

Cruces



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Reasons to Emend

Rhythm

brād brūnecg

(1546a)

ðēgn betstan

(1871b)

Alliteration

∕ x ∕ x | x x x ∕ x x ∕
nīwe sibbe. | Ne bið þē ænigre gād

(949)

x x ∕ ∕ x
Ðā wæs heal hroden

(1151b)

∕ x ∕ x | x x ∕ x ∕
ēðel sīnne. | Ðonon geomor wōc

(1960)

Grammar

Ʒær wearð Ongendīo ecgum sweordum
blondenfexa on bid wrecen

(2961–2962)

Sense and Syntax

Bēowulf

(18a, 53b)

of ðām leoman stōd

(2769)

Notorious Cruxes

168 “nō hē þone gif·stōl grētan mōste” (1/2)

(1) does *hē* refer to Grendel or to Hrōþgār? (2) is the throne God’s or Hrōþgār’s? (3) does *grētan* mean ‘approach’ or ‘attack’ (both senses are well attested)? (4) does *māþ-dum* refer to the *gif-stōl* or is it used more loosely to mean ‘precious gift’ received by a loyal retainer? (5) does *for* mean “because of” (the Creator preventing the approach to or attack on the throne), or “in the presence of”? (6) Does *myne* mean “mind”, “purpose” (so used in 2572) or “love” (strongly supported by the use of the identical phrase *mine (=myne) wisse* in *Wanderer* 27)?

(Wrenn, *Beowulf* [1953; 3rd ed. rev. Bolton 1973], p. 104)

A relevant seventh question might concern the subject of *wisse* and the antecedent of *his* in line 169b.

(Kaske 142)

169b “nē his myne wisse”

seems able to mean either that Grendel did not know God's mind, purpose, or love; that Grendel did not know Hroðgar's mind, purpose, or love; that God did not know Grendel's mind, purpose, or love; that God did not know Hroðgar's mind, purpose, or love; that Hroðgar did not know God's mind, purpose, or love; that Hroðgar did not know Grendel's mind, purpose, or love; that Hroðgar could not “make known his inclination to serve his people with gifts for the Lord”, or could not “know his own mind”; that God did not take thought of Grendel (with wisse meaning “was conscious of”); or that Grendel did not care for, paid no attention to, had no pleasure in, could not work his will on, or could not comprehend Hroðgar's throne (Kaske 143)

168 “nō hē þone gif·stōl grētan mōste” (2/2)

Kaske points to Gregory's explanation of God's asking/ignorance being synonymous with his disapproval.

Bammesberger revives an old reading “formetode” (“despised”) rather than “for Metode” (“on account of God”), reducing the number of parties involved to two.

Orchard accordingly translates “He [Grendel or Hrothgar] was not allowed to approach the gift-throne; he did not value treasure; nor did he know its attraction.”

224 “ēo·letes”

- ▶ *DOE* prefers *ēa·(ge)lāt(e)* “confluence of rivers,” i.e. “sea”;
cf. gloss *wætergelāt* for *colymbus* “?swimming pool” in the Harley glossary
- ▶ < **elwite* “foreign journey”
- ▶ “sea” < **ēol* “*Angelica sylvestris*” (*Wald-Engelwurz*)
- ▶ < **eolhete* “the pasture of the elk (i.e. of the ship?)”
- ▶ < **eohlāte* “horse-abandoning”

. . . and several more

512b “on sund rēon”

“Eart þū sē Bēowulf, sē þe wið Breca wunne
on sīdne sǣ, **ymb sund flite**,
ðær git for wlence wāda cunneð
ond for dolgilpe **on dēop wæter**
aldrum nēpdon? Nē inc ænig mon,
nē lēof nē lāð, belēan mihte
sorhfullne sīð, þā git **on sund rēon**.
Þær git ēagorstrēam **earmum þehton . . .**”

(506–513 and ff.)

- ▶ Take *rēon* “row” literally or figuratively?
- ▶ Read *sund* in the prose sense of “swimming” or in the poetic sense of “sea, body of water” (both senses, swimming and strait/sound, attested in Old Norse)?

See Earle; Jorgensen; Frank; Bammesberger; Robinson; Nelles; Wentersdorf.

769 ealu·scerwen

Dryhtsele denede; Denum eallum wearð,
ceasterbūendum, cēnra gehwylcum,
eorlum **ealuscerwen**.

(767–769a)

- ▶ *ealu*: “ale” or 𐌺𐌻𐌰 “?good luck”?
- ▶ *scerwen*: “dispensation” or “deprivation”?
- ▶ Cf. *Andreas* 1526 “meoduscerwen,” quite possibly under influence from *Beowulf*
- ▶ If “dispensing of ale” and to be understood contextually as “terror,” then a metaphor meant to evoke “wetting oneself”?
- ▶ Or to be read with sense “deprivation” alongside 5b “meadosetla ofteah”?

2085 “glōf”

Þær wæs **Hondsciō** hild onsāge,
feorhbealu fægum; hē fyrrest læg . . .

(2076–2077)

Nō ðȳ ær ūt ða gen idelhende
bona blōdigtōð, bealewa gemyndig,
of ðām goldsele gongan wolde,
ac hē mægnes rōf mīn costode,
grāpode gearofolm. **Glōf** hangode
sīd ond syllic, searobendum fæst;
sīo wæs orðoncum eall gegyrwed
dēofles cræftum ond dracan fellum.
Hē mēc þær on innan unsynnigne,
dior dædfruma gedōn wolde . . .

(2081–2090)

Cf. Thor and Útgarðaloki's glove in *Gylfaginning* (ed. Faulkes p. 37, ll. 33 ff.)?

Bungled Names

- ▶ “Beowulf” for “Beow” (18, 53)
- ▶ “Hȳrde ic þæt [Ȫrse wæs Onel]an cwēn” (62)
- ▶ “mere wio ingasmilts” for “Merewioingas milts” (2921)
- ▶ ? egsode Eorl[e] “terrified the Heruli” (6; Shippey)
- ▶ ? Hondsciō (2076)

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