

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf: An Edition*, edited by Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson (1998)

- 710    Ða com of more        under misthleoþum  
      Grendel gongan,        godes yrre bær,  
      mynte se manscaða     manna cynnes  
      summe besyrwan in     sele þam hean.  
      Wod under wolcnum        to þæs þe he winreced
- 715    goldsele gumena        gearwost wisse  
      fættum fahne.    Ne wæs þæt forma sið  
      þæt he Hroðgares        ham gesohte;  
      næfre he on aldordagum    ær ne siþðan  
      heardran hæle    healðegnas fand.
- 720    Com þa to reced        rinc siðian  
      dreamum bedæld.    Duru sona onarn  
      fyrbendum fæst        syþðan he hire folmum onhran;  
      onbræd þa bealohydig,     ða he gebolgen wæs,  
      recedes muþan.    Raþe æfter þon
- 725    on fagne flor        feond treddode,  
      eode yrremod;    him of eagum stod  
      ligge gelicost        leoht unfæger.  
      Geseah he in recede     rinca manige  
      swefan sibbedriht     samod ætgædere
- 730    magorinca heap.        Þa his mod ahlog;  
      mynte þæt he gedælde,     ær þon dæg cwome,  
      atol aglæca        anra gehwylces  
      lif wið lice        þa him alumpen wæs  
      wistfille wen.    Ne wæs þæt wyrd þa gen
- 735    þæt he ma moste        manna cynnes  
      ðicgean ofer þa niht.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Widsith, Beowulf, Finsburgh, Waldere, Deor: Done into the Common English After the Old Manner*, translated by Charles Scott Moncrieff (1921)

- 710 Then came from the moor / under misty slopes  
Grendel gliding, / God's ire he bare ;  
Was minded, that murderer, / of mannes-kind  
Some to ensnare / in that solemn hall.  
Waded he under the welkin / till he the wine-house,
- 715 Gold-hall of grooms / might get well is sight,  
With filigrees fretted ; nor was it the first time  
That he Hrothgar's / home had sought.  
Nor ever in his days did he, / ere nor after,  
Hardier hero / nor hall-thegns find.
- 720 Came then to the house / that creature hieing,  
From delights divided ; / the door soon opened,  
Through with fired-bands fastened, / when his fingers touched it  
Burst he in then balefully-minded, / when boiling he was,  
The mouth of the room. / Rapidly after
- 725 On its fashioned floor / the fiend was treading,  
On went he ireful, / in his eyes there shone,  
To leaping-flame likest, / a light unlovely,  
Saw he in the hall / heroes many,  
A cousin-band sleeping / couched together,
- 730 A head of friendly warriors. / Then his heart laughed out ;  
He was minded to divide, / ere the day came,  
That ugly devil, / in each and all  
The life from the limbs ; / then lust to him came  
Of feasting his fill. / Nor was it fated again
- 735 That more he might / of mannes-kind  
Stomach after that night.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf: The Oldest English Epic*, translated by Francis B. Gummere (1923)

- 710 Then from the moorland, by misty crags,  
with God's wrath laden, Grendel came.  
The monster was minded of mankind now  
sundry to seize in the stately house.  
Under welkin he walked, till the wine-palace there,  
715 gold-hall of men, he gladly discerned,  
flashing with fretwork. Not first time, this,  
that he the home of Hrothgar sought, —  
yet ne're in his life-day, late or early,  
such hardy heroes, such hall-thanes, found!
- 720 To the house the warrior walked space,  
parted from peace ; the portal opened,  
though with forged bolts fast, when his fists had struck it  
and baleful he burst in his blatant rage,  
the house's mouth. All hastily, then,  
725 o'er fair-paved floor the fiend trod on,  
ireful he strode ; there streamed from his eyes  
fearful flashes, like flame to see.  
He spied in hall the hero-band,  
kin and clansmen clustered asleep,
- 730 hardy liegemen. Then laughed his heart ;  
for the monster was minded, ere morn should dawn,  
savage, to sever, the soul of each,  
life from body, since lusty banquet  
waited his will! But Wryd forbade him  
735 to seize any more of men on earth  
after that evening!

