

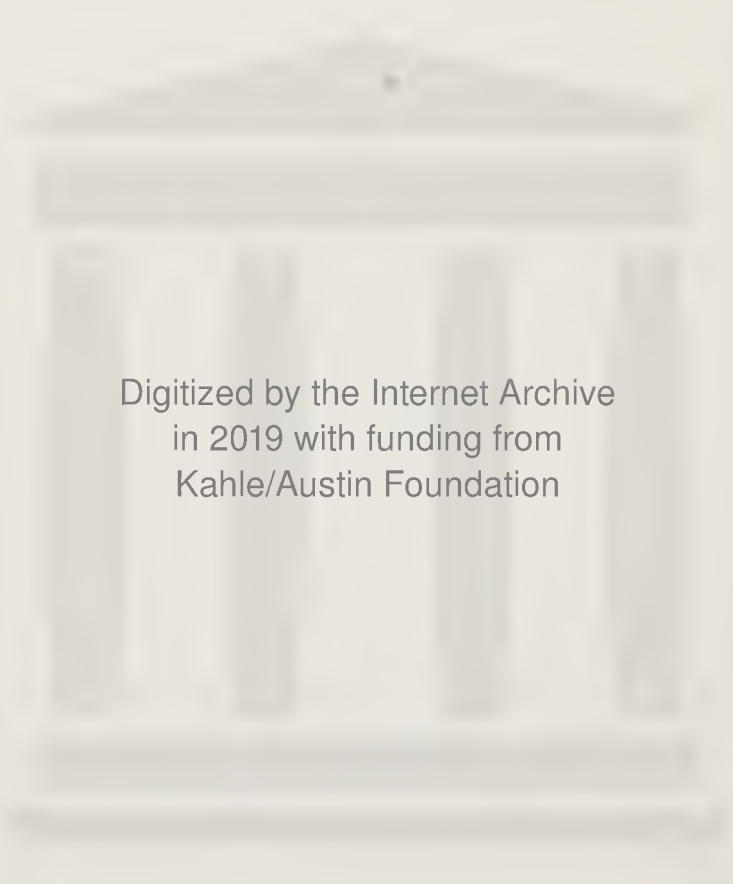
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# **Old English Literature**

## **A Practical Introduction**

Randolph Quirk

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**Edward Arnold**

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# I Introduction

## 1.1 *The Beginnings of 'Englaland'*

For almost four hundred years from about AD 50, 'Britannia' was a province of the Roman Empire. With the recall of the legions in the early fifth century to help in the hopeless task of preventing imperial collapse, opportunity presented itself to the westward-pressing Germanic peoples to cross the North Sea. It was they who, overcoming the Celtic inhabitants, set in train the events through which the country came to be called 'Englaland', the land of the Angles.

We know little of the first 150 years of the Anglo-Saxon settlement, since the new masters – for all their vigour and stern virtues – were a basically illiterate society, with no conception of recording their activities in writing. But from about AD 600, successful missions began to bring Christianity to the English in a two-pronged movement: an advance of Celtic Christianity into Northumbria from Ireland and Scotland, and from Rome itself a mission to Kent (597) led by Augustine. Not only the Scriptures but a wide variety of learning began to be painstakingly set down on vellum in the English monastic houses that sprang up and which (under the leadership of such scholars as Alcuin, Aldhelm and Bede) soon made England a far-famed European centre for learning.

1.2 The Anglo-Saxons (as modern scholars usually call the English of the period before the Norman Conquest) were the first of the Germanic peoples – the first by some centuries – to achieve the literacy which enabled them to bring classical learning to bear upon ideals of heroism already highly developed in their continental forbears, as we know from Tacitus (see p. 20). And they did this while an apparently vigorous oral tradition still preserved the songs, tales, and myths of that earlier, pagan 'Germania'. It was by means of this literacy and this laborious handiwork on vellum that the Anglo-Saxons were able to give us a literature which reflects alike their Germanic interests and ideals, a deep Christian piety, and some considerable influence of Mediterranean learning. It was on vellum too that they came to develop their extraordinary skill in design and illumination (as in the Lindisfarne Gospels), matching the delicate and intricate jewellery in gold and silver (as in the Sutton Hoo treasure, which demonstrates most signally perhaps the high civilization that was achieved early in Anglo-Saxon England).

1.3 But it must be remembered that, in the first instance and always for the most part, the language of literacy was Latin. It was Latin (to

a lesser extent Greek) that scholars read and it was in Latin that they wrote – a situation that persisted throughout the Middle Ages, only gradually changing thereafter. It was in Latin, after all, that Francis Bacon chose to perpetuate his major work – when Shakespeare was already dead.

Yet despite the serious religious, moral, and educational purposes which naturally had first call on the skill of scribes and the enormously expensive vellum writing material, the cultivated Anglo-Saxons in the early generations of their literacy and conversion to Christianity showed sufficient interest in their traditional poetry to commit a good deal of it to writing. Fortunately for us. As a result, here again England had a comfortable headstart on any of the post-imperial ‘emerging peoples’ of Europe in evolving – perhaps under the influence of the Irish – a vernacular literature: writing down works of imagination in their mother-tongue.

#### 1.4 *Poetic Form*

It is not certain how much of the OE literature that we know had been handed down orally from generation to generation before being put into writing. But the *form* of the poetry was certainly traditional, as we can tell by comparing it with the closely similar verse (much smaller in extent and written down only much later) in the continental Old Saxon, Old High German, and Old Scandinavian. And it was a kind of poetry that lent itself readily to memorization and hence to oral transmission.

Basically, the form is a couplet structure, where each unit has two heavily stressed syllables, with a fairly free number of unstressed syllables, and where the two units are linked not by syllabic ‘end-rhymes’ (as in later rhyming poetry) but by ‘head-rhymes’ of syllable-initial sounds, i.e. alliteration. Imitated in Modern English, we might have:

**Al**one by the **l**ake    for**l**ornly he st**á**nds,  
**w**áits **w**ónderingly.    A **w**ind stirs his h**á**ir,  
**b**réathes on his cúrls,    and re**b**úkes s**á**dness.

As in the example, editions of OE poetry present the couplets horizontally, with a space between the two units or ‘half-lines’ as they are often called. The example further shows that it is only stressed syllables that alliterate, and that either one or two of these may alliterate in the first unit, but only the first of them in the second unit. But we have attempted to illustrate two other features of the poetry: the fact that major syntactic breaks frequently come between the alliteratively-linked units, and that a second half-line is frequently linked by a sort of paraphrase relation called ‘variation’ with the following first half-line (with which there is of course no alliterative or other metrical link). It will be seen that alliteration and variation subserve the purpose of

memorization. The latter device also contributes much to the stately (at times somewhat ponderous) rhetoric and leisured pace of the poetry.

Some further striking characteristics have not been illustrated. Anglo-Saxon poets had at their disposal a large poetic vocabulary (items that are largely absent, that is, from OE prose); for example *mēce* 'sword', which, with *brand*, the ordinary word *sweord*, and other synonyms, provided a valuable resource when a particular alliterative sequence was needed. Secondly, poets often used words metaphorically: *brand* literally means something burning. Frequently these metaphors (or 'kennings' as they are called) are compounds such as *life-house* 'body', or phrases such as *whale's way* 'sea'. Thirdly, a considerable part of the poet's repertoire consisted of frameworks or 'formulae' for metrical units which could be used, with appropriate alteration, in different contexts: compare 4.1.26 and 4.1.293.

### 1.5 Poetic Content

It would be rash to judge the concerns of Anglo-Saxon poets purely on the actually surviving OE poetry. It is impossible to know how much was ever written down, or the proportion of what was written down that has survived. We know that there were devastating losses of manuscripts in the early destructive raids by the Vikings on Lindisfarne (793) and other such centres; so much so that King Alfred could complain (c. 890) that learning – indeed literacy itself – was on the verge of extinction. We know too that it is to the resurgence of learning during the Benedictine Revival (c. 950–1000, associated with Æthelwold, Dunstan, and Ælfric, for example) that we owe the manuscripts containing almost all the OE literature that has come down to us. And we may safely infer that, with the urgency of this work (struggling on into the troubled time of Æthelred when the country was torn by internal strife and by far more determined attacks from Scandinavia), the recording of purely secular poetry would have small claim on men's time and materials.

When we consider in addition the dangers of loss through fire, or lack of interest, or the dissolution of the monasteries, it would be foolish to think that the poetry that we still have (almost all of it in four manuscript volumes dating from c. 1000) was all the poetry set down in this period. One of these four codices chanced to be found in Vercelli, in northern Italy, where it had doubtless lain for hundreds of years unread because incomprehensible; yet in this is preserved, for example, the magnificent *Dream of the Rood*. And while three of the volumes are rather single-mindedly concerned with work of an explicitly religious or didactic nature, one – the Exeter Book – contains such a wealth and variety of work whose existence could not otherwise have been suspected, that it is not difficult to envisage the loss of other poems similarly imbued with a unique sensibility.



**1.6** So one must speak only of the content and recurrent themes of that portion of OE poetry which has fortunately survived. Certain important characteristics leap out. Whether poets are treating classical myth (as in the *Phoenix*), testing their ingenuity with Riddles, setting Biblical themes to verse as in *Genesis*, or even attempting to recapture the horror and the glory of the Crucifixion, their imagination was fired by the heroic ideals of secular society and their language permeated with the concept of the lonely struggle against overwhelming forces. In this spirit too they looked in gloomy wonder on the massive Roman remains, ramparts and the ruins of once noble villas which they knew were beyond their ability to reproduce, and reflected on the mutability of worldly possessions and the inexorability of a fate that could overwhelm even men capable of such work (cf. 4.7.75ff.).

In short, the Anglo-Saxon poet was equipped, by his own interests and by the slow dignity of his poetic form, to deal above all in tragedy: man's predicament in the face of hostility, with only his ideals (especially loyalty to his lord – on earth or in heaven) securely beyond the reach of evil: cf. 4.1.230–37; 4.5.42–5.

### **1.7** *Prose Literature*

So far, we have spoken only of poetry: appropriately enough in a book where an introduction to OE poetry is the chief concern; appropriately, too, since in Anglo-Saxon England (as appears to be normal in a society), the development of a literary prose came later than that of the poetry. Nonetheless, it must be stated plainly that the prose achievement in Old English (again, especially with reference to the other vernaculars of Europe) is if anything even more striking than the poetic achievement. Here, after all, the Anglo-Saxons were, so far as we know, starting from scratch, with no native models (e.g. a prose story tradition) to draw on. But already in the ninth century King Alfred is calling for books in English prose (needed because the teaching of Latin had so sharply declined), and is indeed taking part himself in the task with the translation, for example, of St Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis*. By Ælfric's time, a century later, an excellent prose tradition had developed (of which he was one of the best exponents); we had homilies; history; translations from both the Old and New Testaments; laws and charters; works on medicine, science, philosophy; and even some fiction.

### **1.8** *This Book*

It is with a selection of such prose that we begin textual work in this book, since it is easy to find passages of prose elementary enough to begin a reading of OE. As well as serving to give the student a glimpse of the wide range of prose, the short extracts 3.1–4 will be the initial material for learning the basic vocabulary and grammar of the language.

The reader should therefore study each of the passages in turn with great care, following the explanatory glosses on the facing pages (non-literal translations are given in quotation marks) and referring constantly to the Outlines of the Language (5.1ff.). He will find that, although a given word is always translated for him more than once, he is expected to begin remembering the meanings of words, and the relations indicated by case endings and other inflected forms, without necessarily receiving further help. He can always, however, turn to the glossary at the end of the book in case of need.

**1.9** To make it easier to relate the OE text to the translations and glosses on the facing pages, the prose passages are set out in lines which, where possible, do not break up grammatical units.

**1.10** The first of the prose passages is from the annual Chronicle of events (also initiated in Alfred's time) which is a major source of our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon history. Passage 3.1 begins with the record of Byrhtnoth's defeat at Maldon, an event which is the subject of the heroic poem printed here almost in entirety as 4.1. This text too the student is advised to read strictly in turn. Along with 3.1-4, it constitutes a graded sequence where the glossing and annotation are designed to effect a progressive learning of the language. And it will be noticed that, in order to help the student still more to learn OE basically through these texts, we have deliberately drawn from them most of the examples used to illustrate the points of grammar set out in 5.1ff. Once he has mastered these initial texts, however, he should be in a position to move out of sequence in 4.2-8 if he so wishes.

### **1.11** *Additional Reading*

It is impossible in so small a book to present the reader with all the information on history and culture or all the critical discussion of the literature that he will find necessary. The following books are recommended for supplementary reading:

- D. Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society* (rev. edn, Harmondsworth 1968)
- D. M. Wilson, *The Anglo-Saxons* (rev. edn, Harmondsworth 1971)
- T. A. Shippey, *Old English Verse* (London 1972)
- S. B. Greenfield, *A Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York 1965)

## 2 The Sound of Old English

**2.1** It is vital – especially if we are to appreciate the poetry – to acquire the habit of pronouncing OE as it sounded in the last century or so before the Norman Conquest. Although many letters (especially consonants) had the same values as in Modern English, there were numerous sharp differences, and in general the ‘continental’ values of letters (especially German values) are a better guide than those of ModE. In particular, it needs practice to remember that there were no ‘silent letters’ in OE: we must pronounce the initial letters of *writan* ‘write’, *cniht* ‘boy’, *gnornian* ‘mourn’, *hring* ‘ring’, the *r*’s and *e*’s in words like *hyrde* ‘shepherd’, and the lengthened (double) consonants in words like *hätte* ‘was called’.

**2.2** In the following key, the symbols in [ ] are those of the International Phonetic Association, and it is these that are used in the specimen transcription (2.3). In the right-hand column, alternative guidance is given by reference to ModE or (where specified) to particular varieties of English or to other modern languages.

Letter	Example and its meaning	Conditions upon a specific value	IPA symbol	Modern example
æ	sæt ‘sat’		[æ]	<i>S.Brit.Eng.</i> sat
ǣ	dǣd ‘deed’		[ɛ:]	<i>French</i> bête
a	{ mann ‘man’ dagas ‘days’	before m, n(g)	[ɒ]	<i>Amer.Eng.</i> hot
ā	hām ‘home’		[ɑ]	<i>German</i> Land
c	{ cyrice ‘church’ cēne ‘bold’	before/after i, often æ, e, y	[ɑ:] [tʃ] [k]	father church keen
cg	ecg ‘edge’		[dʒ]	edge
e	settan ‘set’		[ɛ]	set
ē	hē ‘he’		[e:]	<i>German</i> Leben
ea	earm ‘arm’		[æə]	{ as for [æ], [ɛ:], [e], [e:],
ēa	ēare ‘ear’		[ɛ:ə]	{ followed by the first syllable
eo	eorl ‘nobleman’		[eə]	{ of about
ēo	bēor ‘beer’		[e:ə]	
f	{ æfre ‘ever’ fif ‘five’	between voiced sounds	[v] [f]	ever fife
	gȳt ‘yet’	before/after i, usu. also æ, e, y	[j]	yet
g	fugol ‘bird’	between back vowels	[ɣ]	<i>colloq. German</i> sagen
	gān ‘go’		[g]	go
	heofon ‘heaven’	initially	[h]	heaven
h	{ niht ‘night’ brōhte ‘brought’	after æ, e, i, y after a, o, u	[ç] [x]	<i>German</i> ich <i>German</i> brachte
i	sittan ‘sit’		[i]	sit
i	wid ‘wide’		[i:]	weed
o	{ monn ‘man’ God ‘God’	before m, n(g)	[ɒ] [ɔ]	<i>Amer.Eng.</i> hot <i>Brit.Eng.</i> hot

Letter	Example and its meaning	Conditions upon a specific value	IPA symbol	Modern example
ō	gōd 'good'		[o:]	German Sohn
s	{ rīsan 'rise' hūs 'house'	between vowels	[z]	rise
sc	scip 'ship'		[ʃ]	ship
þ, ð	{ ōþer, ððer 'other' þurh, ðurh 'through'	between vowels	[ð]	other
u	ful 'full'		[u]	full
ū	hūs 'house'		[u:]	goose
y	wynn 'joy'		[y]	German würde
ȳ	rȳman 'make way'		[y:]	German Güte

**2.3** The following short poem (see 4.8) is interlined with a phonetic transcription for practice reading. In this book, as is usual in modern editions of OE work, most of the letters and letter shapes of the original manuscripts are replaced by forms familiar in ModE. The exceptions are *x*, *ð*, and *þ* (which imitate the manuscript forms) and the 'length marks' on vowels (which – like punctuation and capitalization – are editorial). The Anglo-Saxon mode of writing can be seen by comparing what follows with the reproduction on the cover and jacket, which has been adapted from the manuscript.

Wiht cwōm gongan    þær weras sǣton  
 [wiçt kwo:m gɔŋɡan    θɛ:r weras sɛ:tɔn]  
 monige on mǣðle,    mōde snottre;  
 [mɔniʒə ɔn mæðlə    mo:də snɔtrə]  
 hæfde ān ēage    ond ēaran twā,  
 [hævdə a:n e:əʒə    ɔnd e:ərən twɑ:]  
 ond twēgen fēt,    twelf hund hēafda,  
 [ɔnd twe:ʒən fe:t    twelf hund hɛ:əvda]  
 hrycg ond wombe    ond honda twā,  
 [hrydʒ ɔnd wɔmbə    ɔnd hɔnda twɑ:]  
 earmas ond eaxe,    ānne swēoran  
 [æarmas ɔnd æakslə    a:n:ə swe:ərən]  
 ond sīdan twā.    Saga hwæt ic hātte.  
 [ɔnd si:dən twɑ:    sa:ʔa hwæt iʃ hɑ:t:tə]

**2.4** Spelling was not fixed, as it is in ModE under the rigorous constraints of the printed word. For example, the letters *þ* and *ð* were used almost interchangeably; words normally having a double consonant are sometimes found with a single consonant (*hysas* 4.1.107 beside *hyssas* 4.1.96); *æ* is sometimes replaced by *ā* (*þām* 3.1.3, *þār* 3.2.12); there is vacillation between *eal(l)* and *al* 'all', *and* and *ond*, *sweord* and *swurd* 'sword'. In 3.2 we find the spellings *cyning*, *cyningc*, and *cyngc* for 'king'. But above all, there was variation with *i*, *y*, and *ie*: *hit* and *hyt* (cf. 3.4.2); *hī* and *hȳ* 'they'; *gif*, *gyf* 'if'; *micel*, *mycel* 'great' (cf. 3.1.5); *clīpian*, *clypian* 'call' (cf. 4.1.9); *sȳ* and *sīe* 'be' (cf. 3.4.10); *gyldan*, *gielðan* 'pay' (cf. 3.4.8). See also 5.11.



## 3 Prose

### 3.1 England under Attack

991. Hēr wæs Gypeswic gehergod; ond æfter þām  
swiðe raðe wæs Brihtnōð ealdorman<sup>1</sup> ofslægen  
æt Mældūne.<sup>2</sup> Ond on þām gēare man gerædde  
þæt man geald ærest<sup>3</sup> gafol Deniscan mannum<sup>4</sup>  
for þām mycclan brōgan þe hī worhtan be þām sārīman; 5  
þæt wæs ærest tȳn þūsend punda.  
Þæne ræd gerædde Siric arcebiscop.  
992. Hēr Ōswald, se ēadiga arcebiscop, forlēt þis lif  
ond gefærde þæt heofonlice; ond Æðelwine ealdorman  
gefōr on þām ilcan gēare. Ðā gerædde se cyng<sup>5</sup> 10  
ond ealle his witan þæt man gegaderode þā scipu  
þe āhtes wæron tō Lundenbyrig. Ond se cyng  
þā betāhte þā fyrde tō lādenne Ælfrīce ealdorman  
ond Þorode eorl<sup>6</sup> ond Ælfstāne biscop ond Æscwige biscop;  
ond sceoldan cunnian gif hī meahton þone here āhwær 15  
ūtene betræppan. Ðā sende se ealdorman Ælfrīc  
ond hēt warnian þone here; ond þā on þære nihte,  
ðe hī on ðone dæg tōgædere cuman sceoldon,  
ðā sceōc hē on niht fram þære fyrde  
him sylfum tō mycclum bismore; ond se here þā ætbærst, 20  
būton ān scip þær man ofslōh. Ond þā gemette se here  
ðā scipu of Æastenglum<sup>7</sup> ond of Lundene; ond hī ðær  
ofslōgon mycel wæl, ond þæt scip genāmon  
eall gewæpnod ond gewædod þe se ealdorman on wæs.

---

These annals are from the Laud MS oft he Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, cf. 1. 10.

<sup>1</sup> *Brihtnōð ealdorman* An ealdorman was an official deputy appointed by the king to govern a part of the country. Ealdorman Brihtnōð (or Byrhtnōð, as the name is spelt in 4.1) governed Essex, the territory of the East Saxons, which included the modern county of Essex.

<sup>2</sup> *Mældūne* Maldon, in Essex.

<sup>3</sup> In fact tribute had been paid to the Vikings in King Alfred's time, over a hundred years earlier. But following the battle mentioned here, the ealdormen of Kent, Hampshire, and Wessex were forced to buy peace from the Scandinavians in this way.

<sup>4</sup> The Viking raiders are here referred to as 'Danes'; in Æthelred's time they included men from Norway as well as Denmark.



- 1 *Hēr* Here, 'At this point (in the Annals)'; *wæs* was (5.21); *Gypeswic* Ipswich; *gehergod* plundered; *ond* and; *æfter þām* after that (5.10)
- 2 *swīde* very; *raðe* soon; *ofslægen* slain
- 3 *on þām gēare* in that year (5.5); *man gerædde* one decided (5.17), 'it was decided' (5.26)
- 4 *þæt* that; *geald* paid (5.18); *ærest* first; *gafol* tribute; *þæt . . . gafol* 'that tribute should be paid for the first time'; *Deniscan mannum* to the Danish men
- 5 *for* on account of; *þām mycclan brōgan* the great terror (5.6); *þe* which, that (5.10); *hī* they (5.9); *worhtan* = *worhton* (5.11) wrought, had brought about (5.25); *be þām sārman* along the sea-coast
- 6 *tȳn þūsend punda* ten thousand pounds
- 7 *Þæne* = *Þone* (5.11) The, That; *ræd* plan; *Þæne . . . Archbishop Siric* decided on that plan
- 8 *se ēadiga* the blessed (5.5); *forlēt* gave up; *þis lif* this life
- 9 *gefērde* reached; *þæt heofonlice* the heavenly [life]
- 10 *gefor* departed [this life]; *on þām ilcan gēare* in the same year; *Ðā* Then; *se cyng* the king
- 11 *ealle* all; *witan* councillors; *man gegaderode* one assembled (cf. 3); *þā scīpu* the ships (5.5)
- 12 *āhtes* of any account (5.13); *wæron* were; *tō Lundenbyrig* at London; *Ðā . . . Lundenbyrig* Then the king and all his councillors decided that the ships that were worth anything should be assembled at London
- 13 *þā* then; *betæhte* appointed; *þā fyrde* the [English] army; *tō lādenne* to lead; *Onð . . . biscop* And the king then appointed ealdorman Ælfric . . . and Bishop Æscwig to lead the [English] army
- 15 *sceoldan* = *sceoldon* (5.11,20) [they] should, had to; *cunnian* try; *gif* if, whether; *hī* they; *meahton* might (5.20); *þone here* the [enemy] army; *āhwær* anywhere; *gif . . . whether* they could surround the enemy anywhere from outside
- 16 *ūtene* from outside; *betræppan* entrap; *sende* sent
- 17 *hēt* ordered; *warnian* to warn (5.26); *Ðā . . . here* Then the ealdorman Ælfric sent [a message] and ordered the enemy to be warned; *on þære nihte* in the night
- 18 *on ðone dæg* on the day; *tōgædere cuman* come together; *ond . . . sceoldon* 'and then during the night preceding the day on which they were to join battle'
- 19 *sceōc* hastened away; *fram þære fyrde* from the [English] army (5.5)
- 20 *him . . . 'to his own great disgrace'* (*mycclum bismore*) (5.14); *ætberst* burst out, escaped
- 21 *būton* except; *ān* one; *þær* there; *man ofslōh* one destroyed (cf. 3); *būton . . . 'except that one ship was destroyed there'; gemette* met
- 22 *of* from; *Eastenglum* the East Anglians; *Lundene* London
- 23 *ofslōgon* slew; *mycel wæl* great slaughter; *ond . . . wæl* 'and they caused great slaughter there'; *genāmon* they captured
- 24 *gewæpnod* weaponed; *gewæðod* equipped; *ond . . . and* they captured the ship completely armed and equipped which the ealdorman was on

<sup>5</sup> i.e. Æthelred II, reigned 978–1016. He was called Æthelred *Unræd*, 'bad counsel' or 'folly' (cf. *ræd*, 7 above), but he has come to be called 'the Unready'.

<sup>6</sup> An *eorl* was a man of the upper class; in the eleventh century, and earlier in parts of England dominated by the Danes, this term came to replace *ealdorman*.

<sup>7</sup> East Anglia included Norfolk and Suffolk, as it does today.

## 3.2 Apollonius and Arcestrates

Ðā ðā Arcestrates se cyningc hæfde þæt gewrit oferræd,  
þā niste hē hwilcne forlidenne his dohtor nemde;  
beseah ðā tō ðām þrim cnihtum ond cwæð: 'Hwiltc ēower is forliden?'  
Ðā cwæð heora ān sē hātte Ardalius: 'Ic eom forliden.'  
Se oðder him andwirde ond cwæð: 'Swiga ðū. Ādl þē fornime, 5  
þæt þū ne bēo hāl ne gesund. Mid mē þū bōccræft leornodest,  
ond ðū nāfre būton þāre ceastre geate fram mē ne cōme.  
Hwār gefōre ðū forlidenness?' Mid ði þe se cyngc  
ne mihte findan hwilc heora forliden wære,  
hē beseah tō Apollonio ond cwæð: 'Nim ðū, Apolloni, 10  
þis gewrit ond ræd hit. Ēaðe mæg gewurðan  
þæt þū wite þæt ic nāt, ðū ðe þār andweard wære.'  
Ðā nam Apollonius þæt gewrit ond rædde. Ond, sōna swā  
hē ongeat þæt hē gelufod wæs fram ðām mædene,  
his andwlita eal ārēodode. Ðā se cyngc þæt geseah, 15  
þā nam hē Apollonies hand, ond hine hwōn fram þām cnihtum  
gewænde,  
ond cwæð: 'Wāst þū þone forlidenan man?' Apollonius cwæð:  
'Ðū gōda cyning, gif þīn willa bið, ic hine wāt.'  
Ðā geseah se cyngc þæt Apollonius mid rōsan rude  
wæs eal oferbræded. Þā ongeat hē þone cwyde, ond þus cwæð tō  
him: 20  
'Blissa, blissa, Apolloni, for ðām þe mīn dohtor gewilnað þæs,  
ðe mīn willa is.'

