable, the poet seems to say, but will still tell us how that death will occur.

Part IX: Beowulf vs. the dragon

Summary

Beowulf goes under the cliff, trusting his own strength, and yells at the dragon, who hisses and slithers out of its cave. He draws his sword and advances, as the serpent blows flames across him. The shield protects him, but not for long. He slashes up with his sword but the edge breaks against the glittering scales of the beast. His sword has failed him.

All of the men have retreated to the woods and are watching the battle. Only one, Wiglaf, returns to his lord, holding his shield high and drawing his sword. Wiglaf yells to his companions, telling them to remember what Beowulf has done for them. He rushes forward, telling Beowulf that he will do all he can to help him.

Then the dragon charges, glittering in coils and surging flame, and Wiglaf continues forward, even though his mail shirt is no protection against the dragon's flames. Then Beowulf holds up Naegling again, and this time it snaps, shattering in battle. The dragon belches flame and burns Wiglaf's hand to a crisp. Wiglaf strikes the dragon in the throat, plunging the sword in deep. The fire calms down as Beowulf stabs the dragon in the belly with his belt-knife and the dragon dies.

Beowulf sits down on a seat opposite the wall, and Wiglaf gives him water. Beowulf has a deep gash in his throat, but he can still speak. He tells Wiglaf that if he had a son, he would give him all of his war garments, but he has no son. Then he tells Wiglaf to go and bring the treasure to him so he can see it before he dies. Wiglaf goes into the lair and sees heaps of jewels and gold. He hurries back and Beowulf gives thanks that he got to see these treasures, then tells Wiglaf to build a mound on the sea and call it Beowulf's lair.

He then gives Wiglaf his golden collar and tells him that he is the last of the noble tribe of men--fate has swept all away and he must follow them. Beowulf dies.

Commentary

This section contains some of the poem's most beautiful language, worth examining in the OE form, with description of the glitter and coil of the dragon. This is the climax of the poem. The dragon is Beowulf's third major foe, and the description shows that he is a formidable foe indeed. Seen in the context of the other foes, there are a few key differences. Grendel was attacking the people out of pure malice, giving Beowulf a natural right to kill him. Grendel's mother sought to revenge her son, which makes Beowulf's motives seem slightly less pure, and he was harder to kill. Even without the moral complications, dragons were notoriously difficult to kill, and the poem states that it was a great man who could kill a dragon, even if it meant losing one's life.

Symbolically, we could see the dragon as the devil and the battle of Beowulf and the dragon as the final battle between good and evil, in which both die. We could also interpret the dragon as a symbol of greed, for it hoards the treasure although it has no use for it. Seen in the context of the rest of the poem, this could be a very exciting reading--Beowulf is attacking his own desire for wealth and dies fighting it. But Beowulf is the opposite of the dragon--he gives his wealth away to his warriors. However, the warriors do not help Beowulf in their time of need--the wealth was just as useless to him as it was to the dragon.

The one exception to this, of course, is Wiglaf. Wiglaf is the son-figure who receives Beowulf's golden collar after he dies, since Beowulf has no heirs. There is no explanation as to why Wiglaf stands with Beowulf when the others fail. However, we should remember that Beowulf specifically told the warriors *not* to help him fight the dragon. Beowulf is showing the warrior-honor that he must show. But Wiglaf shows the man-love for Beowulf that wins over the code of the warrior honor. By going against Beowulf's wishes, he fulfills Beowulf's true desires and only with his help and love can Beowulf kill the dragon.

Part X: The end

Wiglaf sees Beowulf's death with great sorrow, and looks down at his lord then at the dragon, laid out on the ground, never again to whirl through the air spurting flame. Very few men have killed dragons and taken their treasure - Beowulf only did by death.

The cowardly men come back, filled with shame, and see their leader dead. Wiglaf tells them that Beowulf gave them so many treasures and rings and it was as if Beowulf had just thrown them away - when his time of need came they were not there to help. "Death is better for any warrior than a shameful life!" he exclaims.

Then he commands that the outcome of the battle should be told to the land, that Beowulf is dead, but so is the Dragon. Then Wiglaf sits and watches over Beowulf. The messages know that when those from the other lands hear that their king is gone, their land will be attacked by the Frisians. He remembers the battle at Ravenswood and the violence of the Swedish-Geatish battle.

Now the lord is lifeless and so the men bring him home, the giver of rings. Soon war will come. Both the dragon and the king will fly no more. Wiglaf tells the people that fate was too strong for Beowulf, but he and the men go into the barrow and look at the treasures.

Then they bring timber from all around for Beowulf's pyre, and load the gold and treasure onto a cart. They pile treasure up on the pyre, and lay Beowulf in the center. Then they light it aflame and the smoke spirals up and toward the sky until it has built to the ground. A Geatish woman weaves a grief-song for Beowulf, saying that she fears the attack which will soon come. Then the men build on the cliff a barrow to be seen by ocean travelers and put all the rings and ornaments they had found in the treasure hoard in the barrow. Then they rode round the barrow, weaving a lay about their king, saying that he was, of all the kings in the world, "the kindest to his men, the most courteous man, the best to his people, and most eager for fame."

Analysis

At the end of Beowulf's life, he asks to see the treasure that he has won. Wiglaf complies, and Beowulf dies satisfied. While Beowulf does not make any statements about the futility of wealth, this passage, and all of *Beowulf* could be read in such a way. The wealth that he won by his death is buried with him, as little help to him as it was to the dragon. His kingdom is gone, his men dishonored. Beowulf lived a good life, but in the end, life went on. Ultimately, this is the conclusion of Beowulf. Without an heir, only the memory of the man is left, and even all the treasure in the world means nothing. Everything leads to death, even for a good king.

Wiglaf rebukes the other eleven men for deserting their king. Perhaps the number twelve is meant as a religious parallel between Jesus and his twelve disciples and Beowulf and his twelve warriors. However, the comparison is reversed: one betrays Jesus while one saves Beowulf. The other men were following Beowulf's orders, but, as mentioned in the last section, the men need to do more than just fulfill the orders of their king: they must *feel* love for him. This is where Beowulf goes beyond that code: he bonds with Hrothgar beyond his duty, just as Wiglaf does for him. Ultimately, the poet is writing a revision to the heroic code, one that makes love even more important than duty.

The ending of this section echoes the beginning of the poem. Beowulf is mourned just as Scyld was mourned, although the method of burial is different. The poem begins and ends with the death of great kings, yet also pays honor to their lives. The lay that the people weave for Beowulf could even be an explanation for the entire poem: this is the final form of the poem about the great warrior and king Beowulf, that has been passed down through the years. Beowulf lives in the immortality of poetry, even if he had no heir and was the last of his line.

1. Discuss the religious aspects of Beowulf.
2. Give examples and discuss the symmetry of plot and images within Beowulf.
3. Why three monsters? What role does each play?
4. How does the oral nature of Beowulf affect the text?
5. What are some overall themes of the poem?
6. What role do women play in Beowulf?
7. How do the stories within stories relate to the main narrative of the text?
8. Compare several of the kings in Beowulf, paying special attention to the in-text comparisons.
9. How does Beowulf compare with a modern adventure story? Does anything like Beowulf exist today?
10. Is Beowulf a hero? Why or why not?

Beowulf

Anonymous (1100-1945)

Old English	Modern English
1 <i>Hwæt. We Gardena in geardagum,</i>	LO, praise of the prowess of people-kings
2 <i>þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon,</i>	of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped,
3 <i>hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.</i>	we have heard, and what honor the athelings won!
4 <i>Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena/ þreatum,</i>	Oft Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,
5 <i>monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah,</i>	from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,
6 <i>egsode eorlas. Syddan ærest weard/</i>	awing the earls. Since erst he lay
7 <i>feastreft funden, he hæc frotre gebad,</i>	friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:
8 <i>weox under wolcnum, weordmyndum þah,</i>	for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,
9 <i>oðþæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra</i>	till before him the folk, both far and near,
10 <i>ofer hronrade hyran scolde,</i>	who house by the whale-path, heard his mandate,
11 <i>gomban gylðan. þæt wæs god cýning.</i>	gave him gifts: a good king he!
12 <i>dæm eafra wæs æfter cenned,</i>	To him an heir was afterward born,
13 <i>geong in geardum, þone god sende</i>	a son in his halls, whom heaven sent
14 <i>folce to frotre; fyrendearfe ongeat</i>	to favor the folk, feeling their woe
15 <i>þe hie ær drugon aldorlease/</i>	that erst they had lacked an earl for leader
16 <i>lange hwile. Him hæc liffrea,</i>	so long a while; the Lord endowed him,
17 <i>wuldres wealdbend, woroldare forgeaf;</i>	the Wielder of Wonder, with world's renown.
18 <i>Beowulf wæs breme blæd wide sprang/,</i>	Famed was this Beowulf: far flew the boast of him,
19 <i>Scyldes eafra Scedelandum in.</i>	son of Scyld, in the Scandian lands.
20 <i>Swa sceal geong/ guma/ gode gewyrcean,</i>	So becomes it a youth to quit him well
21 <i>fromum feohgittum on fæder bearme/,</i>	with his father's friends, by fee and gift,
22 <i>þæt hine on ylde eft gewunigen</i>	that to aid him, aged, in after days,
23 <i>wilgesipas, þonne wig cume,</i>	come warriors willing, should war draw nigh,
24 <i>leode gelæsten; lofðædum sceal</i>	liegemen loyal: by lauded deeds
25 <i>in mægþa gehwære man geþeon.</i>	shall an earl have honor in every clan.
26 <i>Him ða Scyld gewat to gescaphwile</i>	Forth he fared at the fated moment,
27 <i>felahror feran on frean wære.</i>	sturdy Scyld to the shelter of God.
28 <i>Hi hyne þa ætbæron to brimes farode,</i>	Then they bore him over to ocean's billow,
29 <i>swære gesipas, swa he selfa bæd,</i>	loving clansmen, as late he charged them,
30 <i>þenden wordum weold wine Scyldinga;</i>	while wielded words the winsome Scyld,
31 <i>leof landfruma lange ahte.</i>	the leader beloved who long had ruled....
32 <i>þær æt hyde stod hringedstefna,</i>	In the roadstead rocked a ring-dight vessel,
33 <i>isig ond utfus, æþelinges fær.</i>	ice-flecked, outbound, atheling's barge:
34 <i>Alledon þa leofne þeoden,</i>	there laid they down their darling lord
35 <i>beaga bryttan, on bearm scipes,</i>	on the breast of the boat, the breaker-of-rings,
36 <i>mærne be mæste. þær wæs madma fela</i>	by the mast the mighty one. Many a treasure
37 <i>of feorwegum, frætwæ, gelæded;</i>	fetched from far was freighted with him.
38 <i>ne hyrde ic cymlicor teol gegyrwan</i>	No ship have I known so nobly dight
39 <i>hildewæpnum ond headowædum,</i>	with weapons of war and weeds of battle,
40 <i>billum ond byrnum; him on bearme læg</i>	with breastplate and blade: on his bosom lay
41 <i>madma mænigo, þa him mid scoldon</i>	a heaped hoard that hence should go
42 <i>on flodes æht feor gewitan.</i>	far o'er the flood with him floating away.
43 <i>Ðalæs hi hine læssan lacum teodan,</i>	No less these loaded the lordly gifts,
44 <i>þeodgestreonum, þon þa dydon</i>	thanes' huge treasure, than those had done
45 <i>þe hine æt frumsceaftæ ford onsendon</i>	who in former time forth had sent him
46 <i>ænne ofer yðe umborwesende.</i>	sole on the seas, a suckling child.
47 <i>þa gyt hie him asetton segen geldenne/</i>	High o'er his head they hoist the standard,
48 <i>heah ofer heafod, leton holm beran/,</i>	a gold-wove banner; let billows take him,
49 <i>geafon on garserg; him wæs geomor sefa,</i>	gave him to ocean. Grave were their spirits,
50 <i>murnende mod. Afen ne cunnon</i>	mournful their mood. No man is able
51 <i>sergan to sode, selerædende/,</i>	to say in sooth, no son of the halls,
52 <i>hæled under heofenum, hwa þam hlæste onfeng.</i>	no hero 'neath heaven, -- who harbored that freight!
53 <i>ða wæs on burgum Beowulf Scyldinga,</i>	Now Beowulf bode in the burg of the Scyldings,
54 <i>leof leodcýning, longe þrage</i>	leader beloved, and long he ruled
55 <i>folcum gefræge fæder ellor hwearf,</i>	in fame with all folk, since his father had gone
56 <i>aldor of earde, oðþæt him eft onwoc</i>	away from the world, till awoke an heir,
57 <i>heah Healfdene; heold þenden lifde,</i>	haughty Healfdene, who held through life,
58 <i>gamol ond gudreowu, glæde Scyldingas.</i>	sage and sturdy, the Scyldings glad.
59 <i>dæm feower bearn ford gerimed</i>	Then, one after one, there woke to him,
60 <i>in worold wocun, weoroda ræstwan/,</i>	to the chieftain of clansmen, children four:

61 Heorogar ond Hroðgar ond Halga til;
 62 hyrde ic þæt wæs/ Onelan cwen,
 63 Heaðoscilfingas healsgebedda.
 64 þa wæs Hroðgare heresped gýfen,
 65 wiges weorðmýnd, þæt him his winemagas
 66 georne hyrðon, odd þæt seo geogod geweox,
 67 magodriht micel. Him on mod bearn
 68 þæt healreced hatan wolde,
 69 medoærn/ micel, men gewyrcean
 70 þonne/ ylðo bearn æfre gefrunon,
 71 ond þær on innan eall gedælan
 72 geongum ond ealdum, swýlc him god sealde,
 73 buton folcscare ond feorum gúmena.
 74 Ða ic wide gefrægn weort gebannan
 75 manigre mægþe geond þisne middangeard,
 76 folcstede frætwan. Him on fyrste gelomp,
 77 ædre mid ylðum, þæt hit weard ealgearo,
 78 healærna mæst; scop him Heort naman
 79 se þe his wordes geweald wide hæfde.
 80 He beot ne aleh, beagas dæðde,
 81 sinc æt symle. Sele hlifade,
 82 heah ond horngæap, headowýlma bad,
 83 ladan liges; ne wæs hit lenge þa gen
 84 þæt se eeghete/ apunsweorum/,
 85 æfter wælniðe wæcnan scolde.
 86 Ða se ellengæst earfodlice
 87 þrage geholode, se þe in þýstrum bad,
 88 þæt he dogora gehwam dream gehyrde
 89 hludne in healle; þær wæs hearpan sweg,
 90 swutol sang scopes. Sægde se þe cuþe
 91 frumsceaft fira feorran reccean,
 92 cwæð þæt se ælmihtiga eorðan worhte/,
 93 wlitebeorhtne wang, swa wæter bebúged,
 94 gesette sigehreþig sunnan ond monan
 95 leoman to leohhte landbuendum
 96 ond gefrætwaðe foldan sceatas
 97 leomum ond leafum, lif eac gesceop
 98 cynna gehwylcum þara ðe twice hwyrfaþ.
 99 Swa Ða drihtguman dreamum lifdon
 100 eadiglice, oddæt an ongan
 101 fyrene fremman/ feond on helle.
 102 Wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten,
 103 mære mearcstapa, se þe moras heold,
 104 fen ond fæsten; fifelcýnnes eard
 105 wonsæli wer weardode hwile,
 106 siþðan him scýppend forscrifen hæfde
 107 in Caines cýnne. þone cwealm gewræt
 108 ece drihten, þæs þe he Abel slog;
 109 ne gefeah he þære fæhðe, ac he hine feor forwræt,
 110 metod for þý mane, mancýnne fram.
 111 þanon untyððras ealle onwocon,
 112 eotenas ond ylfe ond orcneas,
 113 swýlce gýgantas/, þa wið gode wunnon
 114 lange þrage; he him ðæs lean forgeald.
 115 Gewat Ða neosian, syþðan niht becom,
 116 hean huses, hu hit Þringdene
 117 æfter beorþege gebun hæfdon.
 118 Fand þa ðær inne æþelinga gedriht
 119 swefan æfter symble; sorge ne cudon,
 120 wonsceaft wera. Wiht unhælo,
 121 grim ond grædig, gearo sona wæs,
 122 reoc ond reþe, ond on ræste genam
 123 þritig þegna, þanon eft gewat
 124 hude hremig to ham faran,

Heorogar, then Hrothgar, then Halga brave;
 and I heard that -- was --'s queen,
 the Heathoscylfing'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.
 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: Heort 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. Nor far was that day
 when father and son-in-law stood in feud
 for warfare and hatred that woke again.
 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 knew
 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-riever 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, and far was he driven,
 for the slaughter's sake, from sight of men.
 Of Cain awoke all that woful breed,
 Etins and elves and evil-spirits,
 as well as the giants that warred with God
 weary while: but their wage was paid them!
 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,

Old English

125 mid þære wælfylle wica neosan.
 126 ða wæs on uhtan mid ærdæge
 127 Grendles gudcræft gumum undyrne;
 128 þa wæs æfter wiste wop up ahafen,
 129 micel morgensweg. Aflære þeoden,
 130 æþeling ærgod, unblide sæt,
 131 þolode dryðsweð, þegnsoorge dreah,
 132 syðþan hie þæs ladan last sceawedon,
 133 wergan gastas; wæs þæt gewin to strang,
 134 lad ond longsum. Næs hit lengra fyrst,
 135 ac ymb ane niht eft gefremede
 136 mordbeala mare ond no mearn fore,
 137 fæhde ond fyrene; wæs to fæst on þam.
 138 þa wæs eadfynde þe him elles hwær
 139 gerumlicor ræste sohte/,
 140 bed æfter burum, ða him gebeacnod wæs,
 141 gesægd soðlice sweotolan tacne
 142 healdegnes hete; heold hyne syðþan
 143 fyr ond fæstor se þam feonde ætwand.
 144 Swa rixode ond wið rihte wan,
 145 ana wið eallum, oðþæt idel stod
 146 husa selest. Wæs seo hwil micel;
 147 XII wintra tid torn gepolode
 148 wine Scyldinga/, weana gehwælcne,
 149 sidra sorga. Fordam secgum/ weard,
 150 ylða bearnum, undyrne cūð,
 151 gyddum geomore, hætte Grendel wan
 152 hwile wið Hroþgar, hetenidas wæg,
 153 fyrene ond fæhde fela missera,
 154 singale sæce, sibbe ne wolde
 155 wið manna hwone mægenes Deniga,
 156 feorhbealo feorran, fea þingian,
 157 ne þær nænig witenan wenan þorfte
 158 beorhtre bote to banan/ folmum,
 159 ac/ se/ æglæca ehtende wæs,
 160 deort deapscua, duguþe ond geogoþe,
 161 seomade ond sprede, sinnihte heold
 162 mistige moras. men ne cunnon
 163 hwyðer helrunan hwyrtum scriþað.
 164 Swa fela fyrena feond mancynnes,
 165 atol angengea, oft gefremede,
 166 heardra hynda. Heorot eardode,
 167 sincfage sel sweartum nihtum;
 168 no he þone gifstol gretan moste,
 169 maþdum for metode, ne his myne wisse.
 170 þæt wæs wræt micel wine Scyldinga,
 171 modes breða. Alonig oft gesæt
 172 rice to rune; ræd eahtedon
 173 hwæt swiðferhdum selest wære
 174 wið færgryrum to gefremmanne.
 175 Hwilum hie geheton æt hærgtrafum/
 176 wigweorþunga, wordum bædon
 177 þæt him gastbona geoce gefremede
 178 wið þeodþream. Swylc wæs þeaw hyra,
 179 hæþenra hylt; helle gemundon
 180 in modsefan, metod hie ne cūpon,
 181 dæda demend, ne wiston hie drihten god,
 182 ne hie huru heofena helm herian ne cūpon,
 183 wuldres waldend. Wa bið þam ðe steal
 184 þurh slidne nið sawle bescufan
 185 in fyres fæþm, frofre ne wenan,
 186 wilhte gewendan; wel bið þam þe mot
 187 æfter deaddæge drihten secean
 188 ond to fæder fæþmum freodo wilnian.

Modern English

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, when that bale was shown,
 was seen in sooth, with surest token, --
 the hall-thane's hate. Such held themselves
 far and fast who the fiend outran!
 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-Runes 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 prince 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 words
 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 hales 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!

Old English

189 Swa ða mælceare maga Healfdenes
 190 singala sead, ne mihte snotor hælend
 191 wean onwendan; wæs þæt gewin to swyð,
 192 laþ ond longsum, þe on ða leode becom,
 193 nyðwra cu niþgrim, nihtbealwa mæst.
 194 þæt fram ham gefrægn Higelaces þegn,
 195 god mid Geatum, Grendles dæda;
 196 se wæs moncynnes mægenes strengest
 197 on þam dæge þysse lifes,
 198 æpele ond eacen. Ðet him yðlidan
 199 godne gegyrwan, cwæð, hu gudecning
 200 ofer swanrade secean wolde,
 201 mærne þeoden, þa him wæs manna þearf.
 202 done siðfæt him snotore ceorlas
 203 lythwun logon, þeah he him leof wære;
 204 hwetton higerofne/, hæl sceawedon.
 205 Hæfde se goda Geata leoda
 206 cempa getorone þara þe he cenoste
 207 findan mihte; Xþna sum
 208 sundwudu sohte; secg wisade,
 209 lagucreftig mon, landgemyrcu.
 210 Fyrst ford gewat. Flota wæs on yðum,
 211 bat under beorge. Beornas gearwe
 212 on stefn stigon; streamas wundon,
 213 sund wið sande; secgas bæron
 214 on bearm nacan beorhte frætwæ,
 215 gudsearo geatolic; guman ut scufon,
 216 weras on wilsid, wudu bundenne.
 217 Gewat þa ofer wægholm, winde gefyrsed,
 218 flota famiheals fugle gelicost,
 219 oðþæt ymb antid oþres dogores
 220 wundenstefna gewaden hæfde
 221 þæt ða lidenðe land gesawon,
 222 brimclifu blican, beorgas steape,
 223 side sænæssas; þa wæs sund liden,
 224 eoletes æt ende. þanon up hrade
 225 Wedera leode on wang stigon,
 226 sæwudu sældon sýrcan hrysedon,
 227 gudgewærdo, gode þancedon
 228 þæs þe him yðlade eade wurdon.
 229 þa of wealle geseah weard Scildinga,
 230 se þe holmclifu healdan scolde,
 231 beran ofer bolcan beorhte randas,
 232 fyrðsearu fusticu; hine fyrwyt bræc
 233 modgehygdum, hwæt þa men wæron.
 234 Gewat him þa to warode wigge ridan
 235 þegn Hrodgares, þrymnum twehte
 236 mægenwudu mundum, meþelwordum frægn:
 237 Hwæt syndon ge searohæbbendra,
 238 byrnum werede, þe þus brontne ceol
 239 ofer lagustrate lædan twomon,
 240 hider ofer holmas? Ie/ wæs
 241 endesæta, ægwearde heold,
 242 þe on land Dena ladra nænig
 243 mid scipherge sceðpan ne meahhte.
 244 No her cudlicor cuman ongunnon
 245 lindhæbbende; ne ge leafnesword
 246 gudfremmendra gearwe ne wißson,
 247 maga gemedu. Næfre ic maran geseah
 248 eorla ofer eorþan donne is eower sum,
 249 secg on searwum; nis þæt seldguma,
 250 wæpnum geweordad, næfre/ him his wlite leoge,
 251 ænlic ansyn. Nu ic eower sceal
 252 frumcyn witan, ær ge fyr heonan,

Modern English

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-wood he sought, and, sailor proved,
 led them on to the land's confines.
 Time had now flown; 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' 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.
 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: 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

Old English

253 leassceaweras, on land Dena
 254 furþur feran. Ðu ge feorbuend,
 255 merelidende, minne/ gehyrð
 256 anfealdne geholt: Ofost is selest
 257 to gecyðanne hwanan eowre cyme syndon.
 258 Ðim se yldesta ondswarode,
 259 werodes wisa, wordhord onleac:
 260 We synt gumcynnes Geata leode
 261 ond Hygelaces heordgeneatas.
 262 Wæs min fæder folcum gecyðed,
 263 æþele ordfruma, Ecgþeow haten.
 264 Gebad wintra worn, ær he on weg hwurfe,
 265 gamol of geardum; hine gearwe geman
 266 witena welhwylc wide geond eorþan.
 267 We þurh holdne hige hlaford þinne,
 268 sunu Healfdenes, secean cwomon,
 269 leodgeþyrgean; wes þu us larena god.
 270 Habbað we to þæm mæran mitel ærende,
 271 Deniga frean, ne sceal þær ðyrne sum
 272 wesan, þæs ic wene. þu wast gif hit is
 273 swa we soþlice secgan hyrdon
 274 þæt mid Scyldingum sceadona/ ic nat hwylc,
 275 deogol dædhata, deorcum nihtum
 276 eawed þurh egsan uncudne nið,
 277 hyndu ond hrafyl. Ic þæs Hrodgar mæg
 278 þurh rumne sefan ræd gelæran,
 279 hu he frod ond god feond oferswyðeþ,
 280 gyt him edwendan æfre scolde
 281 bealwa bisigu, bot eft cuman,
 282 ond þa ceawylmas colran wurdap;
 283 odde a sƿðan earfodþrage,
 284 preanyd þolad, þenden þær wunad
 285 on heahstede husa selest.
 286 Weard mapelode, ðær on wicge sæt,
 287 ombeht unforht: æghwæpres sceal
 288 scearp scyldwiga gescad witan,
 289 worda ond worca, se þe wel þenceð.
 290 Ic þæt gehyre, þæt þis is hold weorod
 291 frean Scyldinga. Gewitaþ ford beran
 292 wæpen ond gewædu; ic eow wisige.
 293 Swylce ic maguþegnas mine hate
 294 wið feonda gehwone flotan eowerne,
 295 niwtrwyðne nacan on sande
 296 arum healdan, oþðæt eft byred
 297 ofer lagustreamas leofne mannan
 298 wudu wundenhals to Wedermearce,
 299 godfremmendra swylcum gifeþe bið
 300 þæt þone hilderæs hal gediged.
 301 Gewiton him þa feran. Flota stille bað,
 302 seomode on sale/ sidfæmmed scip,
 303 on ancre fæst. Eforlic scionon
 304 ofer hleorberan gehroden golde,
 305 fah ond fyrheard; ferhwearde heold
 306 guþmod grimmon/. Guman onetton,
 307 sigon ætsomne, oþþæt hy sæl/ timbred,
 308 geatolic ond goldfah, ongyton mihton;
 309 þæt wæs foremærost foldbuendum
 310 receda under roderum, on þæm se rica bað;
 311 lixe se leoma ofer landa fela.
 312 Ðim þa hildedeor hof/ modigra
 313 torht getæhte, þæt hie him to mihton
 314 gegnum gangan; gudbeorna sum
 315 wicg gewende, word æfter cwæð:
 316 Mæl is me to feran; fæder alwalda

Modern English

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-hoard 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!
 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-Brave 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 boars
 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,
 hardy hero, and hailed them thus:--
 "Tis time that I fare from you. Father Almighty

Old English

317 mid arstafum eowit gehealde
 318 sida gesunde. Ic to sæ wille
 319 wid wrad werod wearde healðan.
 320 Stræt was stanfah, stig wisode
 321 gumum ætgædere. Gubbyrne scan
 322 heard hondlocen, hringiren scir
 323 song in searwum, þa hie to sele furdum
 324 in hyra grypregeatwum gangan cwomon.
 325 Setton sæmepe side scyldas,
 326 rondas regnhearde, wid þæs recedes weal,
 327 bugon þa to bence. Þyrnan hringdon,
 328 gudsearo gumena; garas stodon,
 329 sæmanna searo, samod ætgædere,
 330 æscholt ufan græg; wæs se irenþreat
 331 wæpnum gewurðad. þa ðær woloc hæled
 332 oretmeagas æfter æpelum frægn:
 333 Þwanon ferigeað ge fætte scyldas,
 334 græge sýrcan ond grimhelmas,
 335 heresceafta heap? Ic eom Þrodgares
 336 ar ond ombiht. Ne seah ic elþeodige
 337 þus manige men modiglicran.
 338 Wen ic þæt ge for wlenco, nalles for wrætsidum,
 339 ac for higeþrymnum/ Þrodgar sohton.
 340 Him þa ellenrof andswarode,
 341 wlanc Wedera leod, word æfter spræc,
 342 heard under helme: We synt Higelaces
 343 beodgeneatas; Beowulf is min nama.
 344 Wille ic asecgan sunu Healfdenes,
 345 mærum þeodne, min ærende,
 346 aldre þinum, gif he us geunman wile
 347 þæt we hine swa godne gretan moton.
 348 Wulfgar mapelode þæt wæs Wendla leod;
 349 wæs his modsefa manegum gecyðed,
 350 wig ond wisdom: Ic þæs wine Deniga,
 351 frean Scildinga, frinan wille,
 352 beaga bryttan, swa þu bena eart,
 353 þeoden mærne, ymb þinne sid,
 354 ond þe þa ondsware ædre gecyðan
 355 de me se goda agifan þenceð.
 356 Þwearf þa hræðlice þær Þrodgar sæt
 357 eald ond anhar/ mid his eorla gedriht;
 358 eode ellenrof, þæt he for eaxlum gestod
 359 Deniga frean; cupe he dugude þeaw.
 360 Wulfgar madelode to his/ wineðrihtne:
 361 Her syndon geferede, feorran cūmene
 362 ofer geofenes begang Geata leode;
 363 þone yldestan oretmeagas
 364 Beowulf nemnad. Hy benan synt
 365 þæt hie, þeoden min, wid þe moton
 366 wordum wrixlan. No du him wearne geteoh
 367 dinra gegncwida, glædman Þrodgar.
 368 Hy on wiggetawum wyrde þinceað
 369 eorla geæhtlan; huru se aldor deah,
 370 se þæm headorincum hider wisade.
 371 Þrodgar mapelode, helm Scyldinga:
 372 Ic hine cuðe cnihtweseende.
 373 Wæs his ealdfæder Ecgþeo haten,
 374 dæm to ham forgeaf Hreþel Geata
 375 angan dohtor; is his eafora/ nu
 376 heard her cūmen, sohte holdne wine.
 377 donne sægdon þæt sæliþende,
 378 þa de gifscettas Geata fýredon
 379 þyðer to þance, þæt he XXXtigas
 380 manna mægen-cræft on his mundgripe

Modern English

in grace and mercy guard you well,
 safe in your seekings. Seaward I go,
 'gainst hostile warriors hold my watch."
 STONE-BRIGHT the street: 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."
 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,

Old English

381 heaþorof hæbbe. Þine halig god
 382 for arstafum us onsende,
 383 to Westdenum, þæs ic wen hæbbe,
 384 wið Grendles gryre. Ic þam/ godan sceal
 385 for his modþræce madmas beodan.
 386 Beo du on ofeste, hat in gan
 387 seon sibbegedriht samod ætgædere;
 388 gesaga him eac wordum þæt hie sint wilcuman
 389 Deniga leodum.
 390 [] word/ inne ahead:
 391 Eow het seggan sigedrihten min,
 392 aldor Eastdena, þæt he eower æpelu can,
 393 ond ge him syndon ofer sæwþlmas
 394 heardhiggende hider wilcuman.
 395 Nu ge moton gangan in eowrum gudgeatawum
 396 under heregriman Hrodgar geseon;
 397 lætad hildebord her onbidan,
 398 wudu, wælsceaftas, worda gefinges.
 399 Aras þa se rica, ymb hine rinc manig,
 400 þryðlic þegna heap; sume þær bidon,
 401 headoreaf heoldon, swa him se hearda behead.
 402 Snypredon ætsomne, þa secg wisode,
 403 under Heorotes hrof
 404 heard/ under helme, þæt he on heode gestod.
 405 Beowulf madelode on him byrne scan,
 406 searonet/ seowwed smiþes orþancum:
 407 Wæs þu, Hrodgar/, hal. Ic eom Higelaces
 408 mæg ond magodegn; hæbbe ic mærdra fela
 409 ongunnen on geogoþe. Afe weard Grendles þing
 410 on minre eþelþryf undyrne cud;
 411 sergad sælidend þæt þæs sele stande,
 412 reced selestas, rinca gehwylcum
 413 idel ond unnyt, siddan æfenleoht
 414 under heofenes hador beholen weorþed.
 415 þa me þæt gelærdon leode mine
 416 þa selestas, snotere ceorlas,
 417 þeoden Hrodgar, þæt ic þe sohte,
 418 forþan hie mægenes cræft minne/ cuþon,
 419 selfe ofersawon, ða ic of searwum cwom,
 420 fah from feondum. þær ic life geband,
 421 yððe eotena cýn ond on yðum slog
 422 niceras nihtes, nearoþearfe dreah,
 423 wræt Wedera/ nið wean ahsodon,
 424 forgrand gramum, ond nu wið Grendel sceal,
 425 wið þam aglæcan, ana gebegan
 426 ðing wið þyrse. Ic þe nu ða,
 427 bregga Beorhtdena, biddan wille,
 428 eodor Scyldinga, anre bene,
 429 þæt du me ne forwyrne, wigendra hleo,
 430 freowine folca, nu ic þus feorran com,
 431 þæt ic mote ana ond/ minra eorla gedryht,
 432 þæs hearda heap, Heorot fælsian.
 433 Hæbbe ic eac geahsod þæt se æglæca
 434 for his wonhyðum wæpna ne reced.
 435 Ic þæt þonne forhige swa me Higelac sie,
 436 min mondrihten, modes blide,
 437 þæt ic sweord bere oþðe sidne scyld,
 438 geolorand to gupe, ac ic mid grape sceal
 439 fon wið feonde ond ymb feorh satan,
 440 lað wið laþum; ðær gelyfan sceal
 441 dryhtnes dome se þe hine deað nimeð.
 442 Wen ic þæt he wille, gif he wealdan mot,
 443 in þam gudsele Geotena leode
 444 etan unforhte, swa he oft dyde,

