

[4] The Lament for Beowulf

For him then they <i>geared</i> , the <i>folk of the Geats</i> . A pile on the earth all unweaklike that was With warhelms behung, and with boards of the battle, And bright <i>byrnies</i> , e'en after the boon that he bade. Laid down then amid most their King mighty famous The warriors lamenting the <i>lief</i> lord of them. Began on the <i>burg</i> of balefires the biggest The warriors to waken: Haeë yo ha!	(prepared/a people in southern Sweden)  (mail shirts)  (dear, beloved) (hill)
The wood <i>reek</i> went up <i>Swart</i> over the smoky glow, sound the flame <i>Bewound</i> with the weeping, the wind blending stilled, Until it at last the <i>bonehouse</i> had broken Hot at the heart. All <i>unglad</i> of mind with moodcare They mourned their liegelord's <i>quelling</i> . Likewise a sad <i>lay</i> the wife of a fore time For Beowulf the King with her hair all upbouden Sang sorrow careful; Ah, ah, ah. Said oft and over That <i>harmdays</i> for <i>herself she dreaded</i> . Shaming and bondage. The slaughter falls many, much fear of the warrior, Ah, ah, ah.	(smoke) (black) (noisy) (body)  (sad) (death) (song)          (she feared bad times to come)
Heav'n swallowed the reek. Wrought there and fashioned the <i>folk of the Weders</i> A <i>howe</i> on the <i>lith</i> e, that high was and broad, Unto the <i>wavefarers</i> wide to be seen: Then it they <i>betimber'd</i> in time of ten days, The battle strong's beacons; the brands' very leavings They bewrought with a wall in the worthiest of ways, That men of all wisdom might find how to work.	(Geats) (tower/headland) (sailors) (built)
Into burg then did they the rings and bright sungems And all such adornments as in the hoard there The war-minded men had taken e'en now; <i>The earl's</i> treasures let they the earth to be holding, Gold in the grit, wherin yet it liveth, As useless to men as e'er it <i>erst</i> was. Ah.	(Beowulf's) (dirt) (first)
Then round the <i>howe</i> rode the <i>deer</i> of the battle The <i>bairns</i> of the <i>athelings</i> , twelve were they in all. Their care would they mourn, and bemoan them their King, The <i>wordlay</i> would they utter and over the man speak: They accounted his earlship and mighty deeds done, And doughtily deemed them; and due as it is That each one his friendlord with words should <i>belaud</i> , And love in his heart, whenas forth shall he Away from the body be fleeting at last. Ah.	(barrow/horses) (sons/princes)  (elegy)   (praise)
In suchwise they grieved, the folk of the Geats, For the fall of their lord, e'en they his hearthfellows, Quoth they that he was a <i>world King</i> forsooth, The mildest of all men, unto men kindest, To his folk the most gentlest, most yearning of fame. Ah.	(king of all kings)

Translation of Beowulf by William Morris (1834-96) and  
Alfred John Wyatt (1858-1935)