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This extract is taken (slightly adapted) from the Old English version of a popular medieval romance, *Apollonius of Tyre*. Apollonius is shipwrecked on the shores of Cyrene, where the daughter of King Arcestrates falls in love with him. She persuades her father to make Apollonius her tutor. When some young

- 1 *Ðā ðā* Then when (5.28); *cyn(in)g(c)* king; *hæfde oferræd* had read through; *þæt gewrit* the letter (5.5)
- 2 *niste* did not know (5.20,30); *hwilcne* which; *forlidenne* shipwrecked [man]; *dohtor* daughter; *nemde* had named (5.25)
- 3 *beseah tō* looked at; *ðām þrim cnihtum* the three young men; *cwæð* said; *Hwile eower* Which of you (5.9,13)
- 4 *heora* of them; *ān* one; *sē hātte* who was called (5.26); *Ic eom* I am
- 5 *Se oðer* [One of] the other[s]; *andwirde* answered; *Swiga ðū* You be silent! (5.17); *Ādl . . .* 'May disease carry you off' (*forðime*, 5.18,27)
- 6 *þæt* so that; *ne bēo* may not be (5.21,29); *hāl ne gesund* healthy nor sound; *mid* with; *leornode* learned; *bōccræft* book-learning
- 7 *nāfre* never; *būton* outside; *þāre ceastre geate* the gate of the (*þāre*) town; *fram* away from; *cōme* came
- 8 *Hwār = Hwær . . .* 'Where did you experience shipwreck?' (*forlidenness*); *Mid ði þe* When
- 9 *mihte* could; *findan* find
- 10 *Nim* Take
- 11 *ræd* read; *hit* it; *Ēaðe . . .* 'It may easily happen' (*gewurðan*)
- 12 *wite* may know (5.20,27); *þæt ic nāt* 'that [which] I do not know' (5.30); *þār = þær*; *andweard* present
- 13 *nam* took; *rædde* read; *sōna swā* as soon as
- 14 *ongeat* realized; *gelufod wæs* was loved (5.26); *fram* by; *mædene* maiden
- 15 *andwlita* face; *eal ārēodode* reddened all [over]; *geseah* saw (5.18)
- 16 *hwōn* a little way; *hine gewænde* went (5.23)
- 17 *wāst þū* do you know
- 18 *gōða* good (5.3); *gif . . . bið* if it is your will; *hine* him; *wāt* know
- 19 *mid rude* with the redness; *rōsan* of a rose
- 20 *oferbræded* overspread; *ongeat* understood; *þone cwyde* the speech, i.e. what Apollonius has just said; *þus* thus
- 21 *blissa* rejoice; *for ðām þe* because; *mīn* my; *gewilnað* desires; *þæs* that [thing] (5.23)

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men seek her hand in marriage, Arcestrates asks her to choose which she will have. She writes a note, saying that she wishes to marry the man who has been shipwrecked.

### 3.3 A Preface by Ælfric

Ic Ælfrīc, munuc ond mæsseprēost, swā þēah wāccre  
þonne swilcum hādum gebyrige, wearð āsend on Æþelrēdes dæge  
cyninges fram Ælfēage biscope, Aðelwoldes æftergengan,  
tō sumum mynstre, þe is Cernel gehāten, þurh Æðelmāres bēne  
ðæs þegenes; his gebyrd ond goodnys sind gehwār cūpe. 5  
þā bearn mē on mōde (ic trūwige þurh Godes gife) þæt  
ic ðās bōc of Ledenum gereorde tō Engliscre sprāce āwende,  
nā þurh gebylde micelre lāre, ac forþan þe ic geseah ond gehȳrde  
mycel gedwyld on manegum Engliscum bōcum, þe ungelārede menn  
þurh heora bilewitnysse tō micclum wīsdōme tealdon. Ond 10  
mē ofhrēow þæt hī nē cūpon nē næfdon þā godspellican lāre  
on heora gewritum, būton þām mannum ānum ðe þæt Leden cūðon,  
ond būton þām bōcum ðe Ælfrēd cyning snoterlice āwende of Ledene  
on Englisc,<sup>1</sup> þā synd tō hæbbenne. For þisum antimbre  
ic gedyrstlæhte, on Gode trūwiende, þæt ic ðās gesetnysse undergann, 15  
ond ēac for ðām þe menn behōfiað gōdre lāre swiðost on þisum  
tīman,  
þe is geendung þyssere worulde,<sup>2</sup> ond bēoð fela frēcednyssa  
on mancynne ær ðan þe se ende becume, swā swā ūre Drihten  
on his godspelle cwæð tō his leorningcnihtum, ‘Ðonne bēoð  
swilce gedreccednyssa swilce nāron nāfre ær fram frymðe  
middangeardes.’<sup>3</sup> 20

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Ælfric (c.955 – c.1020) was trained at Winchester by Bishop Æthelwold, one of the leaders of the tenth-century revival of English monastic life and learning. He was sent in 987 to the newly established monastery of Cernel (Cerne Abbas, in Dorset) and there wrote, among many other works, the Catholic Homilies – two series of sermons designed to be delivered on holy days and saints’ days throughout the Church year. This extract is part of his Preface to the first series. In 1005 Ælfric became abbot of another new monastery founded by Æthelmær, at Eynsham, near Oxford. His last work was probably written about 1010.

- 1 *munuc* monk; *mæsseprēost* mass-priest, 'priest competent to celebrate mass'; *swā pēah* although; *wāccre* weaker (5.8)
- 2 *þonne* than; *swilcum hādum* for such [holy] orders; *gebyrige* befits (5.27); *wearð āsend* was sent (5.26); *dæge* day
- 3 *cyninges* of the king; *æftergengan* successor
- 4 *tō sumum mynstre* to a certain monastery; *þe . . . gehāten* which is called Cernel; *þurh* through, because of; *bēne* request; *Æðelmāres ðæs þegenes* of the thane Æðelmær
- 5 *gebyrd* birth, rank; *goodnys* goodness; *sind* are; *gehwær* everywhere; *cūpe* known
- 6 *bearn* [it] ran; *mōde* mind; *þā . . . mōde* 'Then it occurred to me'; *trūwige* trust; *gife* gift, grace
- 7 *ðās bōc* this book (5.6f.); *of Ledenum gereorde* from the Latin language; *spræce* speech; *āwende* should translate
- 8 *nā* not at all; *gebylde* confidence; *micelre lāre* of great learning; *ac* but; *forþan* because; *gehyrde* heard
- 9 *gedwyld* error, heresy; *on manegum* in many; *ungelærede* unlearned
- 10 *heora bilewitnysse* their simplicity; *tō as, for*; *wīsdōme* wisdom; *tealdon* considered (as), took (for)
- 11 *mē ofhrēow* I regretted (5.22); *nē . . . nē* neither . . . nor; *cūþon* knew; *næfdon* had not (5.30); *godspellican lāre* evangelical doctrine
- 12 *gewritum* writings; *būton* except; *ānum* only
- 13 *snoterlice* wisely; *of* from
- 14 *þā . . . hæbbenne* which are to be had (5.26); *antimbre* reason
- 15 *gedyrstlæhte* presumed; *trūwiende* trusting; *þæt* so that; *ðās gesetnysse* this work; *undergann* undertook
- 16 *ēac* also; *behōfiað* have need; *swīðost* especially; *on þisum tīman* at this time
- 17 *geendung* ending; *þyssere worulde* of this world; *bēoð* are, 'there will be' (5.24); *fela frēcedyssa* many calamities (5.13)
- 18 *mancynne* mankind; *ær ðan* before; *ende* end; *becume* occurs (5.27); *swā swā* just as; *ūre Drihten* our Lord
- 19 *godspelle* gospel; *leorningcnihtum* disciples; *Donne bēoð* 'Then there will be' (5.24)
- 20 *swilce* such (5.28); *gedreccedyssa* tribulations; *swilce . . . as* there have never been before since the beginning (*frymðe*) of the world (*middangeardes*)

<sup>1</sup> King Alfred (849–99) translated a number of influential works into English, including Gregory's *Pastoral Care* and Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. The OE version of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is associated with him, as is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

<sup>2</sup> It was a common belief that the world would end in the year 1000.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ælfric may be referring to Matthew 24,21, where Christ says, 'For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been seen from the beginning of the world' (R.V.). His words in Mark 13,19 are very similar. Both passages go on to refer to 'false Christs' and deceptions; cf. Ælfric's own fears of *gedwyld*, 9 above.



### 3.4 A Miscellany

- (a) *Ælc trēow þe ne byrð gōdne wæstm,  
sȳ hyt forcorfen and on fȳr āworpen.  
Witodlice, be hyra wæstmum gē hī oncnāwað.  
Ne gæð ælc þāra on heofena rice þe cwyþ tō mē,  
'Drihten! Drihten!' ac sē þe wyrcð mīnes fæder willan* 5  
*þe on heofenum is, sē gæð on heofena rice.*
- (b) *Donne mon bēam on wuda forbærne, ond weorðe yppe  
on þone ðe hit dyde, gielde hē fulwite:  
geselle siextig scillinga<sup>1</sup> – for þām þe fȳr bið pēof.<sup>2</sup>*
- (c) *Gif man calu sīe, Plinius se micla lāce<sup>3</sup> segþ þisne lācedōm.* 10  
*Genim dēade bēon; gebærne tō ahsan; and linsæd ēac;  
dō ele tō on þæt. Sēoþe swīpe lange ofer glēdum.  
Āsēoh þonne and āwringe; and nime welies lēaf, gecnuwige,  
gēote on þone ele. Wylle eft hwile on glēdum.  
Āsēoh; þonne smire mid æfter baþe.* 15
- (d) *Sanctus Paulus wæs gesēonde on norðanweardne þisne  
middangeard,<sup>4</sup>  
þær ealle wætero niðer gewītað, and hē þær geseah  
ofer ðām wætere sumne hārne stān. And wæron  
norð of ðām stāne āwexene swīðe hrīmige bearwas,  
and ðær wæron þȳstro genipo, and under þām stāne* 20  
*wæs nicra eardung and wearga. And hē geseah  
þæt on ðām clife hangodan, on ðām īsgean bearwum,  
manige swearte sāula, be heora handum gebundne.  
And þā fȳnd þær on nicra onlicnesse heora grīpende wæron,  
swā swā grādig wulf. And þæt wæter wæs sweart* 25  
*under þām clife neoðan.*

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This selection further exemplifies the range of material in OE prose: the Anglo-Saxon had access to parts of the Bible, to the law, to medicine, and of course to homiletic teaching in his own language. The extract (a) is from Matthew 7, 19–21; (b) is from the laws of Ine, an early king of Wessex; (c) is from an important British Museum manuscript, Bald's Leechbook, fol. 57b; (d) is from St Paul's vision of hell in the 17th of the Blickling Homilies, with striking parallels to the description of the sinister mere where Grendel's mother lurked (4.5).

- 1 *Ælc* Each; *trēow* tree; *ne byrð* does not bear (5.18); *gōdne wæstm* good fruit
- 2 *sȳ hyt* let it be (5.21,27); *forcorfen* cut down; *on* into; *fȳr* fire; *āworpen* thrown
- 3 *Witodlice* Truly; *be* by; *hyra* their; *wæstmun* fruits; *gē* you (pl.); *hī* them; *oncnāwað* will distinguish (5.24)
- 4 *Ne gæð* will not go (5.24); *þæra* of those; *heofena rice* kingdom of the heavens; *cwyþ* says
- 5 *Drihten* Lord; *ac* but; *sē þe* he who; *wyrceð* carries out; *mines fæder willan* my father's wishes
- 6 *gæð* will go (5.24)
- 7 *Donne* When, 'If'; *mon* anyone; *bēam* a tree; *on wuda* in a wood; *forbærne* burn down (5.27); *weorðe* it become (5.27); *ȳppe* manifest
- 8 *on* against; *þone* . . . him who did it; *gieldes hē* let him pay (5.18,27); *fulwite* full penalty
- 9 *geselle* let him hand over; *siextig* sixty; *scillinga* shillings (5.13); *bið* is; *þeof* a thief
- 10 *gif* if; *man* anyone; *calu* bald; *sie* should be (5.27); *læce* leech, 'doctor'; *segb* says, 'prescribes' (5.17); *læcedōm* remedy
- 11 *Genim* Take; *dēade* dead; *bēon* bees; *gebærne* [one] should burn [them] (5.27); *ahsan* ashes; *linsæd* linseed; *ēac* also
- 12 *dō tō* apply; *ele* oil; *on þæt* to it; *sēoþe* boil (5.27); *swiþe* very; *lange* long; *ofer* over; *glēdum* coals, 'open fire'
- 13 *Asēoh* Strain; *þonne* then; *āwringe* squeeze (5.27); *nime* take (5.27); *welies* of willow; *lēaf* leaves; *gecnuwige* crush (5.27)
- 14 *gēote on þone ele* pour the oil on (5.27); *Wylle* Boil (5.27); *eft* again; *hwīle* for a while (5.12)
- 15 *smire mid* smear with [the substance]; *bape* bath
- 16 *wæs gesēonde* gazed (5.24); *on* towards; *nordanweardne þisne middangeard* the northward [part of] this world
- 17 *þær* where; *ealle* all; *wætero* = *wæteru* (5.11) waters; *nīðer* down; *gewītað* go; *þær* there
- 18 *ofer ðām wætere* above the water; *sumne* a certain; *hārne* grey; *stān* stone, rock; *wæron āwexene* 'had sprung up'
- 19 *norð* north; *hrīmige* frost-covered; *bearwas* woods
- 20 *þȳstro* dark; *geniþo* = *geniþu* mists
- 21 *nicera* of water-monsters; *eardung* dwelling-place; *wearga* of evil creatures
- 22 *clife* cliff; *hangodan* = *hangodon* (5.11) hung; *isgean* = *isigum* (5.11) ice-covered
- 23 *swearte* black, 'sinful'; *sāula* souls; *be* by; *gebundne* bound
- 24 *þā fȳnd* the fiends; *onlicnesse* likeness, form; *heora griþende wæron* were attacking them (5.23,24)
- 25 *swā swā* just as; *grædig wulf* a greedy wolf
- 26 *under neoðan* underneath

<sup>1</sup> The amount can be gauged from the fact that an ox was valued at about six shillings.

<sup>2</sup> Fire is thus equated with theft through its silent 'stealth'; the punishment for theft was also 60 shillings.

<sup>3</sup> Pliny the Elder (died AD 79), from whom much medieval medical and scientific lore was derived.

<sup>4</sup> The world was conceived as occupying a middle point, with the waters and the forces of evil around and beneath.

## 4 Poetry

### 4.1 The Battle of Maldon

Ðā þær Byrhtnōð ongan beornas trymian,  
rād and rædde, rincum tæhte  
hū hī sceoldon standan, and þone stede healdan,  
and bæd þæt hyra randas rihte hēoldon  
fæste mid folman, and ne forhtedon nā.<sup>1</sup> 5  
þā hē hæfde þæt folc fægere getrymmed,  
hē lihte þā mid lēodon, þær him lēofost wæs,  
þær hē his heorðwerod holdost wiste.  
þā stōd on stæðe,<sup>2</sup> stiðlice clypode  
wicinga ār, wordum mælde, 10  
sē on bēot ābēad brimlipendra  
ærende tō þām eorle, þær hē on ōfre stōd:  
'Mē sendon tō þē sǣmen snelle,  
hēton ðē secgan, þæt þū mōst sendan raðe  
bēagas<sup>3</sup> wið gebeorge; and ēow betere is 15  
þæt gē þisne gǣrræs mid gafole forgylدون,  
þonne wē swā hearde hilde dælon.  
Ne þurfe wē ūs spillan, gif gē spēdaþ tō þām;  
wē willað wið þām golde grið fæstnian.  
Gyf þū þæt gerædest þe hēr ricost eart, 20  
þæt þū þine lēoda lȳsan wille,  
syllan sǣmannum on hyra sylfra dōm  
feoh wið frēode, and niman frið æt ūs,  
wē willaþ mid þām sceattum ūs tō scype gangan,  
on flot fēran, and ēow fripes healdan.' 25  
Byrhtnōð mapelode, bord hafenode,<sup>4</sup>  
wand wācne æsc, wordum mælde,

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This battle is mentioned briefly in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 991 (see 3.1) as one of a series of disastrous encounters with the Vikings. In view of its historical background as we have it in the Chronicle, the poem is remarkable for the degree to which it is inspired by the heroic system of values of the pre-migration Germanic societies. This is described 900 years earlier by Tacitus: 'The chiefs fight for victory, the companions for their chief' (*Germania*, AD 97–8, ch. 14; here, and in subsequent notes, we have used the Penguin translation, 1970). We have omitted a few lines at the beginning and end of the poem, which in any case has not been preserved in its entirety.

<sup>1</sup> The soldiers to whom Byrhtnōð is giving these very explicit instructions are the local conscripts, belonging to the *fyrð*. They are distinct from Byrhtnōð's



- 1 *ongan* (5.24) . . . proceeded to rally (*trymian*) the men (*beornas*)
- 2 *rād* rode; *rædde* instructed; *rincum* (5.23) . . . explained (*tāhte*) to the warriors
- 3 *hū* how; *þone* . . . hold (*healdan*) the position (*stede*)
- 4 *bæd* commanded; *hyra randas* their shields; *rihte* correctly; *hēoldon* = *hēolden* (5.11) they should hold (5.27)
- 5 *mid folman* = *folmum* (5.11) with hands; *and* . . . and [that] they should never (*nā*) be afraid
- 6 *folc* company; *fægere* suitably; *getrymmed* rallied
- 7 *lihte* alighted; *mid lēodon* = *lēodum* (5.11) among the people; *þær* . . . where, to him, it was most pleasing (*lēofost*) [to be]
- 8 *þær* where (5.28); *his* . . . knew (*wiste*) his most devoted (*holdost*) hearth-troop [to be]
- 9 *stæde* shore; *stiðlice* sternly; *clypode* called out
- 10 *wicinga* of the Vikings; *ār* messenger; *wordum* with words; *mælde* spoke
- 11 *sē* who; *on bēot* in challenge; *ābēad* proclaimed; *brimlīpendra* of the sea-travellers
- 12 *ærende* message; *ōfre* shore
- 13 *þē* you (sg.); *sāmen* seamen; *snelle* bold
- 14 *hēton* . . . ordered [me] to say (*secgan*) to you; *raðe* quickly
- 15 *bēagas* rings; *wið gebeorge* in return for protection; *ēow* for you (pl.); *betere* better
- 16 *gārræs* spear-rush, i.e. battle (5.35); *mid* . . . should buy off (*forgylton*, 5.11) with tribute (*gafole*)
- 17 *þonne* . . . than [that] we should join in (*dālon*, 5.11) such hard battle (*hilde*)
- 18 *Ne þurfe wē* We need not (5.20); *ūs* ourselves; *spillan* destroy; *gif* . . . if you are prosperous to that extent, i.e. 'if you can manage to pay'
- 19 *willað* are willing; *wið* in return for; *grið* truce; *fæstnian* to establish
- 20 *Gyf* . . . If you decide (*gerædest*) that; *þe* . . . who are the mightiest here
- 21 *þæt* with the following clause expands *þæt* in 20 (5.28); *þine* . . . will ransom (*lȳsan*) your people (5.27)
- 22 *syllan* give; *sāmannum* to the seamen; *on* . . . according to their own judgment (*dōm*)
- 23 *feoh* money; *wið frēode* in return for peace; *frid* peace; *æt* from
- 24 *mid þām sceattum* with the payments; *ūs gangan* 'betake ourselves'; *scype* ship
- 25 *flot* the sea; *fēran* go; *ēow* . . . keep peace with you
- 26 *mapelode* spoke; *bord* shield; *hafenode* raised
- 27 *wand* brandished; *wācne* slender; *æsc* ash-wood [spear]

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own expert retainers, referred to in 8 as the 'hearth-troop'; cf. *heorðgenēatas*, 188.

<sup>2</sup> *on stæde* The Vikings had sailed up the estuary of the river Blackwater (here called Panta, 52, 81) to the island of Northey, which is still linked to the mainland by a ford or causeway (*brigc*, 58), exposed only at low tide.

<sup>3</sup> *bēagas* The literal reference is to ornamental gold rings, or 'torcs', which were both a feature of Anglo-Saxon jewellery and a symbol of wealth. Had it been paid, the tribute referred to by the Viking messenger would probably have taken the form of a collection of arms, ornaments and other items of value.

<sup>4</sup> *bord hafenode* A gesture to receive attention; cf. 228 and 293; similarly, 214.

yrrē and ānræd āgeaf him andsware :  
 'Gehȳrst þū, sǣlida, hwæt þis folc segeð ?  
 Hī willað ēow tō gafole gāras syllan, 30  
 ættrene ord and ealde swurd,<sup>5</sup>  
 þā heregeatu<sup>6</sup> þe ēow æt hilde ne dēah.  
 Brimmanna boda, ābēod eft ongēan,  
 sege þinum lēodum miccle lāpre spell,  
 þæt hēr stynt unforcūð eorl mid his werode, 35  
 þe wile gealgian ēpel þysne,  
 Æpelrēdes eard, ealdres mīnes  
 folc and foldan; feallan sceolon  
 hāþene æt hilde. Tō hēanlic mē þinceð  
 þæt gē mid ūrum sceattum tō scype gangon 40  
 unbefohtene, nū gē þus feor hider  
 on ūrne eard in becōmon.  
 Ne sceole gē swā sōfte sinc gegangan;  
 ūs sceal ord and ecg ær gesēman,  
 grim gūðplega, ær wē gofol syllon.' 45  
 Hēt þā bord beran, beornas gangan,  
 þæt hī on þām ēasteðe ealle stōdon.  
 Ne mihte þær for wætere werod tō þām ōðrum;  
 þær cōm flōwende flōd æfter ebban,  
 lucon lagustrēamas.<sup>7</sup> Tō lang hit him þūhte, 50  
 hwænne hī tōgædere gāras bēron.  
 Hī þær Pantan strēam mid prasse bestōdon  
 Ēastseaxena ord and se æschere.  
 Ne mihte hyra ænig ōðrum derian,  
 būton hwā þurh flānes flyht fyl genāme. 55  
 Se flōd ūt gewāt; þā flotan stōdon gearowe,  
 wicinga fela, wīges georne.  
 Hēt þā hǣleða hlēo healdan þā bricge  
 wigan wigheardne, sē wæs hāten Wulfstān,  
 cāfne mid his cynne – þæt wæs Cēolan sunu – 60  
 þe ðone forman man mid his francan ofscēat,  
 þe þær baldlicost on þā bricge stōp.  
 Þær stōdon mid Wulfstāne wigan unforhte,  
 Ælfere and Maccus, mōdige twēgen,  
 þā noldon æt þām forða flēam gewyrcean, 65  
 ac hī fæstlice wið ðā fȳnd weredon,

<sup>5</sup> *ealde swurd* Weapons were valuable items of property and were handed down from father to son. Old swords were naturally the best, since they would have proved their worth.

<sup>6</sup> *heregeatu* 'A feudal service, originally consisting of weapons, horses, and other military equipments, restored to a lord on the death of his tenant' (OED s.v. *heriot*, 2). This was later converted to a money payment, which is what

- 28 *yrre* angry; *ānrād* resolute; *āgeaf* gave back; *andsware* answer  
 29 *Gehýrst þū* Do you hear; *sālid* a seafarer; *segeð* says  
 30 *Hī* They; *tō gafole* as tribute; *gāras* spears  
 31 *ǣttrene* deadly; *ord* point; *ealde* old; *swurd* (2.4) swords  
 32 *heregeatu* war-gear; *æt hilde* in battle; *dēah* profits (5.20,24)  
 33 *Brimmanna* of the seamen; *boda* messenger; *ābōd* . . . report back (*ongēan*)  
 again (*eft*)  
 34 *þinum lēodum* to your people; *miccle lāpre spell* a much uglier message  
 35 *stynt* stands; *unforcūð* noble; *werode* troop  
 36 *gealgian* defend; *þel þysne* this homeland  
 37 *eard* country; *ealdres mīnes* my lord's  
 38 *foldan* land; *feallan* . . . *hāþene* the heathens shall fall  
 39 *hāþene* heathens; *Tō hēanlic* Too shameful; *mē þinceð* it seems to me (5.22)  
 40 *gangon* = *gangen* should go (5.27)  
 41 *unbefohtene* unopposed; *nū* now that; *þus feor* thus far; *hider* hither  
 42 *becōmon* have come (5.25)  
 43 *swā sōfte* so easily; *sinc* treasure; *gegangan* gain  
 44 *ūs* . . . point and edge must first (*ǣr*) reconcile (*gesēman*) us  
 45 *gūðplega* war-play, i.e. battle; *gofol* tribute  
 46 *Hēt* He commanded; *bord beran* shields to be carried (5.26)  
 47 *þæt* so that; *eastede* river-bank  
 48 *Ne* . . . There, because of the water, the army could not [get] to the others,  
 i.e. the Vikings (5.20)  
 49 *flōwende* flowing; *flōd æfter ebban* the flood-tide after the ebb  
 50 *lucon lagustrēamas* the tidal currents interlocked; *hit* . . . it seemed to them  
 51 *hwænne* [until the time] when; *tōgædere* together; *bēron* = *bāren* might bear  
 52 *mid þrasse* with [military] pomp; *bestōdon* stood by  
 53 *ord* front line; *æschere* ash-wood [ship] ravagers (lit. sg.), i.e. the Vikings  
 54 *hyra ænig* any of them (5.13); *derian* harm (5.23)  
 55 *būton* except; *hwā* whoever; *þurh flānes flyht* because of an arrow's flight;  
*fyl* death; *genāme* received (5.27)  
 56 *ūt gewāt* went out; *þā flotan* the seamen; *gearowe* ready  
 57 *fela* many (5.13); *wīges* for battle; *georne* eager  
 58 *þā* then; *hæleða* of heroes; *hlēo* protector; *bricge* causeway  
 59 *wīgan* warrior; *wīgeardne* battle-hard; *hāten* called  
 60 *cāfne* valiant; *mid his cynne* among his kinsmen; *Cēolan sunu* Ceola's son  
 61 *þe* . . . who with his spear (*francan*) shot down the first man  
 62 *baldlicost* most boldly; *stōþ* stepped  
 63 *wīgan* warriors; *unforhte* unafraid  
 64 *mōdige twēgen* two brave [men]  
 65 *þā* who; *forda* ford; *flēam gewyrcean* take to flight  
 66 *ac* but, rather; *hī weredon* defended themselves; *fæstlice* resolutely; *ðā fýnd*  
 the enemy (pl.)