Modern English

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." [To the door of the hall
 Wulfgar went] 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."
 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: [the hero strode,]
 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
 nicors by night, in need and peril
 avenging the Weders, 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
 will he fearless eat, -- as oft before, --

Old English

445 mægen Hredmanna. Na þu minne heaft
 446 hafalan hydan, ac he me habban wile
 447 dreore/ fahne, gif mec dead nimed.
 448 Hƿred blodig wæl, byrgean þenced,
 449 eted angenga unnumlice,
 450 mearcad morhopp; no du ymb mines ne heaft
 451 lices feorme leng sorgian.
 452 Onsend Higelace, gif mec hild nime,
 453 beaduscruda betst, þæt mine breost wered,
 454 hræglas selest; þæt is Hradlan laf,
 455 Welandes geweorc. Gæd a wƿrd swa hio scel.
 456 Hroðgar mapelode, helm Scyldinga:
 457 For/ gewyrhtum/ þu, wine min Beowulf,
 458 ond for arstafum usic sohtest.
 459 Gesloh þin fæder fæhde mæste;
 460 wearp he Heaholafe to handbonan
 461 mid Wilfingum; da hine Wedera/ cyn
 462 for herebrogan habban ne mihte.
 463 þanon he gesohte Suddena folc
 464 ofer yða gewearc, Arscyldinga.
 465 da ic furpum weold folc Deniga/
 466 ond on geogode heold ginne/ rice,
 467 hordburh hælepa; da wæs Heregar dead,
 468 min yldra mæg unlitigende,
 469 bearn Healfdenes; se wæs betera donne ic.
 470 Siddan þa fæhde feo þingode;
 471 sende ic Wylfingum ofer wæteres hƿetg
 472 ealde madmas; he me aþas swor.
 473 Sorh is me to segganne on sefan minum
 474 gumena ængum hwæt me Grendel hafad
 475 hƿndo on Heorote mid his hetepancum,
 476 færnida gefremed. Is min fletwerod,
 477 wigheap gewanod; hie wƿrd forsweor
 478 on Grendles gƿre. God eape mæg
 479 þone dolsceadan dæda gefwæfan.
 480 Ful oft gebeotedon beore druncne
 481 ofer ealowæge oretmegas
 482 þæt hie in beorsele bidan woldon
 483 Grendles gupe mid gƿrum ega.
 484 donne wæs þeos medoheal on morgentid,
 485 drihtsele dreorfah, þonne dæg lihte,
 486 eal benchelu blode bestymed,
 487 heall heorudreore/; ahte ic holdra þƿ læs,
 488 deorre dugude, þe þa dead fornam.
 489 Site nu to symle ond onæl meoto,
 490 sigehred segum, swa þin sefa hwette.
 491 þa wæs Geatmægum geador ætsomne
 492 on beorsele benc gerymed;
 493 þær swiðferhe sittan eodon,
 494 þƿdum dealle. þegn nytte beheold,
 495 se þe on handa bær hroden ealowæge,
 496 scencte scir wered. Scop hwilum sang
 497 hador on Heorote. þær wæs hæleda dream,
 498 dugud unlytel Dena ond Wedera.
 499 Unferd/ mapelode, Ecglafes bearn,
 500 þe æt fotum sæt frean Scyldinga,
 501 onband beadurune wæs him Beowulfes sid,
 502 modges merefaran, micel æþfuna,
 503 forþon þe he ne upe þæt ænig oder man/
 504 æfre mærdas þon ma middangeardes
 505 gehedde under heofenum þonne he sylfa:
 506 Eart þu se Beowulf, se þe wid Breca wunne,
 507 on sidne sæ ymb sund flite,
 508 dær git for wlence wada cunneðon

Modern English

my noblest thanes. Nor need'st thou then
 to hide my head; 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 Hild should take me,
 best of war-weeds, warding my breast,
 armor excellent, heirloom of Hrethel
 and work of Wayland. Fares Wyrð 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 combat 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 fee I settled,
 to the Wylfings sent, o'er watery ridges,
 treasures olden: oaths he 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 harryings. 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,
 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. -- 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,

Old English

509 ond for dōlgilpe on deop wæter
 510 aldrum neþdon? Ne inc ænig mon,
 511 ne leof ne lad, belean mihte
 512 sorhfullne sīd, þa git on sund reon.
 513 þær git eagorstream earmum þehton,
 514 mæton merestræta, mundum brugdon,
 515 glidon ofer garsetg; geofon þum weol,
 516 wintryp wylmum/. Git on wæteres æht
 517 seofon niht swuncon; he þe æt sunde oferflæt,
 518 hæfde mare mægen. þa hine on morgentid
 519 on Heaporæmas/ holm up ætbær;
 520 donon he gesohte swæsne // eþel//,
 521 leof his leodum, lond Brondinga,
 522 freodoburh fægere, þær he folc ahte
 523 burh ond beagas. Weot eal wið þe
 524 sunu Beanstanes sode/ gelæste.
 525 donne wene ic to þe wyrsan geþingea,
 526 deah þu headoræsa gehwær dohte,
 527 grimre gude, gif þu Grendles dearest
 528 nihtlongne fyrst nean bidan.
 529 Beowulf mæpelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:
 530 Hwæt. þu worn fela, wine min Unferð/,
 531 beore druncen ymb Breca spræc,
 532 sægdest from his side. Soð ic talige,
 533 þæt ic merestrenge maran ahte,
 534 earfeþo on þum, donne ænig oþer man.
 535 Wit þæt getwædon cnihhtwesende
 536 ond gebeotedon wæron begen þa git
 537 on geogodfeore þæt wit on garsetg ut
 538 aldrum neddon, ond þæt geæfndon swa.
 539 Hæfdon swurd nacod, þa wit on sund reon,
 540 heard on handa; wit unc wið hronfixas
 541 werian hohton. No he wiht fram me
 542 flodþum feor fleotan meahte,
 543 hrapor on holme; no ic fram him wolde.
 544 ða wit ætsomne on sæ wæron
 545 fīf nihta fyrst, oþþæt unc flod todræf,
 546 wado weallende, wedera tealdest,
 547 nipende niht, ond norþanwind
 548 headogrim ondhwearf; hreo wæron þa.
 549 Wæs merefixa mod onhræd;
 550 þær me wið ladum licsyrce min,
 551 heard, hondlocen, helpe gefremede,
 552 beadohrægl broden on breostum læg
 553 golde gegyrwed. Afe to grunde teah
 554 fah feondscada, fæste hæfde
 555 grim on grape; hwæpre me gýfeþe weard
 556 þæt ic aglæcan orde gerahte,
 557 hildebille; heaporæs fornam
 558 mihtig meredeor þurh mine hand.
 559 Swa mec gelome ladgeteonan
 560 preatedon pearle. Ic him penode
 561 deoran sweorde, swa hit gedefe wæs.
 562 Næs hie dære fylle gefean hæfdon,
 563 manfordæðlan, þæt hie me begon,
 564 symbel ymbsæton sægrunde neah;
 565 ac on mergenne mecum wunde
 566 be yðlæfe uppe lægon,
 567 sweordum/ aswefede, þæt syðþan na
 568 ymb brontne forð brinlidende
 569 lade ne letton. Leoht eastan com,
 570 beorht beacen godes; brimu swaþredon,
 571 þæt ic sænæssas geseon mihte,
 572 windige weallas. Wyrð oft nered

Modern English

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,
 town and treasure. In triumph o'er thee
 Beanstan's bairn 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 Ecgþeow:--
 "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 chilliest 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 grimmest 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,
 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

Old English

573 unfægne eorl, þonne his ellen deah.
 574 Hwæpere me gesælde þæt ic mid sweorde ofsloh
 575 niceras nigene. No ic on niht gefrægn
 576 under heofones hwealf heardran feohtan,
 577 ne on egstreamum earmran mannon;
 578 hwæpere ic fara feng feore gedigde,
 579 siþes werig. Ða mec sæ oþbær,
 580 flod æfter farode on Finnra land,
 581 wadu/ weallendu. No ic wiht fram þe
 582 swylcra searonida secgan hyrde,
 583 billa brogan. Breca næfre git
 584 æt headolace, ne gehwæper incer,
 585 swa deorlice dæd gefremede
 586 fagum sweordum no ic hæc fela/ gylpe,
 587 þeah ðu þinum broðrum to banan wurde,
 588 heafodmægum; hæc þu in helle scealt
 589 werhdo dreogan, þeah þin wit/ duge/.
 590 Setge ic þe to sode, sunu Ecglafes/,
 591 þæt næfre Grendel/ swa fela grypra gefremede,
 592 atol æglæca, ealdre þinum,
 593 hyndo on Heorote, gif þin hige wære,
 594 sefa swa searogrim, swa þu self talast.
 595 Ac he hafad onfunden þæt he þa fæhde ne þearf,
 596 atole ecgþræce eower leode
 597 swide onsittan, Sigescyldinga;
 598 nymed nybbade, nænegum arad
 599 leode Deniga, ac he lust wiged,
 600 swefed ond sendeþ, sette ne weneþ
 601 to Gardenum. Ac ic him Geata sceal
 602 eafod ond ellen ungeara nu,
 603 guþe gebeodan. Gæþ eft se þe mot
 604 to medo modig, siþþan morgenleoht
 605 ofer ylða bearn oþres dogores,
 606 sunne sweglwæred supan scined.
 607 þa wæs on salum sinces brytta,
 608 gamolfeax ond gudrof; geoce gelyfde
 609 bregga Beorhtdena, gehyrde on Beowulfe
 610 folces hyrde fæstrædne gehohht.
 611 dær wæs hælepa hleahor/, hlyn swynsode,
 612 word wæron wynsume. Eode Wealhþeow ford,
 613 cwen Hrodgares, cynna gemyndig,
 614 grette goldhroden guman on healle,
 615 ond þa freolic wif ful gesealde
 616 ærest Eastdena eþelwearde,
 617 bæd hine blidne æt þære beorþege,
 618 leodum leofne. He on lust geþeah
 619 symbel ond sefeul, sigerof kynning.
 620 Ðmbeode þa ides Helminga
 621 duguþe ond geogoþe dæl æghwylcne,
 622 sincfata sealde, oþþæt sæl alamp
 623 þæt hio Beowulfe, beagbroden cwen
 624 mode gefungen, medoful ætbær;
 625 grette Geata leod, gode þancode
 626 wisfæst wordum hæc de hire se willa gelamp
 627 þæt heo on ænigne eorl gelyfde
 628 fyrena frotre. He þæt ful geþeah,
 629 wælcrow wiga, æt Wealhþeon,
 630 ond þa gyddode guþe gefysed;
 631 Beowulf mæpelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:
 632 Ic þæt hogode, þa ic on holm gestah,
 633 sæbat gesæt mid minre secga gedriht,
 634 þæt ic anunga eowra leoda
 635 willan geworhte oþðe on wælcrunge,
 636 feondgrapum fæst. Ic gefremman sceal

Modern English

earl doomed 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 bane 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.
 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 Ecgþeow:--
 "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

Old English

637 eorlic ellen, oþðe endedæg
 638 on þisse meoduhealle minne gebidan.
 639 ðam wīfe þa word wel licodon,
 640 gylpcwide Geates; eode goldhroden
 641 freolicu folcctwen to hire frean/ sittan.
 642 þa wæs eft swa ær inne on healle
 643 þryrdword sprecen, deod on sælum,
 644 sigefolca sweg, oþþæt semninga
 645 sunu Healfdenes secean wolde
 646 æfenræste; wiste þam ahlætan
 647 to þam heahsele hilde gepinged,
 648 siddan hie sunnan leoht geseon ne/ meah-ton,
 649 oððe nīpende nīht ofer ealle,
 650 scadu helma gesceapu scriðan cwoman,
 651 wan under wolcnum. Werod eall aras.
 652 Gegrette/ þa guma oþerne,
 653 Hroðgar Beowulf, ond him hæl abead,
 654 winænes geweald, ond þæt word atwæd:
 655 Næfre ic ænegum men ær alyfde,
 656 siþðan ic hond ond rond hebban mihte,
 657 dryþærn Dena buton þe nu ða.
 658 Hafa nu ond geheald husa selest,
 659 gemyne mæcþo, mægenellen cþd,
 660 wata wið wraþum. Ne bið þe wilna gad,
 661 gif þu þæt ellenweorc aldre gedigest.
 662 ða him Hroþgar gewat mið his hæleþa gedryht,
 663 eodur Scyldinga, ut of healle;
 664 wolde wigfruma Wealhþeo setan,
 665 cwen to gebeddān. Hæfde kyningwuldor
 666 Grendle togeanes, swa guman gefrungon,
 667 seleweard aset; sundornyfte beheold
 668 ymb aldor Dena, eotonweard abead.
 669 Huru Geata leod georne truwoðe
 670 modgan mægenes, metodes hylðo.
 671 ða he him of dyðe isernþyrnan,
 672 helm of hafelan, sealde his hyrsted sweord,
 673 irena cyst, ombihtþegne,
 674 ond gehealdan het hildegeatwe.
 675 Gespræc þa se goda gylpcworda sum,
 676 Beowulf Geata, ær he on bed stige:
 677 No ic me an herewæsmun hnagran talige,
 678 gylpcgeweorca, þonne Grendel hine;
 679 forþan ic hine sweorde swebban nelle,
 680 aldre beneotan, þeah ic eal mæge.
 681 Næt he þara goda þæt he me ongean slea,
 682 rand geheawe, þeah ðe he rof sie
 683 nīpcgeweorca; ac wit on nīht sculon
 684 setge ofersittan, gif he/ gesetean ðear
 685 wig ofer wæpen, ond siþðan witig god
 686 on swa hwæpere hond, halig dryhten,
 687 mæcdo deme, swa him gemet þince.
 688 Hylde hine þa heapodeor, hleorbolster onfeng
 689 eorles andwlitan, ond hine ymb monig
 690 snellic særinc selereste gebeah.
 691 Fænig heora hohte þæt he þanon scolde
 692 eft eardlufan æfre gesetean,
 693 folc oþðe freoburh, þær he afeded wæs;
 694 ac hie hæfdon gefrunen þæt hie ær to fela micles
 695 in þam winsele wældeað fornam,
 696 Denigea leode. Ac him dryhten forgeaf
 697 wigspeda gewiofu, Wedera leodum,
 698 frofor ond fultum/, þæt/ hie/ feond heora
 699 durh anes cræft ealle ofercomon,
 700 selfes mihtum. Soð is gecyþed

Modern English

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,
 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 guarded 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,
 by single strength. In sooth 'tis told

Old English

701 þæt mih̥tig god manna cynnes
 702 weold wideferh̥d/. Com on wanre niht
 703 scridan screadugenga. Sceaotend swæfon,
 704 þa þæt hornreced healðan scoldon,
 705 ealle buton anum. þæt wæs yldum cūþ
 706 þæt hie ne moste, þa metod nolde,
 707 se scynscapa/ under screadu bregdan;
 708 ac he wæccende wraþum on andan
 709 bad bolgenmod beaðwa gepinges.
 710 Ða com of more under misthleoþum
 711 Grendel gongan, godes yrre bæc;
 712 mynte se manscada manna cynnes
 713 sumne besprwan/ in sele þam hean.
 714 Wod under wolcnum/ to þæs þe he winreced,
 715 goldsele gumena, gearwost wisse,
 716 fættum fahne. Ne wæs þæt forma sið
 717 þæt he Hroþgares ham gesohte;
 718 næfre he on aldordagum ær ne/ siþðan
 719 heardran hæle, healdegnas fand.
 720 Com þa to recede rinc sidian,
 721 dreamum bedæled. Ðuru sona onarn/,
 722 fyrbendum fæst, syþðan he hire folnum æthran/;
 723 onbræd þa healohtydg, Ða he/ gebolgen/ wæs,
 724 recedes muþan. Ræpe æfter þon
 725 on fagne flor feond treddode,
 726 eode yrremod; him of eagum stod
 727 ligge gelicost leoht unfæger.
 728 Geseah he in recede rinca manige,
 729 swefan sibbegeðriht samod ætgædere,
 730 magorinca heap. þa his mod ahllog;
 731 mynte þæt he geðælde, ærþon dæg cwome,
 732 atol aglæca, anra gehwylces
 733 lif wið lice, þa him alumpen wæs
 734 wistfylle wen. Ne wæs þæt/ wyrð þa gen
 735 þæt he ma moste manna cynnes
 736 dicgean ofer þa niht. þryðswoþ beheold
 737 mæg Hygelaces, hu se manscada
 738 under færgripum gefaran wolde.
 739 Ne þæt se aglæca yldan þohte,
 740 ac he gefeng hrade forman siðe
 741 slæpendne rinc, slat unwearnum,
 742 bat banlocan, blod edrum dranc,
 743 synsnædum sweally; sona hæfde
 744 unlyfigendes eal gefeormod,
 745 fet ond folma. Ford near ætstop,
 746 nam þa mid handa higefihtigne
 747 rinc on ræste, ræhte ongean
 748 feond mid folme; he onfeng hraþe
 749 inwitþancum ond wið earm gesæt.
 750 Sona þæt onfunde fyrena hyrde
 751 þæt he ne mette middangeardes,
 752 eorþan sceata/, on elran men
 753 mundgripe maran. He on mode weard
 754 forht on ferhde; no þy ær fram meahhte.
 755 Hyge wæs him hinfus, wolde on heolster fleon,
 756 setan deofla geðræg; ne wæs his drohtod þær
 757 swylce he on ealderdagum ær gemette.
 758 Gemunde þa se goda, mæg Hygelaces,
 759 æfenspræce, uplang astod
 760 ond him fæste wiðfeng; fingras burston.
 761 Eoten wæs utweard; eorl furlur stop.
 762 Aþynte se mæra, þær/ he meahhte swa,
 763 wiðre gewindan ond on weg þanon
 764 fleon on fenhopu; wiste his/ fingra geweald

Modern English

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
 him 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; 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 Wyrd 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
 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

Old English	Modern English
765 on grames grapum. þæt/ wæs geocor sid	in the gripe of the grim one. Gruesome march
766 þæt se hearnscapa to Heorute ateah.	to Heorot this monster of harm had made!
767 Dryhtsele dýnede; Denum eallum weard,	Din filled the room; the Danes were bereft,
768 ceasterbuendum, cenra gehwylcum,	castle-dwellers and clansmen all,
769 eorlum ealuscerwen. Þrre wæron begen,	earls, of their ale. Angry were both
770 reþe renweardas. Reted hlynsode.	those savage hall-guards: the house resounded.
771 þa wæs wundor micel þæt se winsele	Wonder it was the wine-hall firm
772 widhæfde heahodeorum, þæt he on hrusan ne feol,	in the strain of their struggle stood, to earth
773 fæger foldbold; ac he þæs fæste wæs	the fair house fell not; too fast it was
774 innan ond utan irenbendum	within and without by its iron bands
775 searopuncum besmipod. þær fram sylle abeag	craftily clamped; though there crashed from sill
776 meubenc monig, mine gefræge,	many a mead-bench -- men have told me --
777 golde geregnad, þær þa graman wunnon.	gay with gold, where the grim foes wrestled.
778 þæs ne wendon ær witan Scyldinga	So well had weened the wisest Scyldings
779 þæt hit a mid gemete manna ænig,	that not ever at all might any man
780 betlic/ ond banfag, tobretan meahte,	that bone-decked, brave house break asunder,
781 listum toluca, nymþe liges fæþm	crush by craft, -- unless clasp of fire
782 swulge on swapule. Sweg up astag	in smoke engulfed it. -- Again uprose
783 niwe geneahhe; Norddenum stod	din redoubled. Danes of the North
784 atelic egesa, anra gehwylcum	with fear and frenzy were filled, each one,
785 þara þe of wealle wop gehyrdon,	who from the wall that wailing heard,
786 gýpreleod galan godes ondsatan,	God's foe sounding his grisly song,
787 sigeleasne sang, sar wanigean	cry of the conquered, clamorous pain
788 helle hæfton. Heold hine fæste	from captive of hell. Too closely held him
789 se þe manna wæs mægene strengest	he who of men in might was strongest
790 on þam dæge þýsses lifes.	in that same day of this our life.
791 ðolde eorla hleo ænige þinga	NOT in any wise would the earls'-defence
792 þone cwealmcuman cwicne forlætan,	suffer that slaughterous stranger to live,
793 ne his lifdagas leoda ænigum/	useless deeming his days and years
794 nytte tealde. þær genehost brægd	to men on earth. Now many an earl
795 eorl Beowulfes ealde lafe,	of Beowulf brandished blade ancestral,
796 wolde freatrihtnes feorh ealgian,	fain the life of their lord to shield,
797 mæres þeodnes, dær hie meahdon swa.	their praised prince, if power were theirs;
798 Hie þæt ne wiston, þa hie gewin drugon,	never they knew, -- as they neared the foe,
799 heardhigende hildemecgas,	hardy-hearted heroes of war,
800 ond on healfa gehwone heawan þohton,	aiming their swords on every side
801 sawle setan, þone synscadan	the accursed to kill, -- no keenest blade,
802 ænig ofer eorþan irenna cýst,	no farest of falchions fashioned on earth,
803 gudbilla nan, gretan nolde,	could harm or hurt that hideous fiend!
804 ac he sigewæpnum forsworen hæfde,	He was safe, by his spells, from sword of battle,
805 erga gehwylcere. Scolde his aldorgedal	from edge of iron. Yet his end and parting
806 on dæm dæge þýsses lifes	on that same day of this our life
807 earmlic wurdan, ond se ellorgast	woful should be, and his wandering soul
808 on feonda geweald feor sidian.	far off flit to the fiends' domain.
809 da þæt onfunde se þe fela æror	Soon he found, who in former days,
810 modes myrde manna cynne,	harmful in heart and hated of God,
811 fyrene gefremede he wæs/ fag wid god,	on many a man such murder wrought,
812 þæt him se lichoma læstan nolde/,	that the frame of his body failed him now.
813 ac hine se modega mæg Hygelaces	For him the keen-souled kinsman of Hygelac
814 hæfde be honda; wæs gehwæper oðrum	held in hand; hateful alive
815 lifigende lad. Licsar gebad	was each to other. The outlaw dire
816 atol æglæca; him on eaxle weard	took mortal hurt; a mighty wound
817 syndolh sweotol, seonowe onsprungon,	showed on his shoulder, and sinews cracked,
818 burston banlocan. Beowulfe weard	and the bone-frame burst. To Beowulf now
819 gudhred gýfeþe; scolde Grendel þonan	the glory was given, and Grendel thence
820 feorhseot fleon under fenhleodu,	death-sick his den in the dark moor sought,
821 setean wynleas wic; wiste þe geornor	noisome abode: he knew too well
822 þæt his aldres wæs ende gegongen,	that here was the last of life, an end
823 dogera dagrim. Denum eallum weard	of his days on earth. -- To all the Danes
824 æfter þam wælræse willa gelumpen.	by that bloody battle the boon had come.
825 Hæfde þa gefælsod se þe ær feorran com,	From ravage had rescued the roving stranger
826 snotor ond swyðferhd, sele Hrodgares,	Hrothgar's hall; the hardy and wise one
827 genered wid nide; nihtweorce gefeh,	had purged it anew. His night-work pleased him,
828 ellenmærpum/. Hæfde Eastdenum	his deed and its honor. To Eastern Danes

Old English

829 *Geatmearc leod gylp gefæsted,*
 830 *swylce oncyðde ealle gebette,*
 831 *intwidsorge, þe hie ær drugon*
 832 *ond for þreanyrdum þolian scoldon,*
 833 *torn unlytel. þæt wæs tacen sweotol,*
 834 *syððan hildedeor hond alegde,*
 835 *earn ond eaxe þær wæs eal geador*
 836 *Grendles grape under geapne hrof/.*
 837 *ða wæs on morgen mine gefræge*
 838 *ymb þa gifhealle gudrinc monig;*
 839 *ferdon folctogan feorran ond nean*
 840 *geond widwegas wundor sceawian,*
 841 *laþes lastas. No his lifgedal*
 842 *sarlic þuhte setga ænegum*
 843 *þara þe tirlases trode sceawode,*
 844 *hu he werigmod on weg þanon,*
 845 *nida ofercomen, on nicera mere*
 846 *fæge ond geflymed feorhlastas bær.*
 847 *dær wæs on blode brim weallende,*
 848 *atol yða geswing eal gemenged*
 849 *hæton heolfre, heorodreore weol.*
 850 *Deaðfæge deog, siddan dreama leas*
 851 *in fenfreodo feorh alegde,*
 852 *hæþene/ sawle; þær him hel onfeng.*
 853 *þanon eft gewiton ealdgesidas,*
 854 *swylce geong manig of gomenwape*
 855 *fram mere modge mearum ridan,*
 856 *beornas on blacum. dær wæs Beowulfes*
 857 *mærdro mæned; monig oft getwæd*
 858 *þætte sud ne nord þe sæm tveonum*
 859 *ofer eormengrund ofer nænig*
 860 *under swegles begong selra nære*
 861 *rondhæbbendra, rices wyrdra.*
 862 *Ne hie huru winedrihten wiht ne logon,*
 863 *glædne Hroðgar, ac þæt wæs god cýning.*
 864 *Ðwílum heaporofo hleapan leton,*
 865 *on geflit faran fealwe mearas*
 866 *dær him foldwegas fægere þuhton,*
 867 *cystum cude/. Ðwílum cýninges þegn,*
 868 *guma gilþlæden, gidða gemyndig,*
 869 *se de ealfela ealdgesegena*
 870 *worn gemunde, word ofer fand*
 871 *sode gebunden; secg eft ongan*
 872 *síð Beowulfes snytttrum styrian*
 873 *ond on sped wrecan spel gerade,*
 874 *wordum wrixlan. Wellhwylc getwæd*
 875 *þæt he fram Sigemundes/ setgan hyrde*
 876 *ellendædum, uncuþes fela,*
 877 *Wælsinges gewin, wide sidas,*
 878 *þara þe gumena bearn gearwe ne wiston,*
 879 *fæhde ond fyrena, buton Fitela mid hine,*
 880 *þonne he swulces hwæt setgan wolde,*
 881 *eam his nefan, swa hie a wæron*
 882 *æt nida gehwam nydgesteallan;*
 883 *hæfdon ealfela cotena cýnnes*
 884 *sweordum gesæged. Sigemunde gesprong*
 885 *æfter deaðdæge dom unlytel,*
 886 *syððan wiges heard wrym acwealde,*
 887 *hordes hyrde. He under harne stan,*
 888 *æþelinges bearn, ana genedde*
 889 *frecne dæde, ne wæs him Fitela mid.*
 890 *hwæpre him gesælde dæt þæt sword þurhwod*
 891 *wrætlíne wrym, þæt hit on wealle ætstod,*
 892 *dryhtlic iren; draca mordre swealt.*

Modern English

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
 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 roof
 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, athane 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, --
 the Wælsing'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: 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.

Old English

893 *Hæfde aglæca elne gegongen*
 894 *hæt he beahhordes brucan moste*
 895 *selfes dome; sæbat gehleod,*
 896 *bær on bearm scipes beorhte frætwæ,*
 897 *Wælses eafra. Wyrn hat gemealt.*
 898 *Se wæs wrettena wide mærost*
 899 *ofer werpeode, wigendra hleo,*
 900 *ellendædum he hæs ær ondah,*
 901 *siddan Heremodes hild swedrode,*
 902 *eafod/ ond ellen. He mid Cotenum weard*
 903 *on feonda geweald ford forlacen,*
 904 *snude forsended. Hine sorhwylnas*
 905 *læmede to lange; he his leodum weard,*
 906 *eallum æpellingum to aldorcare;*
 907 *swylce oft bemearn ærran mælum*
 908 *swiðferhþes sið snotor ceorl monig,*
 909 *se þe him bealwa to bote gelyfde,*
 910 *hæt hæt deodnes bearn geþeon scolde,*
 911 *fæderæpelum onfon, folc gehealdan,*
 912 *hord ond hleoburh, hælepa rice,*
 913 *//epel// Scyldinga. He þær eallum weard,*
 914 *mæg Hygelaces, manna cynne,*
 915 *freondum gefægra; hine fyren onwod.*
 916 *Hwilum flitende fealwe stræte*
 917 *mearum mæton. Ða wæs morgenleoht*
 918 *scofen ond scynned. Eode scealc monig*
 919 *swiðhigende to sele þam hean*
 920 *searowundor seon; swylce self cýning*
 921 *of brydbure, beahhorda weard,*
 922 *tryddode tirtæst getrume micle,*
 923 *cystum gecyþed, ond his cwen mid him*
 924 *medostigge mæt mægþa huse.*
 925 *Hrodgar mæpelode he to healle geong,*
 926 *stod on stapole, geseah steapne hrof,*
 927 *golde fahne, ond Grendles hond:*
 928 *disse ansýne alwealdan þanc*
 929 *lungre gelimpe. Fela ic læpes gebad,*
 930 *grynnæ æt Grendle; a mæg god wyrcan*
 931 *wunder æfter wundre, wuldres hyrde.*
 932 *Ðæt wæs ungeara þæt ic ænigra me*
 933 *weana ne wende to wídan feore*
 934 *bote gebidan, þonne blode fah*
 935 *husa selest heorodreorig stod,*
 936 *wea wíðscofen wítæna gehwylcum/*
 937 *ðara þe ne wendon hæt hie wíðferhð*
 938 *leoda landgeweorc læpum beweredon*
 939 *scuccum ond scrínum. Nu scealc hafad*
 940 *þurh drihtnes miht dæd gefremede ðe*
 941 *we ealle ær/ ne meah-ton*
 942 *snýttum besprwan. Hwæt, hæt setgan mæg*
 943 *efne swa hwylc mægþa swa done magan cende*
 944 *æfter gumcýnum, gýf heo gýf lpfad,*
 945 *hæt hyre ealðmetod este wære*
 946 *bearngebyrdo. Nu ic, Beowulf, þec,*
 947 *serg betsta, me/ for sunu wylle*
 948 *freogan on ferhþe; heald ford tela*
 949 *niwe sibbe. Ne bið þe nænigra/ gad*
 950 *worolde wilna, þe ic geweald hæbbe.*
 951 *Ful oft ic for læssan lean teohhode,*
 952 *hordweorþunge hnahran rince,*
 953 *sæmran æt sætte. þu þe self hafast*
 954 *dædum gefremed hæt þin dom/ lpfad*
 955 *awa to aldre. Alwalda þec*
 956 *gode forgyfde, swa he nu gýf dyde.*

Modern English

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 other was urged to crime!
 And afresh to the race, 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,
 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!"