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, translated by R.K. Gordon (1926)

Then from the moor under the misty cliffs came Grendel, he bore God's anger. The foul foe purposed to trap with cunning one of the men in the high hall; he went under the clouds till he might see most clearly the wine-building, the gold-hall of warriors, gleaming with plates of gold. That was not the first time he had sought Hrothgar's home; never in his life-days before or since did he find bolder heroes and hall-thanes. The creature came, bereft of joys, making his way to the building. Straightway the door, firm clasped by fire-hardened fetters, opened, when he touched it with his hands; then, pondering evil, he tore open the entry of the hall when he was enraged. Quickly after that the fiend trod the gleaming floor, moved angry in mood. A baleful light like flame flared from his eyes. He saw in the building many heroes, the troop of kinsmen sleeping together, the band of your warriors. Then his mind exulted. The dread monster purposed ere day came to part the life of each one from the body, for the hope of a great feasting filled him. No longer did fate will that after that night he might seize more of mankind.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf*, translated by William Ellery Leonard (1939)

- 710 And now from out the moorland, under the misty slopes  
Came astalking Grendel— God's anger on his hopes.  
That Scather foul was minded to snare of human kin  
Some one, or sundry, that high hall within.  
Under the welkin strode he, until full well he spied
- 715 The wine-house, the gold-hall, with fret-work glittering wide.  
Nor was that the first time Hrothgar's home he sought.  
Yet never in his life-days, late or early, aught  
Like this harsh welcome found he from thanemen in the hall.  
He came afooting onward to the house withal,
- 720 This warring One that ever had been from bliss out-cast;  
Forthwith the door sprang open, with forged-bolts through fast,  
When with his paws he pressed it; yea, then on bale-work bent,  
Swoln as he was with fury, that house's mouth he rent,  
Anon he Fiend was treading the shining floor in there;
- 725 On he moved in anger; from eyes of him did glare,  
Unto fire likest, a light unfair.  
He saw within the chamber many a man asleep,—  
Kinsmen band together, of clanfolk a heap;  
Laughed his mood, was minded that Hobgoblin grim,
- 730 Ere the dawn to sunder each his life from limb,  
Now that fill-of-feeding he weened awaited him!  
But Wyrð it was that would not longer grant him might  
To seize on more of mankind after that same night.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf: The Oldest English Epic*, translated by Charles W. Kennedy (1940)

- 710 From the stretching moors, from the misty hollows,  
Grendel came creeping, accursed of God,  
A murderous ravager minded to snare  
Spoil of heroes in high-built hall.  
Under clouded heavens he held his way
- 715 Till there rose before him the high-roofed house,  
Wine-hall of warriors gleaming with gold.  
Nor was it the first time of his fierce assaults  
On the home of Hrothgar; but never before  
Had he found worse fate or hardier hall-thanes!
- 720 Storming the building he burst the portal,  
Through fastened of iron, with fiendish strength;  
Forced open the entrance in savage fury  
And rushed in rage o'er the shining floor.  
A baleful glare from his eyes was gleaming
- 725 Most like to a flame. He found in the hall  
Many a warrior sealed in slumber,  
A host of kinsmen. His heart rejoiced;  
The savage monster was minded to sever  
Lives from bodies ere break of day,
- 730 To feast his fill of the flesh of men.  
But he was not fated to glut his greed  
With more of mankind when the night was ended!