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the Vikings are demanding. They are indeed to receive the weapons of the English, but with an effect very different from that suggested by the later meaning of *heregeatu*.

<sup>7</sup> *lucon lagustrēamas* This may mean that the two tidal streams flowing round either side of the island joined here, or that the incoming tide met the current of the river.

þā hwile þe hī wāpna wealdan mōston.  
 þā hī þæt ongēaton, and georne gesāwon  
 þæt hī þær bricgweardas bitere fundon,  
 ongunnon lytegian þā lāðe gystas: 70  
 bādon þæt hī upgangan āgan mōston,  
 ofer þone ford faran, fēpan lēdan.  
 Ðā se eorl ongan for his ofermōde<sup>8</sup>  
 ālȳfan landes tō fela lāpere ðēode.  
 Ongan ceallian þā ofer cald wāter 75  
 Byrhtelmes bearn (beornas gehlyston):  
 'Nū ēow is gerȳmed, gāð ricene tō ūs,  
 guman tō gūpe; God āna wāt  
 hwā þære wælstōwe wealdan mōte.'  
 Wōdon þā wælwulfas, for wātere ne murnon, 80  
 wicinga werod, west ofer Pantan,  
 ofer scīr wāter scyldas wēgon,  
 lidmen tō lande linde bāron.  
 þær ongēan gramum gearowe stōdon  
 Byrhtnōð mid beornum. Hē mid bordum hēt 85  
 wyrcean þone wihagan,<sup>9</sup> and þæt werod healdan  
 fæste wið fēondum. þā wæs feohte nēh,  
 tīr æt getohte; wæs sēo tīd cumen  
 þæt þær fāge men feallan sceoldon.  
 þær wearð hrēam āhafen, hremmas wundon, 90  
 earn āses georn;<sup>10</sup> wæs on eorpan cyrm.  
 Hī lēton þā of folman fēolhearde speru,  
 grimme gegrundene gāras flēogan;  
 bogan wāron bysige, bord ord onfēng,  
 biter wæs se beaduræs, beornas fēollon 95  
 on gehwæðere hand, hyssas lāgon.  
 Wund wearð Wulfmār, wælraeste gecēas,  
 Byrhtnōðes mæg, hē mid billum wearð,  
 his swustersunu,<sup>11</sup> swiðe forhēawen.  
 þær wearð wicingum wiperlēan āgyfen: 100  
 gehȳrde ic þæt Ēadweard ānne slōge  
 swiðe mid his swurde, swenges ne wyrnde,  
 þæt him æt fōtum fēoll fāge cempa;  
 þæs him his ðēoden þanc gesæde,  
 þām būrþēne,<sup>12</sup> þā hē byre hæfde. 105

<sup>8</sup> *ofermōde* Cf. 4.2, where Satan comes to grief because of his *ofermētto* 'pride' (27). But the poet here clearly intends to praise Byrhtnōð's heroism, while at the same time pointing out the fatal miscalculation which resulted in defeat.

<sup>9</sup> *wihagan* This defensive formation is called *scyldburh* in 226, *bordweall* in 261.



- 67 *þā hwīle þe* as long as; *wǣpna wealdan* wield weapons (5.23); *mōston* could  
 68 *ongēaton* perceived; *georne* clearly; *gesāwon* saw  
 69 *bricgweardas* bridge-guards; *bitere* fierce; *fundon* found  
 70 *ongunnon* began; *lytegian* to use guile; *lāðe* hateful; *gystas* foreigners  
 71 *bædon* they asked; *upgangan* passage up [on to land]; *āgan mōston* might have  
 72 *faran* to go; *fēþan lādan* to lead the troops  
 73 *ongan ālyfan* allowed (5.24); *for his ofermōde* because of his great courage  
 74 *landes* land (5.13); *tō fela* too much; *lāþere ðeode* to the hateful people  
 75 *Ongan ceallian* called (5.24); *cald* cold  
 76 *Byrhtelmes bearn* Byrhtelm's son, i.e. Byrhtnoð; *gehluston* paid attention  
 77 *ēow* . . . [the way] is opened for you; *gāð* advance; *ricene* quickly  
 78 *guman* men; *gūþe* battle; *āna* alone  
 79 *þære wælstōwe* the slaughter-place, i.e. battlefield (5.23); *wealdan mōte* may control  
 80 *Wōdon* advanced; *wælwulfas* slaughter-wolves (5.35); *for* . . . they did not care about the water  
 81 *wicinga* see 10  
 82 *scīr* gleaming; *scyldas* shields; *wēgon* = *wāgon* carried  
 83 *lidmen* sailors; *linde* lime-wood [shields]  
 84 *ongēan* against; *gramum* [the] fierce [ones]; *gearowe* ready  
 85 *mid bordum* with shields  
 86 *wyrcan* to be formed (5.26); *wihagan* battle-hedge; *and* . . . and the company to hold firm against the enemy  
 87 *feohte* the fight; *nēh* = *nēah* near  
 88 *tīr* glory; *æt getohte* in battle; *wæs* . . . the time was come  
 89 *fāge* doomed  
 90 *weard* was; *hrēam* outcry; *āhafen* raised; *hremmas* ravens; *wundon* wheeled  
 91 *earn* the eagle; *āses* for carrion; *cym* uproar  
 92 *lēton flēogan* let fly; *fēolhearde* file-hard; *speru* spears  
 93 *grimme* cruelly; *gegrundene* sharpened  
 94 *bogan* bows; *bysige* busy; *bord* . . . the shield received the point  
 95 *beadurās* battle-rush  
 96 *gehwæðere* either; *hyssas* young men; *lāgon* lay dead  
 97 *Wund* wounded; *wælræste* bed of slaughter; *gecēas* chose  
 98 *mæg* kinsman; *mid billum* with swords; *weard forhēawen* was hewn down  
 99 *swustersunu* sister's son; *swiðe* cruelly  
 100 *wiperlēan* recompense; *āgyfen* given  
 101 *gehyrde ic* I heard; *þæt* . . . that Eadweard struck one  
 102 *swiðe* fiercely; *swenges* blow; *wyrnde* withheld (5.23)  
 103 *þæt* so that; *him* . . . at his feet (5.14); *cempa* warrior  
 104 *þæs* for that; *him* to him; *ðeoden* prince; *þanc* thanks; *gesāde* said  
 105 *þām būrpēne* to the adjutant (see footnote 12); *byre* opportunity

<sup>10</sup> See 4.7.81–2 for another instance of this conventional theme of the ‘beasts of battle’.

<sup>11</sup> *his swustersunu* Tacitus says, ‘The sons of sisters are as highly honoured by their uncles as by their own fathers. Some tribes even consider the former tie the closer and more sacred of the two’ (*Germania*, ch. 20).

<sup>12</sup> *būrpēne* A *būr* was a room or dwelling separate from the communal hall; *þēn*, *þegen* means ‘servant’ or ‘follower’.

Swā stemnetton stīðhigende  
 hysas æt hilde, hogodon georne  
 hwā þær mid orde ærost mihte  
 on fægean men feorh gewinnan,  
 wigan mid wæpnum; wæl fēol on eorðan. 110  
 Stōdon stædefæste, stihte hī Byrhtnōð,  
 bæd þæt hyssa gehwylc hogode tō wīge,  
 þe on Denon wolde dōm gefeohtan.  
 Wōd þā wīges heard, wæpen up āhōf,  
 bord tō gebeorge, and wið þæs beornes stōp. 115  
 Æode swā ānræd eorl tō þām ceorle:<sup>13</sup>  
 ægþer hyra oðrum yfeles hogode.  
 Sende ðā se sārinc sūperne gār,  
 þæt gewundod wearð wigena hlāford;  
 hē scēaf þā mid ðām scylde, þæt se scaft tōbærst,  
 and þæt spere sprengde, þæt hit sprang ongēan. 120  
 Gegremod wearð se gūðrinc: hē mid gāre stang  
 wlancne wīcing, þe him þā wunde forgeaf.  
 Frōd wæs se fyrdrinc; hē lēt his francan wadan  
 þurh ðæs hysses hals, hand wīode  
 þæt hē on þām fārsceaðan feorh geræhte. 125  
 Ðā hē oþerne ofstlice scēat,  
 þæt sēo byrne tōbærst; hē wæs on brēostum wund  
 þurh ðā hringlocan, him æt heortan stōd  
 ætterne ord. Se eorl wæs þē bliþra: 130  
 hlōh þā mōdi man, sæde Metode þanc  
 ðæs dægweorces þe him Drihten forgeaf.  
 Forlēt þā drenga sum daroð of handa,  
 flēogan of folman, þæt sē tō forð gewāt  
 þurh ðone æpelan Æpelrēdes pegen. 135  
 Him be healfē stōd hyse unweaxen,  
 cniht on gecampe, sē full cāflīce  
 bræd of þām beorne blōdigne gār,  
 Wulfstānes bearn, Wulfmār se geonga;  
 forlēt forheardne faran eft ongēan; 140  
 ord in gewōd, þæt sē on eorþan læg,  
 þe his þēoden ār pearle geræhte.  
 Æode þā gesyrwed secg tō þām eorle;  
 hē wolde þæs beornes bēagas gefeccan,  
 rēaf and hringas, and gerēnod swurd. 145  
 Ðā Byrhtnōð bræd bill of scēðe  
 brād and brūnecg, and on þā byrnan slōh.

<sup>13</sup> *ceorle* This usually means 'freeman of the lowest class'; cf. 240, where an English *ceorl* adds his own heroic words and deeds to those of his aristocratic

- 106 *stemnetton* stood firm; *stiðhicgende* resolute  
 107 *hysas* young men; *hogodon* considered; *georne* eagerly  
 108 *hwā* who; *ǣrost* first, i.e. before anyone else  
 109 *on fāgean men feorh* the life in a doomed man; *gewinnan* gain by fighting  
 110 *wigan* from a warrior; *wæl* the slain  
 111 *stædefæste* steadfast; *stihste* . . . Byrhtnoð exhorted them  
 112 *hyssa gehwylc* each of the young men; *hogode tō* should be intent on  
 113 *on Denon* among the Danes; *dōm* glory; *gefehtan* win by fighting  
 114 *Wōd* advanced; *wiges heard* [one] hard in battle; *āhōf* raised  
 115 *tō gebeorge* as a defence; *wið* . . . stepped forward against the man, i.e. against Byrhtnoð  
 116 *Ēode* went; *swā ānrād* equally resolute; *ceorle* churl  
 117 *ǣgþer hyra* each of them; *ōðrum* . . . intended evil to the other  
 118 *sārinc* seaman; *sūperne* [of] southern [make]  
 119 *geuundod* see 97; *wigena hlāford* the lord of warriors  
 120 *scēaf* thrust, i.e. against the spear that had struck him; *sceaft* shaft; *tōbærst* broke  
 121 *þæt* . . . [Byrhtnoð] broke (*sprengde*) the spear; *þæt* . . . so that it sprang back  
 122 *Gegremod* enraged; *gūðrinc* warrior; *stang* pierced  
 123 *wlancne* proud; *wunde* wound (G f: 5.5); *forgeaf* gave  
 124 *Frōd* experienced; *fyrdrinc* warrior; *lēt wadan* caused to go; *francan* spear  
 125 *þurh* through; *hals* neck; *hand wisode* [his] hand guided [it]  
 126 *þæt* . . . so that he seized (*gerāhte*) the life in the raider (*fārsceaðan*)  
 127 *ōperne* a second [Viking]; *ofstlice* quickly; *scēat* struck  
 128 *sēo byrne* the corslet; *brēostum* breast (lit. pl.); *wund* see 97  
 129 *hringlocan* linked rings, i.e. of the corslet; *him* . . . 'lodged in his heart'  
 130 *ǣtterne* deadly; *þē bliþra* the happier (5.10)  
 131 *hlōh* laughed; *mōdi* brave; *Metode* to God  
 132 *ðæs dægweorces* for the day's work (5.13); *him* to him; *Drihten* the Lord; *forgeaf* gave  
 133 *Forlēt flēogan* let fly; *drenga sum* one of the [Viking] warriors; *darod* spear  
 134 *of folman* from his hand; *sē* it; *tō forð* too deeply; *gewāt* went  
 135 *ðone* . . . the noble thane of Æþelred  
 136 *Him be healfe* By his side (5.14); *unweaxen* immature  
 137 *cniht* youth; *gecampe* battle; *full* very; *cāflīce* bravely  
 138 *brād* plucked out; *blōdigne* bloody  
 139 *se geonga* the young  
 140 *forheardne* [a] very hard [weapon]  
 141 *in gewōd* went in; *sē* he, i.e. the Viking  
 142 *þe* . . . who had wounded (*ǣr gerāhte*, 5.25) his prince sorely (*pearle*). The reference is to the Viking who had wounded Byrhtnoð  
 143 *gesyrwed secg* armed man  
 144 *bēagas* rings (see footnote 3); *gefecan* seize  
 145 *rēaf* booty; *hringas* rings; *gerēnod* ornamented  
 146 *brād* drew; *bill* see 98; *of scēðe* from the sheath  
 147 *brād* broad; *brūnecg* bright-edged (5.35); *slōh* struck

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companions. Here the word refers to one of the enemy force, and is doubtless used pejoratively.

- Tō raþe hine gelette lidmanna sum,  
 þā hē þæs eorles earm āmyrde.  
 Fēoll þā tō foldan fealohilte swurd: 150  
 ne mihte hē gehealdan heardne mēce,  
 wæpnas wealdan. þā gýt þæt word gecwæð  
 hār hilderinc, hyssas bylde,  
 bæd gangan forð gōde gefēran.  
 Ne mihte þā on fōtum leng fæste gestandan, 155  
 hē tō heofenum wlāt  
 'Ic þancige þē, ðēoda Waldend,  
 ealra þāra wynta þe ic on worulde gebād.  
 Nū ic āh, milde Metod, mæste þearfe,  
 þæt þū mīnum gāste gōdes geunne, 160  
 þæt mīn sāwul tō ðē siððian mōte,  
 on þīn geweald, þēoden engla,  
 mid friþe ferian; ic eom frymde tō þē  
 þæt hī helsceaðan hȳnan ne mōton.'  
 Ðā hine hēowon hæðene scealcas, 165  
 and bēgen þā beornas þe him big stōdon,  
 Ælfnōð and Wulmār bēgen lāgon,  
 ðā onemn hyra frēan feorh gesealdon.  
 Hī bugon þā fram beaduwe þe þær bēon noldon:  
 þær wurdon Oddan bearn ærest on flēame, 170  
 Godric fram gūpe, and þone gōðan forlēt,  
 þe him mænigne oft mearh gesealde,  
 hē gehlēop þone eoh þe āhte his hlāford,  
 on þām gerædum þēh hit riht ne wæs,  
 and his brōðru mid him bēgen ærndon, 175  
 Godwine and Godwig, gūpe ne gȳmdon,  
 ac wendon fram þām wīge, and þone wudu sōhton,  
 flugon on þæt fæsten, and hyra fēore burgon,  
 and manna mā þonne hit ænig mæð wære,  
 gȳf hī þā geearnunga ealle gemundon, 180  
 þe hē him tō dugupe gedōn hæfde.  
 Swā him Offa on dæg ār āsæde,  
 on þām meþelstede, þā hē gemōt hæfde,  
 þæt þær mōdiglice manega spræcon,  
 þe eft æt þearfe þolian noldon. 185  
 þā wearð āfeallen þæs folces ealdor,  
 Æþelrēdes eorl. Ealle gesāwon  
 heorðgenēatas þæt hyra hearra læg.  
 þā ðær wendon forð wlance þegenas,  
 unearge men efston georne: 190  
 hī woldon þā ealle oððer twēga,  
 lif forlætan oððe lēofne gewrecan.  
 Swā hī byldð forð bearn Ælfrices,



- 148 *Tō* rape too soon; *hine* . . . one of the sailors impeded (*gelette*) him  
 149 *pā* when; *earn* arm; *āmyrde* wounded  
 150 *fealohilte* yellow-hilted  
 151 *mēce* sword  
 152 *wealdan* see 67; *pā gýt* still; *gecwæð* spoke  
 153 *hār* grey[-haired]; *hilderinc* warrior; *bylde* encouraged  
 154 *gefēran* comrades  
 155 *leng* longer (5.8); *gestandan* stand  
 156 *wlāt* looked  
 157 *þancige* thank; *ðēoda* of peoples; *Waldend* Ruler  
 158 *ealra* . . . for all of the joys; *gebād* have experienced  
 159 *āh mǣste þearfe* have most need; *milde* merciful  
 160 *mīnum gāste* to my spirit; *gōdes* well-being; *geunne* grant  
 161 *sāwul* soul; *sīðian mōte* may journey  
 162 *on* into; *geweald* power; *engla* of angels  
 163 *friþe* peace; *ferian* go; *ic* . . . I beseech thee  
 164 *hī* it, i.e. the soul (5.1,9); *helsceaðan* hell-fiends; *hýnan* harm  
 165 *hǣðene* heathen; *scealcas* warriors  
 166 *bēgen* both; *big* = *bī* by  
 168 *onemn* beside; *frēan* lord; *gesealdon* gave up  
 169 *bugon* moved; *beaduwe* battle  
 170 *Oddan bearn* Odda's sons; *wurdon ærest on flēame* were first in flight  
 171 *þone* . . . abandoned the good [man]  
 172 *mænigne mearh* many a steed; *gesealde* gave  
 173 *gehlēop* leaped upon; *eoh* war-horse; *þe* . . . which his lord owned  
 174 *gerædum* trappings; *þēh* = *þēah* though; *riht* right  
 175 *brōðru* brothers; *ærndon* galloped  
 176 *gýmdon* heeded  
 177 *wendon* turned; *wudu* wood; *sōhton* made for  
 178 *flugon* fled; *fæsten* fastness; *fēore* life; *burgon* saved (5.23)  
 179 *manna mā* more men (5.13); *mǣð* what is right; *þonne* . . . 'than was at all fitting'  
 180 *pā geearnunga ealle* all the favours; *gemundon* remembered  
 181 *him tō duguþe* for their benefit (5.14); *gedōn* done  
 182 *on dæg* on a day; *āsæde* said  
 183 *mepelstede* meeting-place; *gemōt* council  
 184 *mōdiglice* boldly; *spræcon* spoke  
 185 *eft* afterwards; *æt þearfe* at [a time of] need; *þolian* endure  
 186 *āfeallen* fallen; *ealdor* see 37  
 187 *ealle heorðgenēatas* all the hearth-comrades  
 188 *hearra* lord  
 189 *wendon* went; *wlance* proud; *þegenas* thanes  
 190 *unearge* undaunted; *efston* hastened  
 191 *hī* . . . then they all desired; *ōðer twēga* one of two [things]  
 192 *forlātan* to give up; *lēofne* the dear [one]; *gewrecan* avenge  
 193 *hī* them; *bylde forð* urged forward

wiga wintrum geong, wordum mælde,  
 Ælfwine þā cwæð (hē on ellen spræc): 195  
 'Gemunað þāra mæla þe wē oft æt meodo spræcon,<sup>14</sup>  
 þonne wē on bence bēot āhōfon,  
 hælde on healle, ymbe heard gewinn:  
 nū mæg cunnian hwā cēne sȳ.  
 Ic wylle mīne æþelo eallum gecȳþan, 200  
 þæt ic wæs on Myrcon miccles cynnes;  
 wæs mīn ealda fæder Ealhelm hāten,  
 wīs ealdorman, woruldgesælig.  
 Ne sceolon mē on þære þēode þegenas ætwītan,  
 þæt ic of ðisse fyrde fēran wille, 205  
 eard gesēcan, nū mīn ealdor ligeð  
 forhēawen æt hilde. Mē is þæt hearma mæst:  
 hē wæs ægðer mīn mæg and mīn hlāford.'  
 Þā hē forð ēode, fāhðe gemunde,  
 þæt hē mid orde āne geræhte 210  
 flotan on þām folce, þæt sē on foldan læg  
 forwegen mid his wæpne. Ongan þā winas manian,  
 frȳnd and gefēran, þæt hī forð ēodon.  
 Offa gemælde, æscholt āsceōc:  
 'Hwæt þū, Ælfwine, hafast ealle gemanode, 215  
 þegenas tō þearfe. Nū ūre þēoden lið,  
 eorl on eorðan, ūs is eallum þearf  
 þæt ūre æghwylc oþerne bylde  
 wigan tō wige, þā hwile þe hē wāpen mæge  
 habban and healdan, heardne mēce, 220  
 gār and gōd swurd. Ūs Godric hæfð,  
 earh Oddan bearn, ealle beswicene:  
 wēnde þæs formonī man, þā hē on mēare rād,  
 on wlancan þām wigge, þæt wære hit ūre hlāford;  
 forþan wearð hēr on felda folc tōtwāmed, 225  
 scyldburch tōbrocen. Ābrēoðe his angin,  
 þæt hē hēr swā manigne man āflȳmde.'  
 Lēofsunu gemælde, and his linde āhōf,  
 bord tō gebeorge, hē þām beorne oncwæð:  
 'Ic þæt gehāte, þæt ic heonon nelle 230  
 flēon fōtes trym, ac wille furðor gān,  
 wrecan on gewinne mīnne winedrihten.  
 Ne þurfon mē embe Stūrmere stedefæste hælde

<sup>14</sup> Here, and in 184f. and 258, the reference is to the heroic custom of undertaking, formally and in public, to perform valiant deeds. Cf. 4.7.69 and 70. Tacitus says that banquets were often occasions for serious discussion: 'At no other time . . . is the heart so open to frank suggestions or so quick to

- 194 *wintrum geong* young in winters, i.e. years; *mælde* see 27  
 195 *on ellen* boldly  
 196 *gemunað* remember (5.23); *pāra mæla* the times; *meodo* mead  
 197 *bence* bench; *āhōfon* raised up, 'uttered loudly'  
 198 *hæleð on healle* warriors in hall; *ymbe* about; *gewinn* battle  
 199 *nū . . .* now [anyone] may prove who is valiant (*cēne*)  
 200 *æpelo* noble breeding; *eallum* to all; *gecȳpan* declare  
 201 *on Myrcon* among the Mercians; *miccles cynnes* from a great family  
 202 *ealda fæder* grandfather  
 203 *wis ealdorman* wise nobleman; *woruldgesælig* prosperous  
 204 *on þære þēode* among that people; *ætwtitan* reproach  
 205 *of from*; *fyrde* army  
 206 *eard* homeland; *gesēcan* go to; *nū* now that  
 207 *forhēawen* see 99; *Mē* to me; *hearma* of sorrows; *mæst* greatest  
 208 *ægðer* both; *mæg* kinsman  
 209 *fæhðe* of vengeance; *gemunde* was mindful  
 210 *þæt* so that; *orde* see 94; *ānne flotan* one sailor; *geræhte* see 142  
 211 *flotan* see 56; *on* among  
 212 *forwegen* killed; *winas* comrades; *Ongan manian* exhorted  
 213 *frȳnd* friends; *gefēran* companions  
 214 *gemælde* spoke; *æscholt* ash-wood [spear]; *āsceōc* shook  
 215 *Hwæt* Oh!; *gemanode* exhorted  
 216 *tō þearfe* needfully; *Nū* Now that  
 217 *ūs . . .* [there] is need for all of us  
 218 *ūre æghwylc* each of us; *ōperne bylde* should encourage the other  
 219 *wigan* warrior  
 220 *mēce* sword  
 221 *hæfð beswicene* has betrayed (5.25)  
 222 *earh* cowardly  
 223 *wēnde* thought; *þæs* anticipates *þæt*, 224; *formoni man* very many a man;  
*mēare* steed; *rād* see 2  
 224 *on . . .* on the proud horse  
 225 *forþan* for that [reason]; *felda* field; *tōtwæmed* divided  
 226 *scyldbūrh* shield-wall; *tōbrocen* smashed (5.36); *Ābrēoðe . . .* May his plan  
*perish*  
 227 *āflȳmde* caused to flee  
 228 *gemælde* see 214; *linde* see 83  
 229 *gebeorge* see 115; *pām beorne* to the man; *oncwæð* replied  
 230 *gehāte* promise; *heonon nelle* will not [go] hence (5.20)  
 231 *flēon* see 178; *fōtes trym* the space of a foot; *furðor* further  
 232 *winedrihten* friend [and] lord  
 233 *þurfon* see 18; *embe* round about; *Stūrmere*, i.e. Leofsunu's home; *stedefæste*  
 see 111

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warm to a great appeal' (*Germania*, ch. 22). *Bēot* may be translated as 'boast' or 'vow', but neither word is quite satisfactory; 'challenge' is appropriate in 11, since at that point a Viking is speaking.

wordum ætwitan, nū mīn wine gecranc,  
 þæt ic hlāfordlēas hām siðie, 235  
 wende fram wige; ac mē sceal wāpen niman,  
 ord and iren.' Hē ful yrre wōd,  
 feaht fæstlice, flēam hē forhogode.  
 Dunnere þā cwæð, daroð ācwehte,  
 unorne ceorl, ofer eall clypode, 240  
 bæd þæt beorna gehwylc Byrhtnōð wræce:  
 'Ne mæg nā wandian sē þe wrecan þenceð  
 frēan on folce, nē for fēore murnan.'  
 þā hī forð ēodon, fēores hī ne rōhton;  
 ongunnon þā hiredmen heardlice feohtan, 245  
 grame gārberend, and God bādon  
 þæt hī mōston gewrecan hyra winedrihten,  
 and on hyra fēondum fyl gewyrcean.  
 Him se gýsel<sup>15</sup> ongan geornlice fylstan;  
 hē wæs on Norðhymbron heardes cynnes, 250  
 Ecglāfes bearn, him wæs Æscferð nama.  
 Hē ne wandode nā æt þām wigplegan,  
 ac hē fýsde forð flān geneahhe;  
 hwilon hē on bord scēat, hwilon beorn tæsde,  
 æfre embe stunde hē sealde sume wunde, 255  
 þā hwile ðe hē wāpna wealdan mōste.  
 þā gýt on orde stōð Æadweard se langa,  
 gearo and geornful; gylpwordum spræc,  
 þæt hē nolde flēogan fōtmæl landes,  
 ofer bæc būgan, þā his betera leg. 260  
 Hē bræc þone bordweall, and wið ðā beornas feaht,  
 oð þæt hē his sincgyfan on þām sāmmanum  
 wurðlice wrec ær hē on wæle lāge.  
 Swā dyde Æþeric, æpele gefēra,  
 fūs and forðgeorn, feaht eornoste, 265  
 Sibyrhtes brōðor, and swiðe mænig oþer  
 clufon celled bord, cēne hī weredon;  
 bærst bordes lærig, and sēo byrne sang  
 gryrelēoða sum. þā æt gūðe slōh  
 Offa þone sǣlidan, þæt hē on eorðan fēoll, 270  
 and ðær Gaddes mæg grund gesōhte:  
 raðe wearð æt hilde Offa forhēawen.  
 Hē hæfde ðeah geforþod þæt hē his frēan gehēt,  
 swā hē bēotode ær wið his bēahgifan,

<sup>15</sup> *Se gýsel* The hostage is from Northumbria, a part of England largely occupied by the Scandinavians. It was customary for such hostages to fight alongside their 'hosts'.