Old English	Modern English
957 Beowulf mæpelode, bearn Ecþeowes:	Beowulf spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:--
958 We þæt ellenweorc estum miclum,	"This work of war most willingly
959 feohtan fremedon, fæcne geneddōn	we have fought, this fight, and fearlessly dared
960 eafod uncūpes. Uþe ic swiþor	force of the foe. Fain, too, were I
961 þæt du hine selfne geseon moste,	hadst thou but seen himself, what time
962 feond on frætewum fylwerigne.	the fiend in his trappings tottered to fall!
963 Ic hine/ hrædlice heardan clannum	Swiftly, I thought, in strongest gripe
964 on wælbedde wriþan þohte,	on his bed of death to bind him down,
965 þæt he for mundgripe/ minum scolde	that he in the hent of this hand of mine
966 licgean lifþysig, butan his lic swice.	should breathe his last: but he broke away.
967 Ic hine ne mihte, þa metod nolde,	Him I might not -- the Maker willed not --
968 ganges getwæman, no ic him þæs georne ætfealh,	hinder from flight, and firm enough hold
969 feorhgenidlan; wæs to foremhtig	the life-destroyer: too sturdy was he,
970 feond on fepe. Hwæþere he his folme forlet	the ruthless, in running! For rescue, however,
971 to lifwraþe last weardian,	he left behind him his hand in pledge,
972 earm ond eaxe. Ðo þær ænige swa þeah	arm and shoulder; nor aught of help
973 feastreft guma frofre gebrohte;	could the cursed one thus procure at all.
974 no þy leng leofað/ ladgeteona,	None the longer liveth he, loathsome fiend,
975 synnum geswenced, ac hyne sar hafað	sunk in his sins, but sorrow holds him
976 mid/ nydgripe/ nearwe befongen,	tightly grasped in gripe of anguish,
977 balwon bendum. dær abidan sceal	in baleful bonds, where bide he must,
978 maga mane fah miclan domes,	evil outlaw, such awful doom
979 hu him scir metod scrifan wille.	as the Mighty Maker shall mete him out."
980 da wæs swigra serg, sunu Eclafes,	More silent seemed the son of Ecglaf
981 on gylpspræce gudgeweorca,	in boastful speech of his battle-deeds,
982 sibðan æþelingas eorles cræfte	since athelings all, through the earl's great prowess,
983 ofer heanne hrof hand sceawedon,	beheld that hand, on the high roof gazing,
984 feondes fingras. Foran æghwylc wæs,	foeman's fingers, -- the forepart of each
985 stidra/ nægla gehwylc, stile gelicost,	of the sturdy nails to steel was likest, --
986 hæþenes handsporu hilderinces/,	heathen's "hand-spear," hostile warrior's
987 egl, unheoru. æghwylc getwæd	claw uncanny. 'Twas clear, they said,
988 þæt him heardra nan hrinan wolde	that him no blade of the brave could touch,
989 iren ærgod, þæt dæs ahlætan	how keen soever, or cut away
990 blodge beadufolme onberan wolde.	that battle-hand bloody from baneful foe.
991 da wæs haten hrepe Heort innanweard	THERE was hurry and hest in Heorot now
992 folnum gefrætwood. Ðfela þara wæs,	for hands to bedeck it, and dense was the throng
993 wera ond wifa, þe þæt winreced,	of men and women the wine-hall to cleanse,
994 gestsele gypredon. Goldfag scinon	the guest-room to garnish. Gold-gay shone the hangings
995 web æfter wagum, wundorsiona fela	that were wove on the wall, and wonders many
996 serga gehwylcum þara þe on swylc starað.	to delight each mortal that looks upon them.
997 Wæs þæt beorhte bold tobrocen swide,	Though braced within by iron bands,
998 eal inneweard irenbendum fæst,	that building bright was broken sorely;
999 heorras tohlidene. Hrof ana genæs,	rent were its hinges; the roof alone
1000 ealles ansund, þe se aglæta,	held safe and sound, when, seared with crime,
1001 fpyrendædum fag, on fleam gewand,	the fiendish foe his flight essayed,
1002 aldres orwena. Ðo þæt yde byð	of life despairing. -- No light thing that,
1003 to befeonne, fremme se þe wille,	the flight for safety, -- essay it who will!
1004 ac gesetan/ sceal sawlberendra,	Forced of fate, he shall find his way
1005 nyde genyðde, niþða bearna,	to the refuge ready for race of man,
1006 grundbuendra gearwe stowe,	for soul-possessors, and sons of earth;
1007 þær his lichoma legerbedde fæst	and there his body on bed of death
1008 swefep æfter symle. þa wæs sæl ond mæl	shall rest after revel. Arrived was the hour
1009 þæt to healle gang Healfdenes sunu;	when to hall proceeded Healfdene's son:
1010 wolde self cýning symbel þicgan.	the king himself would sit to banquet.
1011 Ðe gefrægen ic þa mægþe maran weorode	Ne'er heard I of host in haughtier throng
1012 ymb hyra sincgýfan sel gebæran.	more graciously gathered round giver-of-rings!
1013 Bugon þa to bence blædagande,	Bowed then to bench those bearers-of-glory,
1014 fylle gefægon; fægere gefægon	fain of the feasting. Featly received
1015 medoful manig magas þara	many a mead-cup the mighty-in-spirit,
1016 swidhigende/ on sele þam hean,	kinsmen who sat in the sumptuous hall,
1017 Þrodgar ond Þroþulf. Heorot innan wæs	Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Heorot now
1018 freondum afýlled; nalles facenstafas	was filled with friends; the folk of Scyldings
1019 Ieodscýldingas þenden fremedon.	ne'er yet had tried the traitor's deed.
1020 Forgeaf þa Beowulfe bearn/ Healfdenes	To Beowulf gave the bairn of Healfdene

Old English	Modern English
1021 segen gylðenne sigores to leane;	a gold-wove banner, guerdon of triumph,
1022 hroden hildescumbor, helm ond byrnan,	broidered battle-flag, breastplate and helmet;
1023 mære madþunswæord manige gesawon	and a splendid sword was seen of many
1024 beforan beorn beran. Beowulf gefaþ	borne to the brave one. Beowulf took
1025 ful on flette; no he þære feohgylfe	cup in hall: for such costly gifts
1026 for sceotendum/ scamigan dorfte.	he suffered no shame in that soldier throng.
1027 Ne gefrægn ic freondlicor feower madmas	For I heard of few heroes, in heartier mood,
1028 golde gegyrede gummanna fela	with four such gifts, so fashioned with gold,
1029 in ealobence odrum gesellan.	on the ale-bench honoring others thus!
1030 Þu þæs helmes hrof heafodbeorge	O'er the roof of the helmet high, a ridge,
1031 wirum bewunden walu/ utan heold,	wound with wires, kept ward o'er the head,
1032 þæt him fela laf frene ne meah-ton	lest the relict-of-foes should fierce invade,
1033 scurheard sceþdan, þonne scyldfreca	sharp in the strife, when that shielded hero
1034 ongean gramum gangan scolde.	should go to grapple against his foes.
1035 Heht da eorla hleo eahta mearas	Then the earls'-defence on the floor bade lead
1036 fætedhleo on flet teon,	coursers eight, with carven head-gear,
1037 in/ under eoderas. þara anum stod	adown the hall: one horse was decked
1038 sadol searwum faþ, since gewurþað;	with a saddle all shining and set in jewels;
1039 þæt wæs hildesetl heahcyninges,	'twas the battle-seat of the best of kings,
1040 donne sweorda gelac sunu Healfdenes	when to play of swords the son of Healfdene
1041 efnan wolde. Ne fre on ore læg	was fain to fare. Ne'er failed his valor
1042 widcufes wig, donne walu feollon.	in the crush of combat when corpses fell.
1043 On da Beowulfe bega gehwæpres	To Beowulf over them both then gave
1044 eodor Ingwina ontweald geteah,	the refuge-of-Ingwines right and power,
1045 witga ond wæpna, het hine wel brucan.	o'er war-steeds and weapons: wished him joy of them.
1046 Swa manlice mære þeoden,	Manfully thus the mighty prince,
1047 hordweard hæleþa, heaþoræsas geald	hoard-guard for heroes, that hard fight repaid
1048 mearum ond madmum, swa hy næfre man lþhd,	with steeds and treasures contemned by none
1049 se þe sergan wile soð æfter rihte.	who is willing to say the sooth aright.
1050 da gyt æghwylcum eorla drihten	AND the lord of earls, to each that came
1051 þara þe mid Beowulfe brimlade/ teah	with Beowulf over the briny ways,
1052 on þære medubence maþdum gesealde,	an heirloom there at the ale-bench gave,
1053 yrfelafe , ond þone ænne heht	precious gift; and the price bade pay
1054 golde forgyldan, þone de Grendel ær	in gold for him whom Grendel erst
1055 mane acwealde, swa he hyra ma wolde,	murdered, -- and fain of them more had killed,
1056 nefne him witig god wýrd forstode	had not wisest God their Wýrd averted,
1057 ond dæs mannes mod. Metod eallum weold	and the man's brave mood. The Maker then
1058 gumena cynnes, swa he nu git ded.	ruled human kind, as here and now.
1059 Forþan bið andgit æghwær selest,	Therefore is insight always best,
1060 ferhdes foreþanc. Fe la sceal gebidan	and forethought of mind. How much awaits him
1061 leofes ond lapes se þe longe her	of lief and of loath, who long time here,
1062 on dyssum windagum worolde bruced.	through days of warfare this world endures!
1063 þær wæs sang ond sweg samod ætgædere	Then song and music mingled sounds
1064 fore Healfdenes hildewisan,	in the presence of Healfdene's head-of-armies
1065 gomenwudu greted, gid oft wreten,	and harping was heard with the hero-lay
1066 donne healgamen Hroþgars scop	as Hrothgar's singer the hall-joy woke
1067 æfter medobence mænan scolde	along the mead-seats, making his song
1068 be/ Finnes eafterum, da hie se fær begeat,	of that sudden raid on the sons of Finn.
1069 hæled Healfdena, Hnæf Scyldinga,	Healfdene's hero, Hnaef the Scylding,
1070 in Freswæle feallan scolde.	was fated to fall in the Frisian slaughter.
1071 Ne huru Hildeburh herian þorfte	Hildeburh needed not hold in value
1072 Eotena treowe; unsynnnum weard	her enemies' honor! Innocent both
1073 beloren leofum æt þam lindplegan/,	were the loved ones she lost at the linden-play,
1074 beornum ond brodrum; hie on gebyrd hruron,	bairn and brother, they bowed to fate,
1075 gare wunde. þæt wæs geomuru ides.	stricken by spears; 'twas a sorrowful woman!
1076 Halles holina Hoces dohtor	None doubted why the daughter of Hoc
1077 meotodsceaft bemearn, syþðan/ morgen com,	bewailed her doom when dawning came,
1078 da heo under swegle geseon meahhte	and under the sky she saw them lying,
1079 morþorbealo maga, þær heo ær mæste heold	kinsmen murdered, where most she had kenned
1080 worolde wýpne. Wig ealle fornam	of the sweets of the world! By war were swept, too,
1081 Finnes þegnas nemne feaum anum,	Finn's own liegemen, and few were left;
1082 þæt he ne mehte on þam medelstede	in the parleying-place he could ply no longer
1083 wig Hengeste wiht gefeohtan,	weapon, nor war could he wage on Hengest,
1084 ne þa wealafe wige forþringan	and rescue his remnant by right of arms

Old English	Modern English
1085 þeodnes degna/. ac hig him gebingo budon,	from the prince's thane. A pact he offered:
1086 þæt hie him oder flet eal gerymdon,	another dwelling the Danes should have,
1087 healle ond heahsetl, þæt hie healfre geweald	hall and high-seat, and half the power
1088 wið Eotena bearn agan moston,	should fall to them in Frisian land;
1089 ond æt feohgylftum Folcwaldan sunu	and at the fee-gifts, Folcwald's son
1090 dogra gehwylce Dene weorþode,	day by day the Danes should honor,
1091 Hengestes heap hringum wenede	the folk of Hengest favor with rings,
1092 efne swa swiðe sincgestreonum	even as truly, with treasure and jewels,
1093 fættan goldes, swa he Fresena cyn	with fretted gold, as his Frisian kin
1094 on beorsele byldan wolde.	he meant to honor in ale-hall there.
1095 ða hie getruwedon on twa healfa	Pact of peace they plighted further
1096 fæste frioduwære. Fin Hengeste	on both sides firmly. Finn to Hengest
1097 elne, unflitne adum benemde	with oath, upon honor, openly promised
1098 þæt he þa wealafe weotena dome	that woful remnant, with wise-men's aid,
1099 arum heolde, þæt ðær ænig mon	nobly to govern, so none of the guests
1100 wordum ne worcum wære ne bræce,	by word or work should warp the treaty,
1101 ne þurh inwitsearo æfre gemænden	or with malice of mind bemoan themselves
1102 deah hie hira beaggylfan banan folgedon	as forced to follow their fee-giver's slayer,
1103 deodenleaze, þa him swa geþearfod wæs.	lordless men, as their lot ordained.
1104 gylt þonne Frysna hwylc frencan/ spræce	Should Frisian, moreover, with foeman's taunt,
1105 ðæs morþorhetes mynðgiend wære,	that murderous hatred to mind recall,
1106 þonne hit sweordes ecg sedan/ scolde.	then edge of the sword must seal his doom.
1107 Ad/ wæs geæfned ond icge gold	Oaths were given, and ancient gold
1108 ahafen of horde. Herescyðlinga	heaped from hoard. -- The hardy Scylding,
1109 betst beadorinca wæs on bælg gearu.	battle-thane best, on his balefire lay.
1110 æt þæm ade wæs eþgesyne	All on the pyre were plain to see
1111 swatfah syrce, swyn ealgylfen,	the gory sark, the gilded swine-crest,
1112 eofer irenheard, æþeling manig	boar of hard iron, and athelings many
1113 wundum awyrðed; sume on wæle cruncon.	slain by the sword: at the slaughter they fell.
1114 Het ða Hildeburh æt Hnæfes ade	It was Hildeburh's hest, at Hnæf's own pyre
1115 hire selfre sunu sweolode befaestan,	the bairn of her body on brands to lay,
1116 banfatu bærnas ond on bælg don	his bones to burn, on the balefire placed,
1117 eame/ on eaxe. Des gnornode,	at his uncle's side. In sorrowful dirges
1118 geomrode giddum. Guderinc astah.	bewept them the woman: great wailing ascended.
1119 Wand to wolcnum wælfyra mæst,	Then wound up to welkin the wildest of death-fires,
1120 hlynode for hlawe; hafelan multon,	roared o'er the hillock: heads all were melted,
1121 bengeato burston, ðonne blod ætspranc,	gashes burst, and blood gushed out
1122 ladbite lices. Lig ealle forswearlg,	from bites of the body. Balefire devoured,
1123 gæsta gifrost, þara ðe þær gud fornam	greediest spirit, those spared not by war
1124 bega folces; wæs hira blæd stacen.	out of either folk: their flower was gone.
1125 Gewiton him ða wigend wita neosian,	THEN hastened those heroes their home to see,
1126 freondum befeallen, Fryslanð geseon,	friendless, to find the Frisian land,
1127 hamas ond heaburh. Hengest ða gyt	houses and high burg. Hengest still
1128 wælfagne winter wunode mid Finne	through the death-dyed winter dwelt with Finn,
1129 eal/ unflitne. Eard gemunde,	holding pact, yet of home he minded,
1130 þeah þe he ne/ meahste on mere drifan	though powerless his ring-decked prow to drive
1131 hringedstefnan; holm storme weol,	over the waters, now waves rolled fierce
1132 won wið winde, winter yfe befeac	lashed by the winds, or winter locked them
1133 isgebinde, oþðæt oþer com	in icy fetters. Then fared another
1134 gear in gearðas, swa nu gyt ðeð,	year to men's dwellings, as yet they do,
1135 þa ðe syngales sele bewitiad/,	the sunbright skies, that their season ever
1136 wuldortorhtan weber. ða wæs winter stacen,	duly await. Far off winter was driven;
1137 fæger foldan bearm. Fundode wrecca,	fair lay earth's breast; and fain was the rover,
1138 gist of gearðum; he to grynwræce	the guest, to depart, though more gladly he pondered
1139 swidor þolhte þonne to sælade,	on wreaking his vengeance than roaming the deep,
1140 gif he torngemot þurhteon mihte	and how to hasten the hot encounter
1141 þæt he Eotena bearn inne gemunde.	where sons of the Frisians were sure to be.
1142 Swa he ne forwyrnde woroldræðenne,	So he escaped not the common doom,
1143 þonne him Hunlafing hildeleoman,	when Hun with "Lafing," the light-of-battle,
1144 billa selest, on bearm dyde,	best of blades, his bosom pierced:
1145 þæs wæron mid Eotenum ecge cude.	its edge was famed with the Frisian earls.
1146 Swylce ferhðfrecan Fin eft begeat	On fierce-heart Finn there fell likewise,
1147 sweorðbealo sliden æt his selves ham,	on himself at home, the horrid sword-death;
1148 sibðan grimne gripe Gudelaf ond Oslaf	for Guthlaf and Oslaf of grim attack

Old English	Modern English
1149 æfter sæside, sorge, mændon,	had sorrowing told, from sea-ways landed,
1150 æt witon weana dæl; ne meahste wæfre mod	mourning their woes. Finn's wavering spirit
1151 forhabban in hrepre. ða wæs heal roden/	bode not in breast. The burg was reddened
1152 feonda feorum, swilce Finn slægen,	with blood of foemen, and Finn was slain,
1153 cýning on corpre, ond seo cwen numen.	king amid clansmen; the queen was taken.
1154 Sceaotend Scyldinga to scýpon feredon	To their ship the Scylding warriors bore
1155 eal ingesteald eorðcýninges,	all the chattels the chieftain owned,
1156 swylce hie æt Finn's ham findan meahston	whatever they found in Finn's domain
1157 sigla, searogimma. Hie on sælade	of gems and jewels. The gentle wife
1158 drihtlice wif to Denum feredon,	o'er paths of the deep to the Danes they bore,
1159 læddon to leodum. Leod wæs asungen,	led to her land. The lay was finished,
1160 gleomannes gyd. Gamen eft astah,	the gleeman's song. Then glad rose the revel;
1161 beorhtode bencsweg; byrelas sealðon	bench-joy brightened. Bearers draw
1162 win of wunderfatum. Ða cwom Wealhþeo ford	from their "wonder-vats" wine. Comes Wealhtheow forth,
1163 gan under gylðnum beage, þær þa godan twegen	under gold-crown goes where the good pair sit,
1164 sæton sulhtergefæderan; þa gyt wæs hiera sib ætgædere,	uncle and nephew, true each to the other one,
1165 æghwylc odrum trywe. Swylce þær Unferþ hyle	kindred in amity. Unferth the spokesman
1166 æt fotum sæt frean Scyldinga; gehwylc hiora his ferhpe treowde,	at the Scylding lord's feet sat: men had faith in his spirit,
1167 þæt he hæfde mod micel, þeah þe he his magum nære	his keenness of courage, though kinsmen had found him
1168 arfæst æt eorða gelacum. Spræc ða ides Scyldinga:	unsure at the sword-play. The Scylding queen spoke:
1169 Onfoh þissum fulle, freodrihten min,	"Quaff of this cup, my king and lord,
1170 sinces brytta. þu on sælum wes,	breaker of rings, and blithe be thou,
1171 goldwine gumena, ond to Geatum spræc	gold-friend of men; to the Geats here speak
1172 mildum wordum, swa sceal man don.	such words of mildness as man should use.
1173 Beo wið Geatas glæd, geofena gemyndig,	Be glad with thy Geats; of those gifts be mindful,
1174 nean ond feorran þu nu hafast.	or near or far, which now thou hast.
1175 Æle man sægde þæt þu ðe for sunu wolde	Men say to me, as son thou wishest
1176 hererinc/ habban. Heorot is gefælsod,	yon hero to hold. Thy Heorot purged,
1177 beahsele beorhta; bruc þenden þu mote	jewel-hall brightest, enjoy while thou canst,
1178 manigra medo, ond þinum magum læf	with many a largess; and leave to thy kin
1179 folc ond rice, þonne ðu ford scyle	folk and realm when forth thou goest
1180 metodscraft seon. Ic minne can	to greet thy doom. For gracious I deem
1181 glædne Hroþulf, þæt he þa geogode wile	my Hrothulf, willing to hold and rule
1182 arum healdan, gyt þu ær þonne/ he,	nobly our youths, if thou yield up first,
1183 wine Scyldinga, worold oflæst;	prince of Scyldings, thy part in the world.
1184 wene ic þæt he mid gode gylðan wille	I ween with good he will well requite
1185 uncran eafteran, gif he þæt eal gemon,	offspring of ours, when all he minds
1186 hwæt wit to willan ond to wordmýndum	that for him we did in his helpless days
1187 umborwesendum ær arna gefremedon.	of gift and grace to gain him honor!"
1188 Hwearf þa bi bence þær hyre byre wæron,	Then she turned to the seat where her sons were placed,
1189 Hredric ond Hroðmund, ond hælepa bearn,	Hrethric and Hrothmund, with heroes' bairns,
1190 giogod ætgædere; þær se goda sæt,	young men together: the Geat, too, sat there,
1191 Beowulf Geata, be þæm gebroðrum twæm.	Beowulf brave, the brothers between.
1192 Him wæs ful boren ond freondlāþu	A CUP she gave him, with kindly greeting
1193 wordum bewægned, ond wunden gold	and winsome words. Of wunden gold,
1194 estum geeawed, earmreade twa,	she offered, to honor him, arm-jewels twain,
1195 hrægl ond hringas, healsbeaga mæst	corselet and rings, and of collars the noblest
1196 þara þe ic on foldan gefrægen hæbbe.	that ever I knew the earth around.
1197 Mænigne ic under swegle seltran hyrde	Ne'er heard I so mighty, 'neath heaven's dome,
1198 hordmaddum hælepa, sýpðan Hama ætwæg	a hoard-gem of heroes, since Hama bore
1199 to þære/ byrhtan byrig Brosinga mene,	to his bright-built burg the Brisings' necklace,
1200 sigle ond sinclæt; searonidas fleah/	jewel and gem casket. -- Jealousy fled he,
1201 Eormenrices, geceas eorne ræd.	Eormenric's hate: chose help eternal.
1202 þone hring hæfde Higelac Geata,	Higelac Geat, grandson of Swerting,
1203 nefa Swertinges, nphstan side,	on the last of his raids this ring bore with him,
1204 sidþan he under segne sint ealgode,	under his banner the booty defending,
1205 wæltreaf wereðe; hýne wýrd fornam,	the war-spoil warding; but Wýrd o'erwhelmed him
1206 sýpðan he for wolenco wean ahsode,	what time, in his daring, dangers he sought,
1207 fæhðe to Frysum. He þa frætwæ wæg,	feud with Frisians. Fairest of gems
1208 eorclanstanas ofer yða ful,	he bore with him over the beaker-of-waves,
1209 rice þeoden; he under rande gecranc.	soverran strong: under shield he died.
1210 Gehwearf þa in Francna fæpm feorh cýninges,	Fell the corpse of the king into keeping of Franks,
1211 breostgewædu ond se beah somod;	gear of the breast, and that gorgeous ring;
1212 wýrsan wigfrecan wæl ceafedon/	weaker warriors won the spoil,

Old English	Modern English
1213 æfter gudscare, Geata leode,	after gripe of battle, from Geatland's lord,
1214 hreawic heoldon. Heol swege onfeng.	and held the death-field. Din rose in hall.
1215 Wealhdeo mabelode, heo fore þam werede spræc:	Wealhtheow spake amid warriors, and said:--
1216 Bruc dissas beages, Beowulf leofa,	"This jewel enjoy in thy jocund youth,
1217 hyse, mid hæle, ond dissas hrægles neat,	Beowulf lov'd, these battle-weeds wear,
1218 heodgestreona/, ond geþeoh tela,	a royal treasure, and richly thrive!
1219 cen þet mid cræfte ond þyssum cnyhtum wes	Preserve thy strength, and these striplings here
1220 lara lide; ic þe þæs lean geman.	counsel in kindness: requital be mine.
1221 Hæfast/ þu gefered þæt de feor ond neah	Hast done such deeds, that for days to come
1222 ealne wideferhþ weras ehtigad,	thou art famed among folk both far and near,
1223 efne swa side swa sæ bebuged/,	so wide as washeth the wave of Ocean
1224 windgeard, weallas. Wes þenden þu lifige,	his windy walls. Through the ways of life
1225 æþeling, eadig. Ic þe an tela	prosper, O prince! I pray for thee
1226 sincgestreona. Weo þu suna minum	rich possessions. To son of mine
1227 dædum gedefe, dreamhealdende.	be helpful in deed and uphold his joys!
1228 Her is æghwylc eorl oþrum getrywe,	Here every earl to the other is true,
1229 modes milde, mandrihtne hold/;	mild of mood, to the master loyal!
1230 þegnas syndon gehwære, heod ealgearo,	Thanes are friendly, the throng obedient,
1231 druncne dryhtguman dod swa ic bidde.	liegemen are revelling: list and obey!"
1232 Eode þa to setle. þær was symbla cyst;	Went then to her place. -- That was proudest of feasts;
1233 druncon win weras. Wyrð ne cūpon,	flowed wine for the warriors. Wyrð they knew not,
1234 geosceaft grimme/, swa hit agangen weard	destiny dire, and the doom to be seen
1235 eorla manegum, sýððan æfen cwom	by many an earl when eve should come,
1236 ond him Hroþgar gewat to hofe sinum,	and Hrothgar homeward hasten away,
1237 rice to ræste. Ræced weardode	royal, to rest. The room was guarded
1238 unrim eorla, swa hie oft ær dydon.	by an army of earls, as erst was done.
1239 Bencpelu beredon; hit geondbræded weard	They bared the bench-boards; abroad they spread
1240 beddum ond bolstrum. Weorstealta sum	beds and bolsters. -- One beer-carouser
1241 fus ond fæge fletræste gebeag.	in danger of doom lay down in the hall. --
1242 Setton him to heafdon hilderandas,	At their heads they set their shields of war,
1243 bordwudu beorhtan; þær on bence wæs	bucklers bright; on the bench were there
1244 ofer æþelinge yþgesene	over each atheling, easy to see,
1245 heafosteapa helm, hringed byrne,	the high battle-helmet, the haughty spear,
1246 þreowudu þrymlit. Wæs þeaw/ hþra	the corselet of rings. 'Twas their custom so
1247 þæt hie oft wæron an wig gearwe,	ever to be for battle prepared,
1248 ge æt ham ge on herge, ge gehwæþer þara,	at home, or harrying, which it were,
1249 efne swylce mæla swylce hira mandryhtne	even as oft as evil threatened
1250 þearf gesælde; wæs seo heod tilu.	their sovran king. -- They were clansmen good.
1251 Sigon þa to slæpe. Sum sare angeald	THEN sank they to sleep. With sorrow one bought
1252 æfenræste, swa him ful oft gelamp,	his rest of the evening, -- as oftime had happened
1253 sýððan goldsele Grendel warode,	when Grendel guarded that golden hall,
1254 unríht æfnde, oþþæt ende betwom,	evil wrought, till his end drew nigh,
1255 swylt æfter synnum. þæt gesyne wearp,	slaughter for sins. 'Twas seen and told
1256 widcūþ werum, þætte wrecend þa gyt	how an avenger survived the fiend,
1257 lifde æfter lapum, lange þrage,	as was learned afar. The livelong time
1258 æfter gudceare. Grendles modor,	after that grim fight, Grendel's mother,
1259 ides, aglæt-wif, yrmþe gemunde,	monster of women, mourned her woe.
1260 se þe wætere-gesan wunian scolde,	She was doomed to dwell in the dreary waters,
1261 tealde streamas, sýððan Cain/ weard	cold sea-courses, since Cain cut down
1262 to ecgbanan angan breþer,	with edge of the sword his only brother,
1263 fæderennæge; he þa fag gewat,	his father's offspring: outlawed he fled,
1264 morþre gemearcod, mandream fleon,	marked with murder, from men's delights
1265 westen warode. þanon woc/ fela	warded the wilds. -- There woke from him
1266 geosceaftgasta; wæs þara Grendel sum,	such fate-sent ghosts as Grendel, who,
1267 heorolwearh hetelic, se æt Heorote fand	war-wolf horrid, at Heorot found
1268 wættendne wer wiges bidan.	a warrior watching and waiting the fray,
1269 þær him aglæta ætgræpe weard;	with whom the grisly one grappled amain.
1270 hwæþre he gemunde mægenes strenge,	But the man remembered his mighty power,
1271 gimfæste gife de him god sealde,	the glorious gift that God had sent him,
1272 ond him to anwaldan are gelyfde,	in his Maker's mercy put his trust
1273 frofre ond fultum; dþ he þone feond oferctwom,	for comfort and help: so he conquered the foe,
1274 gehnægde helle gast. þa he hean gewat,	felled the fiend, who fled abject,
1275 dreame bedæled, deapwíc seon,	reft of joy, to the realms of death,
1276 mancynnes feond, ond his modor þa gyt,	mankind's foe. And his mother now,

Old English	Modern English
1277 gifre ond galgmod, gegan wolde	gloomy and grim, would go that quest
1278 sorhfulne sid, sunu dead/ wrecan.	of sorrow, the death of her son to avenge.
1279 Com þa to Heorote, dær Þringdene	To Heorot came she, where helmeted Danes
1280 geond þæt sæld swæfun. þa dær sona weard	slept in the hall. Too soon came back
1281 edhwyrfte eorlum, siþðan inne fealh	old ills of the earls, when in she burst,
1282 Grendles modor. Wæs se gryre læssa	the mother of Grendel. Less grim, though, that terror,
1283 efne swa micle swa bið mægþa cræft,	e'en as terror of woman in war is less,
1284 wiggryre wifes, be wæpnedmen,	might of maid, than of men in arms
1285 þonne/ heoru bunden, hamere geburen,	when, hammer-forged, the falchion hard,
1286 sweord swate fah swin ofer helme	sword gore-stained, through swine of the helm,
1287 ecgum dylhtig/ andweard scired.	crested, with keen blade carves amain.
1288 þa wæs on healle hearderg togen	Then was in hall the hard-edge drawn,
1289 sweord ofer setlum, sidrand manig	the swords on the settles, and shields a-many
1290 hafan handa fæst; helm ne gemunde,	firm held in hand: nor helmet minded
1291 byrnan side, þa hine se broga angeat.	nor harness of mail, whom that horror seized.
1292 Heo wæs on ofste, wolde ut þanon,	Haste was hers; she would hie afar
1293 feore beorgan, þa heo onfunden wæs.	and save her life when the liegemen saw her.
1294 Þrade heo æþelinga anne hæfde	Yet a single atheling up she seized
1295 fæste befangen, þa heo to fenne gang.	fast and firm, as she fled to the moor.
1296 Se wæs Hroþgare hæleþa leofost	He was for Hrothgar of heroes the dearest,
1297 on gesides had be sæm tweonum,	of trusty vassals betwixt the seas,
1298 rice randwiga, þone de heo on ræste abreat,	whom she killed on his couch, a clansman famous,
1299 blædfæstne beorn. Fæs Beowulf dær,	in battle brave. -- Nor was Beowulf there;
1300 ac wæs ofer in ær geteohhod	another house had been held apart,
1301 æfter maþdunigfe mærum Geate.	after giving of gold, for the Geat renowned. --
1302 DREAM weard in Heorote; heo under heolfre genam	Uproar filled Heorot; the hand all had viewed,
1303 cupe folme; tearu wæs geniwod,	blood-flecked, she bore with her; bale was returned,
1304 geworden in wicum. Ær wæs þæt gewrixle til,	dole in the dwellings: 'twas dire exchange
1305 þæt hie on ba healfa biçgan scoldon	where Dane and Geat were doomed to give
1306 freonda feorum. þa wæs frod cýning,	the lives of loved ones. Long-tried king,
1307 har hilderinc, on hreon mode,	the hoary hero, at heart was sad
1308 syððan he aldorþegn unlyfigendne/,	when he knew his noble no more lived,
1309 þone deorestan deadne wisse.	and dead indeed was his dearest thane.
1310 Þraþe/ wæs to bure Beowulf fetod,	To his bower was Beowulf brought in haste,
1311 sigoreadig setg. Samod ærdæge	dauntless victor. As daylight broke,
1312 eode eorla sum, æþele cempa	along with his earls the atheling lord,
1313 self mid gesidum þær se snotera bad,	with his clansmen, came where the king abode
1314 hwæþer/ him alwalda æfre wille	waiting to see if the Wielder-of-All
1315 æfter weaspelle wyrpe gefremman.	would turn this tale of trouble and woe.
1316 Gang da æfter flore fyrðwyrde man	Strode o'er floor the famed-in-strife,
1317 mid his handscale healwudu dýnede,	with his hand-companions, -- the hall resounded, --
1318 þæt he þone wisan wordum nægde/	wishing to greet the wise old king,
1319 frean Ingwina, frægn gif him wære	Ingwines' lord; he asked if the night
1320 æfter neodladum/ niht getæse.	had passed in peace to the prince's mind.
1321 Hrodgar maþelode, helm Scýldinga:	HROTHGAR spake, helmet-of-Scyldings:--
1322 Ær frin þu æfter sælum. Sorh is geniwod	"Ask not of pleasure! Pain is renewed
1323 Denigea leodum. Dead is æschere,	to Danish folk. Dead is Aeschere,
1324 Drmenlafes yldra broþor,	of Yrmenlaf the elder brother,
1325 min runwita ond min rædbora,	my sage adviser and stay in council,
1326 eaxlgestealla, donne we on orlege	shoulder-comrade in stress of fight
1327 hafelan weredon, þonne hniton fepan,	when warriors clashed and we warded our heads,
1328 eoferas cýnsedan. Swyft/ scolde eorl wesan,	hewed the helm-boars; hero famed
1329 æþeling/ ærgod, swyft æschere wæs.	should be every earl as Aeschere was!
1330 Weard him on Heorote to handþanan	But here in Heorot a hand hath slain him
1331 welgæst wæfre; ic ne wat hwæder/	of wandering death-sprite. I wot not whither,
1332 atol æse wlanc eftsidas teah,	proud of the prey, her path she took,
1333 fýlle gefægnod/. Heo þa fæhde wræc	fain of her fill. The feud she avenged
1334 þe þu gystranniht Grendel twealdest	that yesternight, unyieldingly,
1335 þurh hæstne had heardum clamnum,	Grendel in grimmest grasp thou killedst, --
1336 forþan he to lange leode mine	seeing how long these liegemen mine
1337 wanode ond wyrde. He æt wige getrang	he ruined and ravaged. Reft of life,
1338 ealdres scýldig, ond nu ofer twom	in arms he fell. Now another comes,
1339 mihtig manscaba, wolde hyre mæg wrecan,	keen and cruel, her kin to avenge,
1340 ge feor hafad fæhde gestæled	farin far in feud of blood:

