

## ***Beowulf* 1970-2019**

### **Translation policy:**

I have translated the lines 1970-2019 from *Beowulf* in modern English by using free verse. I have tried to maintain the original meaning; yet, for the sake of fluency, and the form I have chosen, I have added words where I have thought it necessary and ignored the restrictions of modern English grammar as well as the constraints of the Old English version. I have divided the passage in question into three stanzas, which I have given subheadings so as to mark the development of the poem. I have also italicised the speeches and used capital letter at the beginning of each line in order to emphasise the sense of ritual in this passage.

### **Bibliography:**

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### **I. Beowulf's arrival at Hygelac's court**

The return of Beowulf was at once announced to Hygelac:  
The protector of warriors, the dear shield-companion  
Had arrived alive to the precinct –  
Beowulf, unharmed by the battle, had come to the court.  
Swiftly the hall was cleared within  
For the guests on foot,  
Just as the ruler commanded.  
Beowulf, the one who had survived the battle,  
Sat opposite the king himself<sup>1</sup>  
- kinsman with kinsman –  
After the liege lord had greeted the loyal one  
With a ceremonious speech and solemn words.  
Hæreth's daughter moved the mead-vessels about the hall;  
She cherished<sup>2</sup> the people,  
And bore the mead cups to the hands of the warriors.

### **II. Hygelac's speech to Beowulf**

Hygelac began respectfully question his companion in the lofty hall.  
His curiosity pressed him to find out what adventures  
The Sea-Geats had experienced:

*“What happened to you, dear Beowulf,  
On that journey when you so suddenly decided  
To seek conflict faraway over the salty water,  
To seek battle in Heorot?  
Say, did you in any way remedy  
The widely known woe of Hroðgar, the renowned prince?  
My mind has been anxious  
And agitated by surging sorrows  
Because I did not trust the venture of my dear man.  
Long time did I plead you  
Not to attack that murderous creature  
And urge you to allow the South-Danes  
Themselves settle the war with Grendel.  
I thank God that I have been permitted  
To see you safe once again.”*

### **III. Beowulf's answer to Hygelac**

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgðeow:

*“That mighty encounter is manifest  
To many men, O lord Hygelac:  
What time of battle there was between us two,  
Grendel and me, in that place where  
He brought sorrow to a great many<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson (eds), *Beowulf: an Edition* (Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), p. 115n.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell and Robinson (eds), *Beowulf*, p. 115n.

<sup>3</sup> George Jack (ed.), *Beowulf: A Student Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), p. 144 note to line 2003b.

*Victorious Scyldings – caused miseries forever.  
I avenged all that  
So that no Grendel's kinsmen on earth,  
Who live longest of that hateful race<sup>4</sup> – dwelling in crime – ,  
Have need to boast about that uproar at night.  
When I first came to the treasure-hall  
To greet Hrothgar, the renowned son of Heafldene -  
Knowing my reputation - promptly allotted me a seat  
Amongst his own sons. The host was very joyful.  
Never have I seen thanes more merrily drink  
Their mead under the heaven's vault.  
Often the renowned queen, people's pledge of peace,  
Mingled through the hall and urged her young sons.<sup>5</sup>  
Often she gave a man a precious ringlet  
Before she settled down to her seat.”*

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<sup>4</sup> Mitchell and Robinson (eds), *Beowulf*, p. 116 note to lines 2006-9a.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116 note to line 2018.