- 234 *gecranc* has fallen  
 235 *hlāfordlēas* lordless; *hām* homewards; *sīðie* see 161  
 236 *wende* turn  
 237 *īren* iron; *yrre* see 28  
 238 *flēam* see 170; *fæstlice* see 66; *forhogode* scorned  
 239 *darod* see 133; *ācwehte* shook  
 240 *unorne* humble; *ceorl* see 116; *clypode* see 9  
 241 *wræce* avenge (5.27)  
 242 *Ne . . .* He can never flinch (*wandian*) who intends to avenge  
 243 *frēan* see 168; *on folce* among the people; *nē . . .* nor be concerned about life  
 244 *rōhton* cared about (5.23)  
 245 *hīredmen* household retainers; *heardlice* fiercely  
 246 *grame gārberend* fierce spear-bearers; *bædon* asked  
 247 *gewrecan* see 192  
 248 *fyl* death; *gewyrca* bring about  
 249 *Him* them; *gýsel* hostage; *geornlice* eagerly; *fýlstan* to help  
 250 *on Norðhymbron* among the Northumbrians; *heardes cynnes* from a brave family  
 251 *nama* name  
 252 *wigplegan* battle-play  
 253 *fýsde* shot; *flān* arrows; *geneahhe* frequently  
 254 *scēat* see 127; *hwilon* at times; *tāzde* lacerated  
 255 *æfre* constantly; *embe stunde* 'at short intervals'; *sealde* gave; *wunde* see 123  
 256 *wealdan* see 67  
 257 *gýt* see 152; *on orde* in the front line; *se langa* the tall  
 258 *gearo* see 56; *geornful* eager; *gylpwordum* with vows (see footnote 14)  
 259 *fōtmæl landes* a foot of ground  
 260 *ofer bæc* backwards; *būgan* move; *betera* superior  
 261 *bræc* broke; *bordweall* the shield-wall  
 262 *sincgyfan* treasure-giver, i.e. Byrhtnoð; *sāmannum* see 22  
 263 *wurðlice* honourably; *wrec* = *wræc* avenged; *on wæle* among the dead  
 264 *Swā* Likewise; *dyde* did; *æpele* see 135  
 265 *fūs* ready; *forðgeorn* 'eager to advance'; *feah* fought; *eornoste* resolutely  
 266 *brōðor* see 175  
 267 *clufon* split; *cellod* with boss; *cēne* see 199; *hī weredon* defended themselves  
 268 *bærst* clashed; *lærig* ?rim; *byrne* see 128  
 269 *gryrelēoða sum* a terrible song (5.13); *æt gūðe* in the battle; *slōh . . .* Offa struck the seafarer  
 271 *mæg* see 208; *grund gesōhte* sought the ground, i.e. was struck down  
 272 *raðe* soon; *forhēawen* see 99  
 273 *ðeah* however; *geforþod* accomplished; *þæt . . .* what he had promised his lord  
 274 *swā* as; *bēotode* vowed; *bēahgifan* ring-giver



- þæt hī sceoldon bēgen on burh<sup>16</sup> rīdan, 275  
 hāle tō hāme, oððe on here crincgan,  
 on wælstōwe wundum sweltan.  
 Hē læg ðegenlice ðēodne gehende.  
 Ðā wearð borda gebræc; brimmen wōdon,  
 gūðe gegremode; gār oft þurhwōd 280  
 fāges feorhhūs. Forð þā ēode Wīstān,  
 þurstānes sunu, wið þās secgas feaht;  
 hē wæs on geþrange hyra þrēora bana,  
 ær him Wigelmes bearn on þām wæle læge.  
 Þær wæs stið gemōt: stōdon fæste 285  
 wigan on gewinne; wīgend cruncon,  
 wundum wērige; wæl fēol on eorþan.  
 Ōswold and Ealdwold ealle hwile,  
 bēgen þā gebrōþru, beornas trymedon,  
 hyra winemāgas wordon bædon 290  
 þæt hī þær æt ðearfe þolian sceoldon,  
 unwāclīce wæpna nēotan.  
 Byrhtwold mapelode, bord hafenode,  
 sē wæs eald genēat, æsc ācwehte,  
 hē ful baldlice beornas lārde: 295  
 ‘Hige sceal þē heardra, heorte þē cēnre,  
 mōd sceal þē mære, þē ūre mægen lýtlað.  
 Hēr lið ūre ealdor eall forhēawen,  
 gōd on grēote; ā mæg gnornian  
 sē ðe nū fram þīs wīgplegan wendan þenceð. 300  
 Ic eom frōd fēores. Fram ic ne wille,  
 ac ic mē be healfe mīnum hlāforde  
 be swā lēofan men licgan þence.’

<sup>16</sup> *burh* This may refer to the fortified town of Maldon; or to Byrhtnoð's own (fortified) place of residence.

- 275 *bēgen* see 166; *on burh* to the stronghold  
 276 *hāle* unhurt; *here* battle; *crincgan* die  
 277 *wælstōwe* see 79; *wundum sweltan* die of wounds  
 278 *ðegenlice* in a thane-like way, nobly; *gehende* beside  
 279 *borda gebræc* clash of shields; *brimmen* seamen  
 280 *gūðe gegremode* enraged by battle; *þurhwōð* pierced  
 281 *fāges* of the doomed; *feorhhūs* life-house, i.e. body (5.35)  
 282 *sunu* see 60; *secgas* men  
 283 *geþrange* throng; *hyra þrēora* of three of them; *bana* the killer  
 284 *ær* before; *him lāge* lay (5.23,27); *Wigelmes bearn* Wigelm's son – possibly Offa (272)  
 285 *stið* hard; *gemōt* encounter  
 286 *wigan* warriors; *wīgend* warriors; *cruncon* fell  
 287 *wērige* exhausted  
 289 *gebrōþru* brothers; *trymedon* rallied  
 290 *bædon hyra winemāgas* exhorted their beloved kinsmen; *wordon* = *wordum*  
 291 *æt ðearfe þolian* see 185  
 292 *unwāclīce* not weakly; *nēotan* use  
 293 *maþelode* see 26; *hafenode* see 26  
 294 *eald genēat* long-serving retainer; *æsc* see 27; *ācwehte* see 239  
 295 *baldlice* boldly; *lārde* exhorted  
 296 *Hige* Mind; *sceal* must [be] (5.20); *þē heardra* the more resolute (5.8,10); *cēnre* more valiant  
 297 *mōd* spirit; *þē māre* the greater; *þē* as (5.28); *mægen* [bodily] strength; *lýtlað* lessens  
 298 *līð* lies; *ealdor* see 37  
 299 *gōd* the good [man]; *grēote* dust; *ā* ever; *mæg gnornian* he can mourn  
 300 *þīs* = *þys* (5.6,10); *wendan* see 236  
 301 *frōd fēores* advanced in life; *Fram* away; *ic* . . . I will not [go] (5.20)  
 302 *healfē* see 136  
 303 *be* . . . beside so dear a man; *licgan þence* intend to lie

## 4.2 The Fall of the Angels

Fēollon þā ufon of heofnum  
purh swā longe swā þrēo niht and dagas  
þā englas of heofnum on helle, and hēo ealle forsceōp  
Drihten tō dēoflum. Forþon hēo his dæd and word  
noldon weorðian, forþon hē hēo on wyrse lēoht<sup>1</sup> 5  
under eorðan neoðan ælmihtig God  
sette sigelēase on þā sweartan helle.  
Þær hæbbað hēo on æfyn ungemet lange  
ealra fēonda gehwilec fȳr ednēowe.  
Þonne cymð on ūhtan ēasterne wind, 10  
forst fyrnum cald; symble fȳr oððe gār,<sup>2</sup>  
sum heard geþwing habban sceoldon.  
Worhte man hit him tō wite (hyra woruld wæs gehwyrfed)  
forman sīðe fylde helle  
mid þām andsacum. Hēoldon englas forð 15  
heofonrices hēhðe, þe ær Godes hyldo gelæston.  
Lāgon þā oðre fȳnd on þām fȳre, þe ær swā feala hæfdon  
gewinnes wið heora Waldend; wite poliað,  
hātne heaðowelm helle tōmiddes,  
brand and brāde ligas, swilce ēac þā biteran rēcas, 20  
prosm and þȳstro, forþon hie þegnscipe<sup>3</sup>  
Godes forgȳmdon. Hie hyra gāl beswāc,  
engles oferhygd: noldon Alwaldian  
word weorþian; hæfdon wite micel,  
wæron þā befeallene fȳre tō botme 25  
on þā hātan helle, purh hygelēastc  
and purh ofermētto. Sōhton oþer land,  
þæt wæs lēohtes lēas and wæs liges full,  
fȳres fær micel. Fȳnd ongēaton  
þæt hie hæfdon gewrixled wita unrīm, 30  
purh heora miclan mōd, and purh miht Godes,  
and purh ofermētto ealra swiðost.  
Þā spræc se ofermōda cyning þe ær wæs engla scȳnost,  
hwitost on heofne and his Hearran lēof,  
Drihtne dȳre, oð hie tō dole wurdon, 35  
þæt him for gālscipe God sylfa wearð  
mihtig on mōde yrre, wearp hine on þæt morðer innan,

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This passage is from a poem of nearly 3000 lines in one of the four codices discussed in 1.5, the Junius Manuscript. It is basically a paraphrase of Genesis. Our extract (ll. 306–74) is from a part which is a translation from an Old Saxon poem. Its themes – the creation, the defeat of Satan, and the story of Adam and Eve – are treated somewhat similarly elsewhere, e.g. by Ælfric in the first of the Catholic Homilies, as well as by Milton in *Paradise Lost*.



- 1 *ufon* from above; *of* from
- 2 *þurh* . . . for as long as three nights and days
- 3 *on helle* into hell; *hēo* them; *forsceōþ* transformed
- 4 *Drihten* Lord; *tō dēoþlum* into devils; *Forþon* Because (5.28); *hēo* they; *dǣd* deed
- 5 *weorðian* honour; *forþon* therefore; *hē* i.e. God; *wyrse lēoht* worse light, i.e. gloom (but see footnote 1)
- 6 *neoðan* beneath; *ǣlmihtig* almighty
- 7 *sette* placed; *sigelēase* defeated; *sweartan* black
- 8 *ǣfyn* evening; *ungemet* excessively
- 9 *fēonda* devils; *gehwilc* each; *ednēowe* renewed
- 10 *cymð* comes; *on ūhtan* at daybreak; *ēasterne* eastern
- 11 *forst* frost; *fyrnum* extremely; *symble* continually; *oððe* or
- 12 *geþwing* torment; *sceoldon* were obliged
- 13 *Worhte* . . . A state of torment (*wīte*) was created for them (5.26); *gehwyrfed* overturned
- 14 *forman sīde* for the first time; *fylde* . . . hell was filled (5.26)
- 15 *andsacum* adversaries; *forð* thenceforth
- 16 *heofonrīces* of the kingdom of heaven; *hēhðe* the highest point; *ǣr gelāston* had achieved (5.25); *hylde* favour
- 17 *lāgon* lay; *þā oðre* the others; *fýnd* the fiends; *swā feala gewinnes* so much strife
- 18 *Waldend* Ruler; *poliað* suffer
- 19 *hātne* hot; *headowelm* fierce surge of flame; *tōmiddes* amidst
- 20 *brand* fire; *brāde* broad; *ligas* flames; *swilce ēac* so also; *biteran* bitter; *rēcas* fumes
- 21 *þrosm* smoke; *þýstro* darkness; *þegnscipe* service
- 22 *forgýmdon* neglected; *hīe* them; *gāl* folly; *beswāc* led astray
- 23 *engles* of the angel, i.e. Satan; *oferhygd* pride; *Alwaldan* of the Almighty
- 24 *weorþian* see 5
- 25 *befeallene* fallen; *botme* bottom
- 26 *hygelēaste* heedlessness
- 27 *ofermētto* pride
- 28 *lēohtes lēas* deprived of light
- 29 *fǣr* peril; *ongēaton* realized
- 30 *gewrixled* got in exchange; *wīta unrīm* countless punishments (5.13)
- 31 *mōd* pride; *miht* the might
- 32 *ealra swīðost* most of all
- 33 *ofermōda* arrogant; *scýnost* brightest
- 34 *hwītost* whitest; *his* . . . dear to his Lord
- 35 *dýre* dear; *oð* until; *hīe* i.e. the fallen angels; *tō dole wurdon* became foolish
- 36 *þæt* so that; *him* . . . because of their folly; *God* . . . mighty God himself became angry in his heart
- 37 *mihtig* mighty; *wearp* threw; *hine* i.e. Satan; *on innan* into; *morder* torment

<sup>1</sup> *lēoht* It may be that *lēoht* here means 'world', as was possible in Old Saxon.

<sup>2</sup> *gār* The ordinary sense 'spear' is perhaps used in this context to imply 'piercing cold'.

<sup>3</sup> The relationship between Satan (with his followers) and God is seen as similar to that of the 'hearth-troop' and Byrhtnoð in 4.1.

niðer on þæt niobedð, and sceōp him naman siððan,  
 cwæð se hēhsta hātan sceolde  
 Sātan siððan, hēt hine þære sweartan helle 40  
 grundes gýman, nalles wið God winnan.  
 Sātan maðelode,<sup>4</sup> sorgiende spræc,  
 sē ðe helle forð healdan sceolde,  
 gieman þæs grundes, wæs ær Godes engel  
 hwīt on heofne, oð hine his hyge forspēon 45  
 and his ofermetto ealra swiðost,  
 þæt hē ne wolde wereda Drihtnes  
 word wurðian. Wēoll him on innan  
 hyge ymb his heortan, hāt wæs him ūtan  
 wrāðlic wīte; hē þā worde cwæð: 50  
 'Is þes ænga styde ungelic swiðe  
 þām oðrum þe wē ær cūðon,  
 hēan on heofonrice, þe mē mīn Hearra onlāg,  
 þeah wē hine for þām Alwaldan āgan ne mōston,  
 rōmigan ūres rices. Næfð hē þeah riht gedōn 55  
 þæt hē ūs hæfð befællend fýre tō botme,  
 helle þære hātan, heofonrice benumen,  
 hafað hit gemearcod mid moncynne  
 tō gesettanne. Þæt mē is sorga mæst  
 þæt Ādām sceal, þe wæs of eorðan geworht, 60  
 mīnne stronglican stōl behealdan,  
 wesān him on wynne, and wē þis wīte þolien,  
 hearm on þisse helle. Wālā! Āhte ic mīnra handa geweald,  
 and mōste āne tīd ūte weorðan,  
 wesān āne winterstunde,<sup>5</sup> þonne ic mid þys werode – <sup>6</sup> 65  
 ac licgað mē ymbe irenbenda,  
 rīdeð racentan sāl. Ic eom rīces lēas:  
 habbað mē swā hearde helle clommas  
 fæste befangen.

<sup>4</sup> *Sātan maðelode* Cf. 4.1.26, 293 for this 'formula'.

<sup>5</sup> *winterstunde* A 'winter-hour' is an hour of minimum length, since the day from sunrise to sunset was divided into twelve equal periods.

<sup>6</sup> *þys werode* Satan appears to break off here in despair.

- 38 *nīðer* down; *nīobedd* corpse-bed, i.e. hell; *sceōþ* created; *him* for him;  
*naman* name; *siððan* afterwards
- 39 *se hēhsta* the highest, i.e. God; *hātan sceolde* he should be called (5.26)
- 40 *þære* . . . of that black hell
- 41 *grundes* abyss; *gȳman* take charge of; *nalles* not at all; *winnan* to struggle
- 42 *maðelode* spoke; *sorgiende* sorrowing
- 43 *forð* henceforth
- 44 *giēman* see 41
- 45 *forspēon* led astray
- 47 *wereda Drihtnes* of the Lord of troops
- 48 *wurðian* see 5; *Wēoll* surged
- 49 *hāt* . . . *wite* the severe (*wrāðlic*) torment was hot around him
- 50 *þā* then
- 51 *Is* . . . This narrow (*ænga*) place is; *ungelic* unlike
- 53 *hēan* high; *onlāg* granted
- 54 *hine* it, i.e. the high place; *for* because of; *āgan* have; *ne mōston* were not  
able to
- 55 *rōmigan* to strive for; *rices* kingdom; *næfð* has not (5.30); *riht* right
- 56 *þæt* 'inasmuch as'; *befællad* cast down; *fȳr* . . . see 25
- 57 *benumen* deprived of
- 58 *hafað hit gemearcod* he has designated it; *moncynne* mankind
- 59 *tō gesettanne* to be peopled (5.26); *sorga mæst* the greatest of sorrows
- 60 *sceal behealdan* is to occupy; *geworht* made
- 61 *stronglican* powerful; *stōl* throne
- 62 *wesan him* exist (5.14); *on wynne* in joy; *polien* suffer (5.27)
- 63 *hearm* grief; *Wālā* Alas; *Åhte* . . . If I had the power of my hands
- 64 *mōste ūte weorðan* might get outside; *āne tīd* one hour (5.12)
- 65 *wesan* be [outside]; *winterstunde* winter-hour; *werode* troop
- 66 *licgað* . . . iron bonds are lying around me (5.24)
- 67 *rīdeð* is riding [on me]; *racentan* of the fetter; *sāl* the bond
- 68 *habbað befangen* have caught; *hearde* strongly; *helle clommas* the bonds of hell

## 4.3 The Dream of the Rood

Hwæt, ic swefna cyst secgan wylle,  
hwæt mē gemætte tō midre nihte,  
syððan reordberend reste wunedon.  
Þūhte mē þæt ic gesāwe syllicre trēow  
on lyft lādan lēohte bewunden, 5  
bēama beorhtost. Eall þæt bēacen wæs  
begoten mid golde; gimmas stōdon  
fægere æt foldan scēatum,<sup>1</sup> swylce þær fife wæron  
uppe on þām eaxlgespanne. Behēoldon þær engeldryhta feala  
fægere þurh forðgesceaft; ne wæs ðær hūru fracodes gealga, 10  
ac hine þær behēoldon hālige gāstas,  
men ofer moldan, and eall þeos mære gesceaft.  
Syllic wæs se sigebēam, and ic synnum fāh,  
forwundod mid wommum. Geseah ic wuldres trēow  
wædum geweorðod<sup>2</sup> wynnnum scīnan, 15  
gegyred mid golde; gimmas hæfdon  
bewrigen weorðlice Wealdendes trēow.  
Hwæðre ic þurh þæt gold ongytan meahte  
earmra ærgewin, þæt hit ærest ongan  
swātan on þā swiðran healfe. Eall ic wæs mid sorgum gedrēfed, 20  
forht ic wæs for þære fægran gesyhðe; geseah ic þæt fūse bēacen  
wendan wædum and blēom:<sup>3</sup> hwilum hit wæs mid wētan bestēmed,  
beswyled mid swātes gange, hwilum mid since gegyrwed.  
Hwæðre ic þær licgende lange hwile  
behēold hrēowcearig Hælendes trēow, 25  
oð ðæt ic gehyrde þæt hit hlēoðrode;  
ongan þā word sprecan wudu sēlesta:  
'Þæt wæs geāra iū (ic þæt gýta geman)  
þæt ic wæs āhēawen holtes on ende,  
āstyred of stefne mīnum. Genāman mē ðær strange fēondas, 30  
geworhton him þær tō wæfersýne, hēton mē heora wergas hebban;  
bāron mē þær beornas on eaxlum, oð ðæt hie mē on beorg āsetton;  
gefæstnodon mē þær fēondas genōge. Geseah ic þā Frēan mancynnes  
efstan elne micle, þæt hē mē wolde on gestigan.  
þær ic þā ne dorste ofer Dryhtnes word 35

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*The Dream of the Rood* is in the Vercelli Book, but a few fragments of the poem are inscribed in runic letters on the Ruthwell Cross, a stone monument dating from about 700. It is therefore possible either that the poem (or part of it) was in existence at that time, or that the inscriptions on this cross helped to inspire the work of a later poet. The whole poem consists of 156 lines, of which we give ll. 1–74. In the remainder, the cross addresses the dreamer, commanding him to describe his vision and its significance to other men. The narrator ends with an expression of his faith, and of his hope for life after death.

- 1 *Hwæt* Oh; *ic segan wylle* I want to tell; *swefna* of dreams; *cyst* the best  
 2 *hwæt* what; *mē gemætte* I dreamed (5.22); *tō midre nihte* at midnight  
 3 *syðþan* when; *reorderend* speech-bearers, i.e. men; *reste* at rest; *wunedon*  
 stayed, i.e. were  
 4 *þūhte mē* (5.22); *sylicre* wonderful, lit. more wonderful; *trēow* tree  
 5 *on lyft* aloft; *lādan* to be borne (5.24,26); *lēohte* with light; *bewunden*  
 enveloped  
 6 *bēama* of trees; *beorhtost* brightest; *bēacen* beacon  
 7 *begoten* covered; *gimmas* gems; *stōdon* stood  
 8 *fægere* beautiful; *æt scēatum* at the corners; *swylce* likewise; *fife* five  
 9 *uppe* up; *eaxlgespanne* cross-beam; *Behēoldon* gazed; *engeldryhta* angel-hosts  
 10 *þurh forðgesceaft* 'for all time'; *hūru* indeed; *fracodes* of a vile [one]; *gealga*  
 gallows  
 11 *hine . . .* beheld it there; *hālige* holy; *gāstas* spirits  
 12 *ofer* all over; *moldan* the earth; *þeos mære gesceaft* this glorious creation  
 13 *sigebēam* victory-tree; *synnum* with sins; *fāh* stained  
 14 *forwundod* severely wounded; *wommum* with sins; *wuldres* of glory  
 15 *wāðum* with coverings; *geweorðod* adorned; *wynnum* beautifully (5.14);  
*scīnan* shine (5.24)  
 16 *gegyred* adorned  
 17 *bewrigen* covered; *weorðlice* splendidly; *Wealdendes* Ruler's  
 18 *Hwæðre* Yet; *ongytan* perceive  
 19 *earmra* of the wretched; *ærgewin* former struggle  
 20 *swātan* to bleed; *swiðran* right; *sorgum* sorrows; *gedrēfed* troubled  
 21 *forht* afraid; *for* before; *gesyhðe* vision; *fūse* ready  
 22 *wendan* change; *blēom* in colours; *wātan* moisture; *bestēmed* drenched  
 23 *beswyled* soaked; *swātes gange* the flow of blood; *since* treasure; *gegyrwed* see  
 16  
 24 *licgende* lying  
 25 *hrēowcearig* sorrowful; *Hālendes* the Saviour's  
 26 *oð ðæt* until; *hlēoðrode* spoke  
 27 *wudu sēlesta* the best [piece of] wood  
 28 *geāra iū* long ago; *gýta* still; *geman* remember  
 29 *āhēawen* hewn down; *holtes on ende* at the edge of the wood  
 30 *āstyred* moved; *stefne* root; *Genāman* seized (5.11); *strange* strong  
 31 *geworhton . . .* there they made [me] into a spectacle for themselves (*him*);  
*hēton . . .* they commanded me to lift up (*hebban*) their criminals  
 32 *eaxlum* shoulders; *beorg* hill; *āsetton* placed  
 33 *gefæstnodon* fastened; *genōge* enough; *Frēan* the Lord; *mancynnes* of mankind  
 34 *efstan* hasten; *elne mycle* with great zeal; *þæt* [I saw] that; *gestigan* mount  
 35 *dorste* dared; *ofer* against; *Dryhtnes* Lord's

<sup>1</sup> *æt foldan scēatum* *Scēat* may mean either 'corner' or 'surface'; cf. 37. Probably the poet is here visualizing the cross as filling the sky and stretching from horizon to horizon.

<sup>2</sup> *wāðum geweorðod* The reference of *wāðum* may be to the ritual veiling of the cross on Good Friday. Another suggestion is that the poet is thinking of the Christian military standards of the Emperor Constantine, which had richly decorated banners attached to them. In the Good Friday hymn *Vexilla Regis*, the cross is described as 'adorned with royal purple'.

<sup>3</sup> *wendan wāðum and blēom* This may be descriptive of the various colours of crosses carried at church services at different times in the liturgical year.



būgan oððe berstan, þā ic bifian geseah  
 eorðan scēatas.<sup>4</sup> Ealle ic mihte  
 fēondas gefyllan, hwæðre ic fæste stōd.<sup>5</sup>  
 Ongyrede hine þā geong hæleð, þæt wæs God ælmihtig,  
 strang and stiðmōd; gestāh hē on gealgan hēanne, 40  
 mōdig on manigra gesyhðe, þā hē wolde mancyn lȳsan.  
 Bifode ic þā mē se beorn ymbclypte; ne dorste ic hwæðre būgan tō  
 eorðan,  
 feallan tō foldan scēatum, ac ic sceolde fæste standan.  
 Rōd wæs ic āræred, āhōf ic ricne cyning,  
 heofona hlāford, hyldan mē ne dorste. 45  
 Þurhdrifan hī mē mid deorcan næglum; on mē syndon þā dolg  
 gesiene,  
 opene inwidhlemmas; ne dorste ic hira ænigum sceoððan.  
 Bysmeredon hīe unc bütū ætgædere; eall ic wæs mid blōde  
 bestēmed,  
 begoten of þæs guman sidan, siððan hē hæfde his gāst onsended.  
 'Feala ic on þām beorge gebiden hæbbe 50  
 wrāðra wyrda: geseah ic weruda God  
 pearle þenian; þȳstro hæfdon  
 bewrigen mid wolcnum Wealdendes hræw,  
 scirne scīman; sceadu forð ēode,  
 wann under wolcnum.<sup>6</sup> Wēop eal gesceaft, 55  
 cwiðdon cyninges fyll: Crīst wæs on rōde.  
 Hwæðere þær fūse feorran cwōman  
 tō þām ædelinge; ic þæt eall behēold.  
 Sāre ic wæs mid sorgum gedrēfed, hnāg ic hwæðre þām secgum  
 tō handa  
 ēaðmōd elne mycle. Genāmon hīe þær ælmihtigne God, 60  
 āhōfon hine of ðām hefian wīte; forlēton mē þā hilderincas  
 standan stēame bedrifenne; eall ic wæs mid strælum<sup>7</sup> forwundod.  
 Ālēdon hīe hine limwērigne, gestōdon him æt his lices hēafsum;  
 behēoldon hīe ðær heofenes Dryhten, and hē hine ðær hwile reste  
 mēðe æfter ðām miclan gewinne. Ongunnon him þā moldern  
 wyrcan 65  
 beornas on banan gesyhðe, curfon hīe ðæt of beorhtan stāne;  
 gesetton hīe ðæron sigora Wealdend. Ongunnon him þā sorhlēoð  
 galan  
 earme on þā æfentīde, þā hīe woldon eft siðian  
 mēðe fram þām mæran þēodne; reste hē ðær mæte weorode.<sup>8</sup>  
 Hwæðere wē ðær grēotende gōde hwile 70  
 stōdon on staðole; stefn up gewāt  
 hilderinca; hræw cōlode,  
 fæger feorgbold. Þā ūs man fyllan ongan  
 ealle tō eorðan; þæt wæs egeslic wyrd!