Old English	Modern English
1341 þæs þe þincean mæg þegne monegum,	so that many a thane shall think, who e'er
1342 se þe æfter sincgyfan on sefan greoteþ,	sorrows in soul for that sharer of rings,
1343 hreþerbealo hearde; nu seo hand liged,	this is hardest of heart-bales. The hand lies low
1344 se þe eow welhwylcra/ wilna dohte.	that once was willing each wish to please.
1345 Ic þæt londbuend, leode mine,	Land-dwellers here and liegemen mine,
1346 selerædende, sergan hyrde	who house by those parts, I have heard relate
1347 þæt hie gesawon swylce twegen	that such a pair they have sometimes seen,
1348 micle mearcstapan moras healðan,	march-stalkers mighty the moorland haunting,
1349 ellorgæstas. dæra oder wæs,	wandering spirits: one of them seemed,
1350 þæs þe hie gewislicost gewitan meahton,	so far as my folk could fairly judge,
1351 idese onlicnæs; oder earmsceapen	of womankind; and one, accursed,
1352 on weres wæstmum wræclastas træd,	in man's guise trod the misery-track
1353 næfne he wæs mara þonne ænig man oder;	of exile, though huger than human bulk.
1354 þone on geardagum Grendel nemdon/	Grendel in days long gone they named him,
1355 foldbuende. No hie fæder cunnon,	folk of the land; his father they knew not,
1356 hwæþer him ænig wæs ær acenned	nor any brood that was born to him
1357 dýrnra gasta. Hie dygel lond	of treacherous spirits. Untrod is their home;
1358 warigeað, wulfhleopu, windige/ næssas,	by wolf-cliffs haunt they and windy headlands,
1359 fæcne fengelad, dær fyrgenstream	fenways fearful, where flows the stream
1360 under næssa genipu niþer gewited,	from mountains gliding to gloom of the rocks,
1361 flod under foldan. Nis þæt feor heonon	underground flood. Not far is it hence
1362 milgemeartces þæt se mere standeð/;	in measure of miles that the mere expands,
1363 ofer þam hongiad hynde bearwas,	and o'er it the frost-bound forest hanging,
1364 wudu wýrtum fæst wæter oferhelmad.	sturdily rooted, shadows the wave.
1365 þær mæg nihta gehwæm midwundor seon,	By night is a wonder weird to see,
1366 fyr on flode. No þæs frod leafað	fire on the waters. So wise lived none
1367 gumena bearna, þæt þone grund wite;	of the sons of men, to search those depths!
1368 deað þe hæðstapa hundum geswenced,	Nay, though the heath-rover, harried by dogs,
1369 heorot hornum trum, holtwudu sece,	the horn-proud hart, this holt should seek,
1370 feorran geflymed, ær he feorh seled,	long distance driven, his dear life first
1371 aldor on ofre, ær he in wille	on the brink he yields ere he brave the plunge
1372 hafelan hydan/. Nis þæt heoru stow.	to hide his head: 'tis no happy place!
1373 þonon yðgeblond up astiged	Thence the welter of waters washes up
1374 won to wolcnum, þonne wind styreþ,	wan to welkin when winds bestir
1375 lað gewidru, oðþæt lyft drysmað,	evil storms, and air grows dusk,
1376 roderas reotað. Nu is se ræd gelang	and the heavens weep. Now is help once more
1377 eft æt þe anum. Eard git ne const,	with thee alone! The land thou knowst not,
1378 fæcne stowe, dær þu findan miht	place of fear, where thou findest out
1379 felasinnigne setg; set gif þu dýrre.	that sin-flecked being. Seek if thou dare!
1380 Ic þe þa fæhde feo leanige,	I will reward thee, for waging this fight,
1381 ealdgestreonum, swa ic ær dyde,	with ancient treasure, as erst I did,
1382 wundnum/ golde, gýf þu on weg cymest.	with winding gold, if thou winnest back."
1383 Beowulf mapelode, bearn Ecgþeowes/:	BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:
1384 Ne sorga, snotor guma; selre bið æghwæm	"Sorrow not, sage! It beseems us better
1385 þæt he his freond wrece, þonne he fela murne.	friends to avenge than fruitlessly mourn them.
1386 Ure æghwylc/ sceal ende gebidan	Each of us all must his end abide
1387 worolde lifes; wýrce se þe mote	in the ways of the world; so win who may
1388 domes ær deaþe; þæt bið drihtguman	glory ere death! When his days are told,
1389 unlifgendum æfter selest.	that is the warrior's worthiest doom.
1390 Aris, rices weard, uton raþe/ feran	Rise, O realm-warder! Ride we anon,
1391 Grendles magan gang sceawigan.	and mark the trail of the mother of Grendel.
1392 Ic hit þe gehate, no he on helm losað,	No harbor shall hide her -- heed my promise! --
1393 ne on foldan fæpm, ne on fyrgeholt,	enfolding of field or forested mountain
1394 ne on gýfenes grund, ga þær he wille.	or floor of the flood, let her flee where she will!
1395 dys dogor þu gehýld hafa	But thou this day endure in patience,
1396 weana gehwylces, swa ic þe wene to.	as I ween thou wilt, thy woes each one."
1397 Ahleop ða se gomela, gode þancode,	Leaped up the graybeard: God he thanked,
1398 mihtigan drihtne, þæs se man gespræt/.	mighty Lord, for the man's brave words.
1399 þa wæs Hrodgare hors gebated,	For Hrothgar soon a horse was saddled
1400 witg wundenfeax. Wisa fengel	wave-maned steed. The sovran wise
1401 geatolic/ gende; gumfepa stop	stately rode on; his shield-armed men
1402 lindhæbbendra. Lastas wæron	followed in force. The footprints led
1403 æfter walðswaþum wide gespyne,	along the woodland, widely seen,
1404 gang ofer grundas, þær/ heo/ gegnum for	a path o'er the plain, where she passed, and trod

Old English	Modern English
1405 ofer myrcan mor, magoþegna bæc	the murky moor; of men-at-arms
1406 þone selestan sawolleasne	she bore the bravest and best one, dead,
1407 þara þe mid Hroðgare ham ealhtode.	him who with Hrothgar the homestead ruled.
1408 Ofereode þa æþelinga bearn	On then went the atheling-born
1409 steap stanhlido, stige nearwe,	o'er stone-cliffs steep and strait defiles,
1410 enge anpadas, uncud gelad,	narrow passes and unknown ways,
1411 neowle næssas, nicorhusa fela.	headlands sheer, and the haunts of the Nicors.
1412 ðe feara sum beforan gengde	Foremost he fared, a few at his side
1413 wisra monna wong sceawian,	of the wiser men, the ways to scan,
1414 oþþæt he færinga fyrgebeamas	till he found in a flash the forested hill
1415 ofer harne stan hleonian funde,	hanging over the hoary rock,
1416 wynleasne wudu; wæter under stod	a woful wood: the waves below
1417 dreorig ond gedrefed. Denum eallum wæs,	were dyed in blood. The Danish men
1418 winum Scyldinga, weorce on mode	had sorrow of soul, and for Scyldings all,
1419 to geholianne, degne monegum,	for many a hero, 'twas hard to bear,
1420 oncyð eorla gehwæm, syððan æscheres	ill for earls, when Aeschere's head
1421 on þam holmlife hafelan metton.	they found by the flood on the foreland there.
1422 Flod blode weol folc to sægon,	Waves were welling, the warriors saw,
1423 hatan heolfre. Horn stundum song	hot with blood; but the horn sang oft
1424 fuslic fyrðleod/. ðeþa eal geset.	battle-song bold. The band sat down,
1425 Gesawon ða æfter wætere wyrmcynnes fela,	and watched on the water worm-like things,
1426 sellice sædracan, sund cunnian,	sea-dragons strange that sounded the deep,
1427 swylce on næshleodum nicras licgean,	and nicors that lay on the ledge of the ness --
1428 ða on undernmæl oft bewitigad	such as oft essay at hour of morn
1429 sorhfulne sid on seglade,	on the road-of-sails their ruthless quest, --
1430 wyrmas ond wildeor; hie on weg hruron,	and sea-snakes and monsters. These started away,
1431 bitere ond gebolgne, bearhtu ongeaton,	swollen and savage that song to hear,
1432 gudhorn galan. Sumne Geata leod	that war-horn's blast. The warden of Geats,
1433 of flambogan feores getwæfde,	with bolt from bow, then balked of life,
1434 yðgewinnes, þæt him on aldre stod	of wave-work, one monster, amid its heart
1435 herestræl hearda; he on holme wæs	went the keen war-shaft; in water it seemed
1436 sundes þe sænra, ðe hýne swylt fornam.	less doughty in swimming whom death had seized.
1437 Hreþe weard on yðum mid eoferspreotum	Swift on the billows, with boar-spears well
1438 heorohocpytum hearde genearwod,	hooked and barbed, it was hard beset,
1439 nida genæged, ond on næs togen,	done to death and dragged on the headland,
1440 wundorlic wægþora; weras sceawedon	wave-roamer wondrous. Warriors viewed
1441 gryreligne gist. Gyrede hine Beowulf	the grisly guest. Then girt him Beowulf
1442 eorlgewædum, nalles for ealdre mearn.	in martial mail, nor mourned for his life.
1443 Scolde hereþyrne hondum gebroden,	His breastplate broad and bright of hues,
1444 sid ond searofah, sund cunnian,	woven by hand, should the waters try;
1445 seo ðe bancofan beorgan cuþe,	well could it ward the warrior's body
1446 þæt him hildegrap hreþre ne mihte,	that battle should break on his breast in vain
1447 eorres inwiffeng, aldre gesceþðan.	nor harm his heart by the hand of a foe.
1448 ac se hwita helm hafelan wereðe,	And the helmet white that his head protected
1449 se þe meregrundas mengan scolde,	was destined to dare the deeps of the flood,
1450 setan sundgebland since geweordad/,	through wave-whirl win: 'twas wound with chains,
1451 beforan freawrasnum, swa hine fyrndagum	decked with gold, as in days of yore
1452 worhte wæpna smid, wundrum teode,	the weapon-smith worked it wondrously,
1453 besette swinlicum, þæt hine syððan no	with swine-forms set it, that swords nowise,
1454 brond ne beadometas bitan ne meahton.	brandished in battle, could bite that helm.
1455 Næs þæt þonne mæstost mægenfultuma	Nor was that the meanest of mighty helps
1456 þæt him on ðearfe lah dyle Hroðgares;	which Hrothgar's orator offered at need:
1457 wæs þam hæftmece Hrunting nama.	"Hrunting" they named the hilted sword,
1458 þæt wæs an foran ealdgestreona;	of old-time heirlooms easily first;
1459 ecg wæs iren, atertannum fah,	iron was its edge, all etched with poison,
1460 ahyrðed heaþoswate; næfre hit æt hilde ne swac	with battle-blood hardened, nor blenched it at fight
1461 manna ængum þara þe hit mid mundum bewand,	in hero's hand who held it ever,
1462 se ðe grypresidas gegon dorste,	on paths of peril prepared to go
1463 folcstede fara; næs þæt forma sid	to folkstead of foes. Not first time this
1464 þæt hit ellenweorc æfnan scolde.	it was destined to do a daring task.
1465 Þuru ne gemunde mago Ecglafes,	For he bore not in mind, the bairn of Ecglaf
1466 eafopes cræftig, þæt he ær gespræc	sturdy and strong, that speech he had made,
1467 wine druncen, þa he þæs wæpnes onlah	drunk with wine, now this weapon he lent
1468 seltran sweorðfrecan. Selfa ne dorste	to a stouter swordsman. Himself, though, durst not

Old English	Modern English
1469 under yða gewin aldre geneþan,	under welter of waters wager his life
1470 drihtscype dreogan; þær he dome forleas,	as loyal liegeman. So lost he his glory,
1471 ellenmærdum/. ðe wæs þæm oðrum swa,	honor of earls. With the other not so,
1472 sƿðþan he hine to gude gegƿred hæfde.	who girded him now for the grim encounter.
1473 Beowulf mædelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:	BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:--
1474 Gephenc nu, se mæra maga Healfdenes,	"Have mind, thou honored offspring of Healfdene
1475 snotttra fengel, nu ic eom sides fus,	gold-friend of men, now I go on this quest,
1476 goldwine gumena, hwæt wit geo spræcon,	sovrän wise, what once was said:
1477 gif ic æt þearfe þinre scolde	if in thy cause it came that I
1478 aldre linnan, þæt du me a wære	should lose my life, thou wouldst loyal bide
1479 forðgewitenum on fæder stæle.	to me, though fallen, in father's place!
1480 Wes þu mundbora minum magoþegnum,	Be guardian, thou, to this group of my thanes,
1481 hondgesellum, gif met hild nime;	my warrior-friends, if War should seize me;
1482 sƿlƿce þu da mædmas þe þu me sealdest,	and the goodly gifts thou gavest me,
1483 Hroðgar leofa, Hygelace onsend.	Hrothgar beloved, to Hygelac send!
1484 Mæg þonne on þæm golde ongitan Geata dryhten,	Geatland's king may ken by the gold,
1485 geseon sunu Hreðles, þonne he on þæt sint starað,	Hrethel's son see, when he stares at the treasure,
1486 þæt ic guncƿstum godne funde	that I got me a friend for goodness famed,
1487 beaga bryttan, breac þonne moste.	and joyed while I could in my jewel-bestower.
1488 Ond þu Unferð/ læt ealde lafe,	And let Unferth wield this wondrous sword,
1489 wrætlíc wægsweord, widcudne man	earl far-honored, this heirloom precious,
1490 heardecg habban; ic me mid Hruntinge	hard of edge: with Hrunting I
1491 dom gewyrce, oþðe mec dead nimeð.	seek doom of glory, or Death shall take me."
1492 æfter þæm wordum Wedergeata leod	After these words the Weder-Geat lord
1493 efste mid elne, nalas ondsware	boldly hastened, biding never
1494 bidan wolde; brimwylm onfeng	answer at all: the ocean floods
1495 hilderince/. da wæs hwil dæges	closed o'er the hero. Long while of the day
1496 ær he þone grundwong ongytan mehte.	fled ere he felt the floor of the sea.
1497 Sona þæt onfunde se de floda begong	Soon found the fiend who the flood-domain
1498 heorogifre beheold hund missera,	sword-hungry held these hundred winters,
1499 grim ond grædig, þæt þær gumena sum	greedy and grim, that some guest from above,
1500 ælwihta eard utan cunmode.	some man, was raiding her monster-realm.
1501 Grap þa togeanes, gudrinc gefeng	She grasped out for him with grisly claws,
1502 atolan clommu. No þy ær in gescod	and the warrior seized; yet scathed she not
1503 halan lice; hring utan ymbbearh,	his body hale; the breastplate hindered,
1504 þæt heo þone fyrðhom durhfon ne mihte,	as she strove to shatter the sark of war,
1505 locene leodosƿtan/ laþan fingrum.	the linked harness, with loathsome hand.
1506 Wær þa seo brimwylf/, þa heo to botne com,	Then bore this brine-wolf, when bottom she touched,
1507 hringa þengel to hofe sinum,	the lord of rings to the lair she haunted
1508 swa he ne mihte, no he þæs/ modig wæs,	whiles vainly he strove, though his valor held,
1509 wæpna gewealdan, ac hine wundra þæs fela	weapon to wield against wondrous monsters
1510 sƿencte/ on sunde, sædeor monig	that sore beset him; sea-beasts many
1511 hildetuxum heresƿrcan bræc,	tried with fierce tusks to tear his mail,
1512 ehton aglæcan. da se eorl ongeat	and swarmed on the stranger. But soon he marked
1513 þæt he in/ niðsele nathwylcum wæs,	he was now in some hall, he knew not which,
1514 þær him nænig wæter wihte ne sceþede,	where water never could work him harm,
1515 ne him for hrofsele hrinan ne mehte	nor through the roof could reach him ever
1516 færgripe flodes; fyrleoht geseah,	fangs of the flood. Firelight he saw,
1517 blacne leoman, beorhte scinan/.	beams of a blaze that brightly shone.
1518 Ongeat þa se goda grundwyrɡenne,	Then the warrior was ware of that wolf-of-the-deep,
1519 merewif mihtig; mægenræs forgeaf	mere-wife monstrous. For mighty stroke
1520 hildebille, hond/ sweng/ ne ofteah,	he swung his blade, and the blow withheld not.
1521 þæt hire on hafelan hringmæl agol	Then sang on her head that seemly blade
1522 grædig gudleod. da/ se gíst onfand	its war-song wild. But the warrior found
1523 þæt se beadoleoma bitan nolde,	the light-of-battle was loath to bite,
1524 aldre sceþdan, ac seo ecg gesƿac	to harm the heart: its hard edge failed
1525 deodne/ æt þearfe; dolode ær fela	the noble at need, yet had known of old
1526 hondgemota, helm oft gescær,	strife hand to hand, and had helmets cloven,
1527 fægcs fyrðhrægl; da wæs forma sið	doomed men's fighting-gear. First time, this,
1528 deorum mædme, þæt his dom alæg.	for the gleaming blade that its glory fell.
1529 Eft wæs anræd, nalas elnes læt,	Firm still stood, nor failed in valor,
1530 mærdæ gemyndig mæg Hygelaces.	heedful of high deeds, Hygelac's kinsman;
1531 Wearp da wundenmæl wrættum gebunden	flung away fretted sword, featly jewelled,
1532 ƿrre oretta, þæt hit on eorðan læg,	the angry earl; on earth it lay

Old English	Modern English
1533 stid ond stýlcg; strenge getruwode,	steel-edged and stiff. His strength he trusted,
1534 mundgripe mægenes. Swa sceal man don,	hand-gripe of might. So man shall do
1535 þonne he æt gude gegan þenced	whenever in war he weens to earn him
1536 longsumne lof, na ymb his lif tearað.	lasting fame, nor fears for his life!
1537 Gefeng þa be eaxle nalas for fæhðe mearn	Seized then by shoulder, shrank not from combat,
1538 Gudgeata leod Grendles modor;	the Geatish war-prince Grendel's mother.
1539 brægd þa beaðwe heard, þa he gebolgen wæs,	Flung then the fierce one, filled with wrath,
1540 feorhgenidlan, þæt heo on flet gebeaþ.	his deadly foe, that she fell to ground.
1541 Heo him eft hraþe andlean/ forgeald	Swift on her part she paid him back
1542 grimman grapum ond him togeanes feng;	with grisly grasp, and grappled with him.
1543 oferwearp/ þa werigmod wigena strengest,	Spent with struggle, stumbled the warrior,
1544 feþetempa, þæt he on fylle weard.	fiercest of fighting-men, fell adown.
1545 Ofsæt þa þone selegyst ond hyre seax/ geteah,	On the hall-guest she hurled herself, hent her short sword,
1546 brad ond/ brunecg, wolde hire bearn wrecan,	broad and brown-edged, the bairn to avenge,
1547 angan eaferan. Him on eaxle læg	the sole-born son. -- On his shoulder lay
1548 breostnet broden; þæt gebearh feore,	braided breast-mail, barring death,
1549 wid ord ond wid ege ingang forstod.	withstanding entrance of edge or blade.
1550 Hæfde ða forsidod sunu Ecgþeowes	Life would have ended for Ecgtheow's son,
1551 under gýnne grund, Geata cempa,	under wide earth for that earl of Geats,
1552 nemne him heaðobyrne helpe gefremede,	had his armor of war not aided him,
1553 herenet hearde, ond halig god	battle-net hard, and holy God
1554 geweold wigsigor; witig drihten,	wielded the victory, wisest Maker.
1555 rodera rædend, hit on rýht gesced	The Lord of Heaven allowed his cause;
1556 yðelice, sýþðan he eft astod.	and easily rose the earl erect.
1557 Geseaþ ða on searwum sigereadig biþ,	'MID the battle-gear saw he a blade triumphant,
1558 eald sweord eotenisc, eegum þýhtig,	old-sword of Eotens, with edge of proof,
1559 wigena weordmýnd; þæt wæs/ wæpna cyst,	warriors' heirloom, weapon unmatched,
1560 buton hit wæs mare ðonne ænig mon oder	-- save only 'twas more than other men
1561 to beaðulace æþeran meahste,	to bandy-of-battle could bear at all --
1562 god ond geatolic, gíganta geweorc.	as the giants had wrought it, ready and keen.
1563 He gefeng þa fetelþilt, fæca Scýldinga	Seized then its chain-hilt the Scyldings' chieftain,
1564 hreoh ond heorogrim hringmæl gebrægd,	bold and battle-grim, brandished the sword,
1565 aldres orwena, yrringa sloh,	reckless of life, and so wrathfully smote
1566 þæt hire wid halse heard grapode,	that it gripped her neck and grasped her hard,
1567 banhringas bræc. Wíl eal durhwod	her bone-rings breaking: the blade pierced through
1568 fægne flæschoman; heo on flet getrong.	that fated-one's flesh: to floor she sank.
1569 Sæweord wæs swatig, setg weorce gefeh.	Bloody the blade: he was blithe of his deed.
1570 Lixte se leoma, leoht inne stod,	Then blazed forth light. 'Twas bright within
1571 efne swa of hefene hadre scined	as when from the sky there shines unclouded
1572 rodores candel. He æfter recede wlat;	heaven's candle. The hall he scanned.
1573 hwearf þa be wealle, wæpen hafenade	By the wall then went he; his weapon raised
1574 heard be hiltum Higelaces degn,	high by its hilts the Hygelac-thane,
1575 yrr eond anræd. Mæs seo eeg fracod	angry and eager. That edge was not useless
1576 hilderince, ac he hraþe wolde	to the warrior now. He wished with speed
1577 Grendle forgyþðan gudræsa fela	Grendel to guerdon for grim raids many,
1578 ðara þe he geworhte to Westðenum	for the war he waged on Western-Danes
1579 oftor micle ðonne on ænne sið,	oftener far than an only time,
1580 þonne he Hrodgares heordgeneatas	when of Hrothgar's hearth-companions
1581 sloh on sweofote, slæpende fræt	he slew in slumber, in sleep devoured,
1582 folces Denigea fyftýne men	fifteen men of the folk of Danes,
1583 ond oder swýlc ut offerede,	and as many others outward bore,
1584 ladlicu lac. He him hæc lean forgeald,	his horrible prey. Well paid for that
1585 reþe cempa, to ðæs þe he on ræste geseaþ	the wrathful prince! For now prone he saw
1586 gudwerigne Grendel licgan	Grendel stretched there, spent with war,
1587 aldorleasne, swa him ær gesced	spoiled of life, so scathed had left him
1588 hild æt Heorote. Hra wide sprong,	Heorot's battle. The body sprang far
1589 sýþðan he æfter deaðe drepe þrowade,	when after death it endured the blow,
1590 heorosweng heardne, ond hine þa heafde becearf.	sword-stroke savage, that severed its head.
1591 Sona þæt gesawon snottre ceorlas,	Soon, then, saw the sage companions
1592 þa ðe mid Hrodgare on holm wilton/,	who waited with Hrothgar, watching the flood,
1593 þæt wæs yðgeblond eal gemenged,	that the tossing waters turbid grew,
1594 brim blode faþ. Wlondenfeaxe,	blood-stained the mere. Old men together,
1595 gomele ymb godne, ongeador spræcon	hoary-haired, of the hero spake;
1596 þæt hig hæc ædelinges eft ne wendon	the warrior would not, they weened, again,

Old English	Modern English
1597 þæt he sigehredig secean come	proud of conquest, come to seek
1598 mærne þeoden; þa dæs monige geweard	their mighty master. To many it seemed
1599 þæt hine seo brimwylf abroten/ hæfde.	the wolf-of-the-waves had won his life.
1600 da com non dæges. Næs ofgeafon	The ninth hour came. The noble Scyldings
1601 hwate Scyldingas; gewat him ham þonon	left the headland; homeward went
1602 goldwine gumena. Gistas setan/	the gold-friend of men. But the guests sat on,
1603 modes seoce ond on mere staredon,	stared at the surges, sick in heart,
1604 wiston ond ne wendon þæt hie heora winedrihten	and wished, yet weened not, their winsome lord
1605 selfne gesawon. þa þæt sweord ongan	again to see. Now that sword began,
1606 æfter heapostwate hildegitelum,	from blood of the fight, in battle-droppings,
1607 wigbil wanian. þæt wæs wundra sum,	war-blade, to wane: 'twas a wondrous thing
1608 þæt hit eal gemealt ise gelicost,	that all of it melted as ice is wont
1609 donne forstes bend fæder onlæted,	when frosty fetters the Father loosens,
1610 onwinded wælrapas, se geweald hafad	unwinds the wave-bonds, wielding all
1611 sæla ond mæla; þæt is soð metod.	seasons and times: the true God he!
1612 Ne nom he in þæm witum, Wedergeata leod,	Nor took from that dwelling the duke of the Geats
1613 madmæhta ma, þe he þær monige geseah,	precious things, though a plenty he saw,
1614 buton þone hafelan ond þa hilt somod	save only the head and that hilt withal
1615 since fage. Sweord ær gemealt,	blazoned with jewels: the blade had melted,
1616 forbarn brodenmæl; wæs þæt blod to þæs hat,	burned was the bright sword, her blood was so hot,
1617 ættren ellorgæst se þær inne/ swealt.	so poisoned the hell-sprite who perished within there.
1618 Sona wæs on sunde se þe ær æt sætte gebad	Soon he was swimming who safe saw in combat
1619 wighrypre wradra, wæter up þurhdeaf.	downfall of demons; up-dove through the flood.
1620 Wæron yðgebland eal gefælsod,	The clashing waters were cleansed now,
1621 eacne eardas, þa se ellorgast	waste of waves, where the wandering fiend
1622 oflet lifdagas ond þas lænan gesteaft.	her life-days left and this lapsing world.
1623 Com þa to lande lidmanna helm	Swam then to strand the sailors'-refuge,
1624 swidmod swymman; sælace gefeah,	sturdy-in-spirit, of sea-booty glad,
1625 mægenbyrþenne þara þe he him mid hæfde.	of burden brave he bore with him.
1626 Eodon him þa togeanes, gode þancodon,	Went then to greet him, and God they thanked,
1627 drydlic þegna heap, þeodnes gefegon,	the thane-band choice of their chieftain blithe,
1628 þæs þe hi hyne gesundne geseon moston.	that safe and sound they could see him again.
1629 da wæs of þæm hrofan helm ond byrne	Soon from the hardy one helmet and armor
1630 lungre alysed. Lagu drusade,	deftly they doffed: now drowsed the mere,
1631 wæter under wolcnum, wældreore fag.	water 'neath welkin, with war-blood stained.
1632 Ferdon ford þonon febelastum	Forth they fared by the footpaths thence,
1633 ferhþum fægne, foldweg mæton,	merry at heart the highways measured,
1634 cupe stræte. Cyningbalde men	well-known roads. Courageous men
1635 from þæm holmlife hafelan bæron	carried the head from the cliff by the sea,
1636 earfodlice heora æghwæþrum,	an arduous task for all the band,
1637 felamodigra; feower scoldon	the firm in fight, since four were needed
1638 on þæm wælstenge weorcum geferian	on the shaft-of-slaughter strenuously
1639 to þæm goldsele Grendles heafod,	to bear to the gold-hall Grendel's head.
1640 oþðæt semninga to sele comon	So presently to the palace there
1641 frome fyrðhwate feowertyne	foemen fearless, fourteen Geats,
1642 Geata gongan; gumdryhten mid	marching came. Their master-of-clan
1643 modig on gemonge meodowongas træd.	mighty amid them the meadow-ways trod.
1644 da com in gan ealdor degna,	Strode then within the sovran thane
1645 dædcene mon dome gewurþad,	fearless in fight, of fame renowned,
1646 hæle hildedeor, Þrodgar gretan.	hardy hero, Hrothgar to greet.
1647 þa wæs be feaxe on flet boren	And next by the hair into hall was borne
1648 Grendles heafod, þær guman druncon,	Grendel's head, where the henchmen were drinking,
1649 egeslic for eorlum ond þære idese mid,	an awe to clan and queen alike,
1650 wliteseon wrætlíc; weras on sawon.	a monster of marvel: the men looked on.
1651 Beowulf mæpelode, bearn Ecgþeowes:	BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:--
1652 Hwæt. we þe þas sælac, sunu Healfdenes,	"Lo, now, this sea-booty, son of Healfdene,
1653 leod Scyldinga, lustum brohton	Lord of Scyldings, we've lustily brought thee,
1654 tires to tacne, þe þu her to locast.	sign of glory; thou seest it here.
1655 Ic þæt unsofte ealdre gedigde	Not lightly did I with my life escape!
1656 wigge under wætere, weort geneþde	In war under water this work I essayed
1657 earfodlice; ætrihthe wæs	with endless effort; and even so
1658 gud getwæfed, nymde mec god scylde.	my strength had been lost had the Lord not shielded me.
1659 Ne meahthe ic æt hilde mid Hruntinge	Not a whit could I with Hrunting do
1660 wilht gewyrctan, þeah þæt wæpen duge;	in work of war, though the weapon is good;

Old English	Modern English
1661 ac me geude ylda waldend	yet a sword the Sovran of Men vouchsafed me
1662 þæt ic on wage geseah wlitig hangian	to spy on the wall there, in splendor hanging,
1663 eald sweord eacen oftost wisode	old, gigantic, -- how oft He guides
1664 winigea leasum, þæt ic dy wæpne gebræd.	the friendless wight! -- and I fought with that brand,
1665 Ofsloh da æt þære sætte, þa me sæl ageald,	felling in fight, since fate was with me,
1666 huses hyrdas. þa þæt hildebil	the house's wardens. That war-sword then
1667 forbarn brogdenmæl, swa þæt blod gesprang,	all burned, bright blade, when the blood gushed o'er it,
1668 hatost heafostwata. Ic þæt hilt þanan	battle-sweat hot; but the hilt I brought back
1669 feondum ætferede, fyrendæda wræt,	from my foes. So avenged I their fiendish deeds
1670 deadcwealm Denigea, swa hit gedefe wæs.	death-fall of Danes, as was due and right.
1671 Ic hit þe þonne gehate, þæt þu on Heorote most	And this is my hest, that in Heorot now
1672 sorhleas swefan mid þinra serga gedryht	safe thou canst sleep with thy soldier band,
1673 ond þegna gehwylc þinra leoda,	and everythane of all thy folk
1674 dugude ond iogobe, þæt þu him ondrædan ne þearft,	both old and young; no evil fear,
1675 þeoden Scyldinga, on þa healfe,	Scyldings' lord, from that side again,
1676 aldorbealu eorlum, swa þu ær dydest.	ought ill for thy earls, as erst thou must!"
1677 da wæs gylde hilt gamelum rince,	Then the golden hilt, for that gray-haired leader,
1678 harum hildfruman, on hand gylfen,	hoary hero, in hand was laid,
1679 enta ærgeweorc. hit on æht gehwearf	giant-wrought, old. So owned and enjoyed it
1680 æfter deofla hyre Denigea frean,	after downfall of devils, the Danish lord,
1681 wundorsmipa geweorc, ond þa þas worold ofgeaf	wonder-smiths' work, since the world was rid
1682 gromheort guma, godes ondsaca,	of that grim-souled fiend, the foe of God,
1683 mordres scyldig, ond his modor eac,	murder-marked, and his mother as well.
1684 on geweald gehwearf woroldcýninga	Now it passed into power of the people's king,
1685 dæm selestan be sām tveonum	best of all that the oceans bound
1686 dara þe on Scedenigge sceattas dælde.	who have scattered their gold o'er Scandia's isle.
1687 Þrodgar madelode, hylt sceawode,	Hrothgar spake -- the hilt he viewed,
1688 ealde lafe, on dæm wæs or writen	heirloom old, where was etched the rise
1689 fyrngewinnes, syðþan flod ofsloh,	of that far-off fight when the floods o'erwhelmed,
1690 gifen geotende, giganta cýn	raging waves, the race of giants
1691 frefne geferdon; þæt wæs fremde þeod	(fearful their fate!), a folk estranged
1692 ecean dryhtne; him þæs endelean	from God Eternal: whence guerdon due
1693 þurh wæteres wylm waldend sealde.	in that waste of waters the Wielder paid them.
1694 Swa wæs on dæm scennum sciran golde	So on the guard of shining gold
1695 þurh runstafas rihte gemearcod,	in runic staves it was rightly said
1696 geseted ond gesæd hwam þæt sweord geworht,	for whom the serpent-traced sword was wrought,
1697 irena cyst, ærest wære,	best of blades, in bygone days,
1698 wreopenhilt ond wyrmfah. da se wisa spræc	and the hilt well wound. -- The wise-one spake,
1699 sunu Healfdenes swigedon ealle:	son of Healfdene; silent were all:--
1700 þæt, la, mæg sergan se þe sod ond riht	"Lo, so may he say who sooth and right
1701 fremed on folce, feor eal gemon,	follows 'mid folk, of far times mindful,
1702 eald //edel// weard, þæt des eorl wære	a land-warden old, that this earl belongs
1703 geboren betera. Blæd is aræred	to the better breed! So, borne aloft,
1704 geond widwegas, wine min Beowulf/,	thy fame must fly, O friend my Beowulf,
1705 din ofer þeoda gehwylc. Eal þu hit gehýldum healdest,	far and wide o'er folksteads many. Firmly thou shalt all maintain,
1706 mægen mid modes snyttrum. Ic þe sceal mine gelæstan	mighty strength with mood of wisdom. Love of mine will I assure thee,
1707 freode, swa wit furdum spræcon. du scealt to frofre weorþan	as, awhile ago, I promised; thou shalt prove a stay in future,
1708 eal langtwidig leodum þinum,	in far-off years, to folk of thine,
1709 hæledum to helpe. Ne weard Heremod swa	to the heroes a help. Was not Heremod thus
1710 eaforum Ecgwelan, Arscýldingum;	to offspring of Ecgwela, Honor-Scyldings,
1711 ne geweox he him to willan, ac to wælfealle	nor grew for their grace, but for grisly slaughter,
1712 ond to deadcwalum Deniga leodum;	for doom of death to the Danishmen.
1713 breat bolgenmod beodgeneatas,	He slew, wrath-swollen, his shoulder-comrades,
1714 eacgesteallan, oppæt he ana hwearf,	companions at board! So he passed alone,
1715 mære þeoden, mondreamum from.	chieftain haughty, from human cheer.
1716 deah þe hine mihtig god mægenes wýnnum,	Though him the Maker with might endowed,
1717 eafepum stepte, ofer ealle men	delights of power, and uplifted high
1718 ford gefremede, hwæpere him on ferhþe greow	above all men, yet blood-fierce his mind,
1719 breosthord blodreow. Fallas beagas geaf	his breast-hoard, grew, no bracelets gave he
1720 Denum æfter dome; dreamleas gebad	to Danes as was due; he endured all joyless
1721 þæt he þæs gewinnes weorc þrowade,	strain of struggle and stress of woe,
1722 leodbealo longsum. du þe lær be þon,	long feud with his folk. Here find thy lesson!
1723 gumcýste ongit; ic þis gid be þe	Of virtue advise thee! This verse I have said for thee,
1724 awræt wintrum frod. Wundor is to serganne	wise from lapsed winters. Wondrous seems