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf*, translated by Burton Raffel (1963)

- 710      Out from the marsh, from the foot of misty  
Hills and bogs, bearing God's hatred,  
Grendel came, hoping to kill  
Anyone he could trap on this trip to high Herot.  
He moved quickly through the cloudy night,  
715 Up from his swampland, sliding silently  
Toward that gold-shining hall. He had visited Hrothgar's  
Home before, knew the way—  
But never, before nor after that night,  
Found Herot defended so firmly, his reception  
720 So harsh. He journeyed, forever joyless,  
Straight to the door, then snapped it open,  
Tore its iron fasteners with a touch  
And he rushed angrily over the threshold.  
He strode quickly across the inlaid  
725 Floor, snarling and fierce: his eyes  
Gleamed in the darkness, burned with a gruesome  
Light. Then he stopped, seeing the hall  
Crowded with sleeping warriors, stuffed  
With rows of young soldiers resting together.  
730 And his heart laughed, he relished the sight,  
Intended to tear the life from those bodies  
By morning; the monster's mind was hot  
With the thought of food and the feasting his belly  
Would soon know. But fate, that night, intended  
735 Grendel to gnaw the broken bones  
Of his last human supper.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf*, translated by Lucien Dean Pearson (1965)

- 710 Grendel drew on from the moor along the mist-  
slope's foot, God's wrath upon him; the vicious  
waster meant to snare some man or other in the high-  
built Hall. He moved beneath the clouds until he saw  
the winehall clearly, gilded shining Hall of men.
- 715 That was not the first inroad he had made on  
Hrothgar's home; in all the days of life, before or  
since, he found no harder luck or hardier thanes.  
The soul cut off from joys came near the Hall. Soon  
after he laid hold of it with hands the door gave way,
- 720 though clinched by fire-brands; then when his baleful  
mind was swollen he forced wide the great Hall's  
mouth. Swift in wrath the fiend now trod the  
variegated floor; unlovely flame-like light flashed  
from his eyes. Within the room he made out many
- 725 warriors sleeping, a gathered band of young thanes  
close in blood. His spirit laughed; the dreaded  
monster meant, before day came, to part the life of  
each man from his body, now that hope of  
banqueting had come. But he was fated not to feed
- 730 on man again, that night once past.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf: The Donaldson Translation*, translated by E. Talbot Donaldson (1975)

Then from the moor under the mist-hills Grendel came walking, wearing God's anger. The foul ravager thought to catch some one of mankind there in the high hall. Under the clouds he moved until he could see most clearly the wine-hall, treasure-house of men, shining with gold. That was not the first time that he had sought Hrothgar's home. Never before or since in his life-days did he find harder luck, hardier hall-thanes. The creature deprived of joy came walking to the hall. Quickly the door gave way, fastened with fire-forged bands, when he touched it with his hands. Driven by evil desire, swollen with rage, he tore it open, the hall's mouth. After that the foe at once stepped onto the shining floor, advanced angrily. From his eyes came a light not fair, most like flame. He saw many men in the hall, a band of kinsmen all asleep together, a company of war-men. then his heart laughed: dreadful monster, he thought that before the day came he would divide the life from the body of every one of them, for there had come to him a hope of full-feasting. It was not his fate that when that night was over he should feast on more of mankind.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf: A Dual-Language Edition*, translated by Howell D. Chickering, Jr. (1977)

- 710 Then up from the marsh, under misty cliffs,  
Grendel came walking; he bore God's wrath.  
The evil thief planned to trap some human,  
one of man's kind, in the towering hall.  
Under dark skies he came till he saw
- 715 the shining wine-hall, house of gold-giving,  
a joy to men, plated high with gold.  
It was not the first time he had visited Hrothgar;  
never in his life, before or after,  
did he find harder luck or retainers in hall.
- 720 The evil warrior, deprived of joys,  
came up to the building; the door burst open,  
though bound with iron, as soon as he touched it,  
huge in his bloodlust; enraged, he ripped open  
the mouth of the hall; quickly rushed in—
- 725 the monster stepped on the bright-paved floor,  
crazed with evil anger; from his strange eyes  
an ugly light shone out like fire.  
There in the hall he saw many men—  
the band of kinsmen all sleeping together,
- 730 a troop of young warriors. Then his heart laughed;  
evil monster, he thought he would take  
the life from each body, eat them all  
before the day came; the gluttonous thought  
of a full-bellied feast was hot upon him.
- 735 No longer his fate to feed on mankind,  
after that night.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf: An Imitative Translation*, translated by Ruth P. M. Lehmann (1988)