- 36 *būgan* bend; *berstan* break; *bifian* tremble  
 37 *scēatas* surfaces; *mihte gefyllan* could have felled  
 38 *hwæðre* see 18  
 39 *Ongyrede hine* stripped himself; *geong hæled* young man; *æلميhtig* almighty  
 40 *stīðmōd* firm-minded (5.35); *gestāh* see 34; *hēanne* high  
 41 *mōdig* brave; *on gesyhðe* in the sight; *manigra* of many; *lȳsan* redeem  
 42 *Bifode* see 36; *ymbclypte* embraced  
 44 *Rōd* cross; *āræred* raised up; *āhōf* lifted up; *ricne* powerful  
 45 *hyldan* bend  
 46 *Þurhdrifan* (5.11) pierced; *deorcan* (5.11) dark; *næglum* nails; *dolg* wounds; *gesiene* visible  
 47 *opene* open; *inwidhlemmas* malicious blows; *sceððan* injure (5.23)  
 48 *Bysmeredon* insulted; *unc* us two (5.9); *būtū* both; *æt gædere* together; *blōde* blood  
 49 *begoten* poured out; *of from*; *guman sīdan* man's side; *sīððan* when; *onsended* sent forth  
 50 *gebiden* experienced  
 51 *wrāðra wyrda* cruel events; *weruda* of troops  
 52 *þearle* severely; *þenian* stretched out (5.26); *þȳstro* darkness  
 53 *bewrigen* covered; *wolcnum* clouds; *Wealdendes* see 17; *hrāw* corpse  
 54 *scīrne* bright; *scīman* radiance; *sceadu* shadow  
 55 *wann* dark; *Wēop* wept; *gesceaft* see 12  
 56 *cwiðdon* . . . they, i.e. all created things, lamented; *fyll* fall  
 57 *fūse* eager [ones]; *feorran* from afar  
 58 *æðelinge* prince  
 59 *Sāre* sorely; *sorgum* . . . see 20; *hnāg* bent; *þām* . . . 'to the men's hands' (5.14)  
 60 *ēaðmōd* humble; *elne mycle* see 34  
 61 *hefian* heavy; *wīte* torment; *forlēton* left; *hilderincas* warriors  
 62 *stēame* moisture; *bedrifenne* drenched; *strālum* arrows  
 63 *Ālēdon* laid; *limwērigne* limb-weary; *gestōdon* stood; *him æt hēafdum* at his head (5.14); *his līces* of his body  
 64 *hine reste* rested himself  
 65 *mēðe* exhausted; *Ongunnon wyrcan* They made (5.24); *moldern* tomb  
 66 *on banan gesyhðe* in the sight of the slayer, i.e. the cross; *curfon* carved; *beorhtan* see 6; *stāne* stone  
 67 *sigora* of victories; *Ongunnon galan* They sang (5.24); *sorhlēoð* a song of sorrow  
 68 *earme* wretched [ones]; *āfentīde* evening; *sīðian* go  
 69 *māran* see 12; *māte weorode* 'alone' (see footnote 8)  
 70 *wē* i.e. the three crosses; *grēotende* weeping  
 71 *staðole* position; *stefn* voice  
 72 *cōlode* cooled  
 73 *fāger* fair; *feorgbold* life-dwelling, i.e. body  
 74 *egeslic* fearful; *wyrd* fate

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Matthew 27,51 'And behold . . . the earth shook, and the rocks were split'.

<sup>5</sup> The cross presents itself as a loyal 'retainer' of Christ, ironically compelled to assist at his death instead of defending him.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Matthew 27,45 'Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour'.

<sup>7</sup> *strālum* These are presumably the nails of 46; the use of a word meaning 'arrows' is appropriate in this context: the cross is a participant in Christ's 'battle'.

<sup>8</sup> *māte weorode* Literally this means 'with a poor-sized company'. This kind of understatement is a fairly common feature of OE style; cf. *genōge* 33, which clearly has the sense of 'many'.

## 4.4 The Rebirth of the Phoenix

<p> ðær hē sylf biereð  in þæt trēow innan    torhte frætwe;  þær se wilda fugel    in þām wēstenne  ofer hēanne bēam    hūs getimbred  writig ond wynsum,    ond gewīcað þær  sylf in þām solere,    ond ymbseteð ūtan  in þām lēafsceade    līc ond feþre  on healfa gehwāre    hālgum stencum<sup>1</sup>  ond þām æpelestum    eorþan blēdum.  Siteð sipes fūs.    Þonne swegles gim,<sup>2</sup>  on sumeres tid    sunne hātost  ofer sceadu scīneð    ond gesceapu drēogeð,  woruld geondwliteð,    þonne weorðeð his  hūs onhæted    þurh hādor swegl.  Wyrta wearmiað,    willsele stýmeð  swētum swæccum,    þonne on swole byrneð  þurh fýres feng    fugel mid neste.<sup>3</sup>  Bæl bið onæled.    Þonne brond þeceð  heoredrēorges hūs,    hrēoh ōnetteð,  fealo līg feormað,    ond fenix byrneð  fyrngēarum frōd;    þonne fýr þigeð  lænne lichoman;    lif bið on sīðe,  fāges feorhhord,    þonne flāsc ond bān  ādlēg æleð.    Hwæpre him eft cymeð  æfter fyrstmearce    feorh ednīwe,  siþþan þā yslan    eft onginnað  æfter līgpræce    lūcan tōgædre  geclungne tō clēowenne.    Þonne clāne bið  beorhtast nesta,    bæle forgrunden  heaporōfes hof.    Hrā bið ācōlad,  bānfæt gebrocen    ond se bryne sweþrað.  Þonne of þām āde    æples gelīcnes  on þære ascan bið    eft gemēted,  of þām weaxeð wýrm<sup>4</sup>    wundrum fāger,  swylce hē of ægerum    ūt ālāde,  scīr of scýlle. </p>	<p>5</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p> <p>20</p> <p>25</p> <p>30</p> <p>35</p>
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*The Phoenix* is a poem of 677 lines in the Exeter Book, the first part of which (including our extract, ll. 199–234) is a free translation of a Latin work ascribed to Lactantius (died c. AD 340). In Egyptian myths of the Creation, the phoenix was associated with the sun and with renewal, but the story of its rebirth through fire became popular as a Christian allegory and this is represented in the latter part of the OE poem. The bird symbolizes the resurrection of man; all good men, who will be saved; and Christ himself. The fire is a symbol of purification and of the final Judgment.

- 1 *biered* carries
- 2 *in innan* to within; *trēow* tree; *torhte* bright; *frætwæ* treasures
- 3 *wilda* wild; *fugel* bird; *wēstenne* wilderness
- 4 *ofer hēanne bēam* at the top of the high tree; *hūs* house; *getimbred* builds
- 5 *wlitig* beautiful; *wynsum* pleasant; *gewīcað* dwells
- 6 *solere* sunny place; *ymbseted* surrounds; *ūtan* on the outside
- 7 *lēafsceade* leafy shade; *lic* body; *feþre* plumage
- 8 *healfa* side (5.13); *gehwāre* every; *hālgum stencum* with holy fragrances
- 9 *æpelestum* finest; *blēdum* fruits
- 10 *Siteð* sits; *sīþes* for the journey; *fūs* ready; *þonne* When; *swegles gim* the sky's gem
- 11 *sumeres* summer's; *tīd* time; *sunne* sun; *hātost* most hotly
- 12 *sceadu* shadow; *scīneð* shines; *gesceapu* destiny; *drēogeð* fulfils
- 13 *geondwlited* scans; *þonne* then (5.28)
- 14 *onhāted* heated; *hādor* radiant
- 15 *Wyrta* Plants; *wearmiað* grow warm; *willsele* pleasant dwelling; *stýmeð* steams
- 16 *swētum swæccum* with sweet odours; *swole* heat; *byrneð* burns
- 17 *feng* grasp; *neste* nest
- 18 *Bāl* Fire; *onāled* kindled; *brond* fire; *þeceð* covers
- 19 *heoredrēorges* of the death-sad [one]; *hrēoh* fierce [fire]; *ōnetted* hastens
- 20 *fealo* yellow; *lig* flame; *feormað* devours
- 21 *fyrngēarum* with past years; *frōd* wise; *þigeð* eats
- 22 *lænne* transitory; *lichoman* body
- 23 *fāges* of the doomed [one]; *feorhhord* life-hoard, i.e. spirit; *flāsc* flesh; *bān* bone
- 24 *ādlēg* pyre-flame; *āleð* burns; *him* to it
- 25 *fyrstmearce* space of time; *edniwe* renewed
- 26 *sipþan* when; *yslan* the ashes
- 27 *līgþræce* fire-violence; *lūcan* join; *tōgædre* together
- 28 *geclungne* shrunk; *tō clēowenne* to a ball; *clāne* entirely
- 29 *beorhtast* brightest; *bāle* see 18; *forgrunden* destroyed
- 30 *heapōrōfes* of the brave [one]; *hof* dwelling; *Hrā* corpse; *ācōlad* cooled down
- 31 *bānfæt* bone-vessel, i.e. body; *gebrocen* destroyed; *bryne* fire; *sweþrað* ceases
- 32 *of from*; *ād* see 24; *æples* of an apple; *gelīcnes* likeness
- 33 *ascan* ash; *gemēted* found
- 34 *weaxed* grows; *wyrm* worm; *wundrum* wonderfully (5.14); *fāger* beautiful
- 35 *swylce* as if; *of āgerum* from an egg (lit. pl.); *ūt* out; *ālāde* were emerging (5.27)
- 36 *scīr* bright; *of scylle* from the shell

<sup>1</sup> *hālgum stencum* Scented spices were used in baptism. In the poem they are equated with man's good deeds, which help him to achieve eternal life.

<sup>2</sup> *swegles gim* The sun was commonly a symbol for Christ, who will receive the purified souls after the Day of Judgment.

<sup>3</sup> *neste* The nest, like the perfumes of 8 and the plants of 15, stands for good deeds in this world.

<sup>4</sup> *wyrm* Lactantius describes a milk-white worm which grows into an egg, from which the phoenix is reborn. The worm is also mentioned in Pliny's *Natural History* and elsewhere.



## 4.5 The Search for Grendel's Mother

Ic þæt londbūend, lēode mīne,  
selerǣdende secgan hȳrde,  
þæt hīe gesāwon swylce twēgen  
micle mearcstapan mōras healdan,  
ellorgǣstas. Ðāra oðer wæs, 5  
þæs þe hīe gewislicost gewitan meahton,  
idese onlicnes; oðer earmsceapen  
on weres wæstmum wræclāstas træd,  
næfne hē wæs māra þonne ænig man oðer;  
þone on geārdagum Grendel nemdon 10  
foldbūende; nō hīe fæder cunnon,<sup>1</sup>  
hwæþer him ænig wæs ær ācenned  
dyrnra gāsta. Hīe dȳgel lond  
warigeað wulfhleopu, windige næssas,  
frēcne fengelād, ðær fyrgenstrēam 15  
under næssa genipu niþer gewīteð,  
flōd under foldan. Nis þæt feor heonon  
milgemearces, þæt se mere standeð;  
ofer þām hongiað hrinde bearwas,  
wudu wyrtrum fæst wæter oferhelmað.<sup>2</sup> 20  
Þær mæg nihta gehwām niðwundor sēon,  
fȳr on flōde.<sup>3</sup> Nō þæs frōd leofað  
gumena bearna, þæt þone grund wite.  
Ðeah þe hǣðstapa hundum geswenced,  
heorot hornum trum holtwudu sēce, 25  
feorran geflȳmed, ær hē feorh seleð,  
aldor on oðre, ær hē in wille,  
hafelan beorgan. Nis þæt hēoru stōw!  
þonon ȳðgeblond up āstigeð  
won tō wolcnum, þonne wind styrep 30  
lāð gewidru, oð þæt lyft drysmaþ,  
roderas rēotað. Nū is se rǣd gelang  
eft æt þē ānum. Eard gīt ne const,  
frēcne stōwe, ðær þū findan miht

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*Beowulf*, a poem of 3182 lines, probably dates from the eighth century; it survives in the codex known as 'Cotton Vitellius A XV' in the British Museum; see 1.5. The story concerns Danish and Swedish heroes of c. AD 500. Beowulf comes from Gotland (S. Sweden) to the help of the Danish king, Hroðgar, to slay a manlike monster called Grendel. Our extract (ll. 1345–1417) follows an episode in which Grendel's mother has killed one of Hroðgar's men in revenge for the death of her son. After line 1417, the poem continues with an account of Beowulf's single-handed victory over this second creature.



- 1 *þæt* correlates with *þæt* in 3 (5.28); *londbūend* land-dwellers; *lēode mīne* my people
- 2 *selerǣdende* hall-counsellors; *hȳrde* have heard (5.25)
- 3 *swylce twēgen* two such
- 4 *mearcstapan* walkers in the border-country; *mōras* moors; *healdan* guard (5.24)
- 5 *ellorgǣstas* alien spirits; *Ðāra oðer* One of them (5.13)
- 6 *þæs þe* as far as (5.10); *gewislicost* most definitely; *gewitan* ascertain
- 7 *idese* of a woman; *onlīcnes* likeness; *earmsceapen* wretched
- 8 *on wæstmum* in the form (lit. pl.); *weres* of a man; *wræclāstas* exile-paths; *træd* trod
- 9 *næfne* except [that]; *māra* bigger
- 10 *þone* that one (5.31); *on geārdagum* in days of yore; *nemdon* called
- 11 *foldbūende* earth-dwellers; *nō* . . . they (i.e. the earth-dwellers) knew nothing of a father
- 12 *hwæþer* whether; *him* to him (i.e. to the father); *wæs ær ācenned* had been born (5.25)
- 13 *dyrnra gāsta* mysterious spirits; *dȳgel* secret; *lond* land
- 14 *warigeað* inhabit; *wulfhleopu* wolf-[haunted] slopes; *windige* windy; *næssas* headlands
- 15 *frēcne* dangerous; *fengelād* fen-paths; *fyrgeŋstrēam* mountain stream
- 16 *genīpu* mists; *nīþer* down; *gewīteð* goes
- 17 *flōd* flood; *feor* far; *heonon* hence
- 18 *mīlgemearces* in mile-measure (5.13); *mere* lake
- 19 *hongiað* hang; *hrinde* frosty; *beorwas* woods
- 20 *wudu* forest; *wyrtrum fæst* firm in roots, 'firm-rooted'; *wæter* water; *oferhelmað* overhangs
- 21 *nihta gehwām* every night (5.12,13); *nīðwundor* a terrifying marvel
- 22 *þæs* to such a degree (5.10); *frōd* experienced; *leofað* lives
- 23 *gumena* of men; *grund* bottom
- 24 *hǣðstapa* heath-walker; *hundum* by hounds; *geswenced* harassed
- 25 *heorot* hart; *hornum* horns (5.14); *trum* strong; *holtwudu* forest
- 26 *feorran* from afar; *geflȳmed* put to flight; *ær* sooner – correlates with *ær* 27 (5.28); *seleð* will give up (5.24)
- 27 *aldor* life; *ōfre* bank
- 28 *hafelan* head; *beorgan* protect; *hēoru* pleasant; *stōw* place
- 29 *þonon* Thence; *ȳðgeblond* wave-turmoil; *āstigeð* rises
- 30 *won* dark; *tō wolcnum* to the clouds; *styrep* stirs up
- 31 *lāð* dreadful; *gewidru* storms; *lyft* air; *drysmæþ* darkens
- 32 *roderas* skies; *rēotað* weep; *ræd* guidance; *gelang* dependent
- 33 *ānum* alone; *Eard* land; *æt* on; *gīt* . . . you do not yet know
- 34 *frēcne* see 15

<sup>1</sup> *nō hīe fæder cunnon* Earlier in the poem, Grendel is said to be descended from Cain, the progenitor of all evil creatures.

<sup>2</sup> Compare these lines, and lines 64–73 below, with the Vision of St Paul (3.4.16–26), which contains a number of features common to early accounts of the Christian hell – waste land, cold, darkness, mists, depths, and monsters. Virgil (*Aeneid* VI) similarly describes the underworld as a place of black forests, caves, and dark water.

<sup>3</sup> *fȳr on flōde* Possibly this means the will-o'-the-wisp; but a burning lake or river features in many Christian and other descriptions of hell.

- sinnigne secg; sēc gif þū dyrre! 35  
 Ic þē þā fāhðe fēo lēanige,  
 ealdgestrēonum, swā ic āer dyde,  
 wundnum golde, gyf þū on weg cymest.’  
 Bēowulf mapelode, bearn Ecgþēowes:  
 ‘Ne sorga, snotor guma! Sēltre bið āghwām, 40  
 þæt hē his frēond wrece, þonne hē fela murne.  
 Ūre āghwylc sceal ende gebidan  
 worolde lifes; wyrce sē þe mōte  
 dōmes āer dēaþe; þæt bið drihtguman  
 unlifgendum æfter sēlest.<sup>4</sup> 45  
 Āris, rices weard, uton hrape fēran,  
 Grendles māgan gang scēawigan.  
 Ic hit þē gehāte: nō hē<sup>5</sup> on helm losaþ,  
 nē on foldan fāþm, nē on fyrgeholt,  
 nē on gyfenes grund, gā þær hē wille! 50  
 Ðys dōgor þū gepyld hafa  
 wēana gehwylces, swā ic þē wēne tō.’  
 Āhlēop ðā se gomela, Gode þancode,  
 mihtigan Drihtne, þæs se man gespræc.  
 Þā wæs Hrōðgāre hors gebāted, 55  
 wicg wundenfeax. Wisa fengel  
 geatolic gende; gumfēpa stōp  
 lindhæbbendra. Lāstas wæron  
 æfter waldswaþum wide gesýne,  
 gang ofer grundas, swā gegnum fōr 60  
 ofer myrcan mōr, magoþegna bær  
 þone sēlestan sāwollēasne  
 þāra þe mid Hrōðgāre hām eahtode.  
 Oferēode þā æpelinga bearn  
 stēap stānhliðo, stige nearwe, 65  
 enge ānpaðas, uncūð gelād,  
 neowle næssas,<sup>6</sup> nicorhūsa fela;  
 hē fēara sum beforan gengde  
 wīra monna wong scēawian,  
 oþ þæt hē fāringa fyrgebēamas 70  
 ofer hārne stān hleonian funde,  
 wynlēasne wudu; wæter under stōd  
 drēorig ond gedrēfed.

<sup>4</sup> See 4.6.70ff., where stoicism in the face of inevitable death, and the unflinching pursuit of fame as the best kind of memorial in a transient world, are advocated in similar terms. In the *Aeneid* X, Jupiter makes a strikingly similar speech during the battle between the Trojans and the Rutulians.

- 35 *sinnigne* sinful; *secg* man (see footnote 5); *sēc* . . . seek if you dare!  
 36 *pā fāhðe* for that vengeance; *fēo* riches; *lēanige* will reward (5.24)  
 37 *ealdgestrēonum* with ancient treasures  
 38 *wundnum golde* with twisted gold, i.e. gold made into arm-rings; *on weg* away  
 39 *maþelode* spoke  
 40 *Ne sorga* Do not sorrow; *snotor guma* wise man; *Sēltre* . . . It is better for everyone  
 41 *frēond* friend; *wrece* avenge; *þonne* . . . than that he should greatly mourn  
 42 *Ūre āghwylc* Each of us; *ende* end; *gebīdan* await  
 43 *wyrce sē* let him strive for; *þe mōte* who is able to  
 44 *dōmes* glory (5.23); *dēaþe* death; *drihtguman* for a noble [-minded] man  
 45 *unlifgendum* lifeless; *æfter* afterwards; *sēlest* best  
 46 *Āris* Rise up; *rices* kingdom's; *weard* guardian; *uton* let us; *hraþe* quickly  
 47 *māgan* kinswoman; *gang* track; *scēawigan* examine  
 48 *hē* see footnote 5; *on helm* under cover; *nō losað* will not escape (5.24,29)  
 49 *fāþm* bosom; *fyrgeholt* mountain forest  
 50 *gyfenes* of the sea; *grund* see 23; *gā* go  
 51 *dōgor* day; *geþyld* patience; *hafa* have  
 52 *wēana gehwylces* in every woe; *swā* . . . as I expect of you  
 53 *Āhlēop* leapt up (5.36); *se gomela* the old [man]; *þancode* thanked  
 54 *mihtigan Drihtne* mighty Lord; *þæs* . . . for what (5.23); *gespræc* had said (5.25)  
 55 *Hrōðgāre* for Hroðgar; *gebāted* bridled  
 56 *wicg* steed; *wundenfeax* curly-maned; *Wisa* wise; *fengel* lord  
 57 *geatolic* splendid; *gende* = *gengde* rode; *gumfēpa* foot-troop; *stōþ* stepped  
 58 *lindhæbbendra* of shield-bearers; *Lāstas* tracks  
 59 *æfter waldswapum* along the forest paths; *wīde gesyne* widely seen  
 60 *gang* see 47; *grundas* see 23; *swā* as; *gegnum* forward; *fōr* [she] had gone (5.25)  
 61 *myrcan* dark; *magopegna* of the retainers; *bær* carried  
 62 *sēlestan* best; *sāwollēasne* soul-less, 'lifeless'  
 63 *hām* home; *eahtode* had guarded (5.25)  
 64 *Oferēode* went over; *æþelīnga bearn* the son of princes, i.e. Hroðgar  
 65 *stēaþ* steep; *stānhliðo* stony slopes; *stīge* path; *nearwe* narrow  
 66 *enge* narrow; *ānþaðas* single-tracks; *uncūð* unknown; *gelād* see 15  
 67 *neowle* precipitous; *næssas* see 14; *nicorhūsa* lairs of water-monsters  
 68 *sum fēara wīsa monna* one of (i.e. with) a few wise men; *beforan* before  
 69 *wong* terrain; *scēawian* see 47  
 70 *fāringa* suddenly; *fyrgebēamas* mountain trees  
 71 *hārne stān* grey stone; *hleonian* lean (5.24); *funde* found (5.27)  
 72 *wynlēasne* joyless; *wæter* see 20  
 73 *drēorig* bloody; *gedrēfed* troubled

<sup>6</sup> *hē* Here and elsewhere (e.g. 50), Grendel's mother is referred to as masculine.

<sup>6</sup> The narrow paths and high crags of this landscape suggest another Virgilian comparison: the terrain in which Turnus prepares an ambush for Aeneas (*Aeneid* XI).

## 4.6 The Seafarer

Mæg ic be mē sylfum sōðgied wrecan,  
 sīpas secgan, hū ic geswincdagum  
 earfoðhwile oft þrōwade,  
 bitre brēostceare gebiden hæbbe,  
 gecunnad in cēole cearselda fela, 5  
 atol ȝpa gewealc. Þær mec oft bigeat  
 nearo nihtwaco æt nacan stefnan,  
 þonne hē be clifum cnossað. Calde geþrunge  
 wæron fēt mīne, forste gebunden,  
 caldum clommum, þær þā ceare seofedun 10  
 hāte ymb heortan. Hungor innan slāt  
 merewērges mōd. Þæt se mon ne wāt,  
 þe him on foldan fægrost limpeð,  
 hū ic earmcearig iscealdne sā  
 winter wunade wræccan lāstum, 15  
 winemægum bidroren,  
 bihongen hrimgicelum. Hægl scūrum flēag.  
 Þær ic ne gehyrde būtan himman sā,  
 iscaldne wæg. Hwīlum ylfete song  
 dyde ic mē tō gomene, ganetes hlēoþor 20  
 and huilpan swēg fore hleahtor wera,  
 mæw singende fore medodrince.  
 Stormas þær stānc lifu bēotan, þær him stearn oncwæð  
 isigfepera; ful oft þæt earn bigeal  
 ūrigfepra. Nænig hlēomæga 25  
 fēasceaftig ferð frēfran meahte.  
 Forþon him gelȳfeð lȳt sē þe āh lifes wyn  
 gebiden in burgum, bealosīpa hwōn,  
 wlonc and wīngāl, hū ic wērig oft  
 in brimlāde bīdan sceolde. 30  
 Nāp nihtscūa, norþan snīwde,  
 hrim hrūsan bond, hægl fēol on eorþan,  
 corna caldast. Forþon cnyssað nū  
 heortan gepōhtas, þæt ic hēan strēamas,  
 sealtȝpa gelāc sylf cunnige. 35  
 Monað mōdes lust mæla gehwylce  
 ferð tō fēran, þæt ic feor heonan  
 elpēodigra eard gesēce,<sup>1</sup>

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*The Seafarer* is one of several short poems in the Exeter Book, concerned with the contrast of past and present, and with the mutability of life. We have omitted the last 16 lines, which are difficult to interpret, but which are essentially a continuation of the final religious statement beginning at line 103.