Old English	Modern English
1725 hu mihhtig god manna cynne	how to sons of men Almighty God
1726 þurh sidne sefan snyttru bryttad,	in the strength of His spirit sendeth wisdom,
1727 eard ond eorlscripe; he ah ealra geweald.	estate, high station: He swayeth all things.
1728 Ðwiliun he on lufan læted hworfan	Whiles He letteth right lustily fare
1729 monnes modgeþonc mæran cynnes,	the heart of the hero of high-born race, --
1730 seled him on eþle eorþan wynne	in seat ancestral assigns him bliss,
1731 to healdanne, hleoburh wera,	his folk's sure fortress in fee to hold,
1732 geded him swa gewealdene worolde dælas,	puts in his power great parts of the earth,
1733 side rice, þæt he his selfa ne mæg	empire so ample, that end of it
1734 for/ his unsnyttrum ende geþencean.	this wanter-of-wisdom weeneth none.
1735 Wunad/ he on wiste; no hine wiht dweled	So he waxes in wealth, nowise can harm him
1736 adl/ ne ylðo, ne him inwitsorh	illness or age; no evil cares
1737 on sefan sweorced, ne gesacu oþwær	shadow his spirit; no sword-hate threatens
1738 ecghete eowed, ac him eal worold	from ever an enemy: all the world
1739 wended on willan he þæt wyrse ne con,	wends at his will, no worse he knoweth,
1740 oþþæt him on innan oferhygda dæl	till all within him obstinate pride
1741 weaxed ond wridad. þonne se weard swefed,	waxes and wakes while the warden slumbers,
1742 sawele hyrde; bið se slæp to fæst,	the spirit's sentry; sleep is too fast
1743 biðgum gebunden, bona swiðe neah,	which masters his might, and the murderer nears,
1744 se þe of flanbogan fyrenum sceoted.	stealthily shooting the shafts from his bow!
1745 þonne bið on hreþre under helm drepen	"UNDER harness his heart then is hit indeed
1746 biteran stræle him beheorgan ne con,	by sharpest shafts; and no shelter avails
1747 wom wundorbeþodum wergan gastes;	from foul behest of the hellish fiend.
1748 þinced him to lytel þæt he lange heold,	Him seems too little what long he possessed.
1749 gyt sad gromhydig, nallas on gylp seled	Greedy and grim, no golden rings
1750 fædde beagas, ond he þa forðgesteaf	he gives for his pride; the promised future
1751 forgyted ond forgymed, þæs þe him ær god sealde,	forgets he and spurns, with all God has sent him,
1752 wuldres walðend, weorðmynða dæl.	Wonder-Wielder, of wealth and fame.
1753 Ðit on endestæf eft gelimpeð	Yet in the end it ever comes
1754 þæt se lichoma læne/ gedreosed,	that the frame of the body fragile yields,
1755 fæge gefealled; fehd oþer to,	fated falls; and there follows another
1756 se þe unmunlice madmas dæleþ,	who joyously the jewels divides,
1757 eorles ærgestreon, egesan ne gýmed.	the royal riches, nor reck's of his forebear.
1758 Ðebeorh þe done healonid, Ðeowulf leofa,	Ban, then, such baleful thoughts, Beowulf dearest,
1759 setg betsta, ond he þæt selre geteos,	best of men, and the better part choose,
1760 ece ræðas; oferhyda ne gym,	profit eternal; and temper thy pride,
1761 mære cempa. Ðu is þines mægnes blæd	warrior famous! The flower of thy might
1762 ane hwile. Eft sona bið	lasts now a while: but erelong it shall be
1763 þæt þec adl odde ecg eafopes getwæfed,	that sickness or sword thy strength shall minish,
1764 odde fyres feng, odde flodes wylm,	or fang of fire, or flooding billow,
1765 odde gripe metes, odde gares fliht,	or bite of blade, or brandished spear,
1766 odde atol ylðo; odde eagenas beorhtum	or odious age; or the eyes' clear beam
1767 forsited ond forsworced; semninga bið	wax dull and darken: Death even thee
1768 þæt ðec, dryhtguma, ðead oferswyðed.	in haste shall o'erwhelm, thou hero of war!
1769 Swa ic Þringdena hund missera	So the Ring-Danes these half-years a hundred I ruled,
1770 weold under wolcnum ond hig wigge beleac/	wielded 'neath welkin, and warded them bravely
1771 manigum mægþa geond þysne middangeard/,	from mighty-ones many o'er middle-earth,
1772 æscum ond ecgum, þæt ic me ænigne	from spear and sword, till it seemed for me
1773 under swegles begong gesacan ne tealde.	no foe could be found under fold of the sky.
1774 Ðwæt, me þæs on eþle edwenden/ cwom,	Lo, sudden the shift! To me seated secure
1775 gýrn æfter gomene, seopðan Grendel weard,	came grief for joy when Grendel began
1776 ealdgewinna, ingenga min;	to harry my home, the hellish foe;
1777 ic þære soðne singales wæg	for those ruthless raids, unresting I suffered
1778 modceare micle. þæs sig metode þanc,	heart-sorrow heavy. Heaven be thanked,
1779 ecean dryhtne, þæs ðe ic on aldre gebad	Lord Eternal, for life extended
1780 þæt ic on þone hafelan heorodreorigne	that I on this head all hewn and bloody,
1781 ofer ealdgewin eagam starige.	after long evil, with eyes may gaze!
1782 Ða nu to setle, symbelwynne dreorh	-- Go to the bench now! Be glad at banquet,
1783 wigge weorþað; unc sceal worn fela	warrior worthy! A wealth of treasure
1784 maþma gemænra, siþðan morgen bið.	at dawn of day, be dealt between us!"
1785 Geat wæs glæðmod, geong sona to	Glad was the Geats' lord, going betimes
1786 setles neosan, swa se snotttra heht.	to seek his seat, as the Sage commanded.
1787 þa wæs eft swa ær ellenrofum	Afresh, as before, for the famed-in-battle,
1788 fletsittendum fægere gereorded	for the band of the hall, was a banquet dight

Old English	Modern English
1789 niowan stefne. <i>Ni</i> hthelm gesweart	nobly anew. The Night-Helm darkened
1790 deort ofer dryhtgumum. <i>Dugud</i> eal aras.	dusk o'er the drinkers. The doughty ones rose:
1791 <i>Wolde</i> blondenfeax beddes neosan,	for the hoary-headed would hasten to rest,
1792 gamela <i>Scylding</i> . <i>Geat</i> unigmetes wel,	aged Scylding; and eager the Geat,
1793 rofne randwigan, restan lyste;	shield-fighter sturdy, for sleeping yearned.
1794 sona him seleþegn sides wergum,	Him wander-weary, warrior-guest
1795 feorrancundum, ford wisade,	from far, a hall-thane heralded forth,
1796 se for andrysum ealle beweotede/	who by custom courtly cared for all
1797 þegnes þearfe, swylce þy dogore	needs of a thane as in those old days
1798 heapolidende habban scoldon.	warrior-wanderers wont to have.
1799 Reste hine þa rumheort; reced hliuade	So slumbered the stout-heart. Stately the hall
1800 gear ond goldfah; gæst inne swaþ	rose gabled and gilt where the guest slept on
1801 oppæt hrefn blaca heofones wynnne	till a raven black the rapture-of-heaven
1802 blidheort bodode. <i>da/ com/</i> beorht scacan	blithe-heart boded. Bright came flying
1803 scapan/ onetton,	shine after shadow. The swordsmen hastened,
1804 wæron æþelingas eft to leodum	athelings all were eager homeward
1805 fuse to farenne/; wolde feor þanon	forth to fare; and far from thence
1806 cuma collenferhd/ ceoles neosan.	the great-hearted guest would guide his keel.
1807 <i>Þe</i> ht þa se hearda <i>Hrunting</i> beran	Bade then the hardy-one Hrunting be brought
1808 sunu <i>Ecglafes</i> , heht his sweord niman,	to the son of Ecglaf, the sword bade him take,
1809 leoflic iren; sægde him þæs leanes þanc,	excellent iron, and uttered his thanks for it,
1810 twæd, he þone gudwine godne tealde,	quoth that he counted it keen in battle,
1811 wigcræftigne, nales wordum log	"war-friend" winsome: with words he slandered not
1812 metes ecge; þæt wæs modig seæg.	edge of the blade: 'twas a big-hearted man!
1813 <i>Ond</i> þa sidfrome, searwum gearwe	Now eager for parting and armed at point
1814 wigend wæron; eode weord <i>Denum</i>	warriors waited, while went to his host
1815 æþeling to yppan, þær se ofer wæs,	that Darling of Danes. The doughty atheling
1816 hæle hildedeor <i>Hrodgar</i> grette.	to high-seat hastened and Hrothgar greeted.
1817 <i>Beowulf</i> mapelode, bearn <i>Ecgþeowes</i> :	BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgþeow:--
1818 <i>Þu</i> we sælidend sergan wyllad,	"Lo, we seafarers say our will,
1819 feorran cumene, þæt we fundiaþ	far-come men, that we fain would seek
1820 <i>Higelac</i> secan. <i>Wæron</i> her tela	Hygelac now. We here have found
1821 willum bewenede; þu us wel dohtest.	hosts to our heart: thou hast harbored us well.
1822 <i>Gif</i> ic þonne on eorþan owihte mæg	If ever on earth I am able to win me
1823 þinre modlufan maran tilian,	more of thy love, O lord of men,
1824 gumena dryhten, donne ic gyt dyde,	ought anew, than I now have done,
1825 gudgeweorta, ic beo gearo sona.	for work of war I am willing still!
1826 <i>Gif</i> ic þæt gefrigeo ofer floda begang,	If it come to me ever across the seas
1827 þæt þec ymbsittend egesan þytwad,	that neighbor foemen annoy and fright thee, --
1828 swa þec hetende hwilum dydon,	as they that hate thee erewhile have used, --
1829 ic de þusenda þegna bringe,	thousands then of thanes I shall bring,
1830 hæleþa to helpe. <i> Ic on Higela</i> c/ wat,	heroes to help thee. Of Hygelac I know,
1831 <i>Geata</i> dryhten, þeah de he geong sy,	ward of his folk, that, though few his years,
1832 folces hyrde, þæt he met fremman wile	the lord of the Geats will give me aid
1833 wordum/ ond worcum, þæt ic þe wel herige	by word and by work, that well I may serve thee,
1834 ond þe to geoeo garholt bere,	wielding the war-wood to win thy triumph
1835 mægenes fultum, þær de bið manna þearf.	and lending thee might when thou lackest men.
1836 <i>Gif</i> him þonne <i>Hreþric</i> / to hofum <i>Geata</i>	If thy Hrethric should come to court of Geats,
1837 geþinged/, þeodnes bearn, he mæg þær fela	a sovran's son, he will surely there
1838 freonda findan; feorcyþde beoð	find his friends. A far-off land
1839 selran gesolhte þam þe him selfa deaþ.	each man should visit who vaunts him brave."
1840 <i>Hrodgar</i> mapelode him on ondsware:	Him then answering, Hrothgar spake:--
1841 þe þa wordcwyðas wigtig drihten	"These words of thine the wisest God
1842 on sefan sende; ne hyrde ic snotorlicor	sent to thy soul! No sager counsel
1843 on swa geongum feore guman þingian.	from so young in years e'er yet have I heard.
1844 þu eart mægenes strang ond on mode frod,	Thou art strong of main and in mind art wary,
1845 wis wordcwida. <i>Wen</i> ic talige,	art wise in words! I ween indeed
1846 gif þæt geganged, þæt de gar nymed,	if ever it hap that Hrethel's heir
1847 hild heorugrimme, <i>Hreþles</i> eafteran,	by spear be seized, by sword-grim battle,
1848 adl oþde iren ealdor dinne,	by illness or iron, thine elder and lord,
1849 folces hyrde, ond þu þin feorh hafast,	people's leader, -- and life be thine, --
1850 þæt þe <i>Sægeatas</i> selran næbben	no seemlier man will the Sea-Geats find
1851 to geceosenne cýning ænigne,	at all to choose for their chief and king,
1852 hordweard hæleþa, gyt/ þu healdan wylt	for hoard-guard of heroes, if hold thou wilt

Old English	Modern English
1853 maga rice. Æle þin modsefa/	thy kinsman's kingdom! Thy keen mind pleases me
1854 licad leng swa wel, leofa Beowulf/.	the longer the better, Beowulf loved!
1855 Hwast þu gefered þæt þam folcum sceal,	Thou hast brought it about that both our peoples,
1856 Geata leodum ond Gardenum,	sons of the Geat and Spear-Dane folk,
1857 sib gemæne/, ond sacu restan,	shall have mutual peace, and from murderous strife,
1858 intwitnibas, þe hie ær drugon,	such as once they waged, from war refrain.
1859 wesan, þenden ic wealde widan rices,	Long as I rule this realm so wide,
1860 maþmas gemæne, manig/ oþerne	let our hoards be common, let heroes with gold
1861 godum gegretan ofer ganotes bæd;	each other greet o'er the gannet's-bath,
1862 sceal hringnaca ofer heafu/ bringan	and the ringed-prow bear o'er rolling waves
1863 lac ond luftacen. Ic þa leode wat	tokens of love. I trow my landfolk
1864 ge wid feond ge wid freond fæste geworhte,	towards friend and foe are firmly joined,
1865 æghwas untæle ealde wisan.	and honor they keep in the olden way."
1866 ða git him eorla hleo inne gesealde,	To him in the hall, then, Healfdene's son
1867 mago Healfdenes, maþmas XJ;	gave treasures twelve, and the trust-of-earls
1868 het hine/ mid þam lacum leode swære	bade him fare with the gifts to his folk beloved,
1869 secean on gespyntum, snude eft cuman.	hale to his home, and in haste return.
1870 Gecyste þa cýning æpelum god,	Then kissed the king of kin renowned,
1871 þeoden Scyldinga, degn bestan	Scyldings' chieftain, that choicest thane,
1872 ond be healse genam; hruron him tearas,	and fell on his neck. Fast flowed the tears
1873 blondenteaxum. Him wæs bega wen,	of the hoary-headed. Heavy with winters,
1874 ealðum infroðum, opres swidor,	he had chances twain, but he clung to this, --
1875 þæt hie/ seodðan/ no/ geseon moston,	that each should look on the other again,
1876 modige on meple. Wæs/ him se man to þon leof	and hear him in hall. Was this hero so dear to him.
1877 þæt he þone breostwylm forberan ne mehte,	his breast's wild billows he banned in vain;
1878 ac him on hrepre hygebendum fæst	safe in his soul a secret longing,
1879 æfter deorum men ðyrne langað	locked in his mind, for that loved man
1880 beorn wid blode. Him Beowulf þanan,	burned in his blood. Then Beowulf strode,
1881 gudrine goldwlan, græsmoldan træð	glad of his gold-gifts, the grass-plot o'er,
1882 since hremig; sægenga bað	warrior blithe. The wave-roamer bode
1883 agendfæran/, se þe/ on ancre rad.	riding at anchor, its owner awaiting.
1884 þa wæs on gange gifu Hrodgares	As they hastened onward, Hrothgar's gift
1885 oft geæhted; þæt wæs an cýning	they lauded at length. -- 'Twas a lord unpeered,
1886 æghwas orleahre, oþþæt hine ylðo benam	every way blameless, till age had broken
1887 mægenes wynnium, se þe oft manegum scod.	-- it spareth no mortal -- his splendid might.
1888 Cwom þa to flode felamodigra,	CAME now to ocean the ever-courageous
1889 hægstældra heap/, hringnet bæron,	hardy henchmen, their harness bearing,
1890 locene leodosýrcan. Landweard onfand	woven war-sarks. The warden marked,
1891 eftsid eorla, swa he ær dyde;	trusty as ever, the earl's return.
1892 no he mid hearne of hlides nosan	From the height of the hill no hostile words
1893 gæstas/ grette, ac him togeanes rad,	reached the guests as he rode to greet them;
1894 cward/ þæt wilcuman Wedera leodum	but "Welcome!" he called to that Weder clan
1895 scapan/ scirhame to scipe foron.	as the sheen-mailed spoilers to ship marched on.
1896 þa wæs on sanðe sægeap naca	Then on the strand, with steeds and treasure
1897 hlæden herewadum, hringedstefna,	and armor their roomy and ring-dight ship
1898 mearum ond madmum; mæst hlifade	was heavily laden: high its mast
1899 ofer Hrodgares hordgestreonum.	rose over Hrothgar's hoarded gems.
1900 He þam batwearde bunden golde	A sword to the boat-guard Beowulf gave,
1901 siwurd gesealde, þæt he syððan wæs	mounted with gold; on the mead-bench since
1902 on meodubence maþme/ þy weorþra/,	he was better esteemed, that blade possessing,
1903 yrfelafe. Gewat him on naca/	heirloom old. -- Their ocean-keel boarding,
1904 drefan deop wæter, Dena land ofgeaf.	they drove through the deep, and Daneland left.
1905 þa wæs be mæste merehræglasum,	A sea-cloth was set, a sail with ropes,
1906 segl sale fæst; sundwudu þunede.	firm to the mast; the flood-timbers moaned;
1907 No þær wegflotan wind ofer yðum	nor did wind over billows that wave-swimmer blow
1908 sides getwæfde; sægenga for,	across from her course. The craft sped on,
1909 fleat famigheals forð ofer yðe,	foam-necked it floated forth o'er the waves,
1910 bundenstefna ofer brimstreamas,	keel firm-bound over briny currents,
1911 þæt hie Geata clifu ongitan meah-ton,	till they got them sight of the Geatish cliffs,
1912 cupe næssas. Ceol up geþrang	home-known headlands. High the boat,
1913 lyftgeswenced, on lande stod.	stirred by winds, on the strand updrove.
1914 Hraþe wæs æt holme hyðweard geara	Helpful at haven the harbor-guard stood,
1915 se þe ær lange tid leofra manna	who long already for loved companions
1916 fus æt farode feor wlatode;	by the water had waited and watched afar.

Old English	Modern English
1917 sælde to sande sidlæpne scip,	He bound to the beach the broad-bosomed ship
1918 oncerbendum/ fæst, þy læs hym þa drym	with anchor-bands, lest ocean-billows
1919 wudu wynsuman forwrecan meahte.	that trusty timber should tear away.
1920 Het þa up beran æþelinga gestreon,	Then Beowulf bade them bear the treasure,
1921 frætwu ond fætgold; næs him feor þanon	gold and jewels; no journey far
1922 to gesecanne sinces bryttan,	was it thence to go to the giver of rings,
1923 Higelac Hreþling, þær æt ham wunad	Hygelac Hrethling: at home he dwelt
1924 selfa mid gesidum sæwealle neah.	by the sea-wall close, himself and clan.
1925 Bold was betlic, bregorof cýning,	Haughty that house, a hero the king,
1926 heah/ in/ healle, Hygd swiðe geong,	high the hall, and Hygd right young,
1927 wis, welþungen, þeah de wintra lýt	wise and wary, though winters few
1928 under burhlocan gebiden hæbbe,	in those fortress walls she had found a home,
1929 Hæreþes dohtor; næs hio hnaþ swa þeah,	Haereth's daughter. Nor humble her ways,
1930 ne to gnead gifa Geata leodum,	nor grudged she gifts to the Geatish men,
1931 maþmgestreona. Flod þrydo wæg,	of precious treasure. Not Thryth's pride showed she,
1932 fremu folces cwen, firen ondrysne.	folk-queen famed, or that fell deceit.
1933 Mænig þæt dorste deor geneþan	Was none so daring that durst make bold
1934 swæsra gesida, nefne sinfrea,	(save her lord alone) of the liegemen dear
1935 þæt hire an dæges eagum starede,	that lady full in the face to look,
1936 ac him wælbenðe weotode tealde	but forged fetters he found his lot,
1937 handgewriþene; hraþe seopðan wæs	bonds of death! And brief the respite;
1938 æfter mundgripe mece gefinged,	soon as they seized him, his sword-doom was spoken,
1939 þæt hit sceadenmæl scýran moste,	and the burnished blade a baleful murder
1940 cwealmbealu cyðan. Ær bið swýlc cwenlic þeaw	proclaimed and closed. No queenly way
1941 idese to efnanne, þeah de hio ænlicu sy,	for woman to practise, though peerless she,
1942 þætte freodutwebbe feores onsæce	that the weaver-of-peace from warrior dear
1943 æfter ligetorne leofne mannan.	by wrath and lying his life should reave!
1944 Þuru þæt onhohsnode/ Hemminges/ mæg;	But Hemming's kinsman hindered this. --
1945 ealodrinçende oder sæðan,	For over their ale men also told
1946 þæt hio leodbealewa læs gefremede,	that of these folk-horrors fewer she wrought,
1947 inwitnida, syððan/ ærest weard	on slaughts of evil, after she went,
1948 gyfen goldhroden geongum cempa,	gold-decked bride, to the brave young prince,
1949 ædelum diore, syððan hio Offan flet	atheling haughty, and Offa's hall
1950 ofer fealone flod be fæder lare	o'er the fallow flood at her father's bidding
1951 side gesohhte. dær hio syððan well	safely sought, where since she prospered,
1952 in gumstole, gode, mære,	royal, throned, rich in goods,
1953 lifgesteafra lifigende breac,	fain of the fair life fate had sent her,
1954 hioð heahlufan wið hæleþa brego,	and leal in love to the lord of warriors.
1955 ealles moncýnnes mine gefræge	He, of all heroes I heard of ever
1956 þone/ selestan bi sæm tveonum,	from sea to sea, of the sons of earth,
1957 eormencýnnes. Fordam Offa wæs	most excellent seemed. Hence Offa was praised
1958 geofum ond gudum, gartene man,	for his fighting and feeing by far-off men,
1959 wiðe/ geweordod/, wiðdome heold	the spear-bold warrior; wisely he ruled
1960 edel sinne; þonon Eomer/ woc	over his empire. Eomer woke to him,
1961 hæledum to helpe, Hemminges/ mæg,	help of heroes, Hemming's kinsman,
1962 nefa Garmundes, niða cræftig.	Grandson of Garmund, grim in war.
1963 Gewat him ða se hearda wið his hondscole	HASTENED the hardy one, henchmen with him,
1964 sylf æfter sande sæwong tredan,	sandy strand of the sea to tread
1965 wiðe warodas. Woruldcandel scan,	and widespread ways. The world's great candle,
1966 sigel sudan fus. Ði sið drugon,	sun shone from south. They strode along
1967 elne geeodon, to dæs de eorla hleo,	with sturdy steps to the spot they knew
1968 bonan Ongenpeoes burgum in innan,	where the battle-king young, his burg within,
1969 geongne gudcýning godne gefrunon	slayer of Ongenþeow, shared the rings,
1970 hringas dælan. Higelace wæs	shelter-of-heroes. To Hygelac
1971 sið Beowulfes sniude gecýped,	Beowulf's coming was quickly told, --
1972 þæt dær on wordig wigendra hleo,	that there in the court the clansmen's refuge,
1973 lindgestealla, lifigende cwm,	the shield-companion sound and alive,
1974 heaðolaces hal to hofe gongan.	hale from the hero-play homeward strode.
1975 Hrade wæs gerymed, swa se rita beþead,	With haste in the hall, by highest order,
1976 fedegestum flet innanweard.	room for the rovers was readily made.
1977 Gesæt þa wið sylfne se ða sætce genæs,	By his sovran he sat, come safe from battle,
1978 mæg wið mæge, syððan/ mandryhten	kinsman by kinsman. His kindly lord
1979 þurh hleodorcwyðe holdne gegrette,	he first had greeted in gracious form,
1980 meaglum wordum. Meoduscencum	with manly words. The mead dispensing,

Old English	Modern English
1981 hwearf geond þæt healreced Hæreðes dohtor,	came through the high hall Haereth's daughter,
1982 lufode ða leode, lidwæge bær	winsome to warriors, wine-cup bore
1983 hæledum/ to handa. Higelac ongan	to the hands of the heroes. Hygelac then
1984 sinne geseldan in sele þam hean	his comrade fairly with question plied
1985 fægðe fricgean hyne fyrwtet bræc,	in the lofty hall, sore longing to know
1986 hwylce Sægeata sidas wæron:	what manner of sojourn the Sea-Geats made.
1987 Ðu lomp eow on lade, leofa Biowulf,	"What came of thy quest, my kinsman Beowulf,
1988 þa ðu færinga feorr gehogodest	when thy yearnings suddenly swept thee yonder
1989 sæcne secean ofer sealt wæter,	battle to seek o'er the briny sea,
1990 hilde to Hiorote? Ac ðu Þrodgare	combat in Heorot? Hrothgar couldst thou
1991 widcudne/ wean wihte gebettest,	aid at all, the honored chief,
1992 mærum deodne? Ic ðæs modecare	in his wide-known woes? With waves of care
1993 sorhwylmum sead, side ne truwoðe	my sad heart seethed; I sore mistrusted
1994 leofes mannes; ic ðe lange bæd	my loved one's venture: long I begged thee
1995 þæt ðu þone wælgæst wihte ne grette,	by no means to seek that slaughtering monster,
1996 lete Suddene sylfe geweorðan	but suffer the South-Danes to settle their feud
1997 gude wið Grendel. Gode ic þanc serge	themselves with Grendel. Now God be thanked
1998 þæs ðe ic ðe gesundne geseon moste.	that safe and sound I can see thee now!"
1999 Biowulf mædelode, bearn Ecgdioes:	Beowulf spake, the bairn of Ecgtheow: --
2000 þæt is undyrne, dryhten Higelac/,	"'Tis known and unhidden, Hygelac Lord,
2001 micel/ gemeting, monegum fira,	to many men, that meeting of ours,
2002 hwylc/ orleghwil/ uncer Grendles	struggle grim between Grendel and me,
2003 weard on ðam/ wange, þær he worna fela	which we fought on the field where full too many
2004 Sigescyðdingum/ sorge gefremede,	sorrows he wrought for the Scylding-Victors,
2005 ymde/ to aldre. Ic ðæt eall gewræc,	evils unending. These all I avenged.
2006 swa begylpan/ ne hearf Grendeles maga	No boast can be from breed of Grendel,
2007 ænig/ ofer eorðan uhtlēm þone,	any on earth, for that uproar at dawn,
2008 se ðe/ lengest leofað ladan cynnes,	from the longest-lived of the loathsome race
2009 facne/ bifongen. Ic ðær furdum cwom	in fleshly fold! -- But first I went
2010 to ðam hringsele Þrodgar gretan;	Hrothgar to greet in the hall of gifts,
2011 sona me se mæra mago Healfdenes,	where Healfdene's kinsman high-renowned,
2012 syddan he modsefan minne cude,	soon as my purpose was plain to him,
2013 wið his sylfes sunu setl getæhte.	assigned me a seat by his son and heir.
2014 Weorod was on wynn; ne seah ic wiðan feorh	The liegemen were lusty; my life-days never
2015 under heofones hwealf healsittendra	such merry men over mead in hall
2016 medudream maran. Hwylum mæru cwen,	have I heard under heaven! The high-born queen,
2017 fridusibb folca, flet eall geondhwearf,	people's peace-bringer, passed through the hall,
2018 bædde byre geonge; oft hio beahwridan	cheered the young clansmen, clasps of gold,
2019 serge sealde/, ær hie to setle geong.	ere she sought her seat, to sundry gave.
2020 Hwylum for dugude/ dohtor Þrodgares	Oft to the heroes Hrothgar's daughter,
2021 eorlum on/ ende ealuwæge bær;	to earls in turn, the ale-cup tendered, --
2022 þa ic Freaware fletsittende/	she whom I heard these hall-companions
2023 nemnan hyrde, þær hio nægled/ sinc	Freawaru name, when fretted gold
2024 hæledum sealde. Sio gehaten is/,	she proffered the warriors. Promised is she,
2025 geong, goldhroden, gladum suna Froðan;	gold-decked maid, to the glad son of Froda.
2026 hafað/ þæs geworden wine Scyðdinga,	Sage this seems to the Scylding's-friend,
2027 rices hyrde, ond þæt ræd talað,	kingdom's-keeper: he counts it wise
2028 þæt he mid ðy wife wælfæhða dæl,	the woman to wed so and ward off feud,
2029 sæcra gesette. Oft seldan hwær	store of slaughter. But seldom ever
2030 æfter leodhyre lytle hwile	when men are slain, does the murder-spear sink
2031 bongar buged, þeah seo bryd ðuge.	but briefest while, though the bride be fair!
2032 Mæg þæs þonne ofþyncan deodne/ Heaðobeardna	"Nor haply will like it the Heathobard lord,
2033 ond þegna gehwam þara leoda,	and as little each of his liegemen all,
2034 þonne he mid fæmnan on flett gæð,	when athane of the Danes, in that doughty throng,
2035 dryhtbeorn Dena, duguda biweneðe.	goes with the lady along their hall,
2036 on him gladiad gomelfra lafe,	and on him the old-time heirlooms glisten
2037 heard ond hringmæl Heaðobeardna/ gestreon	hard and ring-decked, Heathobard's treasure,
2038 þenden hie ðam wæpnum wealdan moston,	weapons that once they wielded fair
2039 oddæt hie forlæddan to ðam lindplegan	until they lost at the linden-play
2040 swære gesidas ond hyra sylfra feorh.	liegeman leal and their lives as well.
2041 þonne cwið æt beore se ðe beah gesyðh/,	Then, over the ale, on this heirloom gazing,
2042 eald æscwiga, se ðe eall geman/,	some ash-wielder old who has all in mind
2043 gartwealm gumena him bið grim sefa/,	that spear-death of men, -- he is stern of mood,
2044 onginneð geomormod geongum ceman	heavy at heart, -- in the hero young

Old English	Modern English
2045 þurh hredra gehrygd higes cunnian,	tests the temper and tries the soul
2046 wigbealu weccan, ond þæt word acwyrð:	and war-hate wakens, with words like these:--
2047 Meaht du, min wine, mete gecnawan	_Canst thou not, comrade, ken that sword
2048 þone þin fæder to gefeohte bær	which to the fray thy father carried
2049 under heregriman hindeman side,	in his final feud, 'neath the fighting-mask,
2050 dyre iren, þær hyne Dene slogon,	dearest of blades, when the Danish slew him
2051 weoldon wælstowe, syddan/ Widergyld læg,	and wielded the war-place on Withergild's fall,
2052 æfter hælepa hryre, hwate Scyldungas?	after havoc of heroes, those hardy Scyldings?
2053 Nu her þara banena byre nathwylces	Now, the son of a certain slaughtering Dane,
2054 frætwum hremig on flet gæd,	proud of his treasure, paces this hall,
2055 mordres gylped, ond þone madþum byred,	joys in the killing, and carries the jewel
2056 þone þe du mid rihte rædan sceoldest.	that rightfully ought to be owned by thee!_
2057 Manad swa ond myndgad mæla gehwylce	Thus he urges and eggs him all the time
2058 sarum wordum, oddæt sæl cymed	with keenest words, till occasion offers
2059 þæt se fæmnan þegn fore fæder dædum	that Freawaru's thane, for his father's deed,
2060 æfter billes bite blodfag swefed,	after bite of brand in his blood must slumber,
2061 ealdres scyldig; him se oder þonan	losing his life; but that liegeman flies
2062 losad lifigende/, con him land geare.	living away, for the land he kens.
2063 þonne bið/ abrocene/ on þa healfre	And thus be broken on both their sides
2064 adswæord eorla; syddan/ Ingelbe	oaths of the earls, when Ingeld's breast
2065 weallad wælnidas, ond him wilflutan	wells with war-hate, and wife-love now
2066 æfter ceawælum colran weordad.	after the care-billows cooler grows.
2067 þy ic Heaðobearna/ hylbo ne telge,	"So I hold not high the Heathobards' faith
2068 dryhtsibbe dæl Denum unfaene,	due to the Danes, or their during love
2069 freondscipe fæstne. Ic sceal ford sprecan	and pact of peace. -- But I pass from that,
2070 gen ymbe Grendel, þæt du geare tunne,	turning to Grendel, O giver-of-treasure,
2071 sinces brytta, to hwan syddan weard	and saying in full how the fight resulted,
2072 hondraes hæleda. Syddan heofones gim	hand-fray of heroes. When heaven's jewel
2073 glad ofer grundas, gæst yrre cwom,	had fled o'er far fields, that fierce sprite came,
2074 eatol, æfengrom, user neosan,	night-foe savage, to seek us out
2075 dær we gesunde sæl weardodon.	where safe and sound we sentried the hall.
2076 þær wæs Hondscio hild/ onsæge,	To Hondscio then was that harassing deadly,
2077 feorhbealu fægum; he fyrrest læg,	his fall there was fated. He first was slain,
2078 gyrðed cempa; him Grendel weard,	girded warrior. Grendel on him
2079 mærum maguþegne/ to mudbonan,	turned murderous mouth, on our mighty kinsman,
2080 leofes mannes lic eall forswearg.	and all of the brave man's body devoured.
2081 No ðy ær ut ða gen idelhende	Yet none the earlier, empty-handed,
2082 bona blodigtod, bealewa gemyndig,	would the bloody-toothed murderer, mindful of bale,
2083 of ðam goldsele gongan wolde,	outward go from the gold-decked hall:
2084 ac he mægnes rof min costode,	but me he attacked in his terror of might,
2085 grapode gearofolm. Glof hangode	with greedy hand grasped me. A glove hung by him
2086 sid ond syllic, searobendum fæst;	wide and wondrous, wound with bands;
2087 sio/ wæs ordoncum eall gegyrwed	and in artful wise it all was wrought,
2088 deofles cræftum ond dracan fellum.	by devilish craft, of dragon-skins.
2089 He met þær on innan unsynnigne,	Me therein, an innocent man,
2090 dior dædfruma, gedon wolde	the fiendish foe was fain to thrust
2091 manigra sumne; hyt ne mihte swa,	with many another. He might not so,
2092 syddan ic on yrre uppriht astod.	when I all angrily upright stood.
2093 To lang ys to recenne hu ic/ ðam/ leodscædan	'Twere long to relate how that land-destroyer
2094 yfla gehwylces onðlean forgeald;	I paid in kind for his cruel deeds;
2095 þær ic, þeoden min, þine leode	yet there, my prince, this people of thine
2096 weordode weorcum. He on weg losade,	got fame by my fighting. He fled away,
2097 lytle hwile lifwyrna breac/;	and a little space his life preserved;
2098 hwæpre him sio swidre swade weardade	but there staid behind him his stronger hand
2099 hand on Hiorte, ond he hean donan	left in Heorot; heartsick thence
2100 modes geomor meregrund gefeoll.	on the floor of the ocean that outcast fell.
2101 Me þone wætraes wine Scildunga	Me for this struggle the Scyldings'-friend
2102 fættan golde fela leanode,	paid in plenty with plates of gold,
2103 manegum madnum, syddan mergen com	with many a treasure, when morn had come
2104 ond we to symble geseten hæfdon.	and we all at the banquet-board sat down.
2105 þær wæs gidd ond gleo. Gomela Scilding,	Then was song and glee. The gray-haired Scylding,
2106 felafricgende, feorran rehte/;	much tested, told of the times of yore.
2107 hwilum hildedeor hearpan wynnne,	Whiles the hero his harp bestirred,
2108 gomenwudu grette, hwilum gyd awræt	wood-of-delight; now lays he chanted