- 710 Then from the moorland under misty hills  
Grendel came gliding; God's wrath he bore.  
That murderer meant there in the mighty hall  
to seek to ensnare some man or other.  
He strode under stormclouds till the stronghold loomed,  
715 gleaming golden, with gilded plating  
disclosed clearly. He had come before  
to maraud, ravage Hrothgar's home.  
He had not found in life before nor since  
harder misfortune then in the hall of Geats.
- 720 Then to the building came the brute wandering,  
deprived of pleasure. Yet the portal gaped,  
though fast with forged bands, as he first touched it.  
Angry he opened the entrance to the building  
with hateful purpose. Hurriedly crossing  
725 the patterned pavement the oppressor came  
in fuming fury. From the fiend's eyes shot  
lurid light flashing like lightning glare.  
In the hall he beheld heroes in plenty,  
a cluster of kinsmen caught there sleeping,  
730 huddled warriors. Then his heart rejoiced;  
the horrid hellfiend hoped before daylight  
to outrage each one, all flesh riven,  
breath from body. He was blindly sure  
of his fill feasting.
- But no further prey
- 735 would his lot allow when this last night passed,  
no more of mankind.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, translated by R. M. Liuzza  
(2000)

- 710 Then from the moor, in a blanket of mist,  
Grendel came stalking — he bore God's anger;  
the evil marauder meant to ensnare  
some of human-kind in that high hall.  
Under the clouds he came until he clearly knew
- 715 he was near the wine-hall, men's golden house,  
finely adorned. It was not the first time  
he had sought out the home of Hrothgar,  
but never in his life, early or late,  
did he find harder luck or a hardier hall-thane.
- 720 To the hall came that warrior on his journey,  
bereft of joys. The door burst open,  
fast in its forged bands, when his fingers touched it;  
bloody-minded, swollen with rage, he swung open  
the hall's mouth, and immediately afterwards
- 725 the fiend strode across the paved floor,  
went angrily; in his eyes stood  
a light not fair, glowing like fire.  
He saw in the hall many a soldier,  
a peaceful troop sleeping all together,
- 730 a large company of thanes — and he laughed inside;  
he meant to divide, before day came,  
this loathsome creature, the life of each  
man from his body, when there befell him  
the hope of a feast. But it was not his fate
- 735 to taste any more of the race of mankind  
after that night.

## Beowulf Translations Handout

from *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, translated by Seamus Heaney  
(2000)

- 710 In off the moors, down through the mist bands  
God-cursed Grendel came greedily loping.  
The bane of the race of men roamed forth,  
hunting for a prey in the high hall.  
Under the cloud-murk he moved towards it
- 715 until it shone above him, a sheer keep  
of fortified gold. Nor was that the first time  
he had scouted the grounds of Hrothgar's dwelling—  
although never in his life, before or since,  
did he find harder fortune or hall-defenders.
- 720 Spurned and joyless, he journeyed on ahead  
and arrived at the bawn. The iron-braced door  
turned on its hinge when his hands touched it.  
Then his rage boiled over, he ripped open  
the mouth of the building, maddening for blood,
- 725 pacing the length of the patterned floor  
with his loathsome tread, while a baleful light,  
flame more than light, flared from his eyes.  
He saw many men in the mansion, sleeping,  
a ranked company of kinsmen and warriors
- 730 quartered together. And his glee was demonic,  
picturing the mayhem: before morning  
he would rip life from limb and devour them,  
feed on their flesh; but his fate that night  
was due to change, his days of ravaging
- 735 had come to an end.