- 1 *Mæg* ic I can; *be* about; *sōdgied* true poem; *wrecan* recite
- 2 *sīþas* experiences; *secgan* relate; *geswincdagum* laborious days (5.23)
- 3 *earfoðhwile* hardship-period; *prōwade* suffered
- 4 *bitre* bitter; *brēostceare* breast-sorrow; *gebiden* experienced
- 5 *gecunnad* explored; *cēole* boat; *cearselda* sorrow-abodes
- 6 *atol* terrible; *ȝþa* waves; *gewealc* surge; *mec bigeat* occupied me
- 7 *nearo* anxious; *nihtwaco* night-watch; *nacan* of the boat; *stefnan* prow
- 8 *þonne* . . . when it tosses by the cliffs; *Calde* by cold; *geþrunge* pinched
- 9 *forste* by frost
- 10 *clommu* fetters; *seofedun* = *seofedon* sighed
- 11 *hāte* hot – prob. modifies *ceare*; *Hungor* Hunger; *innan* from within; *slāt* tore
- 12 *merewērges* of the sea-weary [one]
- 13 *þe him* to whom (5.10); *fægrost* most happily; *limpeð* it happens (5.22)
- 14 *earncearig* wretched; *iscealdne* ice-cold; *sæ* sea
- 15 *winter* for the winter (5.12); *wunade* remained; *wræccan* of an exile; *lāstum* in the paths
- 16 *winemægum* . . . deprived of dear kinsmen
- 17 *bihongen* hung about; *hrimgicelum* with icicles; *Hægl* Hail; *scūrum* in showers; *flēag* flew
- 18 *būtan* except; *hlimman* resound (5.24)
- 19 *wæg* wave; *ȝlfete* of the swan
- 20 *dyde* . . . I took as entertainment for myself; *ganetes* gannet; *hlēoþor* cry
- 21 *huilpan* of the curlew; *swæg* sound; *fore* instead of; *hleahor* laughter; *wera* of men
- 22 *mæw* seagull; *singende* singing; *medodrince* mead-drink
- 23 *Stormas* Storms; *stānc lifu* stone cliffs; *bēotan* = *bēoton* beat; *þær* . . . there the tern answered them
- 24 *īsigfeþra* the icy-feathered [one]; *þæt earn* the eagle; *bigel* screamed
- 25 *ūrigfeþra* the dewy-feathered [one]; *Nænig* None; *hlēomæga* protecting kinsmen
- 26 *fēasceafīg* desolate; *ferð* spirit; *frēfran* comfort
- 27 *Forþon* Indeed; *him gelyfeð* believes (5.23); *lýt* little; *sē* . . . he who has the joy of life
- 28 *gebiden* see 4; *burgum* dwellings; *bealosīpa hwōn* few hardships (5.13)
- 29 *wlonc* proud; *wīngāl* wine-merry; *wērig* weary
- 30 *brimlāde* ocean-path; *bīdan* remain
- 31 *Nāp* darkened; *nihtscūa* night-shadow; *norþan* . . . it snowed from the north
- 32 *hrīm* frost; *hrūsan* earth; *bond* bound
- 33 *corna* of grains; *caldast* coldest; *Forþon* Thus; *cnyssað* . . . *þæt* thoughts buffet the heart now that . . .
- 34 *ic sylf* I myself; *hēan strēamas* deep seas
- 35 *sealtȝþa* of the salt waves; *gelāc* tumult; *cunnige* see 5
- 36 *Monað* urges; *lust* desire; *mæla gehwylce* 'all the time' (5.13)
- 37 *ferð* spirit; *heonan* hence
- 38 *elþeodigra* of aliens; *eard* land; *gesēce* seek

<sup>1</sup> *elþeodigra eard* Lines 34–5 seem to indicate that the narrator is now contemplating a voyage different in kind from those he has previously mentioned – which have not taken him far from the shore, cf. 6–8. There are records of men going on dangerous voyages into exile for the sake of their spiritual welfare, but the term 'alien' (*peregrinus*) was used of good Christians, who, belonging to the City of God, are exiles in this world. *Eard* could therefore signify 'Heaven', the voyage being death, or death following a virtuous life. Lines 39–43, which suggest that the narrator has in mind the trials of every man, perhaps support this latter interpretation.



forþon nis þæs mōdwlanc mon ofer eorþan,  
 nē his gifena þæs gōd, nē in geoguþe tō þæs hwæt, 40  
 nē in his dǣdum tō þæs dēor, nē him his dryhten tō þæs hold,  
 þæt hē ā his sǣfōre sorge næbbe,  
 tō hwon hine Dryhten gedōn wille.<sup>2</sup>  
 Ne biþ him tō hearpan hyge, nē tō hringþege,  
 nē tō wīfe wyn, nē tō worulde hyht, 45  
 nē ymbe ōwiht elles, nefne ymb yða gewealc;  
 ac ā hafað longunge sē þe on lagu fundað.  
 Bearwas blōstmum nimað, byrig fægriað,  
 wongas wlitigiað, woruld ōnetteð;<sup>3</sup>  
 ealle þā gemoniað mōdes fūsne, 50  
 sefan tō sīþe, þām þe swā þenceð  
 on flōdwegas feor gewītan.  
 Swylce gēac monað geōmran reorde,  
 singeð sumeres weard, sorge bēodeð  
 bittre in brēosthord. þæt se beorn ne wāt, 55  
 sēftēadig secg, hwæt þā sume drēogað,  
 þe þā wræclāstas wīdost lecgað.  
 Forþon nū mīn hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan.  
 Mīn mōdsefa mid mereflōde  
 ofer hwæles ēpel hweorfeð wīde, 60  
 eorþan scēatas. Cymeð eft tō mē  
 gīfre and grādig. Gielleð ānfloga,<sup>4</sup>  
 hweteð on hwælweg hreþer unwearnum  
 ofer holma gelagu. Forþon mē hātran sind  
 Dryhtnes drēamas þonne þis dēade lif, 65  
 lāne on londe. Ic gelýfe nō  
 þæt him eorðwelan ēce stondað.  
 Simle þrēora sum þinga gehwylce  
 ær his tiddæge<sup>5</sup> tō twēon weorpeð:  
 ādl oþþe yldo oþþe ecghete 70  
 fægum fromweardum feorh oðþringeð.  
 Forþon þæt bið eorla gehwām æftercweþendra  
 lof lifgendra lāstworda betst,  
 þæt hē gewyrce, ær hē on weg scyle,  
 fremum on foldan wið fēonda nīþ, 75  
 dēorum dǣdum dēofle tōgēanes,  
 þæt hine ælda bearn æfter hergen,

<sup>2</sup> This reminder of Judgment shows that the poet was familiar with the homiletic writings of his time: cf. footnotes 3, 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> A number of sermons refer to the world hastening towards its end (and cf. 3.3, footnotes 2 and 3). Ælfric connects growth and fertility with the end of the world: '[This world] grows that it may fall' (Catholic Homilies, XL).

<sup>4</sup> *ānfloga* This is sometimes taken to mean the cuckoo of 62, but it may well be

- 39 *forþon* because; *þæs mōdwlanc* so proud  
 40 *nē* . . . nor so generous of his gifts; *geoguþe* youth; *tō þæs hwæt* so vigorous  
 41 *dǣdum* deeds; *dēor* brave; *nē* . . . nor is his lord so devoted (*hold*) to him  
 42 *ā* always; *his sǣfore* concerning his sea-voyage; *sorge* anxiety  
 43 *tō* . . . as to what [fate] the Lord will bring him (*hine*) to  
 44 *Ne* . . . His mind is not on the harp; *hringþege* ring-receiving  
 45 *wīfe* woman; *hyht* joy  
 46 *ōwiht elles* anything else; *nefne* except; *gewealc* see 6  
 47 *longunge* longing; *sē* . . . he who sets out on the sea  
 48 *Bearwas* Woods; *blostmum* blossoms; *nimað* take on; *byrig fǣgriað* the dwell-  
 ings grow fair  
 49 *wongas whitigiað* the meadows grow beautiful; *ōnetted* hastens on  
 50 *þā* those [things]; *gemoniað* remind; *mōdes fūsne* [the man] eager of spirit  
 51 *sefan* the heart; *tō siþe* to the journey; *þām þe* in him who  
 52 *flōdwegas* ocean-paths  
 53 *Swylce* Likewise; *gēac* cuckoo; *geōmran reorde* with sad voice  
 54 *singed* see 22; *sumeres* summer's; *weard* guardian; *bēodeð* forebodes  
 55 *bittre* see 4; *brēosthord* breast-hoard, i.e. the feelings of the heart  
 56 *sēftēadig* comfort-blessed; *secg* man; *hwæt* . . . what those few suffer  
 57 *þā wræclāstas lecað* lay the exile-paths, 'travel as exiles'; *wīdost* very widely  
 58 *Forþon* 'For all that'; *hweorfeð* turns; *ofer* beyond; *hreperlocan* heart-  
 enclosure  
 59 *mōdsefa* mind; *mid mereflōde* along with the ocean  
 60 *hwæles ēþel* the whale's homeland; *wīde* widely  
 61 *scēatas* [over] the regions  
 62 *gifre* eager; *grǣdig* hungry; *Gielleð* cries; *ānfloga* the lone flier  
 63 *hweteð* urges; *unwearnum* irresistibly  
 64 *holma* of the seas; *gelagu* the expanses; *Forþon* Thus; *drēamas* joys; *hātran*  
 hotter 'dearer'  
 65 *dēade* dead  
 66 *lāne* transitory; *londe* land; *gelýfe* believe; *nō* not at all  
 67 *him* 'for anyone'; *eorðwelan* earthly riches; *ēce* for ever  
 68 *Simle* Always; *þrēora sum* one of three [things] (5.13); *þinga gehwylce* in  
 every circumstance  
 69 *tiddæge* last day; *tō twēon weorped* comes into question  
 70 *ād*l disease; *yldo* age; *ecghete* sword-hatred  
 71 *fægum* from the doomed [one]; *fromweardum* 'departing'; *oðþringeð* matches  
 72 *Forþon* So; *þæt* anticipates *þæt* 74; *eorla gehwām* for every man; *æftercweþendra*  
 . . . the praise (*lof*) of those living and speaking afterwards  
 73 *lāstworda betst* the best of trace-words, i.e. epitaphs  
 74 *gewyrce* may earn; *on weg* away; *scyle* must [go] (5.20)  
 75 *fremum* by good deeds; *wið* against; *nīþ* malice  
 76 *dēorum* see 41; *dēofle* the devil; *tōgēanes* against  
 77 *þæt* so that; *ælda* of men; *bearn* sons; *hergen* may praise (5.27)

a reference to the *hyge* of 58. Pliny, in his *Natural History*, and later writers such as St Augustine and Alcuin write of the ability of the soul to travel outside the body; and the notion of the free-ranging spirit – sometimes in the shape of a bird – is found in Icelandic sagas and in Irish legends.

<sup>5</sup> *tiddæge* The interpretation depends on an emendation; the manuscript reads *tide ge*.

and his lof siððan lifge mid englum  
 āwa tō ealdre, ēcan lifes blæd,  
 drēam mid duguþum.<sup>6</sup> Dagas sind gewitene, 80  
 ealle onmēdlan eorþan rīces.  
 Nearon nū cyningas nē cāseras  
 nē goldgiefan, swylce iū wæron,  
 þonne hī mæst mid him mārþa gefremedon  
 and on dryhtlicestum dōme lifdon. 85  
 Gedroren is þēos duguð eal, drēamas sind gewitene;  
 wuniað þā wācran and þās woruld healdaþ,  
 brūcað þurh bisgo. Blæd is gehnāged;  
 eorþan indryhto ealdað and sēarað  
 swā nū monna gehwylc geond middangeard: 90  
 ylðo him on fareð, onsȳn blācað,  
 gomelfeax gnornað, wāt his iūwine,  
 æþelinga bearn eorþan forgiefene.  
 Ne mæg him þonne se flāschoma, þonne him þæt feorg losað,  
 nē swēte forswelgan nē sār gefēlan 95  
 nē hond onhrēran nē mid hyge þencan.<sup>7</sup>  
 Þēah þe græf wille golde strēgan  
 brōþor his geborenum, byrgan be dēadum  
 mǣpmum mislicum, þæt hine mid nille.  
 Ne mæg þære sǣwle, þe biþ synna ful, 100  
 gold tō gēoce for Godes egsan,  
 þonne hē hit ǣr hȳdeð þenden hē hēr leofað.<sup>8</sup>  
 Micel biþ se Meotudes egsa, forþon hī sēo molde oncyrrēð;  
 sē gestapelade stīpe grundas,  
 eorþan scēatas and uprodor. 105  
 Dol biþ sē þe him his Dryhten ne ondrādeþ: cymeð him se dēað  
 unþinged.  
 Ēadig bið sē þe ēaþmōd leofaþ: cymeð him sēo ǣr of heofonum.  
 Meotod him þæt mōd gestapelað, forþon hē in his meahte gelȳfeð.

<sup>6</sup> See 4.5.40–45 (and footnote 4) for a similar statement, but without explicit Christian overtones.

<sup>7</sup> These lines (88–96) suggest another comparison with Ælfric. In the homily mentioned in footnote 3, he goes on to say, 'This world is like an old man . . . in old age the man's stature is bowed, . . . his face wrinkled, . . . his breast

- 78 *lof* glory; *lifge* may live  
 79 *āwa tō ealdre* 'for ever and ever'; *ēcan* eternal; *blæd* glory  
 80 *dugeþum* the valiant [in heaven]; *Dagas* days  
 81 *onmēdlan* splendours  
 82 *Nearon* There are not (5.21); *cāseras* emperors  
 83 *goldgiefan* gold-givers; *swylce* such as; *iū* formerly  
 84 *þonne* . . . when they performed (*gefremedon*) the greatest of glorious deeds  
 (*mærþa*) among themselves  
 85 *dryhtlicestum* noblest; *dōme* renown  
 86 *Gedroren* declined; *duguð* valiant company  
 87 *wuniað* see 15; *þā wācran* the weaker [ones]  
 88 *brūcað* live; *bisgo* trouble; *gehnæged* humbled  
 89 *indryhto* the nobility; *ealdað* grows old; *sēarað* fades  
 90 *geond* throughout; *middangeard* world (see 3.4, footnote 4)  
 91 *him on fareð* comes on him; *onsyn* face; *blācað* grows pale  
 92 *gomelfeax* the grey-haired [one]; *gnornað* laments; *iūwine* former friends  
 93 *æþelinga* of princes; *forgiefene* [to have] given up  
 94 *Ne* . . . The body (*se flæschoma*) will not then be able, when life (*þæt feorg*)  
 fails for him  
 95 *swēte* sweet [things]; *forswelgan* to swallow; *sār* pain; *gefēlan* feel  
 96 *onhrēran* move  
 97 *Þeah þe* . . . Although a brother wishes to strew (*strēgan*) the grave of his  
 brother (*geborenum*)  
 98 *byrgan* . . . bury [him] beside the dead  
 99 *māþmum mislicum* with various treasures; *þæt* i.e. such wealth; *nille* will  
 not [go] (5.20)  
 100 *Ne mæg gold tō gēoce* Gold cannot [act] as a help; *þære sāwle* to the soul;  
*synna* of sins  
 101 *for* in the face of; *egsan* fear  
 102 *hýdeð* hides; *þenden* while  
 103 *Meotudes* of God; *forþon* . . . because of which the earth changes itself, i.e. is  
 changed  
 104 *sē* i.e. God; *gestapelade* established; *stipe* . . . firm foundations  
 105 *scēatas* see 61; *uprodor* sky  
 106 *Dol* Foolish; *him ondrædeþ* fears (5.23); *dēað* death; *unþinged* unexpected  
 107 *Ēadig* Blessed; *ēapmōd* humble; *ār* grace  
 108 *meahte* power; *mōd* state of mind; *gelýfeð* see 66

is tormented with sighs, and between his words his breath fails . . . So it is with this world.'

<sup>8</sup> These lines (97–102) contain echoes of Psalm 49 (48 in the Vulgate), and there is a close parallel to them in an OE homily (MS Hatton 116, p. 390).

## 4.7 The Wanderer

'Oft him ānhaga āre gebideð,  
 Metudes miltse, þeah þe hē mōdcearig  
 geond lagulāde longe sceolde  
 hrēran mid hondum hrimcealde sǣ,  
 wadan wræclāstas: wyrd bið ful āræd.' 5  
 Swā cwæð eardstapa earfeþa gemyndig,  
 wrāpra wælsleahta, winemāga hryre:  
 'Oft ic sceolde āna ūhtna gehwylce  
 mīne ceare cwīpan. Nis nū cwicra nān,  
 þe ic him mōdsefan minne durre 10  
 sweotule āsecgan. Ic tō sōþe wāt  
 þæt biþ in eorle indryhten þēaw,  
 þæt hē his ferðlocan fæste binde,  
 healde his hordcofan, hycge swā hē wille.<sup>1</sup>  
 Ne mæg wērig mōd wyrde wiðstandan, 15  
 nē se hrēo hyge helpe gefremman.  
 Forðon dōmgeorne drēorigne oft  
 in hyra brēostcofan bindað fæste.  
 Swā ic mōdsefan minne sceolde,  
 oft earmcearig ēðle bidæled, 20  
 frēomægum feor, feterum sǣlan,  
 siþþan geāra iū goldwine minne  
 hrūsan heolstre biwrah and ic hēan þonan  
 wōd wintercearig ofer waþema gebind,  
 sōhte seledrēorig sinces bryttan, 25  
 hwær ic feor oþþe nēah findan meahte  
 þone þe in meoduhealle mine wisse,  
 oþþe mec frēondlēasne frēfran wolde,  
 wenian mid wynnum.<sup>2</sup> Wāt sē þe cunnað  
 hū slīpen bið sorg tō gefēran 30  
 þām þe him lýt hafað lēofra geholena:  
 warað hine wræclāst, nales wunden gold,  
 ferðloca frēorig, nalæs foldan blæd;  
 gemon hē selesecgas and sincþege,  
 hū hine on geoguðe his goldwine 35  
 wenede tō wiste. Wyn eal gedrēas.  
 Forþon wāt sē þe sceal his winedryhtnes  
 lēofes lārcwidum longe forþolian.  
 Ðonne sorg and slæp somod ætgædre

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*The Wanderer* is of the same genre as *The Seafarer* and is also in the Exeter Book.

<sup>1</sup> The principle of keeping one's sorrows to oneself is Germanic and heroic, and also classical and Christian.



- 1 *ānhaga* the solitary [one]; *āre* grace; *gebīdeð* experiences
- 2 *Metudes* God's; *miltse* mercy; *mōdcearig* troubled in thought
- 3 *geond* throughout; *lagulāde* the sea-way; *longe* for a long time (5.36)
- 4 *hrēran* stir; *hrīmcealde* ice-cold; *sā* sea
- 5 *wadan* travel; *wræclāstas* exile-paths; *wyrd* destiny; *āræd* determined
- 6 *eardstapa* wanderer; *earfeþa* of hardships; *gemyndig* mindful
- 7 *wrāþra wælsleahta* of fierce killings; *winemæga* . . . in the fall (*hryre*) of dear kinsmen
- 8 *āna* alone; *ūhtna gehwylce* every dawn
- 9 *ceare* sorrow; *cwīþan* bewail; *cwicra nān* no one living
- 10 *mōdsefan* mind; *durre* dare (5.27)
- 11 *sweetule* openly; *āsecgan* explain; *tō sōþe* as a fact
- 12 *eorle* man; *indryhten* noble; *þēaw* custom
- 13 *ferðlocan* spirit-enclosure; *binde* bind (5.27)
- 14 *healde* guard; *hordcofan* treasure-chest, i.e. heart; *hycge* . . . think as he will
- 15 *wērig* weary; *wiðstondan* withstand
- 16 *hrēo* disturbed; *hyge* mind; *helpe* help; *gefremman* bring
- 17 *Forðon* Therefore; *dōmgeorne* glory-desiring [ones]; *drēorigne* a sad [heart]
- 18 *brēostcofan* heart
- 20 *earncearig* wretched; *ēðle* of a native land; *bidæled* deprived
- 21 *frēomægum* from noble kinsmen; *feterum* with fetters; *sælan* bind
- 22 *sīþþan* since; *geāra iū* long ago; *goldwine* gold-friend, i.e. lord
- 23 *hrūsan* of the earth; *heolstre* in the darkness; *biwrāh* [I] covered; *hēan* abject; *þonan* thence
- 24 *wōd* went; *wintercearig* desolate as winter; *wapema* of waves; *gebind* expanse
- 25 *seledrēorig* 'grieving over the hall'; *sinces* of treasure; *bryttan* giver
- 26 *nēah* near
- 27 *þone þe* one who; *meoduhealle* mead-hall; *mine wisse* might know love, 'feel love for me'
- 28 *frēondlēasne* friendless; *frēfran* comfort
- 29 *wenian* entertain; *wynnum* pleasures; *sē þe cunnað* he who experiences [it]
- 30 *slīþen* cruel; *sorg* sorrow; *tō gefēran* as a companion
- 31 *þām þe* for him who; *lýt* few; *geholena* confidants
- 32 *warað* preoccupies; *nales* not at all; *wunden gold* see 4.5.38
- 33 *frēorig* frozen; *foldan* of the earth; *blæd* glory
- 34 *gemon* remembers; *seleseccas* hall-men; *sinþeþe* treasure-receiving
- 35 *on geogude* in youth
- 36 *wenede* see 29; *tō wiste* to the feast; *gedrēas* has perished (5.25)
- 37 *Forþon* 'And so'; *winedryhtnes* friendly lord's
- 38 *lārcwidum* words of advice; *forþolian* forgo
- 39 *Donne* When; *slæp* sleep; *somod ætgædre* both together

<sup>2</sup> The close relationship of lord and retainer in the society which forms the background to this poem is well illustrated throughout *The Battle of Maldon* (4.1).

earmne ānhagan oft gebindað,  
 þinceð him on mōde þæt hē his mondryhten  
 clyppe and cysse, and on cnēo lecge  
 honda and hēafod, swā hē hwilum ær  
 in geārdagum giefstōles brēc.<sup>3</sup> 40  
 Donne onwæcneð eft winelēas guma,  
 gesihð him biforan fealwe wēgas,  
 bapian brimfuglas, brædan fepra,  
 hrēosan hrīm and snāw hægle gemenged.  
 Þonne bēoð þý hefigran heortan benne,  
 sære æfter swæsne. Sorg bið geniwad,  
 þonne māga gemynd mōd geondhweorfeð,  
 grēteð gliwstafum, georne geondscēawað  
 secga geseldan. Swimmað eft on weg.<sup>4</sup>  
 Flēotendra ferð nō þær fela bringeð  
 cūðra cwidegiedda.<sup>5</sup> Cearo bið geniwad 55  
 þām þe sendan sceal swīpe geneahhe  
 ofer wapema gebind wērigne sefan.  
 Forþon ic gepencan ne mæg geond þās woruld  
 for hwan mōdsefa mīn ne gesweorce,  
 þonne ic eorla lif eal geondþence,  
 hū hī færlīce flet ofgēafon,  
 mōdge magupegnas. Swā þes middangeard  
 ealra dōgra gehwām drēoseð and fealleþ.<sup>6</sup>  
 Forþon ne mæg weorþan wīs wer, ær hē āge  
 wintra dæl in woruldrice. Wita sceal gepyldig,<sup>7</sup> 65  
 ne sceal nō tō hātheort nē tō hrædwyrde,  
 nē tō wāc wiga nē tō wanhȳdig,  
 nē tō forht nē tō fægen, nē tō feohgīfre,  
 nē nāfre gielpes tō georn. Ær hē geare cunne  
 beorn sceal gebīdan, þonne hē bēot spriceð,<sup>8</sup> 70  
 oþ þæt, collenferð, cunne gearwe  
 hwider hrepra gehygd hweorfan wille.  
 Ongietan sceal glēaw hæle hū gæstlic bið,  
 þonne eall þisse worulde wela wēste stondeð,<sup>9</sup>  
 swā nū missenlice geond þisne middangeard 75  
 winde biwāune weallas stondaþ,

<sup>3</sup> This appears to refer to a ceremonial distribution of gifts. Comparable ceremonies involving a retainer and his lord are described in Icelandic sagas.

<sup>4</sup> *secga geseldan* The narrator may be thinking of his kinsmen and comrades as they exist in his memory; or he may mean that he is communing with their spirits. It is likely that the *flēotendra ferð* of 54 are these memories, or spirits, though it has been suggested that they are the sea-birds of 47. See 4.6, footnote 4, for the conception of the soul or spirit as able to travel independently of the body, an idea which we perhaps have again here in 55-7.

- 40 *earmne* see 20; *gebindað* hold fast  
 41 *þinceð* . . . 'he dreams' (5.22); *mondryhten* lord  
 42 *clyppe* embraces (5.27); *cysse* kisses; *cnēo* knee; *lecge* lays  
 43 *hēafod* head  
 44 *in gēardagum* in days of yore; *giefstōles* gift-seat; *brēac* had joy from  
 45 *onwæcneð* awakens; *eft* again; *winelēas guma* friendless man  
 46 *gesihð* sees; *biforan* before; *fealwe* tawny; *wēgas* waves  
 47 *bapian* bathe (5.24); *brimfuglas* sea-birds; *brædan* spread; *fepra* feathers  
 48 *hrēosan* fall; *hrim* frost; *snāw* snow; *hægle* with hail; *gemenged* mingled  
 49 *þȳ hefigran* the heavier; *heortan* of the heart; *benne* wounds  
 50 *sāre* painful; *æfter swā̅sne* for the beloved [one]; *genīwad* renewed  
 51 *þonne* . . . when the mind (*mōd*) surveys the memory (*gemynd*) of kinsmen  
 52 *grēteð* greets; *glīwstafum* joyfully; *geondscēawað* examines  
 53 *secga* of men; *geseldan* the companions; *Swimmað* swim; *on weg* away  
 54 *Flēotendra ferð* The spirit of the floating [ones]; *nō* not at all; *bringeð*  
 brings; *fela cūðra cwidegiedda* many familiar utterances  
 56 *geneahhe* often  
 57 see 24, 15, 10  
 58 *Forþon* So; *geþencan* think; *geond* see 3  
 59 *for hwan* why; *ne gesweorce* should not grow dark  
 60 *þonne* when; *geondþence* think over  
 61 *færlice* suddenly; *flet ofgēafon* gave up the [hall] floor, i.e. died  
 62 *mōdge* brave; *maguþegnas* young retainers; *middangeard* world (see 3.4,  
 footnote 4)  
 63 *ealra* . . . 'on every single day' (5.13, 14); *drēoseð* declines  
 64 *Forþon* 'And so'; *ne* . . . a man cannot become wise before he has (5.27)  
 65 *wintra dæl* a quantity of winters, i.e. many years; *woruldrice* world; *Wita*  
 wise man; *sceal* . . . must [be] patient (5.20)  
 66 *tō* too; *hātheort* hot-headed; *nē* nor (5.29); *hrædwyrde* hasty of speech  
 67 *wāc* weak; *wiga* warrior; *wanhȳdig* foolhardy  
 68 *forht* timid; *fægen* pleasure-loving; *feohgīfre* wealth-greedy  
 69 *nā̅fre* never; *gielpes* for self-assertiveness; *geare cunne* 'is fully aware'  
 70 *gebīdan* wait  
 71 *collenferð* resolute  
 72 *hwider* whither; *hrepra* of the heart; *gehygd* the thought; *hweorfan* turn  
 73 *Ongietan* understand; *glēaw* wise; *hæle* man; *gæstlic* terrible; *bið* it will be  
 (5.24)  
 74 *þonne* when; *wela* prosperity; *wēste* deserted  
 75 *missenlice* in various places  
 76 *winde* by the wind; *biwāune* blown upon; *weallas* walls

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 4.3, footnote 8, for comparable 'understatements': the sense is that the narrator's 'companions' are completely silent or – if we take them to be birds – unintelligible.