Old English	Modern English
2109 <i>sod ond sarlic, hwilum syllic spell</i>	of sooth and sadness, or said aright
2110 <i>rehte æfter rihte rumheort cýning.</i>	legends of wonder, the wide-hearted king;
2111 <i>Hwilum eft ongan, eldo gebunden,</i>	or for years of his youth he would yearn at times,
2112 <i>gomel gudwiga giogude/ cwidan,</i>	for strength of old struggles, now stricken with age,
2113 <i>hildestrengo; hreder inne/ weoll,</i>	hoary hero: his heart surged full
2114 <i>þonne he wintrum frod worn gemunde.</i>	when, wise with winters, he wailed their flight.
2115 <i>Swa we þær inne onðlangne dæg/</i>	Thus in the hall the whole of that day
2116 <i>niode naman, oddæt niht becwom</i>	at ease we feasted, till fell o'er earth
2117 <i>oder to yldum. þa wæs eft hræde</i>	another night. Anon full ready
2118 <i>gearo gýrnwære Grendeles modor,</i>	in greed of vengeance, Grendel's mother
2119 <i>síðode sorhfull; sunu dead fornam,</i>	set forth all doleful. Dead was her son
2120 <i>wighete Wedra. Wif unhyre</i>	through war-hate of Weders; now, woman monstrous
2121 <i>hyre bearn gewræt, beorn acwealde</i>	with fury fell a foeman she slew,
2122 <i>ellenlice; þær wæs æschere,</i>	avenged her offspring. From Aeschere old,
2123 <i>frodan fyrnwitan, feorh udgenge.</i>	loyal councillor, life was gone;
2124 <i>Þoder hy hine ne moston, syddan mergen twom,</i>	nor might they e'en, when morning broke,
2125 <i>deadwerigne, Denia leode,</i>	those Danish people, their death-done comrade
2126 <i>bronde forbærnan, ne on bælf/ hladan</i>	burn with brands, on balefire lay
2127 <i>leofne mannan; hio þæt lic ætbær</i>	the man they mourned. Under mountain stream
2128 <i>feondes fædmum/ under/ firgenstream.</i>	she had carried the corpse with cruel hands.
2129 <i>þæt wæs Hrodgare/ hreowa tornost</i>	For Hrothgar that was the heaviest sorrow
2130 <i>þara þe leodfruman lange begeate.</i>	of all that had laden the lord of his folk.
2131 <i>þa se deoden mec dine life</i>	The leader then, by thy life, besought me
2132 <i>healsode hreohmod, þæt ic on holma geþring</i>	(sad was his soul) in the sea-waves' coil
2133 <i>eorlscipe efnde, ealdre genedde,</i>	to play the hero and hazard my being
2134 <i>mærdro fremede; he me mede gehet.</i>	for glory of prowess: my guerdon he pledged.
2135 <i>It da dæs wælnes, þe is wide cud,</i>	I then in the waters -- 'tis widely known --
2136 <i>grimne/ gryreligne grundhyrde fond;</i>	that sea-floor-guardian savage found.
2137 <i>þær unc hwile wæs hand gemæne,</i>	Hand-to-hand there a while we struggled;
2138 <i>holm heolfre weoll, ond ic heafde becearf</i>	billows welled blood; in the briny hall
2139 <i>in dam gudsele/ Grendeles modor</i>	her head I hewed with a hardy blade
2140 <i>eacnum ecgum, unsofte þonan</i>	from Grendel's mother, -- and gained my life,
2141 <i>feorh oðferede. Fæs ic fæge þa gyt,</i>	though not without danger. My doom was not yet.
2142 <i>ac me eorla hleo eft gesealde</i>	Then the haven-of-heroes, Healfdene's son,
2143 <i>madma menigeo, maga Healfdenes.</i>	gave me in guerdon great gifts of price.
2144 <i>Swa se deodkþning þeatwum lypde.</i>	"So held this king to the customs old,
2145 <i>Nealles ic dam leanum forloren hæfde,</i>	that I wanted for nought in the wage I gained,
2146 <i>mægnæs mede, ac he me madmas/ geaf,</i>	the meed of my might; he made me gifts,
2147 <i>sunu Healfdenes, on minne/ sylfes dom;</i>	Healfdene's heir, for my own disposal.
2148 <i>da ic de, beorncþning, bringan wylle,</i>	Now to thee, my prince, I proffer them all,
2149 <i>estum geþwan. Gen is eall æt de</i>	gladly give them. Thy grace alone
2150 <i>lissa gelong; ic lýt hafo</i>	can find me favor. Few indeed
2151 <i>heafodmaga nefne, Hygelac, dec.</i>	have I of kinsmen, save, Hygelac, thee!"
2152 <i>Het da in beran eaforheafodsegn,</i>	Then he bade them bear him the boar-head standard,
2153 <i>headosteapne helm, hare byrnan,</i>	the battle-helm high, and breastplate gray,
2154 <i>gudswæord geatolic, gyd æfter wræt:</i>	the splendid sword; then spake in form:--
2155 <i>Me dis hildesceorp Hrodgar sealde,</i>	"Me this war-gear the wise old prince,
2156 <i>snotra fengel, sume worde het</i>	Hrothgar, gave, and his hest he added,
2157 <i>þæt ic his ærest de est gesægde.</i>	that its story be straightway said to thee. --
2158 <i>twæd þæt hýt hæfde Þiorogar cýning,</i>	A while it was held by Heorogar king,
2159 <i>leod Scyldunga lange hwile;</i>	for long time lord of the land of Scyldings;
2160 <i>no dy ær suna sinum sylþan wolde,</i>	yet not to his son the soveran left it,
2161 <i>hwatum Heorowearde, þeah he him hold wære,</i>	to daring Heorowearde, -- dear as he was to him,
2162 <i>breostgewædu. Þruc ealles well.</i>	his harness of battle. -- Well hold thou it all!"
2163 <i>Hyrde ic þæt þam frætuum feower mearas</i>	And I heard that soon passed o'er the path of this treasure,
2164 <i>lungre, gelice, last weardode,</i>	all apple-fallow, four good steeds,
2165 <i>æppelfealuwe; he him est geteah</i>	each like the others, arms and horses
2166 <i>meara ond madma. Swa sceal mæg don,</i>	he gave to the king. So should kinsmen be,
2167 <i>nealles inwitnet odrum/ bregdon</i>	not weave one another the net of wiles,
2168 <i>dyrnum cræfte, dead renian/</i>	or with deep-hid treachery death contrive
2169 <i>hondgesteallan. Hygelace wæs,</i>	for neighbor and comrade. His nephew was ever
2170 <i>nida/ heardum, nefa swyde hold,</i>	by hardy Hygelac held full dear,
2171 <i>ond gehwæder/ odrum hropra genyþdig.</i>	and each kept watch o'er the other's weal.
2172 <i>Hyrdre ic þæt he done healsbeah Hygde gesealde,</i>	I heard, too, the necklace to Hygd he presented,

Old English	Modern English
2173 wrætlīcne wundurmaddum, done þe him Wealhdeo geaf,	wonder-wrought treasure, which Wealhtheow gave him
2174 deodnes/ dohtor, þrio wicg somod	soveran's daughter: three steeds he added,
2175 swancor ond sadolbeorht; hƿre sƿddan wæs	slender and saddle-gay. Since such gift
2176 æfter/ beahdege breost/ geweordod.	the gem gleamed bright on the breast of the queen.
2177 Sƿa bealdode/ bearn Ecgðeowes,	Thus showed his strain the son of Ecgtheow
2178 guma gudum cūd, godum dædum,	as a man remarked for mighty deeds
2179 dreah æfter dome, nealles druncne slog	and acts of honor. At ale he slew not
2180 heordgeneatas; næs him hreoh sefa,	comrade or kin; nor cruel his mood,
2181 ac he mancƿnnes mæste cræfte	though of sons of earth his strength was greatest,
2182 ginfæstan gife, þe him god sealde,	a glorious gift that God had sent
2183 heold hildedeor. Hean wæs lange,	the splendid leader. Long was he spurned,
2184 sƿa hƿne Geata bearn godne ne tealdon,	and worthless by Geatish warriors held;
2185 ne hƿne on medobence micles ƿƿrdne	him at mead the master-of-clans
2186 drihten/ Wedera gedon wolde;	failed full oft to favor at all.
2187 sƿƿde wendon/ þæt he sleac Ƶære,	Slack and shiftless the strong men deemed him,
2188 ædeling unfrom. Edwenden dƵom	profitless prince; but payment came,
2189 tireadigum menn torna gehƵƿlces.	to the warrior honored, for all his woes. --
2190 Het da eorla hleo in gefetian,	Then the bulwark-of-earls bade bring within,
2191 headorof cƵning, Hredles lafe	hardy chieftain, Hrethel's heirloom
2192 golde gegƵrede; næs mid/ Geatum da	garnished with gold: no Geat e'er knew
2193 sincmadƵum selra on/ sweordes had;	in shape of a sword a statelier prize.
2194 þæt he on Biowulfes bearm alegde	The brand he laid in Beowulf's lap;
2195 ond him gesealde seofan þusendo,	and of hides assigned him seven thousand,
2196 bold ond bregostol. Him wæs bam/ samod	with house and high-seat. They held in common
2197 on dam leodscipe lond/ gecƵnde,	land alike by their line of birth,
2198 eard, edelriht, odrum swidor	inheritance, home: but higher the king
2199 side rice þam dær selra wæs.	because of his rule o'er the realm itself.
2200 Eft/ þæt geiode ufaran doƵrum	Now further it fell with the flight of years,
2201 hildehlæmmum, sƿddan Hygelac læg	with harryings horrid, that Hygelac perished,
2202 ond Heardrede/ hildemereas	and Heardred, too, by hewing of swords
2203 under bordhreodan to bonan wurdon,	under the shield-wall slaughtered lay,
2204 da hƿne gesohtan on sigefeoðe	when him at the van of his victor-folk
2205 hearde hildefretan, Heaðoscilfingas,	sought hardy heroes, Heatho-Scilfings,
2206 nida genægðan nefan Hererices,	in arms o'erwhelming Hereric's nephew.
2207 sƿddan Beowulfe brade rice	Then Beowulf came as king this broad
2208 on hand gehƵearf. he geheold tela	realm to wield; and he ruled it well
2209 fiftig wintra/ wæs da froð cƵning,	fifty winters, a wise old prince,
2210 eald eƵelƵeard/, oddæt an/ ongan	warding his land, until One began
2211 deorcum nihtum draca ricsian/,	in the dark of night, a Dragon, to rage.
2212 se de on heanum hofe hord beƵeotode,	In the grave on the hill a hoard it guarded,
2213 stanbeorh steapne/; stig under læg,	in the stone-barrow steep. A strait path reached it,
2214 eldum uncud. þær on innan giong	unknown to mortals. Some man, however,
2215 nida nathƵƵl, se de/ neh/ gefeng	came by chance that cave within
2216 hædnum horde, hond,	to the heathen hoard. In hand he took
2217 since/ fahne. He þæt sƿddan,	a golden goblet, nor gave he it back,
2218 beah/ de/ he/ slæpende besƵred/ wurde/	stole with it away, while the watcher slept,
2219 beofes cræfte; þæt sie diod onfand/,	by thievish wiles: for the warden's wrath
2220 bufolc/ beorna, þæt he gebolgen/ wæs.	prince and people must pay betimes!
2221 Nealles mid gewealdum/ Ƶyrnhord abrac/	THAT way he went with no will of his own,
2222 sƵlfes willum, se de him sare gesceod,	in danger of life, to the dragon's hoard,
2223 ac for þreanedlan beow/ nathƵƵlces	but for pressure of peril, some prince's thane.
2224 hæleda bearna hetesƵengeas fleah/,	He fled in fear the fatal scourge,
2225 ærnes/ þearfa, ond dær inne fealh/,	seeking shelter, a sinful man,
2226 setg sƵnbysig, sona onfunde	and entered in. At the awful sight
2227 þæt þær/ dam gƵste gƵƵrebroga/ stod;	tottered that guest, and terror seized him;
2228 hƵædre earm/ sceapen/	yet the wretched fugitive rallied anon
2229 sceapen {	from fright and fear ere he fled away,
2230 th}a/ hƵne se fær beƵeat.	and took the cup from that treasure-hoard.
2231 Sincfæt/; þær wæs sƵƵlra fela	Of such besides there was store enough,
2232 in dam eordhuse/ ærgestreona,	heirlooms old, the earth below,
2233 sƵa hƵ on geardagum gumena nathƵƵl,	which some earl forgotten, in ancient years,
2234 eormenlafe æƵelan cƵnnes,	left the last of his lofty race,
2235 þancƵƵcƵende þær gehƵdde,	heedfully there had hidden away,
2236 deore madmas. Calle hie dead fornam	dearest treasure. For death of yore

Old English	Modern English
2237 ærran mælum, ond se/ an da gen	had hurried all hence; and he alone
2238 leoda dugude, se dær lengest hwearf,	left to live, the last of the clan,
2239 weard/ winegeomor, wende/ þæs ylcan,	weeping his friends, yet wished to bide
2240 þæt he lytel fæc longgestreona	warding the treasure, his one delight,
2241 brucan moste. Æorh eallgears	though brief his respite. The barrow, new-ready,
2242 wunode on wonge wæterpðum/ neah,	to strand and sea-waves stood anear,
2243 niwe be næsse, nearocræftum fæst.	hard by the headland, hidden and closed;
2244 þær on innan/ bær eorlgestreona	there laid within it his lordly heirlooms
2245 hringa hýrde hordwyrðne/ dæl,	and heaped hoard of heavy gold
2246 fættan goldes, fea/ worda cwæð:	that warden of rings. Few words he spake:
2247 Æeald þu nu, hruse, nu hæled ne moston/,	"Now hold thou, earth, since heroes may not,
2248 eorla æhte. Hwæt, hýt ær on de	what earls have owned! Lo, erst from thee
2249 gode begeaton. Gudead fornam,	brave men brought it! But battle-death seized
2250 feorhbealo/ fæcne, fyra/ gehwylcne	and cruel killing my clansmen all,
2251 leoda minra, þara/ de þis lif/ ofgeaf,	robbed them of life and a liegeman's joys.
2252 gesawon seledream. Ic/ nah hwa sweord wege	None have I left to lift the sword,
2253 odde feormie/ fæted wæge,	or to cleanse the carven cup of price,
2254 dryncfæt deore; dugud/ ellor sceot/.	beaker bright. My brave are gone.
2255 Sceal se hearda helm hýrsted/ golde	And the helmet hard, all haughty with gold,
2256 fættum befeallen; feormpnd swefad,	shall part from its plating. Polishers sleep
2257 þa de beadogriman bywan sceoldon,	who could brighten and burnish the battle-mask;
2258 ge swylce seo herepad, sio æt hilde gebad	and those weeds of war that were wont to brave
2259 ofer horda gebræt bite irena,	over bicker of shields the bite of steel
2260 brosnad æfter beorne. Æe mæg byrnan hring	rust with their bearer. The ringed mail
2261 æfter wigfruman/ wide feran,	fares not far with famous chieftain,
2262 hæledum be healde. Ææs hearpan wyn,	at side of hero! No harp's delight,
2263 gomen gleobeames, ne god hafoc	no glee-wood's gladness! No good hawk now
2264 geond sæl swinged, ne se swiftra mearh	flies through the hall! Nor horses fleet
2265 burhstede beated. Bealocwealm hafad	stamp in the burgstead! Battle and death
2266 fela feorhþynna ford/ onsended.	the flower of my race have reft away."
2267 Swa giomormod gíohdo mænide	Mournful of mood, thus he moaned his woe,
2268 an æfter eallum, unblide hwearf/	alone, for them all, and unblithe wept
2269 dæges ond nihtes, oddæt deades wylm	by day and by night, till death's fell wave
2270 hran æt heortan. Hordwynne fond	o'erwhelmed his heart. His hoard-of-bliss
2271 eald uhtsceada opene standan,	that old ill-doer open found,
2272 se de byrnende/ biorgas seced,	who, blazing at twilight the barrows haunteth,
2273 nacod niðdraca, nihtes fleoged	naked foe-dragon flying by night
2274 fyre befangen; hýne foldbuend	folded in fire: the folk of earth
2275 swide/ ondrædðd/. Æe gesetean sceall	dread him sore. 'Tis his doom to seek
2276 hord/ on/ hrusan/, þær he hæden gold	hoard in the graves, and heathen gold
2277 warad wintrum/ frod, ne byð him wihte dý sel.	to watch, many-wintered: nor wins he thereby!
2278 Swa se deodscæda preo hund wintra	Powerful this plague-of-the-people thus
2279 heold on hrusan hordærna sum,	held the house of the hoard in earth
2280 eacencræftig, oddæt hýne an abealch	three hundred winters; till One aroused
2281 mon on mode; mandryhtne bær	wrath in his breast, to the ruler bearing
2282 fæted wæge, friodowære bæd	that costly cup, and the king implored
2283 hlaford sinne. da wæs hord rasod,	for bond of peace. So the barrow was plundered,
2284 onboren beaga hord, bene getidad	borne off was booty. His boon was granted
2285 feastreafum men. Frea sceawode	that wretched man; and his ruler saw
2286 fira fyrngeweort forman side.	first time what was fashioned in far-off days.
2287 þa se wýrm onwoc, wroht wæs geniwad;	When the dragon awoke, new woe was kindled.
2288 stonc da æfter stane, stearcheort onfand	O'er the stone he snuffed. The stark-heart found
2289 feondes fotlast; he to ford gestop	footprint of foe who so far had gone
2290 dýrnan cræfte dracan heafde neah.	in his hidden craft by the creature's head. --
2291 Swa mæg unfæge eade gedigan	So may the doomed easily flee
2292 wean ond wrætsid, se de waldendes	evils and exile, if only he gain
2293 hýlðo gehealdeþ. Hordweard sohte	the grace of The Wielder! -- That warden of gold
2294 georne æfter grunde, wolde guman findan,	o'er the ground went seeking, greedy to find
2295 þone þe him on sweofote sare geteode,	the man who wrought him such wrong in sleep.
2296 hat ond hreohmod hlæw/ oft ymbelhwearf	Savage and burning, the barrow he circled
2297 ealne utanweardne/, ne dær ænig mon	all without; nor was any there,
2298 on þære/ westenne; hwædre wiges/ gefeh,	none in the waste.... Yet war he desired,
2299 beadutwe/ weorces, hwilum on beorh æthwearn,	was eager for battle. The barrow he entered,
2300 sincefæt sohte. Æe þæt sona onfand/	sought the cup, and discovered soon

Old English	Modern English
2301 dæt hæfde gumena sum goldes gefandod,	that some one of mortals had searched his treasure,
2302 heahgestreona. Þordweard onbad	his lordly gold. The guardian waited
2303 earfodlice oddæt æfen twom;	ill-enduring till evening came;
2304 wæs da gebolgen beorges hyrde,	boiling with wrath was the barrow's keeper,
2305 wolde se/ lada/ lige forgyldan	and fain with flame the foe to pay
2306 drincfæt dyre. þa wæs dæg sceaten	for the dear cup's loss. -- Now day was fled
2307 wyrme on willan; no on wealle læg,	as the worm had wished. By its wall no more
2308 bidan wolde, ac mid bæle for,	was it glad to bide, but burning flew
2309 fyre gefyrsed. Wæs se fruma egeslic	folded in flame: a fearful beginning
2310 leodum on lande, swa hyt lungre weard	for sons of the soil; and soon it came,
2311 on hyra sincgifu sare geendod.	in the doom of their lord, to a dreadful end.
2312 da se gæst ongan gledum spiwan,	THEN the baleful fiend its fire belched out,
2313 beorht hofu bærnan; bryneleoma stod	and bright homes burned. The blaze stood high
2314 eldum on andan. No dær/ aht cwices	all landsfolk frightening. No living thing
2315 lad lyftfloga læfan wolde.	would that loathly one leave as aloft it flew.
2316 Wæs þæs wyrmes wig wide gesyne,	Wide was the dragon's warring seen,
2317 nearofages nid nean ond feorran,	its fiendish fury far and near,
2318 hu se gudscreada Geata leode	as the grim destroyer those Geatish people
2319 hatode ond hynde; hord eft gesceat,	hated and hounded. To hidden lair,
2320 dryhtsele byrme, ær dæges hwile.	to its hoard it hastened at hint of dawn.
2321 Hæfde landwara lige befangen,	Folk of the land it had lapped in flame,
2322 bæle ond bronde, beorges getruwode,	with bale and brand. In its barrow it trusted,
2323 wiges ond wealles; him seo wen geleaf.	its battling and bulwarks: that boast was vain!
2324 þa wæs Biowulfe broga gecyðed	To Beowulf then the bale was told
2325 snude to sode, þæt his sylfes ham/,	quickly and truly: the king's own home,
2326 bolða selest, brynewylmum mealt,	of buildings the best, in brand-waves melted,
2327 gifstol Geata. þæt dam godan wæs	that gift-throne of Geats. To the good old man
2328 hreow on hredre, hygesorga mæst;	sad in heart, 'twas heaviest sorrow.
2329 wende se wisa þæt he wealdende	The sage assumed that his sovran God
2330 ofer ealde riht, ecean dryhtne,	he had angered, breaking ancient law,
2331 bitre gebulge. Breost innan weoll	and embittered the Lord. His breast within
2332 þeostum geponcum, swa him gehpywe ne wæs.	with black thoughts welled, as his wont was never.
2333 Hæfde ligdraca leoda fæsten,	The folk's own fastness that fiery dragon
2334 ealond utan, eordweard done	with flame had destroyed, and the stronghold all
2335 gledum forgrunden; him dæs gudkpyning,	washed by waves; but the warlike king,
2336 Wedera bioden, wræce leornode.	prince of the Weders, plotted vengeance.
2337 Heht him þa gewyrcean wigendra hleo	Warriors'-bulwark, he bade them work
2338 eallirene, eorla dryhten,	all of iron -- the earl's commander --
2339 wigbord wrætlíc; wisse he gearwe	a war-shield wondrous: well he knew
2340 þæt him holtwudu helpan/ ne meahste,	that forest-wood against fire were worthless,
2341 lind wid lige. Sceaolde lændaga/	linden could aid not. -- Atheling brave,
2342 æpeling ærgod ende gebidan,	he was fated to finish this fleeting life,
2343 worulde lifes, ond se wyrm somod,	his days on earth, and the dragon with him,
2344 þeah de hordwelan heolde lange.	though long it had watched o'er the wealth of the hoard! --
2345 Ofehogode da hringa fengel	Shame he reckoned it, sharer-of-rings,
2346 þæt he þone widflogan weorode gesohste,	to follow the flyer-afar with a host,
2347 sidan herge; no he him þa/ sætte ondred,	a broad-flung band; nor the battle feared he,
2348 ne him þæs wyrmes wig for wiht dyde,	nor deemed he dreadful the dragon's warring,
2349 eafod ond ellen, fordon he ær fela	its vigor and valor: ventures desperate
2350 nearo nedende nida gedigde,	he had passed a-plenty, and perils of war,
2351 hildehlemma, syddan he Hrodgares,	contest-crash, since, conqueror proud,
2352 sigoreadig secg, sele fælsode	Hrothgar's hall he had wholly purged,
2353 ond æt gude forgrap Grendeles mægum	and in grapple had killed the kin of Grendel,
2354 ladan cynnes. No þæt læsest wæs	loathsome breed! Not least was that
2355 hondgemota/, þær mon Hygelac sloh,	of hand-to-hand fights where Hygelac fell,
2356 syddan Geata cyning gude ræsum,	when the ruler of Geats in rush of battle,
2357 freawine folca Freslondum on,	lord of his folk, in the Frisian land,
2358 Hredles eafora hiorodryncum swealt,	son of Hrethel, by sword-draughts died,
2359 bille gebeaten. þonan Biowulf com	by brands down-beaten. Thence Beowulf fled
2360 sylfes cræfte, sundnpytte dreach;	through strength of himself and his swimming power,
2361 hæfde him on earme ana/ XXXI	though alone, and his arms were laden with thirty
2362 hildegeatwa, þa he to holme beag/.	coats of mail, when he came to the sea!
2363 Nealles Hetware hremge þorfton/	Nor yet might Hetwaras haughtily boast
2364 fedewiges, þe him foran ongean	their craft of contest, who carried against him

Old English	Modern English
2365 linde bæron; lýt eft becwom	shields to the fight: but few escaped
2366 fram þam hildfrecan/ hames niosan.	from strife with the hero to seek their homes!
2367 Oferswam ða sioleda bigong sunu Ecgðeowes,	Then swam over ocean Ecgtheow's son
2368 earm anhaga, eft to leodum;	lonely and sorrowful, seeking his land,
2369 þær him Hygd gebeað hord ond rice,	where Hygd made him offer of hoard and realm,
2370 beagas ond bregostol, bearne ne truwode	rings and royal-seat, reckoning naught
2371 þæt he wið ælfylcum eþelstolas	the strength of her son to save their kingdom
2372 healdan cude, ða wæs Hygelac deað.	from hostile hordes, after Hygelac's death.
2373 No ðy ær feascæfte findan meahton	No sooner for this could the stricken ones
2374 æt ðam ædelinge ænige ðinga,	in any wise move that atheling's mind
2375 þæt he Heardrede hlaforð wære	over young Heardred's head as lord
2376 odde þone cýnedom ciosan wolde;	and ruler of all the realm to be:
2377 hwæðre he him on folce freondlarum heold,	yet the hero upheld him with helpful words,
2378 estum mid ære, oddæt he yldra weard,	aided in honor, till, older grown,
2379 Wedergeatum weold. Hyne wræcmægas	he wielded the Weder-Geats. -- Wandering exiles
2380 ofer sæ sohtan, suna Ohteres;	sought him o'er seas, the sons of Ohtere,
2381 hæfdon hy forhealden helm Scýlfinga,	who had spurned the sway of the Scylfings'-helmet,
2382 þone selestan sæcýninga	the bravest and best that broke the rings,
2383 þara ðe in Swiorice sinc brýtnaðe,	in Swedish land, of the sea-kings' line,
2384 mærne þeoden. Him þæt to mearc weard;	haughty hero. Hence Heardred's end.
2385 he þær/ for/ feorme feorhþwunde hleat	For shelter he gave them, sword-death came,
2386 sweordes swengum, sunu Hygelaces,	the blade's fell blow, to bairn of Hygelac;
2387 ond him/ eft gewat Ongendioes bearn	but the son of Ongentheow sought again
2388 hames niosan, syddan Heardred læg,	house and home when Heardred fell,
2389 let done bregostol Biowulf healdan,	leaving Beowulf lord of Geats
2390 Geatum wealdan. þæt wæs god cýning.	and gift-seat's master. -- A good king he!
2391 Se ðæs leodhyrces lean gemunde	THE fall of his lord he was fain to requite
2392 uferan dogrum. Eadgilse weard	in after days; and to Eadgils he proved
2393 feascæftum freond, folce gesteppe	friend to the friendless, and forces sent
2394 ofer sæ side sunu Ohteres,	over the sea to the son of Ohtere,
2395 wígun ond wæpnum; he gewræt syddan	weapons and warriors: well repaid he
2396 cealdum cearsidum, cýning ealdræ bineat.	those care-paths cold when the king he slew.
2397 Swa he nida gehwane genesen hæfde,	Thus safe through struggles the son of Ecgtheow
2398 slíðra geslyhta/, sunu Ecgðeowes,	had passed a plenty, through perils dire,
2399 ellenweorca, od done anne dæg	with daring deeds, till this day was come
2400 þe he wið þam wyrme gewegan sceolde.	that doomed him now with the dragon to strive.
2401 Gewat þa XIIIa sum torne gebolgen	With comrades eleven the lord of Geats
2402 dryhten Geata dracan sceawian.	swollen in rage went seeking the dragon.
2403 Hæfde þa gefrunen hwanan sio fæhð aras,	He had heard whence all the harm arose
2404 bealonid biorna; him to bearme cwom	and the killing of clansmen; that cup of price
2405 madþumfæt mære þurh ðæs mealdan hond.	on the lap of the lord had been laid by the finder.
2406 Se wæs on ðam dreate preottaoda serg,	In the throng was this one thirteenth man,
2407 se ðæs orleges or onstealde,	starter of all the strife and ill,
2408 hæft hygegiomor, sceolde hean donon	care-laden captive; cringing thence
2409 wong wisian. He ofer willan giong	forced and reluctant, he led them on
2410 to ðæs ðe he eorðsele anne wisse,	till he came in ken of that cavern-hall,
2411 hlæw under hrusan holmþwíne neh,	the barrow delved near billowy surges,
2412 yðgewinne; se wæs innan full	flood of ocean. Within 'twas full
2413 wrætta ond wira. Weard unhjore,	of wire-gold and jewels; a jealous warden,
2414 gearo gudfreta, goldmadmas heold,	warrior trusty, the treasures held,
2415 eald under eorðan. Næs þæt yðe ceap	lurked in his lair. Not light the task
2416 to gegangenne gumena ænigum.	of entrance for any of earth-born men!
2417 Gesæt ða on næsse niðheard cýning,	Sat on the headland the hero king,
2418 þenden hælo ahead heordgeneatum,	spake words of hail to his hearth-companions,
2419 goldwine Geata. Him wæs geomor sefa,	gold-friend of Geats. All gloomy his soul,
2420 wæfre ond wælfus, wýrð ungemete neah,	wavering, death-bound. Wýrð full nigh
2421 se done gomelan gretan sceolde,	stood ready to greet the gray-haired man,
2422 secean sawle hord, sundur geðælan	to seize his soul-hoard, sunder apart
2423 lif wið lice, no þon lange wæs	life and body. Not long would be
2424 feorh æþelinges flæsce bewunden.	the warrior's spirit enwound with flesh.
2425 Biowulf mapelade, bearn Ecgðeowes:	Beowulf spake, the bairn of Ecgtheow:--
2426 Ifela ic on giogode gudræsa genæs,	"Through store of struggles I strove in youth,
2427 orleghwila; ic þæt eall gemon.	mighty feuds; I mind them all.
2428 Ic wæs syfanwintre, þa met sinca/ baldor/,	I was seven years old when the sovrán of rings,

