

Beowulf 64-85: King Hrōðgár of the Danes builds his great hall Heorot.

The three texts in this document are (a) MS Cott. Vitellius A.XII, (b) *Bjólfskviða*, Halldóra B. Björnsson íslenskaði (Reykjavík: Fjölvi 1983), (c) *Beowulf*, Translated by Seamus Heaney (Faber 1999)

(a)

65 Þa wæs Hroðgare heresped gyfen,
wiges weorðmynd, þæt him his winemagas
georne hyrdon, oðð þæt seo geogoð geweox,
magodriht micel. Him on mod bearn
þæt healreced hatan wolde,
medoærn micel, men gewyrcean
70 þonne ylde bearn æfre gefrunon,
ond þær on innan eall gedælan
geongum ond ealdum, swylce him god sende,
buton folcscare ond feorum gumena.
ða ic wide gefrægn weorc gebannan
75 manigre mægþe geond þisne middangeard,
folcstede frætwan. Him on fyrste gelomp,
ædre mid yldum, þæt hit wearð ealgearo,
healærna mæst; scop him Heort naman
se þe his wordes geweald wide hæfde.
80 He beot ne aleh, beagas dælde,
sinc æt symle. Sele hlifade,
heah ond horngeap, heaðowylma bad,
laðan liges; ne wæs hit lenge þa gen
þæt se ecghete aþumsweorum,
85 æfter wælniðe wæcnan scolde.

(b)

65 Þá var Hrōðgeiri herlán gefið, [hersæld
víga virðing svo að vinmágar hans
forystu fylgdu og af frændum óx
mögdrótt mikil. Móður honum svall,
höll skyldi reisa heit það strengdi,
mjöðrann mikinn mengi láta húsa...
70 meiri en aldabörn áður vissu
og í inni því með öllum deila
gömlum og ungum, því er guð honum veitti,
utan land þjóðar og líf þegna.
Þá frá eg víða til verka settan
75 mannfjölda mikinn við miðgarð þenna
hús að skrautbúa. Honum lánaðist
með öld árla að algera húsið,
hallranna mest. Gaf Hjartar nafn [Herodda
að um veröld vítt veg hans bæri.
80 Brá hann eigi heitum, baugum deildi
og silfri að sumbli. Salur gnæfði
hár og horngeypur; höðelda beið,
leiðra loga. Áður lengi væri

85 enn reis eggjagnat með eiðsvörnum;
aftur valníð vakna skyldi.

(c)

The fortunes of war favoured Hrothgar.
Friends and kinsmen flocked to his ranks,
young followers, a force that grew
to a mighty army. So his mind turned
to hall-building: he handed down orders
for men to work on a great mead-hall
meant to be a wonder of the world for ever;
it would be his throne-room and there he would dispense
his God-given goods to young and old –
but not the common land or people's lives.
Far and wide through the world, I have heard,
orders for work to adorn that wallstead
were sent to many peoples. And soon it stood there,
finished and ready, in full view,
the hall of halls. Heorot was the name
he had settled on it, whose utterance was law.
Nor did he renege, but doled out rings
and torques at the table. The hall towered,
its gables wide and high and awaiting
a barbarous burning. That doom abided,
but in time it would come: the killer instinct
unleashed among in-laws, the blood-lust rampant.