<sup>6</sup> See 4.6.88–96 and footnote 7 for a similar comparison of the death of men with the ending of the world.

<sup>7</sup> Similar lists of injunctions are to be found in a number of OE homilies.

<sup>8</sup> *beot* See 4.1, footnote 14, for the connotations of this word.

<sup>9</sup> A reference to the end of the world; cf. 4.6 and footnote 3.

- hrīme bihrorene, hryðge þā ederas.<sup>10</sup>  
 Wōriað þā wīnsalo, waldend licgað  
 drēame bidrorene. Duguð eal gecrong  
 wlonc bī wealle: sume wīg fornōm, 80  
 ferede in forðwege; sumne fugel oþbær  
 ofer hēanne holm; sumne se hāra wulf  
 dēaðe gedælde;<sup>11</sup> sumne drēorighlēor  
 in eorðscræfe eorl gehyðde.  
 Ypde swā þisne eardgeard ælda Scyppend, 85  
 oþ þæt burgwara breahmta lēase,  
 eald enta geweorc idlu stōdon.  
 Sē þonne þisne wealsteal wīse gepōhte,  
 and þis deorce lif dēope geondþenceð,  
 frōd in ferðe, feor oft gemon 90  
 wælsleahta worn, and þās word ācwið:  
 'Hwær cwōm mearg, hwær cwōm mago? Hwær cwōm  
 mǣppumgyfa?  
 Hwær cwōm symbla gesetu? Hwær sindon seledrēamas?<sup>12</sup>  
 Ēalā beorht būne, ēalā byrnwiga,  
 ēalā þeodnes þrym! Hū sēo þræg gewāt, 95  
 genāp under nihthelm, swā hēo nō wære!  
 Stondeð nū on lāste lēofre dugupe  
 weal wundrum hēah, wyrmlicum fāh;  
 eorlas fornōmon æsca þrype,  
 wæpen wælgifru, wyrd sēo mære; 100  
 and þās stānhleoþu stormas cnyssað,  
 hrīð hrēosende hrūsan bindeð,  
 wintres wōma, þonne won cymeð,  
 nīpeð nihtscūa, norþan onsendeð  
 hrēo hæglfare hælepum on andan. 105  
 Eall is earfoðlic eorþan rice;  
 onwendeð wyrda gesceaft weoruld under heofonum.  
 Hēr bið feoh lāne, hēr bið frēond lāne,  
 hēr bið mon lāne, hēr bið mæg lāne:  
 eal þis eorþan gesteal idel weorpeð.' 110  
 Swā cwæð snottor on mōde, gesæt him sundor æt rūne.  
 'Til biþ sē þe his trēowe gehealdeþ, ne sceal nāfre his torn tō rycene  
 beorn of his brēostum ācýþan, nempe hē ær þā bōte cunne  
 eorl mid elne gefremman. Wel bið þām þe him āre sēceð,  
 frōfre tō Fæder on heofonum, þær ūs eal sēo fæstnung stondeð.' 115

<sup>10</sup> Ruins are found elsewhere in OE poetry, and also in medieval Latin, as symbols of mutability. Another Exeter Book poem, *The Ruin*, is a meditation on a derelict Roman city. The *enta* of 87 may be a reference to the Romans, and the phrase *wyrmlicum fāh* in 98 may be descriptive of Roman bas-reliefs, which often featured snake-like creatures.



- 77 *bihrorene* covered; *hryðge* storm-swept; *ederas* buildings  
 78 *Wōriað* crumble; *wīnsalo* wine-halls; *waldend* rulers  
 79 *drēame* of joy; *bidrorene* deprived; *Duguð* noble company; *gecrong* has fallen (5.25)  
 80 *wlonc* proud; *bī* by; *sume* . . . battle took some  
 81 *ferede* carried; *in forðwege* on the journey hence; *sumne* . . . one a bird bore off  
 82 *hēanne holm* the deep sea; *hāra* grey; *wulf* wolf  
 83 *dēaðe* to death; *gedælde* handed over; *drēorighlēor eorl* sad-faced man  
 84 *eorðscræfe* grave; *gehýdde* hid  
 85 *Ƞpde* destroyed; *eardgeard* city; *ælda* of men; *Scyppend* Creator  
 86 *burgwara* of the citizens; *breahmta* rejoicings; *lēase* deprived  
 87 *eald* old; *enta* of giants; *geweorc* works; *īdlu* empty  
 88 *Sē* He who; *wealsteal* walled place; *wīse* wisely; *geþōhte* has pondered  
 89 *deorce* dark; *dēope* deeply  
 90 *frōd* wise; *ferðe* see 54; *feor* far [back]; *gemon* see 34  
 91 *wælsleahta* worn many killings; *word* words; *ācwīð* utters  
 92 *Hwær* . . . Where has the steed gone; *mago* young man; *māþpumgyfa* treasure-giver  
 93 *symbla* of banquets; *gesetu* dwellings; *seledrēamas* hall-joys  
 94 *Ēalā* Alas; *beorht* bright; *būne* cup; *byrnwiga* mailed warrior  
 95 *þrym* glory; *þrāg* time  
 96 *genāþ* has darkened; *nihthelm* the cover of night; *swā* . . . as if it had never been  
 97 *on lāste* in the track, 'in their place'; *duguþe* see 79  
 98 *weal* wall; *wundrum hēah* wonderfully high; *wyrmlicum* with serpent forms; *fāh* decorated  
 99 *eorlas* . . . the power (*þrýþe*, pl.) of ash-wood [spears] has carried off the men  
 100 *wælgīfru* slaughter-greedy; *wyrd* . . . the glorious (*mære*) destiny  
 101 *stānhleopu* stony slopes; *stormas* storms; *cnyssað* batter  
 102 *hrīð* snowstorm; *hrēosende* see 48; *hrūsan* see 23  
 103 *wintres* winter's; *wōma* noise; *won* dark[ness]  
 104 *nīþeð* grows dark; *nihtscūa* night-shadow; *norþan* from the north; *onsendeð* sends out  
 105 *hrēo* fierce; *hæglfare* hailstorm; *hælepum* . . . to the vexation of men (5.14)  
 106 *earfoðlic* fraught with hardship; *rīce* realm  
 107 *onwendeð* changes; *wyrda* of destiny (lit. pl.); *gesceaft* the ordered course  
 108 *feoh* property; *lāne* transitory; *frēond* friend  
 109 *mæg* kinsman  
 110 *gesteal* establishment, i.e. the things of this world; *īdel* useless  
 111 *snottor* the wise [one]; *gesæt him* sat (5.23); *sundor* apart; *æt rūne* in meditation  
 112 *Til* Good; *trēowe* faith; *gehealdeþ* keeps; *torn* bitterness; *tō rycene* too readily  
 113 *of from*; *brēostum* breast (lit. pl.); *ācýþan* reveal; *nemþe* unless; *bōte* remedy; *gefremman* achieve  
 114 *mid elne* with zeal; *Wel* Well; *āre* see 1  
 115 *frōfre* comfort; *fæstnung* stronghold

<sup>11</sup> In several OE poems, there are allusions to wolves and birds – usually the eagle and the raven – as attendant on scenes of battle; cf. 4.1.90f.

<sup>12</sup> It was a commonplace in Latin homilies to pose the rhetorical question, 'Where are (*Ubi sunt*) the pleasures and the heroes of the past?' This theme remained popular in European poetry; cf. Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* and Villon's *Ballade des dames du temps jadis*. Compare *The Seafarer* (4.6.80–88), where the narrator looks back in a similar way.



## 4.8 Riddles

- (a) Wiht cwōm gongan þær weras sæton  
monige on mæðle, mōde snottre;  
hæfde ān ēage ond ēaran twā,  
ond twēgen fēt, twelf hund hēafda,  
hrycg ond wombe ond honda twā, 5  
earmas ond eaxle, ānne swēoran  
ond sīdan twā. Saga hwæt ic hātte.
- (b) Neb wæs mīn on nearwe, ond ic neoþan wætre,  
flōde underflōwen, firgenstrēamum  
swīpe besuncen, ond on sunde āwōx 10  
ufan ȝpum þeaht, ānum getenge  
līpendum wuda lice mīne.  
Hæfde feorh cwico, þā ic of fæðmum cwōm  
brimes ond bēames on blacum hrægle;  
sume wæron hwīte hyrste mīne, 15  
þā mec lifgende lyft upp āhōf,  
wind of wæge, siþþan wīde bær  
ofer seolhbapo. Saga hwæt ic hātte.
- (c) Oft mec fæste bilēac frēolicu mēowle,  
ides on earce, hwīlum up ātēah 20  
folmum sīnum ond frēan sealde,  
holdum pēodne, swā hīo hāten wæs.  
Siðþan mē on hrepre hēafod sticade,  
niþan upweardne, on nearo fēgde.  
Gif þæs ondfengan ellen dohte, 25  
mec frætwedne fyllan sceolde  
rūwes nāthwæt. Ræd hwæt ic mæne.

---

The Exeter Book contains almost a hundred Riddles, varying widely in tone and extent. No solutions are given in the original and many are by no means certain. The three selected here are (a) 85, (b) 10, and (c) 61, as they are commonly numbered in editions of the Exeter Book.

- (a) The solution is probably 'one-eyed onion-man': there is a Latin riddle with this answer dating from about the fifth century AD.

- 1 *Wiht* creature; *cwōm gongan* came walking (5.24); *weas* men
- 2 *mæðle* council; *mōde* in mind; *snottre* wise
- 3 *ēage* eye; *ēaran* ears; *twā* two
- 4 *twēgen* two; *twelf hund* twelve hundred; *hēafda* heads
- 5 *hrycg* back; *wombe* stomach
- 6 *earmas* arms; *eaxle* shoulders; *āne swēoran* one neck
- 7 *sīdan* sides; *Saga Say*; *hätte* am called (5.26)
- 8 *Neb* beak; *on nearwe* in a narrow place; *neopan* beneath; *wætre* water
- 9 *flōde* by the flood; *underflōwen* underflowed, i.e. borne up; *firgenstrēamum* by mountain streams
- 10 *besuncen* submerged; *sunde* sea; *āwōx* [I] grew up
- 11 *ufan* from above; *ȝþum* waves; *þeaht* covered; *ānum līpendum wuda* to a moving [piece of] wood; *getenge* clinging
- 12 *lice mīne* with my body
- 13 *feorh* spirit; *cwico* living; *of fæðmum* from the embraces
- 14 *brimes* sea; *bēames* wood; *blacum* black; *hrægle* clothing
- 15 *hwīte* white; *hyrste* decorations
- 16 *lifgende* living; *lyft* air; *upþ* up
- 17 *of wāge* from the wave; *wīde* far
- 18 *seolhbapo* seal-bath, i.e. sea
- 19 *bilēac* enclosed; *frēolicu* fine; *mēowle* woman
- 20 *ides* woman; *earce* chest; *ātēah* pulled out
- 21 *folmum sīnum* with her hands; *frēan* to the lord; *sealde* gave
- 22 *holdum* devoted; *hīo* = *hēo*; *hāten* commanded
- 23 *hreþre* bosom; *hēafod* see 4; *sticade* thrust
- 24 *niopan* from beneath; *upweardne* upward; *on nearo* see 8; *fēgde* fixed
- 25 *þæs ondfengan* the receiver's; *ellen* strength; *dohte* was good
- 26 *mec frætweðne* me, the adorned [one]; *fyllan* fill
- 27 *rūwes nāthwæt* something rough; *Ræd* Explain; *mæne* signify

- 
- (b) There is little dispute that the solution here is 'barnacle goose', which was popularly thought to grow from the barnacles that attach themselves to ships. There is a version of the legend in ch. 26 of the fourteenth-century *Mandeville's Travels*.
- (c) This riddle, like several others, depends for its effectiveness on a *double entendre*; of the 'innocent' meanings proposed, 'helmet' is perhaps the most convincing.

## 5 Outlines of the Language

### The Noun Phrase

**5.1** OE nouns may be masculine, neuter, or feminine, irrespective of biological sex; thus *stān* 'stone' is masculine, *wīf* 'woman' is neuter, and *fyrð* 'army' is feminine.

**5.2** Nouns show inflectional distinctions for up to four cases – nominative, accusative, genitive, dative – and the pattern of case endings gives us four broad classes of nouns: the *general masculine*, the somewhat similar *general neuter*, the *general feminine*, and the *-an* class where there is little difference between the genders.

**5.3** Adjectives agree with their related nouns in gender, case, and number, but in addition they have an inflectional distinction depending on whether they follow a demonstrative (when they have the *definite inflection*) or do not (when they have the *indefinite inflection*). The definite inflection is also used in vocative phrases, e.g. 3.2.18.

**5.4** There are two demonstratives, *þæt* 'the, that', and *þis* 'this'. Both are inflected for gender, case, and number. The articles of ModE are often totally absent: *wicinga ā* 'a messenger of the Vikings'.

**5.5** In the following table, we combine the illustration of the three *general (G)* noun classes with the *indefinite* adjective inflection and the *definite* adjective inflection, the latter accompanied by the *þæt* demonstrative:

*General masculine nouns, 'good king':*

sing	nom	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i>	gōd <sup>1</sup> se gōda	cyning
	acc	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i>	gōdne þone gōdan	cyning
	gen	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i>	gōdes þæs gōdan	cyninges
	dat	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i>	gōdum þæm gōdan	cyninge
	nom & acc	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i>	gōde þā gōdan	cyningas
plur	gen	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i>	gōdra þāra gōdena	cyninga
	dat	<i>ind</i> & <i>def</i>	(þæm) gōdum	cyningum

General neuter and feminine nouns, 'wide land' *neut.*, 'strong cross' *fem.*:

sg	na	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> wīd <sup>1</sup> pæt wide ]	land	n	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> strang <sup>3</sup> sēo strange ]	rōd <sup>3</sup>
					a	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> pā strangan ] rōde
	g	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> wīdes pæs wīdan ]	landes	gd	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> pāre strangre ]	rōde
	d	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> wīdum pām wīdan ]	lande			
pl	na	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> wīd <sup>2</sup> pā wīdan ]	land <sup>2</sup>	na	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> stranga pā strangan ]	rōda
					g	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> pāra strangena ] rōda
	g	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> wīdra pāra wīdena ]	landa	g	[ <i>indef</i> <i>def</i> pāra strangena ]	rōda
	d	ind & (pām) wīdum <i>def</i>	landum	d	ind & (pām) strangum <i>def</i>	rōdum

### Notes

- (1) Numerous adjectives have an *-e* ending, e.g. *rice* 'powerful'.
- (2) Where a short syllable precedes, we have *-u* endings, e.g. *trumu scipu* 'satisfactory ships'.
- (3) As in (2), e.g. *gramu cwalu* 'hideous slaughter'.

**5.6** The next table shows the *-an* noun class (*AN*) and the *pis* demonstrative:

	masc	neut	fem
sg	n pes guma 'man'	pis ēage 'eye'	pēos byrne 'coat-of-mail'
	a pisne guman	pis ēage	pās byrnan
	g pisses guman	pisses ēagan	pisse byrnan
	d pissum guman	pissum ēagan	pisse byrnan

*no gender distinction*

pl	na	pās guman, ēagan, byrnan
	g	pissa gumena, ēagena, byrnena
	d	pissum gumum, ēagum, byrnum

**5.7** There are many minor irregularities in noun inflection which we must ignore in this book, but some common nouns with major irregularities should be noted:

	sg	pl
na	mann ( <i>masc</i> 'man')	menn
g	mannes	manna
d	menn	mannum

Similarly *fōt* 'foot', d.sg. *fēt*; *bōc* 'book' (fem., with g.sg. *bōce*); *burg* 'stronghold' (fem., with g.sg. *burge*, d.sg. *byrig*).

### 5.8 Comparative and Superlative

The comparative of adjectives is formed by adding *-ra* (always with the definite inflection: 5.6), of adverbs by adding *-or*. The superlative has the ending *-ost* (usually with the definite inflection in the case of adjectives). There are several irregular items:

	ADJECTIVE			ADVERB		
'good'	<i>gōd</i>	[ <i>betra</i> <i>sēlra</i> ]	<i>betst</i> <i>sēlest</i>	<i>wel</i>	[ <i>bet</i> <i>sēl</i> ]	<i>betst</i> <i>sēlest</i>
'long'	<i>lang</i>	<i>lengra</i>	<i>lengest</i>	<i>lange</i>	<i>leng</i>	<i>lengest</i>
'little'	<i>lytel</i>	<i>lāssa</i>	<i>lāest</i>	<i>lyt</i>	<i>lās</i>	<i>lāest</i>
'great, much'	<i>micel</i>	<i>māra</i>	<i>māest</i>	<i>micle</i>	<i>mā</i>	<i>māest</i>
'evil'	<i>yfel</i>	<i>wyrsa</i>	<i>wyrst</i>	<i>yfle</i>	<i>wyrs</i>	<i>wyrst</i>

Like *lang* in having a vowel change in the comp. and superl. are *eald* 'old', *geong* 'young', *hēah* 'high', *strang* 'strong'.

### 5.9 Personal Pronouns

There are gender differences only in the 3rd person singular.

1ST PERSON, 'I, WE'		2ND PERSON, 'YOU'	
<i>sg</i>	<i>pl</i>	<i>sg</i>	<i>pl</i>
<i>n ic</i>	<i>wē</i>	<i>þū</i>	<i>gē</i>
<i>a mē, mec</i>	<i>ūs</i>	<i>þē</i>	<i>ēow</i>
<i>g mīn</i>	<i>ūre</i>	<i>þīn</i>	<i>ēower</i>
<i>d mē</i>	<i>ūs</i>	<i>þē</i>	<i>ēow</i>

#### 3RD PERSON, 'HE, IT, SHE, THEY'

<i>sg</i>	<i>pl</i>		
<i>masc</i>	<i>neut</i>	<i>fem</i>	
<i>n hē</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>hēo</i>	<i>hī</i>
<i>a hine</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>hī</i>	<i>hī</i>
<i>g his</i>	<i>his</i>	<i>hire</i>	<i>hira</i>
<i>d him</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>hire</i>	<i>him</i>

#### Notes

- (1) The personal pronouns are used also as reflexives: *he hine reste* 'he rested himself' (4.3.64).
- (2) As well as singular and plural, the 1st and 2nd person have a dual number, meaning 'we-two', 'you-two'; e.g. *unc*, 4.3.48.
- (3) Genitives such as *mīn* can take the indefinite adjective inflection (5.5).



**5.10** The demonstratives *þæt* and *þis* (5.5,6) are also used pronominally both as demonstratives (*æfter þām* 'after that' 3.1.1, *sē gewāt* 'that [thing, i.e. the spear] went' 4.1.134), and as relatives (e.g. 3.2.4; 3.3.14), though the usual relative pronoun is the invariable *þe* (as in 3.3.4, 9, 12, 13, 17). When genitive or dative was required, *þe* could be accompanied by the relevant form of personal pronoun; thus *þe him* 'that to him', i.e. 'to whom' (4.7.10). From *þæt*, we have several important adverbial expressions such as *þæs* 'so much' (e.g. 4.5.22) and *þȳ* or *þē* 'by so much' (e.g. 4.1.130, 296-7); and from *þis* an 'instrumental' form *þȳs*.

### Unstressed Forms

**5.11** By about AD 1000, inflectional endings were often blurred in pronunciation, so that *-um*, *-on*, *-an*, *-en* could sound alike. As a result, numerous 'reverse' spellings are found (e.g. 3.1.5; 3.4.22; 4.1.5; 4.1.7), just as in ModE we sometimes hesitate between *-ant* and *-ent* in spelling *dependent*. Unstressed words such as determiners and pronouns varied in spelling a good deal, doubtless on similar grounds: e.g. *þone* appears as *þæne* in 3.1.7, *hira* as *heora* in 3.2.4 and elsewhere. Cf. also 2.4.

### The Functions of the Cases

**5.12** The *accusative* marks the direct object of most transitive verbs (but see also 5.23), and the complement of some prepositions which imply movement: *þurh ðone æpelan þegen* '(it went) through the noble thane', 4.1.135. In addition, the accusative is used in adverbial phrases expressing extent: *wē ðær gōde hwīle stōdon* 'we stood there for a long time', 4.3.70.

**5.13** In addition to the various uses of the *genitive* that remain in Modern English, there were additional ones in OE. In particular, (a) a descriptive use as in *ic wæs miccles cynnes* 'I was of great lineage', 4.1.201, *wiges heard* 'fierce in battle'; (b) a partitive use as in *ūre sum* 'one of us', *ægþer hira* 'each of them', *manna fela* 'many men' (*fela* itself is invariable); (c) some prepositions in certain uses (cf. 4.1.115); (d) adverbial uses as in *ealles* 'entirely', *āhtes* 'of any value', *ēode his weges* '(he) went on his way'. See also 5.23.

**5.14** The *dative* is used for the indirect object with verbs of telling, giving, etc. (see also 5.23), and with most prepositions. In addition, there are numerous adverbial uses and special idioms; for example, *hwīlum* 'at times', *folce tō frōfre* 'as a comfort to the people', *forste gebunden* 'bound with frost', *wundum sweltan* 'die of wounds', 4.1.277, *wintrum geong* 'young in years'. The dative is used as a kind of possessive in expressions like *him æt fōtum* 'at his feet', 4.1.103 (cf. also 4.1.129, 136), and as a reflexive with verbs such as 'be' (e.g. 4.2.62).

## Verbs and the Verb Phrase

**5.15** Verbs show distinctions of *number*, *tense*, *mood* and (in the indicative singular) *person*. The forms are identified by a combination of base forms (e.g. *bycg-* and *boht-* with the verb 'buy') and endings such as *-e*, *-að*, *-on*. Careful study of the vertical matching in 5.17 and 5.18 will show that from a knowledge of a small number of forms for each verb, the 'principal parts', the whole set of distinctions for each verb can be worked out. Except for the few irregular verbs to which this does not apply, the principal parts are given with each verb in the glossary.

*Note* Infinitives and participles are sometimes inflected; e.g. *hæbbenne*, 3.3.14.

**5.16** According to the pattern of inflections, we distinguish three types of verb: *D* (those with past participles ending with *-d* or sometimes *-t*), *N* (those with past participles in *-(e)n*), and *Irregular*.

**5.17** The *D* verbs constitute the vast majority. The principal parts are the *infinitive*, the *present indicative 3rd pers. sg.*, and the *past indic. 3rd pers. sg.* There are several subtypes of *D* verbs, as illustrated by *lufian* 'love', *fremman* 'perform', and *bycgan* 'buy':

### PRESENT

	(Infinitive) (Indicative 3rd sg)	<i>lufian</i> <i>lufað</i>	<i>fremman</i> <i>fremeð</i>	<i>bycgan</i> <i>bygð</i>
<i>Indicative</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic)	<i>lufie</i>	<i>fremme</i>	<i>bycge</i>
	(þū)	<i>lufast</i>	<i>fremest</i>	<i>bygst</i>
	(hē)	<i>lufað</i>	<i>fremeð</i>	<i>bygð</i>
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	<i>lufiað</i>	<i>fremmað</i>	<i>bycgað</i>
<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic, þū, hē)	<i>lufie</i>	<i>fremme</i>	<i>bycge</i>
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	<i>lufien</i>	<i>fremmen</i>	<i>bycgen</i>
<i>Imperative</i>	<i>sg</i>	<i>lufa</i>	<i>freme</i>	<i>byge</i>
	<i>pl</i>	<i>lufiað</i>	<i>fremmað</i>	<i>bycgað</i>
<i>Participle</i>		<i>lufiende</i>	<i>fremmende</i>	<i>bycgende</i>

### PAST

	(Indicative 3rd sg)	<i>lufode</i>	<i>fremede</i>	<i>bohte</i>
<i>Indicative</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic)	<i>lufode</i>	<i>fremede</i>	<i>bohte</i>
	(þū)	<i>lufodeſt</i>	<i>fremedeſt</i>	<i>bohteſt</i>
	(hē)	<i>lufode</i>	<i>fremede</i>	<i>bohte</i>
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	<i>lufodon</i>	<i>fremedon</i>	<i>bohton</i>
<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic, þū, hē)	<i>lufode</i>	<i>fremede</i>	<i>bohte</i>
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	<i>lufoden</i>	<i>fremeden</i>	<i>bohten</i>
<i>Participle</i>		<i>gelufod</i>	<i>gefremed</i>	<i>geboht</i>

**5.18** The *N* verbs are more complicated, though many of the endings in 5.17 occur in similar use. The principal parts are the *infinitive*, the *present indicative 3rd pers. sg.*, the *past indic. 3rd pers. sg.*, the *past indic. pl.*, and the *past participle*. There are several subtypes, as illustrated by *helpan* 'help', *cēosan* 'choose', and *sēon* 'see':

PRESENT

(Infinitive) (Indicative 3rd sg)		<i>helpan</i> <i>helpð</i>	<i>cēosan</i> <i>cȳst</i>	<i>sēon</i> <i>syhð</i>
<i>Indicative</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic)	helpe	cēose	sēo
	(þū)	helpst	cȳst	syhst
	(hē)	helpð <sup>1</sup>	cȳst <sup>1</sup>	syhð
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	helpað	cēosað	sēoð
<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic, þū, hē)	helpe	cēose	sēo
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	helpen	cēosen	sēon
<i>Imperative</i>	<i>sg</i>	help	cēos	seoh
	<i>pl</i>	helpað	cēosað	sēoð
<i>Participle</i>		helpende	cēosende	sēonde

PAST

(Indicative 3rd sg) (Indicative 3rd pl) (Participle)		<i>healp</i> <i>hulpon</i> <i>geholpen</i>	<i>cēas</i> <i>curon</i> <i>gecoren</i>	<i>seah</i> <i>sāwon</i> <i>gesewen</i>
<i>Indicative</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic)	healp	cēas	seah
	(þū)	hulpe	cure	sāwe
	(hē)	healp	cēas	seah
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	hulpon	curon	sāwon
<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic, þū, hē)	hulpe	cure	sāwe
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	hulpen	curen	sāwen
<i>Participle</i>		geholpen	gecoren	gesewen

*Note* (1) Uncontracted forms in *-eð* also occur; e.g. *gebideð* 'experiences', 4.7.1.