Old English	Modern English
2429 freawine folca, æt minum fæder/ genam;	friend-of-his-folk, from my father took me,
2430 heold mec ond hæfde Hreðel cýning,	had me, and held me, Hrethel the king,
2431 geaf me sinc ond symbel, sibbe gemunde.	with food and fee, faithful in kinship.
2432 Ææs ic him to life ladra oðwhte,	Ne'er, while I lived there, he loathlier found me,
2433 beorn in/ burgum, þonne his bearna hwyrc,	bairn in the burg, than his birthright sons,
2434 Herebeald ond Hæðcyn odde Hygelac min.	Herebeald and Haethcyn and Hygelac mine.
2435 Wæs þam yldestan ungedefelice	For the eldest of these, by unmeet chance,
2436 mæges dædum morþorbed stred,	by kinsman's deed, was the death-bed strewn,
2437 syddan hýne Hæðcyn of hornbogan,	when Haethcyn killed him with horny bow,
2438 his freawine, flane gestwente,	his own dear liege laid low with an arrow,
2439 miste mercelses ond his mæg ofset,	missed the mark and his mate shot down,
2440 brodor oderne blodigan gare.	one brother the other, with bloody shaft.
2441 þæt wæs feohleas gefeolt, fyrenum gesýngad,	A feeless fight, and a fearful sin,
2442 hreðre hygemede; sceolde hwæðre swa þeah	horror to Hrethel; yet, hard as it was,
2443 ædeling unwrecen ealdres linnan.	unavenged must the atheling die!
2444 Swa bið geomorlic gomelum teorle	Too awful it is for an aged man
2445 to gebidanne, þæt his byre ride	to bide and bear, that his bairn so young
2446 giong on galgan, þonne he gýð wrece,	rides on the gallows. A rime he makes,
2447 sarigne sang, þonne his sunu hangad	sorrow-song for his son there hanging
2448 hrefne to hroðre, ond he him helpe/ ne mæg,	as rapture of ravens; no rescue now
2449 eald ond infrod, ænige gefremman.	can come from the old, disabled man!
2450 Symble bið gemyndgad morna gehwylce	Still is he minded, as morning breaks,
2451 eaforan ellorsid; oðres ne gymed	of the heir gone elsewhere; another he hopes not
2452 to gebidanne burgum in innan	he will bide to see his burg within
2453 yrfeweardas, þonne se an hafad	as ward for his wealth, now the one has found
2454 þurh deades nyð dæda gefondad.	doom of death that the deed incurred.
2455 Gesýhd sorhtearig on his suna bure	Forlorn he looks on the lodge of his son,
2456 winsele westne, windge reste	wine-hall waste and wind-swept chambers
2457 reote berofene. Ridenð swefad,	reft of revel. The rider sleepeth,
2458 hæled in hodman; nis þær hearpan sweg,	the hero, far-hidden; no harp resounds,
2459 gomen in gearðum, swylce ðær iu wæron.	in the courts no wassail, as once was heard.
2460 Gewited þonne on sealman, sorhleoð gæled	"THEN he goes to his chamber, a grief-song chants
2461 an æfter anum; þuhte him eall to rum,	alone for his lost. Too large all seems,
2462 wongas ond wicstede. Swa Weðra helm	homestead and house. So the helmet-of-Weders
2463 æfter Herebealde heortan sorge	hid in his heart for Herebeald
2464 weallende/ wæg. Wihhte ne meahhte	waves of woe. No way could he take
2465 on ðam feorhþonan fæghde gebetan;	to avenge on the slayer slaughter so foul;
2466 no ðy ær he þone headorinc hatian ne meahhte	nor e'en could he harass that hero at all
2467 ladum dædum, þeah him leof ne wæs.	with loathing deed, though he loved him not.
2468 He ða mid þære sorhge, þe him swa/ sar belamp,	And so for the sorrow his soul endured,
2469 gundream ofgeaf, godes leoht gereas,	men's gladness he gave up and God's light chose.
2470 eafterum læfde, swa ðeð eadig mon,	Lands and cities he left his sons
2471 lond ond leodþyrig, þa he of life gewat.	(as the wealthy do) when he went from earth.
2472 þa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata	There was strife and struggle 'twixt Swede and Geat
2473 ofer wid/ wæter, wroht gemæne,	o'er the width of waters; war arose,
2474 herenid hearda, syddan Hreðel swealt,	hard battle-horror, when Hrethel died,
2475 odde him Ongendeowes eafteran wæran	and Ongentheow's offspring grew
2476 frome, fyrðhwate, freode ne woldon	strife-keen, bold, nor brooked o'er the seas
2477 ofer heafo healdan, ac ymb Hreosnabeorh	pact of peace, but pushed their hosts
2478 eatolne inwitscear oft gefremedon/.	to harass in hatred by Hreosnabeorh.
2479 þæt mægwine mine gewræcan,	Men of my folk for that feud had vengeance,
2480 fæhde ond fyrene, swa hýt gefræge wæs,	for woful war ('tis widely known),
2481 þeah ðe oder his ealdre gebolhte,	though one of them bought it with blood of his heart,
2482 heardan ceape: Hæðcynne weard,	a bargain hard: for Haethcyn proved
2483 Geata dryhtne, gud onsæge.	fatal that fray, for the first-of-Geats.
2484 þa ic on morgne gefrægn mæg oderne	At morn, I heard, was the murderer killed
2485 billes ecgum on bonan stælan,	by kinsman for kinsman, with clash of sword,
2486 þær Ongenþeow Eofores niosad.	when Ongentheow met Eofor there.
2487 Gudhelm toglað, gomela Scýlfing	Wide split the war-helm: wan he fell,
2488 hreas hildeblac/; hond gemunde	hoary Scýlfing; the hand that smote him
2489 fæhdo genoge, feorhsweng ne ofteah.	of feud was mindful, nor flinched from the death-blow.
2490 Ic him þa madmas, þe he me sealde,	-- "For all that he gave me, my gleaming sword
2491 geald æt gude, swa me gifede wæs,	repaid him at war, -- such power I wielded, --
2492 leohtan sweorde; he me lond forgeaf,	for lordly treasure: with land he entrusted me,

Old English	Modern English
2493 eard, edelwyrn. Næs him ænig hearf	homestead and house. He had no need
2494 þæt he to Gifdum odde to Gardenum	from Swedish realm, or from Spear-Dane folk,
2495 odde in Swiorice secean hurf	or from men of the Gifths, to get him help, --
2496 wýrsan/ wigfrecan, weorde gecýpan.	some warrior worse for wage to buy!
2497 Sýmle ic him on fedan beforan wolde,	Ever I fought in the front of all,
2498 ana on orde, ond swa to aldre sceall	sole to the fore; and so shall I fight
2499 sætce fremman, þenden his sweord þolad,	while I bide in life and this blade shall last
2500 þæt mec ær ond sid oft gelæste.	that early and late hath loyal proved
2501 Syddan ic for dugedum Dæghrefne weard	since for my doughtiness Daeghrefn fell,
2502 to handbonan, Huga cempa;	slain by my hand, the Hugas' champion.
2503 nalles he da frætwæ frefscynige/,	Nor fared he thence to the Frisian king
2504 breostweordunge, bringan moste,	with the booty back, and breast-adornments;
2505 ac in compe/ gecrong cumbles hyrde,	but, slain in struggle, that standard-bearer
2506 æþeling on elne; ne wæs ecg bona,	fell, atheling brave. Not with blade was he slain,
2507 ac him hildegrap heortan wylmas,	but his bones were broken by brawny gripe,
2508 banhus gebræt. Nu sceall billes ecg,	his heart-waves stilled. -- The sword-edge now,
2509 hond ond heard sweord, ymb hord wigan.	hard blade and my hand, for the hoard shall strive."
2510 Beowulf madelode, beotwordum spræt	Beowulf spake, and a battle-vow made
2511 niehstan side: Ic genedde fela	his last of all: "I have lived through many
2512 guda on geogode; gyt ic wylle,	wars in my youth; now once again,
2513 frod folces weard, fæhde setan,	old folk-defender, feud will I seek,
2514 mærdū/ fremman, gif mec se mansceada	do doughty deeds, if the dark destroyer
2515 of eordsele ut geseced.	forth from his cavern come to fight me!"
2516 Gegrette da gumena gehwylcne,	Then hailed he the helmeted heroes all,
2517 hwate helmberend, hindeman side,	for the last time greeting his liegemen dear,
2518 swæse gesidas: Nolde ic sweord beran,	comrades of war: "I should carry no weapon,
2519 wæpen to wyrme, gif ic wiste hu	no sword to the serpent, if sure I knew
2520 wid dam aglæcean elles/ meahste	how, with such enemy, else my vows
2521 gylpe widgripan, swa ic gio wid/ Grendle dyde.	I could gain as I did in Grendel's day.
2522 Ac ic dær heafuþres hates wene,	But fire in this fight I must fear me now,
2523 oredes/ ond attres/; fordon ic me on hafu	and poisonous breath; so I bring with me
2524 bord ond byrnan. Nelle ic beorges weard	breastplate and board. From the barrow's keeper
2525 forleon/ fotes trem, ac unc furdur/ seal	no footbreadth flee I. One fight shall end
2526 weordan æt wealle, swa unc wýrd geteod,	our war by the wall, as Wýrd allots,
2527 metod manna gehwæs. Ic eom on mode from	all mankind's master. My mood is bold
2528 þæt ic wid þone gudflogan gylp ofersitte.	but forbears to boast o'er this battling-flyer.
2529 Gebide ge on beorge byrnum werede,	-- Now abide by the barrow, ye breastplate-mailed,
2530 setgas on searwum, hwæder sel mæge	ye heroes in harness, which of us twain
2531 æfter wælraße wunde gedýgan	better from battle-rush bear his wounds.
2532 uncer twega. Nis þæt eower sid	Wait ye the finish. The fight is not yours,
2533 ne gemet mannes, nefne/ min anes,	nor meet for any but me alone
2534 þæt/ he wid aglæcean eofodo dæle,	to measure might with this monster here
2535 eorlscype efne. Ic mid elne sceall	and play the hero. Hardily I
2536 gold gegangan, odde gud nimes,	shall win that wealth, or war shall seize,
2537 feorhbealu frefne, frefan eowerne.	cruel killing, your king and lord!"
2538 Aras da bi ronde rof oretta,	Up stood then with shield the sturdy champion,
2539 heard under helme, hiorosercean bær	stayed by the strength of his single manhood,
2540 under stanclofu, strengo getruwode	and hardy 'neath helmet his harness bore
2541 anes mannes. Ne bid swylc earges sid.	under cleft of the cliffs: no coward's path!
2542 Geseah da be wealle se de/ worna fela,	Soon spied by the wall that warrior chief,
2543 gumcýstum god, guda gedigde,	survivor of many a victory-field
2544 hildehlemma, þonne hniton fedan,	where foemen fought with furious clashings,
2545 stondan/ stanbogan, stream ut þonan	an arch of stone; and within, a stream
2546 brecan of beorge. Wæs þære burnan wælm	that broke from the barrow. The brooklet's wave
2547 heafuþrum hat; ne meahste horde neah	was hot with fire. The hoard that way
2548 unbyrnende ænige hwile	he never could hope unharmed to near,
2549 deop gedýgan for dracan lege.	or endure those deeps, for the dragon's flame.
2550 Let da of breostum, da he gebofgen wæs,	Then let from his breast, for he burst with rage,
2551 Wedergeata leod word ut faran,	the Weder-Geat prince a word outgo;
2552 stearcheort styrinde; stefn in becom	stormed the stark-heart; stern went ringing
2553 heafotorht hlynnan under harne stan.	and clear his cry 'neath the cliff-rocks gray.
2554 Hete wæs onhrered, hordweard oncnio	The hoard-guard heard a human voice;
2555 mannes reorde; næs dær mara fyrst	his rage was enkindled. No respite now
2556 freode to friclan. From ærest twom	for pact of peace! The poison-breath

Old English	Modern English
2557 orud aglæcean ut of stane,	of that foul worm first came forth from the cave,
2558 hat hildeswat. Þruse dýnede.	hot reek-of-fight: the rocks resounded.
2559 Þiorn under beorge bordrand onswaf	Stout by the stone-way his shield he raised,
2560 wið ðam gryregieste, Geata dryhten;	lord of the Geats, against the loathed-one;
2561 ða wæs hringbogan heorte gefýsed	while with courage keen that coiled foe
2562 sætte to seceanne. Sweord ær gebræd	came seeking strife. The sturdy king
2563 god gudecýning, gomele lafe,	had drawn his sword, not dull of edge,
2564 ecgum unslaw/; æghwædrum wæs	heirloom old; and each of the two
2565 bealohýrgendra broga fram odrum.	felt fear of his foe, though fierce their mood.
2566 Stidmod gestod wið/ steapne rond	Stoutly stood with his shield high-raised
2567 winia bealdor, ða se wýrm gebeah	the warrior king, as the worm now coiled
2568 snude tosomne; he on searwum bad.	together amain: the mailed-one waited.
2569 Gewat ða byrnende gebogen scriðan,	Now, spire by spire, fast sped and glided
2570 to gescipe scýndan. Scýld wel gebearg	that blazing serpent. The shield protected,
2571 life ond lice læssan hwile	soul and body a shorter while
2572 mærum þeodne þonne his myne sohte,	for the hero-king than his heart desired,
2573 ðær he þý fyrste, forman dogore	could his will have wielded the welcome respite
2574 wealdan moste swa him wýrd ne gesctaf	but once in his life! But Wýrd denied it,
2575 hred æt hilde. Hond up abræd	and victory's honors. -- His arm he lifted
2576 Geata dryhten, gryrefahne sloh	lord of the Geats, the grim foe smote
2577 incgelafe, þæt sio ecg gewac	with atheling's heirloom. Its edge was turned
2578 brun on bane, bat unswidor	brown blade, on the bone, and bit more feebly
2579 þonne his diodecýning þearfe hæfde,	than its noble master had need of then
2580 bysigum gebæded. þa wæs beorges weard	in his baleful stress. -- Then the barrow's keeper
2581 æfter heaðuswenge on hreowum mode,	waxed full wild for that weighty blow,
2582 wearp wælfyre; wide sprungon	cast deadly flames; wide drove and far
2583 hildeleoman. Þredsigora ne gealp	those vicious fires. No victor's glory
2584 goldwine Geata; gudbill geswac,	the Geats' lord boasted; his brand had failed,
2585 nacerd æt nide, swa hýt no sceolde,	naked in battle, as never it should,
2586 iren ærgod. Ne wæs þæt eðe sið,	excellent iron! -- 'Twas no easy path
2587 þæt se mæra maga Ecgðeowes	that Ecgðeow's honored heir must tread
2588 grundwong þone ofgyfan wolde;	over the plain to the place of the foe;
2589 sceolde ofer/ willan wic eardian	for against his will he must win a home
2590 elles hwergen, swa sceal æghwylc mon	elsewhere far, as must all men, leaving
2591 alætan lændagas. Næs ða long to ðon	this lapsing life! -- Not long it was
2592 þæt ða aglæcean þý eft gemetton.	ere those champions grimly closed again.
2593 Þýrte hyne hordweard hreder ædme weoll	The hoard-guard was heartened; high heaved his breast
2594 niðwan stefne; nearo drowode,	once more; and by peril was pressed again,
2595 fyre befangen, se ðe ær folce weold.	enfolded in flames, the folk-commander!
2596 Nealles him on heape handgesteallan/,	Nor yet about him his band of comrades,
2597 ædelinga bearn, ymbe gestodon	sons of athelings, armed stood
2598 hildecýstum, ac þý on holt bugon,	with warlike front: to the woods they bent them,
2599 ealðre burgan. Þiorn in anum weoll	their lives to save. But the soul of one
2600 sefa wið sorgum; sibb æfre ne mæg	with care was cumbered. Kinship true
2601 wiht onwendan þam ðe wel þenceð.	can never be marred in a noble mind!
2602 Wiglaf wæs haten Weoxstanes sunu,	WIGLAF his name was, Weohstan's son,
2603 leoflic lindwiga, leod Scýlfinga,	linden-thane loved, the lord of Scýlfings,
2604 mæg ælfheres; geseah his mondryhten	Aelfhere's kinsman. His king he now saw
2605 under heregriman hat þrowian.	with heat under helmet hard oppressed.
2606 Gemunde ða ða are þe he him ær forgeaf,	He minded the prizes his prince had given him,
2607 wicstede weligne Wægmundinga,	wealthy seat of the Waegmunding line,
2608 folcrihta gehwylc, swa his fæder ahte.	and folk-rights that his father owned
2609 Ne mihte ða forhabban; hond rond gefeng,	Not long he lingered. The linden yellow,
2610 geolwe linde, gomel swýrd geteah,	his shield, he seized; the old sword he drew: --
2611 þæt wæs mid eldum Eamundes laf,	as heirloom of Eamund earth-dwellers knew it,
2612 suna Ohteres/. þam æt sætte weard,	who was slain by the sword-edge, son of Ohtere,
2613 wræccan/ wineleasum, Weohstan/ bana	friendless exile, erst in fray
2614 metes ecgum, ond his magum ætbær	killed by Weohstan, who won for his kin
2615 brunfagne helm, hringde byrnan,	brown-bright helmet, breastplate ringed,
2616 eald sweord etonisc; þæt him Onela forgeaf,	old sword of Eotens, Onela's gift,
2617 his gædelinges gudgewædu,	weeds of war of the warrior-thane,
2618 fyrðsearo fustlic, no ymbe ða fæhðe spræc,	battle-gear brave: though a brother's child
2619 þeah ðe he his broðor bearn abredwade.	had been felled, the feud was unfelt by Onela.
2620 He frætwæ geheold fela missera,	For winters this war-gear Weohstan kept,

Old English	Modern English
2621 bill ond byrnan, oddæt his byre mihte	breastplate and board, till his bairn had grown
2622 eorlscipe efnan swa his ærfæder;	earlship to earn as the old sire did:
2623 geaf him ða mid Geatum gudgewæda,	then he gave him, mid Geats, the gear of battle,
2624 æghwæs unrim, þa he of ealdre gewat,	portion huge, when he passed from life,
2625 frod on forðweg. þa wæs forma sið	fared aged forth. For the first time now
2626 geongan cempa, þæt he gude ræs	with his leader-lord the liegeman young
2627 mid his freodryhtne fremman sceolde.	was bidden to share the shock of battle.
2628 ðe gemealt him se modsefa, ne his mæges/ laf	Neither softened his soul, nor the sire's bequest
2629 gewat æt wige; þæt/ se wyrn onfand,	weakened in war. So the worm found out
2630 syddan hie togædre gegan hæfdon.	when once in fight the foes had met!
2631 Wiglaf madelode, wordrihta fela	Wiglaf spake, -- and his words were sage;
2632 sægde gesiðum him wæs sefa geomor:	sad in spirit, he said to his comrades:--
2633 Ic ðæt mæl/ geman, þær we meðu þegun,	"I remember the time, when mead we took,
2634 þonne we/ geheton ussum hlaforde	what promise we made to this prince of ours
2635 in biorsele, de us ðas beagas geaf,	in the banquet-hall, to our breaker-of-rings,
2636 þæt we him ða gudgetawa gylðan woldon	for gear of combat to give him requital,
2637 gif him þyslicu hearf gelumpe,	for hard-sword and helmet, if hap should bring
2638 helmas ond heard sweord. de he usic on herge geceas	stress of this sort! Himself who chose us
2639 to dyssum siðfate sylfes willum,	from all his army to aid him now,
2640 onmunde usic mæra, ond me þas madmas geaf,	urged us to glory, and gave these treasures,
2641 þe he usic garwigend gode tealde,	because he counted us keen with the spear
2642 hwate helंबरend, þeah de hlaforð us	and hardy 'neath helm, though this hero-work
2643 his ellenweorc ana adohte	our leader hoped unhelped and alone
2644 to gefremmanne, folces hyrde,	to finish for us, -- folk-defender
2645 for ðam he manna mæst mæra gefremede,	who hath got him glory greater than all men
2646 dæda dollicra. Nu is se dæg cumen	for daring deeds! Now the day is come
2647 þæt ure mandryhten mægenes behofað,	that our noble master has need of the might
2648 godra gudrinca; wutun gongan to,	of warriors stout. Let us stride along
2649 helpan hildfruman, þenden hyt sy,	the hero to help while the heat is about him
2650 gledesga grim. God wat on mec	glowing and grim! For God is my witness
2651 þæt me is micle leofre þæt minne lichaman	I am far more fain the fire should seize
2652 mid minne goldgyfan gled fædmie.	along with my lord these limbs of mine!
2653 ðe þynced me gerysne þæt we raldas beren	Unsuited it seems our shields to bear
2654 eft to earde, nemne we æror mægen	homeward hence, save here we essay
2655 fane gefyllan, feorh ealgian	to fell the foe and defend the life
2656 Wedra deodnes. Ic wat geare/	of the Weders' lord. I wot 'twere shame
2657 þæt næron ealdgewyrht, þæt he ana scyle	on the law of our land if alone the king
2658 Geata/ dugude gnorn þrowian,	out of Geatish warriors woe endured
2659 gesigan æt sæcce; urum sceal sweord ond helm,	and sank in the struggle! My sword and helmet,
2660 byrne ond beaduscud/, þam gemæne.	breastplate and board, for us both shall serve!"
2661 Wod þa þurh þone wælcet, wigheafolan bæc	Through slaughter-reek strode he to succor his chieftain,
2662 frean on fultum, fea worda cwæð/:	his battle-helm bore, and brief words spake:--
2663 Leofa Biowulf, læst eall tela,	"Beowulf dearest, do all bravely,
2664 swa ðu on geogudfeore geara getwæde	as in youthful days of yore thou vowedst
2665 þæt ðu ne alæte be de lifigendum	that while life should last thou wouldst let no wise
2666 dom gedreosan. Scealt nu dædum rof,	thy glory droop! Now, great in deeds,
2667 ædeling anhydig, ealle mægene	atheling steadfast, with all thy strength
2668 feorh ealgian; ic de fullæstu.	shield thy life! I will stand to help thee."
2669 æfter ðam wordum wyrn prre cwom,	At the words the worm came once again,
2670 atol inwitgæst, odre side	murderous monster mad with rage,
2671 fyrwylmum fah fionda niosian/,	with fire-billows flaming, its foes to seek,
2672 ladra manna; ligyðum for.	the hated men. In heat-waves burned
2673 Born bord wid rond, byrne ne meahthe	that board to the boss, and the breastplate failed
2674 geongum garwigan geoce gefremman,	to shelter at all the spear-thane young.
2675 ac se maga geonga under/ his mæges scyld	Yet quickly under his kinsman's shield
2676 elne geeode, þa his agen wæs/	went eager the earl, since his own was now
2677 gledum forgrunden. þa gen gudcyrning	all burned by the blaze. The bold king again
2678 mæra/ gemunde, mægenstrengo sloh	had mind of his glory: with might his glaive
2679 hildebille, þæt hyt on heafolan stod	was driven into the dragon's head, --
2680 niþe genyðed; Nægling forbærst,	blow nerved by hate. But Naegling was shivered,
2681 geswat æt sæcce sweord Biowulfes,	broken in battle was Beowulf's sword,
2682 gomol ond grægmael. Him þæt gifede ne wæs	old and gray. 'Twas granted him not
2683 þæt him irenna ege mihton	that ever the edge of iron at all
2684 helpan æt hilde; wæs sio hond to strong,	could help him at strife: too strong was his hand,

Old English	Modern English
2685 se de meta gehwane, mine gefræge,	so the tale is told, and he tried too far
2686 swenge ofersohhte, þonne he to sætte bær	with strength of stroke all swords he wielded,
2687 wæpen wundrum/ heard; næs him wihte de sel.	though sturdy their steel: they steadied him nought.
2688 þa wæs þeodscæda þriððan side,	Then for the third time thought on its feud
2689 fæcne fyrdraca, fæhða gemyndig,	that folk-destroyer, fire-dread dragon,
2690 rædde on done rofan, þa him rum ageald,	and rushed on the hero, where room allowed,
2691 hat ond headogrim, heals ealne ymbefeng	battle-grim, burning; its bitter teeth
2692 biteran banum; he geblodegod weard	closed on his neck, and covered him
2693 sawuldriore, swat yðum weoll.	with waves of blood from his breast that welled.
2694 da ic æt þearfe gefrægn/ þeodcyniges	'Twas now, men say, in his sovran's need
2695 andlongne eorl ellen eþðan,	that the earl made known his noble strain,
2696 cræft ond cendū, swa him gecynde wæs.	craft and keenness and courage enduring.
2697 Ne hedde he þæs heafolan, ac sio hand gebarn	Heedless of harm, though his hand was burned,
2698 modiges mannes, bær he his mæges/ healp,	hardy-hearted, he helped his kinsman.
2699 þæt he þone niðgæst niðdor hwene sloh,	A little lower the loathsome beast
2700 setg on searwum, þæt dæt sweord gedeaf,	he smote with sword; his steel drove in
2701 fah ond fæted, þæt dæt fyr ongon	bright and burnished; that blaze began
2702 swedrian syddan. þa gen sylf cýning	to lose and lessen. At last the king
2703 geweold his gewitte, wællseaxe gebræd	wielded his wits again, war-knife drew,
2704 biter ond beaduscearp, þæt he on byrnan wæg;	a biting blade by his breastplate hanging,
2705 forwrat Wedra helm wýrm on middan.	and the Weders'-helm smote that worm asunder,
2706 Feond gefýldan ferh ellen wræt,	felled the foe, flung forth its life.
2707 ond hi hyne þa begen abroten hæfðon,	So had they killed it, kinsmen both,
2708 sibædelingas. Swylc sceolde setg wesian,	athelings twain: thus an earl should be
2709 þegn æt deafe. þæt dam þeodne wæs	in danger's day! -- Of deeds of valor
2710 sidast/ sigelhwila sylfes dædum,	this conqueror's-hour of the king was last,
2711 worlde geweorres. da sio wund ongon,	of his work in the world. The wound began,
2712 þe him se eorðdraca/ ær geworhte,	which that dragon-of-earth had erst inflicted,
2713 swelan ond swellan; he þæt sona onfand,	to swell and smart; and soon he found
2714 þæt him on breostum bealonide/ weoll	in his breast was boiling, baleful and deep,
2715 attor on innan. da se ædeling giong	pain of poison. The prince walked on,
2716 þæt he bi wealle wishyrgende	wise in his thought, to the wall of rock;
2717 gesæt on sesse; seah on enta geweort,	then sat, and stared at the structure of giants,
2718 hu da stanbogan stapulum fæste	where arch of stone and steadfast column
2719 ece eordreced innan healde.	upheld forever that hall in earth.
2720 Hyne þa mid handa heorodreorigne,	Yet here must the hand of the henchman peerless
2721 þeoden mærne, þegn ungemete till	lave with water his winsome lord,
2722 winedryhten/ his watere gelafede,	the king and conqueror covered with blood,
2723 hilde sædne, ond his helm/ onspeon.	with struggle spent, and unspan his helmet.
2724 Biowulf mapelode he ofer benne spræt,	Beowulf spake in spite of his hurt,
2725 wunde wæbleate; wisse he gearwe	his mortal wound; full well he knew
2726 þæt he dæghwila gedrogen hæfde,	his portion now was past and gone
2727 eorðan wynne/; da wæs eall sceacen	of earthly bliss, and all had fled
2728 dogorgerimes, deað ungemete neah:	of his file of days, and death was near:
2729 Nu ic suna minum spillan wolde	"I would fain bestow on son of mine
2730 gudgewæðu, þær me gifede swa	this gear of war, were given me now
2731 ænig yrfeweard æfter wurde	that any heir should after me come
2732 lice gelenge. Ic dæs leode heold	of my proper blood. This people I ruled
2733 fiftig wintra; næs se folccýning,	fifty winters. No folk-king was there,
2734 ymbesittendra ænig dara,	none at all, of the neighboring clans
2735 þe mec gudwinum gretan dorste,	who war would wage me with 'warriors'-friends'
2736 egesan deon. Ic on earde bad	and threat me with horrors. At home I bided
2737 mælgescæafta, heold min tela,	what fate might come, and I cared for mine own;
2738 ne sohhte searonidas, ne me swor fela	feuds I sought not, nor falsely swore
2739 ada on unriht. Ic dæs ealles mæg	ever on oath. For all these things,
2740 feorhbennum seoc gefean habban;	though fatally wounded, fain am I!
2741 for ðam me witan ne dearf waldend fira	From the Ruler-of-Man no wrath shall seize me,
2742 mordorbealo maga, þonne min sceated	when life from my frame must flee away,
2743 lif of lice. Nu ðu lungre geong	for killing of kinsmen! Now quickly go
2744 hord sceawian under harne stan,	and gaze on that hoard 'neath the hoary rock,
2745 Wiglaf leofa, nu se wýrm liged,	Wiglaf loved, now the worm lies low,
2746 swefed sare wund, since bereafod.	sleeps, heart-sore, of his spoil bereaved.
2747 Bio nu on ofoste, þæt ic ærwelan,	And fare in haste. I would fain behold
2748 goldæht ongite, gearo sceawige	the gorgeous heirlooms, golden store,

Old English	Modern English
2749 <i>swegle searogimmas, þæt ic ðy seft mæge</i>	have joy in the jewels and gems, lay down
2750 <i>æfter maddumtwelan min alætan</i>	softlier for sight of this splendid hoard
2751 <i>lif ond leodscipe, þone ic longe heold.</i>	my life and the lordship I long have held."
2752 <i>ða ic snude gefrægn sunu Wihstanes</i>	I HAVE heard that swiftly the son of Weohstan
2753 <i>æfter wordcwþum wundum dryhtne</i>	at wish and word of his wounded king, --
2754 <i>hyran headosiocum, hringnet beran,</i>	war-sick warrior, -- woven mail-coat,
2755 <i>brogðne beadusercean under/ beorges hrof.</i>	battle-sark, bore 'neath the barrow's roof.
2756 <i>Geseah ða sigehredig, þa he bi sesse geong,</i>	Then the clansman keen, of conquest proud,
2757 <i>magopegn modig maddumsigla fealo,</i>	passing the seat, saw store of jewels
2758 <i>gold glitinian grunde gefenge,</i>	and glistening gold the ground along;
2759 <i>wundur on wealle, ond þæs wyrmes denn,</i>	by the wall were marvels, and many a vessel
2760 <i>ealðes uhtflogan, orcas stondan,</i>	in the den of the dragon, the dawn-flier old:
2761 <i>fyrnmanna fatu feormendlease,</i>	unburnished bowls of bygone men
2762 <i>hyrstum behrorene; þær wæs helm monig</i>	reft of richness; rusty helms
2763 <i>ealð ond omig, earmbeaga fela</i>	of the olden age; and arm-rings many
2764 <i>searwum gesæled. Sinc eade mæg,</i>	wondrously woven. -- Such wealth of gold,
2765 <i>gold on grunde/, gumcynnes gehwone</i>	booty from barrow, can burden with pride
2766 <i>oferhigian, hyde se ðe wylle.</i>	each human wight: let him hide it who will! --
2767 <i>Swylce he siomian geseah segn eallgylden</i>	His glance too fell on a gold-wove banner
2768 <i>heah ofer horde, hondwundra mæst,</i>	high o'er the hoard, of handiwork noblest,
2769 <i>gelocen leodocræftum; of ðam leoma/ stod,</i>	brilliantly broidered; so bright its gleam,
2770 <i>þæt he þone grundwong ongitan meahte,</i>	all the earth-floor he easily saw
2771 <i>wræte/ giوندwilitan. Næs ðæs wyrmes þær</i>	and viewed all these vessels. No vestige now
2772 <i>onsyn ænig, ac hyne ecg fornam.</i>	was seen of the serpent: the sword had ta'en him.
2773 <i>ða ic on hlæwe gefrægn hord reafian,</i>	Then, I heard, the hill of its hoard was reft,
2774 <i>ealð enta geweorc, anne mannan,</i>	old work of giants, by one alone;
2775 <i>him on bearm hladdon/ bunan ond discas</i>	he burdened his bosom with beakers and plate
2776 <i>syfles dome; segn eac genom,</i>	at his own good will, and the ensign took,
2777 <i>beacna beorhtost. Will ær gescoð</i>	brightest of beacons. -- The blade of his lord
2778 <i>ecg wæs iren ealðhlaforðes</i>	-- its edge was iron -- had injured deep
2779 <i>þam ðara madma mundbora wæs</i>	one that guarded the golden hoard
2780 <i>longe hwile, ligegesan wæg</i>	many a year and its murder-fire
2781 <i>hatne for horde, hioroweallende</i>	spread hot round the barrow in horror-billows
2782 <i>middelnihitum, oðþæt he morðre swealt.</i>	at midnight hour, till it met its doom.
2783 <i>Ar wæs on ofoste, eftsides georn,</i>	Hasted the herald, the hoard so spurred him
2784 <i>frætwum gefyrðred; hyne fyrwet bræc,</i>	his track to retrace; he was troubled by doubt,
2785 <i>hwæder collenferð twicne gemette</i>	high-souled hero, if haply he'd find
2786 <i>in ðam wongstede Wedra þeoden</i>	alive, where he left him, the lord of Weders,
2787 <i>ellensiočne, þær he hine ær forlet.</i>	weakening fast by the wall of the cave.
2788 <i>Þe ða mid þam madmum mærne þeoden,</i>	So he carried the load. His lord and king
2789 <i>dryhten sinne, driorigne fand</i>	he found all bleeding, famous chief
2790 <i>ealðres æt ende; he hine eft ongon</i>	at the lapse of life. The liegeman again
2791 <i>wæteres weorpan, oðþæt wordes ord</i>	plashed him with water, till point of word
2792 <i>breosthord þurhbræc.</i>	broke through the breast-hoard. Beowulf spake,
2793 <i>gomel/ on gιοhðe/ gold sceawode:</i>	sage and sad, as he stared at the gold. --
2794 <i>It ðara frætwu frean ealles danc,</i>	"For the gold and treasure, to God my thanks,
2795 <i>wuldurcynninge, wordum secge,</i>	to the Wielder-of-Wonders, with words I say,
2796 <i>ecum dryhtne, þe ic her on starie,</i>	for what I behold, to Heaven's Lord,
2797 <i>þæs ðe ic moste minum leodum</i>	for the grace that I give such gifts to my folk
2798 <i>ær swypldæge swyplc gestrypan.</i>	or ever the day of my death be run!
2799 <i>Þu ic on madma hord mine/ behohhte</i>	Now I've bartered here for booty of treasure
2800 <i>frode feorhlege, fremmad gena</i>	the last of my life, so look ye well
2801 <i>leoda þearfe; ne mæg ic her leng wesan.</i>	to the needs of my land! No longer I tarry.
2802 <i>Hatad heaðomære hlæw gewyrcean</i>	A barrow bid ye the battle-fanned raise
2803 <i>beorhtne æfter bæle æt brimes nosan;</i>	for my ashes. 'Twill shine by the shore of the flood,
2804 <i>se scel to gemyndum minum leodum</i>	to folk of mine memorial fair
2805 <i>heah hlifian on Hronesnæsse,</i>	on Hrones Headland high uplifted,
2806 <i>þæt hit sælidend syddan hatan</i>	that ocean-wanderers oft may hail
2807 <i>Biowulfes biorh, ða ðe brentingas</i>	Beowulf's Barrow, as back from far
2808 <i>ofer floda genipu feorran drifad.</i>	they drive their keels o'er the darkling wave."
2809 <i>Dyde him of healse hring gylðenne</i>	From his neck he unclasped the collar of gold,
2810 <i>þeoden þristhydig, þegne gesealde,</i>	valorous king, to his vassal gave it
2811 <i>geongum garwigan, goldfahne helm,</i>	with bright-gold helmet, breastplate, and ring,
2812 <i>beah ond byrnan, het hyne brucan well:</i>	to the youthful thane: bade him use them in joy.

Old English	Modern English
2813 þu eart endelaƿ usses cynnes,	"Thou art end and remnant of all our race
2814 Wægmundinga. Ealle wƿrd forstweop/	the Waegmunding name. For Wƿrd hath swept them,
2815 mine magas to metodscæfte,	all my line, to the land of doom,
2816 eorlas on elne; ic him æfter sceal.	earls in their glory: I after them go."
2817 þæt wæs þam gomelan gingæste word	This word was the last which the wise old man
2818 breostgehygdum, ær he bælc cure,	harbored in heart ere hot death-waves
2819 hate headowƿlmas; him of hƿedre/ gewat	of balefire he chose. From his bosom fled
2820 sawol secean soðfæstra dom.	his soul to seek the saints' reward.
2821 ða wæs gegongen guman/ unfrodum	IT was heavy hap for that hero young
2822 eorfolice, þæt he on eorðan geseah	on his lord beloved to look and find him
2823 þone leofestan lifes æt ende	lying on earth with life at end,
2824 bleate gebæran. Bona swƿlce læg,	sorrowful sight. But the slayer too,
2825 egeslic eorðdraca ealdre bereafod,	awful earth-dragon, empty of breath,
2826 bealwe gebæded. Beahhordum leng	lay felled in fight, nor, fain of its treasure,
2827 wƿrm wohbogen wealdan ne moste,	could the writhing monster rule it more.
2828 ac hine/ irenna ecga fornamon,	For edges of iron had ended its days,
2829 hearde, headoscearde homera lafe,	hard and battle-sharp, hammers' leaving;
2830 þæt se wiðfloga windum stille	and that flier-afar had fallen to ground
2831 hreas on hrusan hordærne neah.	hushed by its hurt, its hoard all near,
2832 ðalles æfter lyfte lacende hwearf	no longer lusty aloft to whirl
2833 middelnihƿtum, madmæhta wolonc	at midnight, making its merriment seen,
2834 ansyn ƿwde, ac he eorðan gefeoll	proud of its prizes: prone it sank
2835 for ðæs hildfruman hondgeweorce.	by the handiwork of the hero-king.
2836 Þuru þæt on lande lyt manna ðah,	Forsooth among folk but few achieve,
2837 mægenagenda, mine gefræge,	-- though sturdy and strong, as stories tell me,
2838 þeah ðe he ðæda gehwæs ðyrstig wære,	and never so daring in deed of valor, --
2839 þæt he wið attor sceadan orede geræsde,	the perilous breath of a poison-foe
2840 oððe hringsele hondum stƿrede,	to brave, and to rush on the ring-board hall,
2841 gif he wæccende weard onfunde	whenever his watch the warden keeps
2842 buon on beorge. Biowulfe weard	bold in the barrow. Beowulf paid
2843 dryhtmadma ðæl deade forgolden;	the price of death for that precious hoard;
2844 hæfde æghwæder/ ende gefered	and each of the foes had found the end
2845 lænan lifes. ðæs ða lang to ðon	of this fleeting life. Befell erelong
2846 þæt ða hildblatan holt ofgefan,	that the laggards in war the wood had left,
2847 tydre treowlogan tƿne ætsomne.	trothbreakers, cowards, ten together,
2848 ða ne dorston ær ðaredum lætan	fearing before to flourish a spear
2849 on hyra mandryhtnes miclan þearfe,	in the sore distress of their sovran lord.
2850 ac hy scamienðe scƿldas bæran,	Now in their shame their shields they carried,
2851 gudgewærðu, þær se gomela læg,	armor of fight, where the old man lay;
2852 wliton on Wlaf. He gewergað sæt,	and they gazed on Wiglaf. Wearied he sat
2853 fedetempa, frean eaxlum neah,	at his sovran's shoulder, shieldsman good,
2854 wehte hyne wætre; him wiht ne speow/.	to wake him with water. Nowise it availed.
2855 ðe meahƿe he on eorðan, ðeah he ude wel,	Though well he wished it, in world no more
2856 on ðam frumgare feorh gehealdan,	could he barrier life for that leader-of-battles
2857 ne ðæs wealdendes wiht oncirran;	nor baffle the will of all-wielding God.
2858 wolde ðom godes ðædum ræðan	Doom of the Lord was law o'er the deeds
2859 gumena gehƿylcum, swa he nu gen ðeð.	of every man, as it is to-day.
2860 þa wæs æt ðam geongan/ grim ondsƿaru/	Grim was the answer, easy to get,
2861 edbegete þam ðe ær his elne forleas.	from the youth for those that had yielded to fear!
2862 Wiglaf madelode, Weohstanes sunu,	Wiglaf spake, the son of Weohstan, --
2863 sec, sarigferð seah on unleofe:	mournful he looked on those men unloved:--
2864 þæt, la, mæg sergan se ðe wƿle soð specan	"Who sooth will speak, can say indeed
2865 þæt se monðryhten se eow ða madmas geaf,	that the ruler who gave you golden rings
2866 eoredgeatwe, þe ge þær on standað,	and the harness of war in which ye stand
2867 þonne he on ealubence oft gesealde	-- for he at ale-bench often-times
2868 healsittendum helm ond byrnan,	bestowed on hall-folk helm and breastplate,
2869 þeoden his þegnum, swƿlce he þƿrdlicost	lord to liegemen, the likeliest gear
2870 oƿer feor oððe neah findan meahƿe,	which near of far he could find to give, --
2871 þæt he genunga gudgewærðu	threw away and wasted these weeds of battle,
2872 wrade forwurpe, ða hyne wig beget.	on men who failed when the foemen came!
2873 ðealles folccƿning ƿƿrdgesteallum	Not at all could the king of his comrades-in-arms
2874 gƿlpan þorft; hwæðre him god ude,	venture to vaunt, though the Victory-Wielder,
2875 sigora waldend, þæt he hyne sƿlfne gewræt	God, gave him grace that he got revenge
2876 ana mid ecge, þa him wæs elnes þearf.	sole with his sword in stress and need.

Old English	Modern English
2877 Ic him lifwraðe lýtle meahste	To rescue his life, 'twas little that I
2878 ætgifan æt gude, ond ongan swa þeah	could serve him in struggle; yet shift I made
2879 ofer min gemet mages helpan;	(hopeless it seemed) to help my kinsman.
2880 symle wæs þy sæmra, þonne ic sweorde drep	Its strength ever waned, when with weapon I struck
2881 ferhðgenidlan, fyr unswidor	that fatal foe, and the fire less strongly
2882 weoll of gewitte. Wergendra/ to lýt	flowed from its head. -- Too few the heroes
2883 þrong ymbe þeoden, þa hyne sio þrag betwom.	in throe of contest that thronged to our king!
2884 Ðu/ sceal sincþego ond swyrdgifu,	Now gift of treasure and girding of sword,
2885 eall edelwyrn eowrum cýnne,	joy of the house and home-delight
2886 lufen alicgean; londrihtes mot	shall fail your folk; his freehold-land
2887 þære mægþurge monna æghwylc	every clansman within your kin
2888 idel hweorfan, syddan ædelingas	shall lose and leave, when lords highborn
2889 feorran gefricgean fleam eowerne,	hear afar of that flight of yours,
2890 domleasan dæd. Deað bið sella	a fameless deed. Yea, death is better
2891 eorla gehwylcum þonne edwitlif.	for liegemen all than a life of shame!"
2892 Þeht da þæt heaðoweort to hagan biðdan	THAT battle-toil bade he at burg to announce,
2893 up ofer eorclif, þær þæt eorlweorð	at the fort on the cliff, where, full of sorrow,
2894 morgenlongne dæg modgimor sæt,	all the morning earls had sat,
2895 bordhæbbende, bega on wenum,	daring shieldsmen, in doubt of twain:
2896 endedogores ond eftcýmes	would they wail as dead, or welcome home,
2897 leofes monnes. Lýt swigode	their lord beloved? Little kept back
2898 niwra spella se ðe næs gerad,	of the tidings new, but told them all,
2899 ac he soðlice sægde ofer ealle:	the herald that up the headland rode. --
2900 Ðu is wilgeofa Weðra leoda,	"Now the willing-giver to Weder folk
2901 dryhten Geata, deaðbedde fæst,	in death-bed lies; the Lord of Geats
2902 wunad wælreste wyrmes dædum.	on the slaughter-bed sleeps by the serpent's deed!
2903 Ðim on efn liged ealborgewinna	And beside him is stretched that slayer-of-men
2904 sexbennum/ seor; sweorde ne meahste	with knife-wounds sick: no sword availed
2905 on ðam aglæcean ænige þinga	on the awesome thing in any wise
2906 wunde gewyrcean. Wiglaf sited	to work a wound. There Wiglaf sitteth,
2907 ofer Biowulfe, byre Wihstanes,	Weohstan's bairn, by Beowulf's side,
2908 eorl ofer oðrum unligifendum,	the living earl by the other dead,
2909 healded higemædum heafodwearde	and heavy of heart a head-watch keeps
2910 leofes ond lades. Ðu ys leodum wen	o'er friend and foe. -- Now our folk may look
2911 orleghwile, syddan underne/	for waging of war when once unhidden
2912 Frowum ond Frysum fyll cýninges	to Frisian and Frank the fall of the king
2913 wide weorðed. Wæs sio wroht scæpen	is spread afar. -- The strife began
2914 heard wið Hugas, syddan Higelac cwom	when hot on the Hugas Hygelac fell
2915 faran flotherge on Fresna land,	and fared with his fleet to the Frisian land.
2916 þær hyne Hetware hilde genægdon/,	Him there the Hetwaras humbled in war,
2917 elne geodon mid ofermægene,	plied with such prowess their power o'erwhelming
2918 þæt se byrnwiga bugan sceolde,	that the bold-in-battle bowed beneath it
2919 feoll on fedan, nalles frætwe geaf	and fell in fight. To his friends no wise
2920 ealbor dugode. Us wæs a syddan	could that earl give treasure! And ever since
2921 Merewioingas milts ungyfede.	the Merowings' favor has failed us wholly.
2922 Ne ic to/ Sweodeode sibbe oððe treowe	Nor aught expect I of peace and faith
2923 wihte ne wene, ac wæs wide cūð	from Swedish folk. 'Twas spread afar
2924 þætte Ongendio ealdre besyðede	how Ongentheow reft at Ravenswood
2925 Hæþcen Hreþling wið Hrefnawudu,	Haethcyn Hrethling of hope and life,
2926 þa for onmedlan ærest gesohton	when the folk of Geats for the first time sought
2927 Geata leode Gudscefingas.	in wanton pride the Warlike-Scyflings.
2928 Sona him se froda fæder Ohtheres,	Soon the sage old sire of Ohtere,
2929 eald ond egesfull, ondslyht/ ageaf,	ancient and awful, gave answering blow;
2930 abreot brimwisan, bryd ahyrðe/,	the sea-king he slew, and his spouse redeemed,
2931 gomela iomeowlan/ golde berofene,	his good wife rescued, though robbed of her gold,
2932 Onelan modor ond Ohtheres,	mother of Ohtere and Onela.
2933 ond ða folgode feorhgenidlan,	Then he followed his foes, who fled before him
2934 oððæt hi odeodon earfodlice	sore beset and stole their way,
2935 in Hrefnesholt hlafordlease.	bereft of a ruler, to Ravenswood.
2936 Besæt ða sinherge sweorda lafe,	With his host he besieged there what swords had left,
2937 wundum werge, wean oft gehet	the weary and wounded; woes he threatened
2938 earmre teohhe ondlonge niht,	the whole night through to that hard-pressed throng:
2939 cward, he on mergemne meces eorðum	some with the morrow his sword should kill,
2940 getan wolde, sum on galgtreowum/	some should go to the gallows-tree

Old English	Modern English
2941 fuglum/ to gamene. Frofor eft gelamp	for rapture of ravens. But rescue came
2942 sarigmodum somod ærdæge,	with dawn of day for those desperate men
2943 syddan hie Hygelaces horn ond byman,	when they heard the horn of Hygelac sound,
2944 gealdor ongeaton, þa se goda com	tones of his trumpet; the trusty king
2945 leoda dugode on last faran.	had followed their trail with faithful band.
2946 Wæs sio swatswadu Sweona/ ond Geata,	"THE bloody swath of Swedes and Geats
2947 wælræs weora wide gesyne,	and the storm of their strife, were seen afar,
2948 hu da folc mid him fæhde towehton.	how folk against folk the fight had awakened.
2949 Gewat him da se goda mid his gædelingum,	The ancient king with his atheling band
2950 frod, felageomor, fæsten secean,	sought his citadel, sorrowing much:
2951 eorl Ongenþio, ufor oncirde;	Ongentheow earl went up to his burg.
2952 hæfde Hygelaces hilde gefrunen,	He had tested Hygelac's hardihood,
2953 wlonces wigcræft, widres ne truwode,	the proud one's prowess, would prove it no longer,
2954 þæt he sæmannum onsacan mihte,	defied no more those fighting-wanderers
2955 headolidendum hord forstandan,	nor hoped from the seamen to save his hoard,
2956 bearn ond bryde; beah eft þonan	his bairn and his bride: so he bent him again,
2957 eald under eordweall. þa wæs æht boden	old, to his earth-walls. Yet after him came
2958 Sweona leodum, segn Hygelaces/	with slaughter for Swedes the standards of Hygelac
2959 freodowong þone ford/ oferedon,	o'er peaceful plains in pride advancing,
2960 syddan Hredlingas to hagan þrungon.	till Hrethelings fought in the fenced town.
2961 þær weard Ogendio w e g u m sweorda/,	Then Ongentheow with edge of sword,
2962 blondenfexa, on bid wrecen,	the hoary-bearded, was held at bay,
2963 þæt se heodcýning dafian sceolde	and the folk-king there was forced to suffer
2964 Eafores anne dom. Hyne pýringa	Eofor's anger. In ire, at the king
2965 Wulf Wonreding wæpne geræhte,	Wulf Wonreding with weapon struck;
2966 þæt him for swenge swat ædrum sprong	and the chieftain's blood, for that blow, in streams
2967 ford under fexe. Næs he forht swa deh,	flowed 'neath his hair. No fear felt he,
2968 gomela Scilling, ac forgeald hrade	stout old Scylfing, but straightway repaid
2969 wýrsan wrixle wælhlem þone,	in better bargain that bitter stroke
2970 syddan deodcýning þyder oncirde.	and faced his foe with fell intent.
2971 Ne meahste se snella sunu Wonredes	Nor swift enough was the son of Wonred
2972 ealdum teorle ondslyht/ gíofan,	answer to render the aged chief;
2973 ac he him on heafde helm ær gesce,	too soon on his head the helm was cloven;
2974 þæt he blode fah bugan sceolde,	blood-bedecked he bowed to earth,
2975 feoll on foldan; næs he fæge þa git,	and fell adown; not doomed was he yet,
2976 ac he hyne gewyrpte, þeah de him wund hrine.	and well he waxed, though the wound was sore.
2977 Let se hearða Hygelaces þegn	Then the hardy Hygelac-thane,
2978 bradne/ mece, þa his brodor læg,	when his brother fell, with broad brand smote,
2979 eald sweord eotonisc, entiscne helm	giants' sword crashing through giants'-helm
2980 bretan ofer bordweal; da gebeah cýning,	across the shield-wall: sank the king,
2981 folces hyrde, wæs in feorh dropen.	his folk's old herdsman, fatally hurt.
2982 da wæron monige þe his mæg wridon,	There were many to bind the brother's wounds
2983 ricone arærdon, da him gerymed weard	and lift him, fast as fate allowed
2984 þæt hie wælstowe wealdan moston.	his people to wield the place-of-war.
2985 þenden reafode rinc oderne,	But Eofor took from Ongentheow,
2986 nam on Ogendio irenbyrnan,	earl from other, the iron-breastplate,
2987 heard swyrð hilted ond his helm somod,	hard sword hilted, and helmet too,
2988 hares hyrste Hygelace bæc.	and the hoar-chief's harness to Hygelac carried,
2989 He/ dam/ frætwum feng ond him fægre gehet	who took the trappings, and truly promised
2990 leana mid/ leodum, ond gelæste/ swa.	rich fee 'mid folk, -- and fulfilled it so.
2991 geald þone gudræs Geata dryhten,	For that grim strife gave the Geatish lord,
2992 Hredles eafora, þa he to ham becom,	Hrethel's offspring, when home he came,
2993 Hofore ond Wulfe mid ofermaðmum,	to Eofor and Wulf a wealth of treasure,
2994 sealde hiora gehwædrum hund þusenda	Each of them had a hundred thousand
2995 landes ond locenra beaga ne dorfte him da lean odwitan	in land and linked rings; nor at less price reckoned
2996 mon on middangearde, syddan/ hie da mæra geslogon,	mid-earth men such mighty deeds!
2997 ond da Hofore forgeaf angan dohtor,	And to Eofor he gave his only daughter
2998 hamweordunge, hýlðo to wedde.	in pledge of grace, the pride of his home.
2999 þæt ys sio fæhdo ond se feondscipe,	"Such is the feud, the foeman's rage,
3000 wælnid wera, dæs de ic wen/ hafo,	death-hate of men: so I deem it sure
3001 þe us secead to Sweona leoda,	that the Swedish folk will seek us home
3002 syddan hie gefricgead frean userne	for this fall of their friends, the fighting-Scylfings,
3003 ealborleasne, þone de ær geheold	when once they learn that our warrior leader
3004 wid hettendum hord ond rice	lifeless lies, who land and hoard

Old English	Modern English
3005 æfter hæleda hryre, hwate Scildingas,	ever defended from all his foes,
3006 folcred fremede odde furdur gen	furthered his folk's weal, finished his course
3007 eorlscipe efnde. Æu/ is ofost betost	a hardy hero. -- Now haste is best,
3008 þæt we þeodcýning þær sceawian	that we go to gaze on our Geatish lord,
3009 ond þone gebringan, þe us beagas geaf,	and bear the bountiful breaker-of-rings
3010 on adfære. Æe scel anes hwæt	to the funeral pyre. No fragments merely
3011 meltan mid þam modigan, ac þær is madma hord,	shall burn with the warrior. Wealth of jewels,
3012 gold unrimme grimme geceapod/,	gold untold and gained in terror,
3013 ond nu æt sidestan sylfes feore	treasure at last with his life obtained,
3014 beagas gebolhte/. þa sceall brond fretan,	all of that booty the brands shall take,
3015 æled þercean, nalles eorl wegan	fire shall eat it. No earl must carry
3016 maddum to gemyndum, ne mægd scýne	memorial jewel. No maiden fair
3017 habban on healse hringweordunge,	shall wreathe her neck with noble ring:
3018 ac sceal geomormod, golde bereafod,	nay, sad in spirit and shorn of her gold,
3019 oft nalles æne elland tredan,	oft shall she pass o'er paths of exile
3020 nu se herewisa hleahfor alegde,	now our lord all laughter has laid aside,
3021 gamen ond gleodream. Fordon sceall gar wesan	all mirth and revel. Many a spear
3022 monig, morgenceald, mundum bewunden,	morning-cold shall be clasped amain,
3023 hæfen on handa, nalles hearpan sweg	lifted aloft; nor shall lilt of harp
3024 wigend weccan, ac se wonna hrefn	those warriors wake; but the wan-hued raven,
3025 fus ofer fægum fela reordian,	fain o'er the fallen, his feast shall praise
3026 earne secan hu him æt æte speow,	and boast to the eagle how bravely he ate
3027 þenden he wid wulf wæl reafode.	when he and the wolf were wasting the slain."
3028 Swa se serg hwata serggende wæs	So he told his sorrowful tidings,
3029 ladra spella; he ne leag fela	and little he lied, the loyal man
3030 wyrda ne worda. Weorod eall aras;	of word or of work. The warriors rose;
3031 eodon unblide under Earnanæs,	sad, they climbed to the Cliff-of-Eagles,
3032 wollenteare wundur/ sceawian.	went, welling with tears, the wonder to view.
3033 Fundon da on sande sawulleasne	Found on the sand there, stretched at rest,
3034 hlimbed healdan þone þe him hringas geaf	their lifeless lord, who had lavished rings
3035 ærran mælum; þa wæs endedæg	of old upon them. Ending-day
3036 godum gegongen, þæt se gudcýning,	had dawned on the doughty-one; death had seized
3037 Wedra þeoden, wundorbeade swealt.	in woful slaughter the Weders' king.
3038 ær hi þær gesegan syllican wiht,	There saw they, besides, the strangest being,
3039 wýrn on wonge widerræhtes þær	loathsome, lying their leader near,
3040 ladne/ licgean; wæs se legdraca	prone on the field. The fiery dragon,
3041 grimlic, gryrefah/, gledum beswæled.	fearful fiend, with flame was scorched.
3042 Se wæs fiftiges fotgemearces	Reckoned by feet, it was fifty measures
3043 lang on legere, lyftwýrne heold	in length as it lay. Aloft erewhile
3044 nihtes hwilum, nyder eft gewat	it had revelled by night, and anon come back,
3045 dennes niosian; wæs da deade fæst,	seeking its den; now in death's sure clutch
3046 hæfde eordscrafa ende genýttod.	it had come to the end of its earth-hall joys.
3047 Him big stodan bunan ond orcas,	By it there stood the stoups and jars;
3048 discas lagon ond dyre swýrd,	dishes lay there, and dear-decked swords
3049 omige, þurhjetone, swa hie wid eorðan fædm	eaten with rust, as, on earth's lap resting,
3050 þusend wintra þær eardodon.	a thousand winters they waited there.
3051 þonne wæs þæt yfe, eacencræftig,	For all that heritage huge, that gold
3052 iumonna gold galdre bewunden,	of bygone men, was bound by a spell,
3053 þæt dam hringsele hrinan ne moste	so the treasure-hall could be touched by none
3054 gumena ænig, nefne god sylfa,	of human kind, -- save that Heaven's King,
3055 sigora sodecýning, sealde þam de he wolde	God himself, might give whom he would,
3056 he is manna gehýld hord openian,	Helper of Heroes, the hoard to open, --
3057 efne swa hwýlcum manna swa him gemet duhte.	even such a man as seemed to him meet.
3058 þa wæs gesýne þæt se sid ne dah	A PERILOUS path, it proved, he trod
3059 þam de unrhte inne gehýdde	who heinously hid, that hall within,
3060 wræte/ under wealle. Weard ær ofslah	wealth under wall! Its watcher had killed
3061 feara sumne; þa sio fæhd geweard	one of a few, and the feud was avenged
3062 gewreten wradlice. Wundur hwar þonne	in woful fashion. Wondrous seems it,
3063 eorl ellenrof ende gefere	what manner a man of might and valor
3064 lifgesceafta, þonne leng ne mæg	oft ends his life, when the earl no longer
3065 mon mid his magum/ meduseld buan.	in mead-hall may live with loving friends.
3066 Swa wæs Biowulfe, þa he biorges weard	So Beowulf, when that barrow's warden
3067 sohte, searonidas; seolfa ne cude	he sought, and the struggle; himself knew not
3068 þurh hwæt his worulde gedal weorðan sceolde.	in what wise he should wend from the world at last.

Old English	Modern English
3069 Swa hit od domes dæg diope benemdon	For princes potent, who placed the gold,
3070 þeodnas mære, þa dæt þær dýdon,	with a curse to doomsday covered it deep,
3071 þæt se secg wære synnum scildig,	so that marked with sin the man should be,
3072 hergum geheaderod, hellbendum fæst,	hedged with horrors, in hell-bonds fast,
3073 womnum gewitnad, se done wong strude/,	racked with plagues, who should rob their hoard.
3074 næs he goldhwæte gearwor hæfde	Yet no greed for gold, but the grace of heaven,
3075 agendes est ær gesceawod.	ever the king had kept in view.
3076 Wiglaf madelode, Wihstanes sunu:	Wiglaf spake, the son of Weohstan:--
3077 Oft sceall eorl monig anes willan	"At the mandate of one, oft warriors many
3078 wræt adreogan/, swa us geworden is.	sorrow must suffer; and so must we.
3079 Ær meah-ton we gelæran leofne þeoden,	The people's-shepherd showed not aught
3080 rices hýrde, ræd ænigne,	of care for our counsel, king beloved!
3081 þæt he ne grette goldweard þone,	That guardian of gold he should grapple not, urged we,
3082 lete hýne licgean þær he longe wæs,	but let him lie where he long had been
3083 wicum wunian od woruldende;	in his earth-hall waiting the end of the world,
3084 heold on heahgesteap. Þord ys gesceawod,	the hest of heaven. -- This hoard is ours
3085 grimme gegongen; wæs þæt gifede to swið	but grievously gotten; too grim the fate
3086 þe done þeodcýning/ þýder ontyhte.	which thither carried our king and lord.
3087 Ic wæs þær inne ond þæt eall geondseh,	I was within there, and all I viewed,
3088 recedes geatwa, þa me gerymed wæs,	the chambered treasure, when chance allowed me
3089 nealles swæslike sið alyfed	(and my path was made in no pleasant wise)
3090 inn under eordweall. Ic on ofoste gefeng	under the earth-wall. Eager, I seized
3091 micle mid mundum mægenþyrdenne	such heap from the hoard as hands could bear
3092 hordgestreona, hider ut æthær	and hurriedly carried it hither back
3093 cýninge minum. Cwico wæs þa gena,	to my liege and lord. Alive was he still,
3094 wis ond gewittig; worn eall gespræt	still wielding his wits. The wise old man
3095 gomol on gehdo ond eowic gretan het,	spake much in his sorrow, and sent you greetings
3096 bæd þæt ge geworhton æfter wines dædum	and bade that ye build, when he breathed no more,
3097 in bælstede beorh þone hean,	on the place of his balefire a barrow high,
3098 micelne ond mærne, swa he manna wæs	memorial mighty. Of men was he
3099 wigend weordfullost wide geond eorðan,	worthiest warrior wide earth o'er
3100 þenden he burchwelan brucan moste.	the while he had joy of his jewels and burg.
3101 Uton nu eðstan odre siðe/,	Let us set out in haste now, the second time
3102 seon ond secean searoginna/ geþræt,	to see and search this store of treasure,
3103 wundur under wealle; ic eow wisige,	these wall-hid wonders, -- the way I show you, --
3104 þæt ge genoge neon sceawiað	where, gathered near, ye may gaze your fill
3105 beagas ond brad gold. Sie sio þær gearo,	at broad-gold and rings. Let the bier, soon made,
3106 ædre geæfned, þonne we ut cýmen,	be all in order when out we come,
3107 ond þonne geferian frean userne,	our king and captain to carry thither
3108 leofne mannan, þær he longe sceal	-- man beloved -- where long he shall bide
3109 on dæs walðendes wære gepolian.	safe in the shelter of sovran God."
3110 Het ða gebedan þýre Wihstanes,	Then the bairn of Weohstan bade command,
3111 hæle hildedior, hæleda monegum	hardy chief, to heroes many
3112 boldagendra, þæt hie bælwudu	that owned their homesteads, hither to bring
3113 feorran feredon, foltagende,	firewood from far -- o'er the folk they ruled --
3114 godum togenes: Æu sceal gled fretan,	for the famed-one's funeral. " Fire shall devour
3115 weaxan wonna leg wigena strengel,	and wan flames feed on the fearless warrior
3116 þone ðe oft gebad isernsture,	who oft stood stout in the iron-shower,
3117 þonne stræla storm strengum gebæded	when, sped from the string, a storm of arrows
3118 scot ofer scildweall, seft nytte heold,	shot o'er the shield-wall: the shaft held firm,
3119 federgearwum/ fus flane fulleode.	fealty feathered, followed the barb."
3120 Þuru se snotra sunu Wihstanes	And now the sage young son of Weohstan
3121 acigde of cordre cýninges/ þegnas	seven chose of the chieftain's thanes,
3122 sýfone/ tosomne/, þa selestan,	the best he found that band within,
3123 eode eahlta sum under inwithrof	and went with these warriors, one of eight,
3124 hilderinca/; sum on handa bær	under hostile roof. In hand one bore
3125 æledleoman, se ðe on orde geong.	a lighted torch and led the way.
3126 Ææs ða on hlytne hwa þæt hord strude,	No lots they cast for keeping the hoard
3127 sýddan orwearde ænigne dæl	when once the warriors saw it in hall,
3128 sergas gesegon on sele wunian,	altogether without a guardian,
3129 læne licgan; lýt ænig mearn	lying there lost. And little they mourned
3130 þæt hi ofostlice/ ut geferedon	when they had hastily haled it out,
3131 dýre madmas. Dracan et scufun,	dear-bought treasure! The dragon they cast,
3132 wýrm ofer weallclif, leton weg niman,	the worm, o'er the wall for the wave to take,

Old English	Modern English
3133 flod fædmian frætwā hƿrde.	and surges swallowed that shepherd of gems.
3134 þa wæs wunden gold on wæn hlāden,	Then the woven gold on a wain was laden --
3135 æghwæs unrim, æþeling/ boren,	countless quite! -- and the king was borne,
3136 har hilderinc to Hronesnæsse.	hoary hero, to Hrones-Ness.
3137 Þim da gegiredan Geata leode	THEN fashioned for him the folk of Geats
3138 ad on eorðan unwaclicne,	firm on the earth a funeral-pile,
3139 helmum/ behongen, hildebordum,	and hung it with helmets and harness of war
3140 beorhtum byrnum, swa he bena wæs;	and breastplates bright, as the boon he asked;
3141 alegdon da to midðes mærne þeoden	and they laid amid it the mighty chieftain,
3142 hæled hiofende, hlaforð/ leofne.	heroes mourning their master dear.
3143 Ongunnon þa on beorge bælfra mæst	Then on the hill that hugest of balefires
3144 wigend weccan; wudurec/ astah,	the warriors awakened. Wood-smoke rose
3145 sweart ofer swiðole/, swogende leg	black over blaze, and blent was the roar
3146 woþe bewunden windblond gelæg,	of flame with weeping (the wind was still),
3147 oðþæt he ða banhus gebrocen hæfde/,	till the fire had broken the frame of bones,
3148 hat on hredre. Hīgum unrote	hot at the heart. In heavy mood
3149 modceare mændon, monðryhtnes tƿealm/;	their misery moaned they, their master's death.
3150 swylce ġiomorgyð Geatisc/ meotƿle	Wailing her woe, the widow old,
3151 bundenheorde/	her hair upbound, for Beowulf's death
3152 song/ sorgcearig swiðe/ geneahhe	sung in her sorrow, and said full oft
3153 þæt hio hƿre heofungdagas/ hearde ondrede/,	she dreaded the doleful days to come,
3154 wælfylla worn/, werudes egesan,	deaths enow, and doom of battle,
3155 hƿndo ond hæftnyð/. Heofon rece sweag/.	and shame. -- The smoke by the sky was devoured.
3156 Geworhton þa Wedra leode	The folk of the Weders fashioned there
3157 hleo on hoc, se wæs heah ond brad,	on the headland a barrow broad and high,
3158 wæglidendum wiðe gesƿne,	by ocean-farers far described:
3159 ond betimbredon/ on tƿn dagum	in ten days' time their toil had raised it,
3160 beaurofes becn, bronda lafe	the battle-brave's beacon. Round brands of the pyre
3161 wealle beworhton, swa hƿt weorðlicost	a wall they built, the worthiest ever
3162 foresnotre men findan mihton.	that wit could prompt in their wisest men.
3163 Hi on beorg dydon beg ond siglu,	They placed in the barrow that precious booty,
3164 eall swylce hƿrsta, swylce on horde ær	the rounds and the rings they had reft erewhile,
3165 niðhedige men ġenumen hæfdon,	hardy heroes, from hoard in cave, --
3166 forleton eorla ġestreon eorðan healdan,	trusting the ground with treasure of earls,
3167 gold on greote, þær hit nu ġen lifað	gold in the earth, where ever it lies
3168 eldum swa unnyt swa hit/ æror/ wæs.	useless to men as of yore it was.
3169 þa ymbe hlæw riððan hildediora,	Then about that barrow the battle-keen rode,
3170 æþelinga bearn, ealra twelfe/,	atheling-born, a band of twelve,
3171 woldon ceare/ cƿidan ond kƿning mænan,	lament to make, to mourn their king,
3172 wordgyð wrecan ond ymb wer/ sƿrecan;	chant their dirge, and their chieftain honor.
3173 eahtodan eorlscipe ond his ellenweorc	They praised his earlship, his acts of prowess
3174 dugudum demdon, swa hit ġedefe/ bið/	worthily witnessed: and well it is
3175 þæt mon his winedryhten wordum herġe,	that men their master-friend mightily laud,
3176 ferhðum freoġe/, þonne he forð scile	heartily love, when hence he goes
3177 of lichaman lædeð/ weorðan.	from life in the body forlorn away.
3178 Swa beġnornodon Geata leode	Thus made their mourning the men of Geatland,
3179 hlaforðes/ hƿre/, heorðġeneatas,	for their hero's passing his hearth-companions:
3180 cƿædon þæt he ƿære ƿyruldcƿninga	quoth that of all the kings of earth,
3181 manna/ mildust ond monðƿærust/,	of men he was mildest and most beloved,
3182 leodum liðost ond lofġeornost.	to his kin the kindest, keenest for praise.