**5.19** *Irregular verbs* can in some cases be reconstructed from principal parts of the D or N types, but there are major exceptions.

**5.20** Some irregular verbs are mixtures, in part resembling N verbs (in their present) and D verbs (in their past). Moreover, in individual instances, some parts occur only rarely or not at all. For example, *sculan* 'be obliged to' has no participles, and its commonest forms are:

	PRESENT INDICATIVE	PAST INDICATIVE
<i>sg</i> (ic)	sceal	sceolde
(þū)	scealt	sceoldest
(hē)	sceal	sceolde
<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	sculon	sceoldon

The relevant parts of other common irregular verbs are:

	PRESENT			PAST
	(ic)	(þū)	(wē)	(hē)
cunnan 'know how to'	cann	canst	cunnon	cūðe
magan 'be able'	mæg	meaht, miht	magon	meahte, mihte
þurfan 'need'	þearf	þearft	þurfon	þorfte
— 'dare'	dearr	dearst	durron	dorste
(ge)munan 'remember'	-man	-manst	-munon	-munde
dugan 'be of use'	dēah	—	dugon	dohte
āgan 'have'	āh	āhst	āgon	āhte
— 'be allowed'	mōt	mōst	mōton	mōste
witan 'know'	wāt	wāst	witon	wiste
willan 'want'	wille	wilt	willað	wolde

#### Notes

- (1) *Dōn* 'do' and *gān* 'go' also resemble both D and N verbs, but their inflections can be inferred from the parts given in the glossary.
- (2) Present subjunctive forms occur such as *mæge*, *mote*, *wille* (e.g. 4.1.21), *dyrr*e (4.5.35), *scyle* (4.6.74). But *-e* forms occur more widely, irrespective of number, tense, or mood, when preceding the pronouns *wē*, *gē* (e.g. 4.1.18, 43).
- (3) With several of these auxiliary verbs, 'be' or a verb of motion can be understood without being expressed (e.g. 4.1.48, 296, 301).

**5.21** The forms of the verb 'be', *bēon* and *wesan*, are exceptionally irregular:

		PRESENT		PAST
<i>Indicative</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic)	eom	bēo	wæs
	(þū)	eart	bist	wære
	(hē)	is	bið	wæs
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	sind(on)	bēoð	wæron
<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>sg</i> (ic, þū, hē)	sȳ	bēo	wære
	<i>pl</i> (wē, gē, hī)	sȳn	bēon	wæren
<i>Imperative</i>	<i>sg</i>	wes	bēo	
	<i>pl</i>	wesað	bēoð	
<i>Participles</i>		wesende	bēonde	gebēon

*Note* Forms corresponding to modern 'are' are rare in most OE texts, but cf. 4.6.82.



### 5.22 *Verbs and their Subjects*

Subjects were frequently left unexpressed: e.g. *hēt* '[he] ordered', 4.1.46. With impersonal constructions, this was the norm: *mē ofhrēow* '[it] saddened me', 3.3.11; *mē þinceð* '[it] seems to me'; *ēow is gerȳmed* '[it] is cleared for you', 4.1.77. But sometimes such impersonal subjects were expressed, e.g. *hit him þūhte* 'it seemed to them', 4.1.50.

### 5.23 *Verbs and their Objects*

Most transitive verbs have the direct object in the accusative, and if there is an indirect object it is in the dative: *geaf gōdne hring þām menn* 'he gave the man a fine ring'. Some verbs however have the direct object in the dative (e.g. *derian* 'harm', *sceððan* 'injure', *beorgan* 'save', *helpan* 'help', *andswarian* 'answer') and others have it in the genitive (e.g. *gewilnian* 'desire', *wyrnan* 'withhold', *gemunan* 'remember', *wēnan* 'expect', *brūcan* 'enjoy', *bīdan* 'await', *þurfan* 'need', *wealdan* 'control', *geunnan* 'grant', *þancian* 'thank', *reccan* 'care for'). Several verbs corresponding to intransitives in ModE have reflexive objects; e.g. *wendan* 'go' (cf. 3.2.16), *gangan* 'go' (cf. 4.1.24), *licgan* 'lie' (cf. 4.1.284).

### *Tense, Aspect, Voice*

**5.24** The present tense forms were used also to express the future (e.g. 3.4.4), *willan* plus infinitive normally implying volition rather than tense, *sculan* plus infinitive implying obligation. The simple tense forms also served for the aspectual contrast represented in ModE *I work* and *I am working*, though the rare construction illustrated by *wæs gesēonde* (3.4.16) often seems to imply something like the ModE 'progressive' *be* + -ing. The same applies to some constructions with the infinitive, as in *cōm gangan* 'came walking' (cf. 4.8.1). In general, however, an infinitive clause has no aspectual implication: *lc geseah hine cuman* corresponds equally to 'I saw him come' and 'I saw him coming'. Sometimes *ongan* plus infinitive was used as equivalent to the simple past rather than indicating an ingressive aspect, 'began to . . .'

**5.25** Although *habban* plus past participle was sometimes used to express perfect or pluperfect (e.g. 4.1.221; 3.2.1; 4.1.273), it was quite general to leave the distinction to be implied by the context alone. For example, *nū gē becōmon* 'now that you have come', 4.1.42; *þe hī worhtan* 'which they had brought about', 3.1.5. Where pluperfect is meant, however, it was common to have the adverb *ær* 'before' in the clause: e.g. 4.1.142, 182.

**5.26** Instead of the passive voice, we often find the indefinite pronoun *man* 'one' with the active (e.g. 3.1.3), but *wesan* or *weorðan* plus past participle could also be used, as in *wæs hāten* 'was called' (4.1.59), *wearð gewundod* 'got wounded' (4.1.119). In the case of *hātan*, there was in fact an inflectional contrast available for active and passive in the past tense: *hēt* 'he called', *hätte* 'he was called' (cf. 3.2.4).



It is convenient to regard the infinitive as being potentially passive: cf. 3.3.14; 4.1.46.

## Features of the Clause

### *The Use of the Subjunctive*

**5.27** In independent clauses, the subjunctive is used as a 'third-person imperative': *gielde hē* 'let him pay, he must pay', 3.4.8. But for the most part, the subjunctive occurs in a wide variety of subordinate clauses where, in one way or another, no claim is being made as to truth-value. For example:

- (a) Hypothetical conditions, as in 3.4.7, 10.
- (b) Concessive clauses, as in 4.5.24-5.
- (c) Indirect requests, as in 4.1.241.
- (d) Indirect questions, as in 3.2.9.
- (e) Non-factual noun clauses, as in *wēnde þæt wære hit ūre hlāford* 'thought that it was our lord', 4.1.224.
- (f) Comparative clauses, as in 4.1.179.
- (g) Clauses dependent on subjunctive-demanding clauses, as in 4.1.219.

### *Correlation and Subordination*

**5.28** A widespread way of subordinating one clause to another was to introduce matching particles into each, as in ModE 'the more the merrier' or as in 4.1.297, *mōd sceal þē mære, þē ūre mægen lýtlað* 'courage must be the greater as our strength lessens'. Compare also *wēnde þæs formoni man þæt wære hit ūre hlāford* 'many a man thought that, [namely] that it was our lord', 4.1.223. Note also the relation between *þæt* in 4.1.20 and *þæt* in the following line; likewise 4.1.68-9; *swilce . . . swilce*, 3.3.19f.

Correlation has the effect that the same particle can correspond to either a conjunct or a subordinator in ModE. Thus *swā* can mean 'so' and 'as', *þær* 'there' or 'where', *þā* 'then' or 'when', *forþon* 'because' or 'therefore' (e.g. 4.2.4-5). For example: *Ðā se cyngc þæt geseah, þā nam hē Apollonies hand* 'When the king saw that, then he took A.'s hand', 3.2.15.

### *Negation*

**5.29** Clauses were made negative by placing *ne* before the auxiliary or (if there was no auxiliary) the main verb: cf. 3.2.9; 4.1.164; 4.1.80. Multiple negation was common, and *ne* could be reinforced by another negative particle which usually followed the negated auxiliary or main verb, as in *hē ne wandode nā*, lit. 'he did not hesitate not-ever', 4.1.252. Co-ordinated negation was expressed with *nē . . . nē*, as in 3.3.11; 4.5.49-50.

**5.30** The particle *ne* combined with the adverbs *æfre* and *ā* 'ever' to give the two words meaning 'never', *næfre* and *nā* or *nō* (as well as the

intensified form of the latter, *nāwiht* 'never at all', which was contracted to *noht* 'nought, not'). In a similar way, there are four verbs with which *ne* combined (*wesan* 'be', *habban* 'have', *willan* 'wish', *witan* 'know'), so that we have negative forms such as *nīs* 'isn't', *nāron* 'weren't', *nāfde* 'hadn't', *nolde* 'didn't want', *ic nāt* 'I don't know' (3.2.12), *niste hē* 'he didn't know' (3.2.2).

### Order of Sentence Elements

**5.31** As well as arrangements like *Ōswald forlēt his lif* 'O. gave up this life' (3.1.8), normal in ModE, we find considerable variety of order in OE. Indeed, the exact reverse of the type just illustrated occurs in the preceding line: *Pæne ræd gerædde Siric* 'S. decided on that plan' (3.1.7), where we recognize that the writer has chosen to mention the object first, because it is already known about, but to delay revealing the subject until, in end position, it can have the greatest impact. Similarly, where the object is a pronoun (and hence obviously known about), the verb frequently takes up the climactic end-position: *ic hine wāt* 'I know him', 3.2.18.

**5.32** When a clause opens with a conjunct, it is commonly followed immediately by the first (or only) part of the verb phrase. For example (with initial *swā*), 4.1.106, 264; (with *pær*) 4.1.170, 285. This is especially so with *ðā* 'then': *Ðā nam Apollonius þæt gewrit* 'Then A. took the letter', 3.2.13. By contrast, when a clause opens with a subordinator, the verb phrase (or its main item) is usually put in final position: *þæt ic ðās bōc of Ledenum gereorde tō Engliscre spræce āwende* 'that I should turn this book from the Latin language into the English speech', 3.3.7; *þā noldon æt þām forða flēam gewyrcean* 'who would not take to flight at the ford', 4.1.65. Cf. also 3.1.18; 4.1.67, 68, 69; 4.1.183, 184, 185; 4.1.256; 4.1.262, 263. Since the same item can be a conjunct or a subordinator (cf. 5.28), it is the position of the verb that provides the distinction: *þā hē byre hæfde* 'when he had the chance', 4.1.105; *þonne wē bēot āhōfon* 'when we shouted vows', 4.1.197.

### Lexicology

**5.33** It is obviously essential for the student to recognize that many words in OE are the 'same' as in ModE, however disguised by different pronunciation and spelling (*mann*, *lif*, *gēar*, *pūsend*, etc). Many of course have changed their meaning as well (*ealdorman*, for example) and many have been replaced by the words (from French, Latin and other languages) that we have adopted over the past 900 years (for *swiðe*, we now have *very*, for example).

**5.34** But in addition to using his knowledge of ModE, the student should cultivate the habit of seeing regularities of relation between OE words themselves. Thus there are many nouns and adjectives with related verbs; e.g.

*eard* 'dwelling place'*lufu* 'love'*beorht* 'bright'*eardian* 'dwell'*lufian* 'love'*beorhtian* 'shine'

**5.35** We need to recognize also that many of the long words encountered are compounds of words that may have been met already, e.g.

*sǣrima* 'sea-rim', i.e. 'coast'*bōccræft* 'book-craft, literacy'*gōdspell* 'good story, gospel'

even though some of the compounding practices of OE were different from ours today (e.g. *brūnecg* 'bright edged', *fealohilte* 'yellow-hilted'), and many of those occurring in the poetry are of that striking kind of poetic periphrasis known as the *kenning* (cf. 1.4); e.g. *sincgifa* 'treasure-giver, lord', *feorhhūs* 'life-house, body'.

**5.36** Above all, we need to note that several prefixes and suffixes recur frequently, with regular effect on the meaning of the word so modified. Some of the commonest have remained in ModE (e.g. *mis-*, *ofer-*, *un-*; *-dōm*, *-ere*, *-ful*, *-ig* as in *grādig* 'greedy', *-hād* '-hood', *-isc*, *-lēas* as in *winelēas* 'friendless', *-nes(s)*, *-scipe*), but in some important instances we need to know the specifically OE usage:

#### Prefixes

- ā-* gives completeness and sometimes intensification to the meaning: *āhēawan* 'cut off', *ārāran* 'raise up', *āflȳman* 'rout utterly'
- for-* is an intensifier, especially in an unpleasant direction: *forbarnan* 'destroy by burning', *forhēawan* 'cut down', *forheard* 'very hard', *forhogian* 'think ill of', *unforcūð* 'not ill-reputed' (4.1.35)
- ge-* gives a perfective meaning to verbs: *gerācan* 'get by reaching', *gefeohtan* 'get by fighting', *gefēran* 'reach by going', *gehlēapan* 'leap upon'. This is linked with the notion of *inclusiveness* when used with other parts of speech, as in *gehwær* 'everywhere'
- of-* chiefly adds completeness to the meaning of verbs: *ofslēan* 'strike down'
- tō-* is another strong intensifier; *tōberstan* 'break apart, shatter'

#### Suffixes

- a* forms agent nouns from verbs: *sincgifa* 'treasure-giver'
- e* forms adverbs from adjectives: *dēoþe* 'deeply', *fæste* 'firmly', *frēondlice* 'in a friendly way'
- end* forms agent nouns: *gārberend* 'spear-bearer'
- lic* forms adjectives, especially from nouns: *gōdspellic* 'concerning the gospel, evangelical', *heofonlic* 'heavenly'
- lice* forms adverbs from adjectives: *snotorlice* 'wisely', *witodlice* 'certainly', *stiðlice* 'sternly'
- ung* forms abstract nouns, especially from verbs: *prōwung* 'torment', *geendung* 'end'



# Glossary

The meanings of words are for the most part explained at the points where they occur in the texts. We give here only a general indication of the meaning (or a grammatical reference) for those items which are not glossed at or near each occurrence. A few words which have remained unchanged in Modern English are omitted. Nouns, pronouns, and verbs are accompanied by grammatical information: for G, see 5.5; AN, 5.6; D, 5.17; N, 5.18.

ac: but  
 āgan: have (5.20)  
 āge → āgan  
 āh, āhte → āgan  
 āhafen → āhebban  
 āhebban: raise (N āhefð, āhōf, āhōfon, āhafen)  
 āhōf, āhōfon → āhebban

æfter: after  
 ælc: each  
 ænig: any  
 ær: before, formerly  
 ærest: first  
 æt: at, from

bæd, bædon → biddan  
 bær, bæron → beran  
 be: by  
 bearn: child (G n)  
 behealdan: hold (→ healdan)  
 behēold, behēoldon → behealdan  
 bēo, bēoð → bēon  
 bēon: be (5.21)  
 beorn: man (G m)  
 beran: bear, carry (N birð, bær, bæron, geboren)  
 bīdan: remain (N bītt, bād, bidon, gebiden)  
 biddan: ask, command (N bitt, bæd, bædon, gebeden)  
 bindan: bind (N bint, band, bundon, gebunden)  
 bindað, binde, bindeð → bindan  
 bið → bēon  
 bond = band → bindan  
 byrð = birð → beran

cald: cold  
 cōm, cōme → cuman  
 const = canst → cunnan  
 cuman: come (N cym(e)ð, c(w)ōm, c(w)ōmon, gecumen)  
 cumen = gecumen → cuman  
 cunnan: know, know how to (5.20)  
 cunnað → cunnian  
 cunne, cunnon → cunnan  
 cunnian: experience (D cunnað, cunnode)

cunnige → cunnian  
 cūðe, cūðon → cunnan  
 cwæð → cweðan  
 cweðan: say, speak (N cwiðð, cwæð, cwædon, gecweden)  
 cwōm, cwōman → cuman  
 cwyð → cweðan  
 cymest, cym(e)ð → cuman  
 cyning: king (G m)

dēah → dugan  
 dō → dōn  
 dohte → dugan  
 dōn: do (dēð, dyde, dydon, gedōn)  
 dearr: dare (5.20)  
 dorste → dearr  
 dōð → dōn  
 dugan: be of use (5.20)  
 durre → dearr  
 dyde, dydon → dōn

ēac: also  
 eal(l): all  
 eart → wesan  
 eft: again  
 engel: angel (G m)  
 eom → wesan  
 ēode, ēodon → gān  
 eorl: man; but see 3.1, footnote 6 (G m)  
 eorðe: earth, ground, world (AN f)  
 ēow, ēower 5.9

faran: go (N færð, fōr, fōron, gefaren)  
 fareð → faran  
 fæste: firmly  
 feaht → feohtan  
 feala = fela  
 feallan: fall (N fylð, fēoll, fēollon, gefeallen)  
 fealleð → feallan  
 fela: many  
 feohtan: fight (N fyht, feaht, fuhton, gefohten)  
 fēol(l), fēollon → feallan  
 fēond: enemy, devil (G m)  
 feor: far  
 feorh: life (G n, gen. sg. fēores)  
 fēran: go (D fērð, fērde)  
 fēt → fōt



findan: find (N fint, fand, fundon, gefunden)  
 flēag → flēogan  
 flēogan: fly (N flȳð, flēag, flugon, geflogen)  
 folc: people, band, company (G n)  
 folde: earth, land (AN f)  
 folme: hand (AN f)  
 for: before, because of  
 forlætan: let, leave (→lætan)  
 forlēt, forlēton → forlætan  
 forniman: take (→niman)  
 fornime → forniman  
 fornōm, fornōmon → forniman  
 forð: forth, forward  
 forðan, forðon: thus  
 fōt: foot (m 5.7)  
 fram: from  
 ful(l): full; very  
 fundað → fundian  
 funde, fundon → findan  
 fundian: set out (D fundað, fundode)  
 fȳnd → fēond  
 fȳr: fire (G n)  
 gā → gān  
 gān: go (gāð, ēode, ēodon, gegān)  
 gangan: go (N gengð, gēng, gēngon, gegangen)  
 gangon → gangan  
 gār: spear (G m)  
 gāð → gān  
 gāð → gān  
 gē 5.9  
 gebād → gebīdan  
 gebīdan: wait, experience (→bīdan)  
 gebiden, gebīdeð → gebīdan  
 gebindan: hold fast (→bindan)  
 gebindað → gebindan  
 gebunden → gebindan  
 gecunnad → cunnian  
 gehātan: promise, call (→hātan)  
 gehāten → hātan  
 gehealdan: hold, keep (→healdan)  
 gehealdeð → gehealdan  
 gehēt → gehātan  
 gehwylc: each, every  
 gehȳran: hear (D gehȳrð, gehȳrde)  
 gehȳrde, gehȳrst → gehȳran  
 geman → gemunan  
 gemon = geman → gemunan  
 gemunan: remember (5.20)  
 gemunað → gemunan  
 gemunde, gemundon → gemunan  
 genāman, genāme, genāmon → geniman  
 genim → geniman  
 geniman: take (→niman)  
 gengde → gengan  
 gengan: go (D gengeð, gengde)  
 geond: throughout  
 georn: eager  
 georne: eagerly, clearly  
 gesāwe, gesāwon → gesēon  
 geseah → gesēon

gesēon: see, perceive (→sēon)  
 gesēonde → gesēon  
 gewāt → gewitan  
 gewinn: battle, struggle (G n)  
 gewitan: ascertain (→witan)  
 gewitan: go (N gewitt, gewāt, gewiton, gewiten)  
 gewitað, gewitene, gewiteð → gewitan  
 gewyrca: bring about, earn (→wyrca)  
 gewyrce → gewyrca  
 geworht → wyrca  
 geworhton → gewyrca  
 gif: if  
 gōd: good  
 gyf = gif

habban: have (D ic hæbbe, hē hæfð, hafað, hæfde)  
 hafað, hafað → habban  
 hand: hand (G f)  
 hātan: command, call (N hātt, hēt hēton, gehāten)  
 hāten = gehāten → hātan  
 hātte → hātan (5.26)  
 hæbbað, hæbbe → habban  
 hæfde, hæfdon, hæfð → habban  
 hē 5.9  
 heofon: heaven (G m)  
 hēoldon → healdan  
 heora = hira 5.9  
 heorte: heart (AN f)  
 hēr: here  
 hēt, hēton → hātan  
 hī 5.9  
 hīe = hī 5.9  
 hild: battle (G f)  
 him 5.9  
 hine 5.9  
 hira 5.9  
 his 5.9  
 hit 5.9  
 hlāford: lord (G m)  
 hogode, hogodon → hycgan  
 hond = hand  
 hū: how  
 hwær: where  
 hwæt: what  
 hwæð(e)re: however  
 hwīl: while (G f)  
 hwilon = hwilum  
 hwilum: sometimes, at times  
 hȳ = hī 5.9  
 hycgan: think (D hogað, hogode)  
 hycge → hycgan  
 hyge: mind, thoughts (G m)  
 hym = him 5.9  
 hyra = hira 5.9  
 hyse: young man (G m, gen. sg. hys(es))  
 hyt = hit 5.9

ic 5.9  
 in: in, into

lāgon → licgan  
 lang: long  
 læg, læge → licgan  
 lætan: let, cause (N lætt, lēt, lēton, gelæten)  
 leg = læg → licgan  
 lēof: dear  
 leofað → libban  
 lēt, lēton → lætan  
 libban: live (D ic libbe, hē leofað, lifde)  
 licgan: lie (N līð, læg, lægon, gelegen)  
 licgað, licgende → licgan  
 lif: life (G n)  
 lifdon → libban  
 lifge, lifgende → libban  
 ligeð → licgan  
 lið → licgan

magan: be able (5.20)  
 man: one (5.26)  
 man(n): man (m 5.7)  
 maneg = manig  
 manig: many  
 mæg, mæge → magan  
 mænig = manig  
 mē 5.9  
 meahte, meahton → magan  
 mec 5.9  
 men(n) → man(n)  
 micel: much, great  
 mid: with  
 miht, mihte → magan  
 mīn 5.9  
 mōd: spirit, mind (G n)  
 mon = man  
 mon(n) = man(n)  
 monig = manig  
 mōst, mōste, mōston → mōt  
 mōt: be able, obliged, allowed (5.20)  
 mōte, mōton → mōt  
 mycel = micel

nam → niman  
 næbbe, næfdon, næfð → habban (5.30)  
 næron → wesan (5.30)  
 ne, nē 5.29  
 nim → niman  
 niman: take (N nimð, nam/nōm, nāmon/nōmon, genumen)  
 nimað, nime → niman  
 nis → bēon (5.30)  
 nō: never  
 nolde, noldon → willan (5.30)  
 nū: now

of: from  
 ofer: over  
 on: in(to), on(to)  
 ond: and  
 ongan → onginnan  
 ongeat, ongēaton → ongytan  
 ongietan = ongytan

onginnan: begin (N onginn(e)ð, ongan, ongunnon, ongunnen; 5.24)  
 onginnað → onginnan  
 ongunnon → onginnan  
 ongytan: perceive (N ongytt, ongeat, ongēaton, ongyten)  
 oð: until  
 oðer: other, second  
 oððe: or

rād → rīdan  
 rīdan: ride (N rītt, rīdeð, rād, rīdon, geriden)  
 rīdeð → rīdan

saga → secgan  
 sǣde → secgan  
 sǣton → sittan  
 sceal → sculan  
 sceoldan, sceolde, sceoldon → sculan  
 sceole, sceolon → sculan  
 sculan: be obliged to (5.20)  
 scyle → sculan  
 se, sē 5.4, 5, 10  
 sēc, sēce, sēceð → sēcan  
 sēcan: seek (D sēcð, sōhte)  
 secgan: say, tell (D ic secge, hē segð, sǣde)  
 sege → secgan  
 sende, sendon → sendan  
 sendan: send (D sent, sende)  
 sēo 5.4, 5, 10  
 sēon: see (N syhð, seah, sǣwon, gesewen)  
 sind, sindon → wesan  
 sittan: sit (N sitt, sǣt, sǣton, geseten)  
 siððan: afterwards  
 sōhte, sōhton → sēcan  
 spræc, spræcon → sprecan  
 sprecan: speak (N spric(e)ð, spræc, spræcon, gesprecen)  
 spriceð → sprecan  
 standan: stand (N stent, stōd, stōdon, gestanden)  
 standeð → standan  
 stōd, stōdon → standan  
 stondað, stondeð = standað, standeð → standan  
 sum: one, a certain, some  
 swā: so, as (5.28)  
 swiðe: very  
 swurd: sword (G n)  
 sylf: self  
 syllan: give (D sylð, sealde)  
 syllon → syllan  
 synd, syndon = sind, sindon → bēon

tō: to, as; too

þā: then, when (5.28)  
 þā 5.4, 5, 10  
 þām, þāra 5.4, 5, 10  
 þās 5.4, 6, 10  
 þæm 5.4, 5, 10  
 þær: there, where (5.28)

þāra, þāre 5.4, 5, 10

þæs 5.4, 5, 10

þæt 5.4, 5, 10

þæt: that (as conjunction)

þe: that, who, which (5.10)

þē 5.9

þēah: though, yet

þencan: think, intend (D þencð, þōhte)

þence, þenceð→þencan

þēoden: prince (G m)

þēos 5.4, 6, 10

þes 5.4, 6, 10

þīn 5.9

þincan: seem (D þincð, þūhte)

þīne, þīnum 5.9

þis 5.4, 6, 10

þone 5.4, 5, 10

þonne: then, when (5.28); than (with comparative)

þū 5.9

þūhte→þincan

þurh: through

þys 5.4, 6, 10

ūre 5.9

ūs 5.9

wadan: go, advance (N wædð, wōd, wōdon, gewaden)

wāst→witan

wāt→witan

wāpen: weapon (G n)

wāre, wāron→wesan

wæs→wesan

wē 5.9

weorð→weorðan

weorðan: become (N wyrð, weorð, wurdon, geworden; 5.26)

weorðeð→weorðan

weoruld = woruld

wesan: be (5.21)

wīg: battle (G n)

willan: want (5.20)

wil(l)e, willað→willan

wisse→witan

wiste→witan

witan: know (5.20)

wite→witan

wið: with, towards

wōd, wōdon→wadan

wolde, woldon→willan

word: word (G n)

worhtan, worhte→wyrcan

worold = woruld

woruld: world (G f)

wurdon→weorðan

wylle = wille→willan

wyrcan: make (D wyrceð, worhte)

wyrce, wyrceð→wyrcan

ymb(e): around







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