*Beowulf* Prologue Reading

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| Hwæt! Wé Gárdena      in géardagum  |  | Listen! We --of the [Spear-Danes](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#r1)      in the days of yore,  |
| þéodcyninga      þrym gefrúnon**·**  |  | of those clan-kings--      [heard](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#r2) of their glory**.**  |
| hú ðá æþelingas      ellen fremedon**.**  |  | how those nobles      performed courageous deeds**.**  |
| Oft Scyld Scéfing      sceaþena þréatum  |  | Often [Scyld, Scef's](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#r4) son,      from enemy hosts  |
| monegum maégþum      meodosetla oftéah**·**  | **5**  | from many peoples      seized mead-benches;  |
| egsode Eorle      syððan aérest wearð  |  | and terrorised [the fearsome Heruli](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#r6)      after first he was  |
| féasceaft funden      hé þæs frófre gebád**·**  |  | found helpless and destitute,      he then knew recompense for that:-  |
| wéox under wolcnum**·**      weorðmyndum þáh  |  | he waxed under the clouds,      throve in honours,  |
| oð þæt him aéghwylc      þára ymbsittendra  |  | until to him each      of the bordering tribes  |
| ofer hronráde      hýran scolde,  | **10**  | beyond the [whale-road](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#r10)      had to submit,  |
| gomban gyldan**·**      þæt wæs gód cyning**.**  |  | and yield tribute:-      that was a good king!  |
| Ðaém eafera wæs      æfter cenned  |  | To him a heir was      born then  |
| geong in geardum      þone god sende  |  | young in the yards,      God sent him  |
| folce tó frófre**·**      fyrenðearfe ongeat**·**  |  | to comfort the people;      He had seen the dire distress  |
| þæt híe aér drugon      aldorléase  | **15**  | that they suffered before,      leader-less  |
| lange hwíle**·**      him þæs líffréä  |  | a long while;      them for that the Life-Lord,  |
| wuldres wealdend      woroldáre forgeaf:  |  | Ruler of Glory,      granted honour on earth:  |
| Béowulf wæs bréme      --blaéd wíde sprang--  |  | [Beowulf (Beaw)](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#r18) was famed      --his renown spread wide--  |
| Scyldes eafera      Scedelandum in**.**  |  | Scyld's heir,      in Northern lands**.**  |
| Swá sceal geong guma      góde gewyrcean  | **20**  | So ought a young man      by good deeds deserve,  |
| fromum feohgiftum      on fæder bearme  |  | (and) by fine treasure-gifts,      while in his father's keeping,  |
| þæt hine on ylde      eft gewunigen  |  | that him in old age      shall again stand by,  |
| wilgesíþas      þonne wíg cume**·**  |  | willing companions,      when war comes,  |
| léode gelaésten:      lofdaédum sceal  |  | people serve him:      by glorious deeds must,  |
| in maégþa gehwaére      man geþéön**.**  | **25**  | amongst his people, everywhere,      one prosper**.**  |
| Him ðá Scyld gewát      tó gescæphwíle  |  |

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| Then Scyld departed      at the destined time, | [**\*\*26-52\*\***](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#e26) |

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| felahrór féran      on fréan waére**·**  |  | still in his full-strength, to fare      in the [protection of the Lord Frea;](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#r27)  |
| hí hyne þá ætbaéron      tó brimes faroðe  |  | he they carried      to the sea's surf,  |
| swaése gesíþas      swá hé selfa bæd  |  | his dear comrades,      as he himself had bid,  |
| þenden wordum wéold      wine Scyldinga  | **30**  | when he yet wielded words,      that friend of the Scyldings,  |
| léof landfruma      lange áhte**·**  |  | beloved ruler of the land,      had ruled for a long time;  |
| þaér æt hýðe stód      hringedstefna  |  | there at the harbour stood      with a ringed-prow,  |
| ísig ond útfús      æþelinges fær**·**  |  | icy and keen to sail,      a hero's vessel;  |
| álédon þá      léofne þéoden  |  | they then laid down      the beloved prince,  |
| béaga bryttan      on bearm scipes  | **35**  | the giver of rings and treasure,      in the bosom of the boat,  |
| maérne be mæste**·**      þaér wæs mádma fela  |  | the mighty by the mast;      many riches were there,  |
| of feorwegum      frætwa gelaéded**·**  |  | from far-off lands      ornate armour and baubles were brought;  |
| ne hýrde ic cýmlícor      céol gegyrwan  |  | I have not heard of a comelier      keel adorned  |
| hildewaépnum      ond heaðowaédum  |  | with weapons of battle      and war-dress,  |
| billum ond byrnum**·**      him on bearme læg  | **40**  | [bill-blades](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#r40) and byrnies;      there lay on his breast  |
| mádma mænigo      þá him mid scoldon  |  | many treasures,      which with him must,  |
| on flódes aéht      feor gewítan**·**  |  | in the power of the waves,      drift far off;  |
| nalæs hí hine laéssan      lácum téodan  |  | in no way had they upon him fewer      gifts bestowed  |
| þéodgestréonum      þonne þá dydon  |  | with the wealth of a nation,      than those did  |
| þe hine æt frumsceafte      forð onsendon  | **45**  | who him in the beginning      had sent forth  |
| aénne ofer ýðe      umborwesende**·**  |  | alone upon the waves      being but a child;  |
| þá gýt híe him ásetton      segen gyldenne  |  | yet then they set up      the standard of gold,  |
| héah ofer héafod**·**      léton holm beran**·**  |  | high over head;      they let the sea bear,  |
| géafon on gársecg**·**      him wæs geómor sefa  |  | gave to the [ocean,](http://www.heorot.dk/beowulf-rede-notes.html#r49)      in them were troubled hearts,  |
| murnende mód**·**      men ne cunnon  | **50**  | mourning minds;      men cannot  |
| secgan tó sóðe      seleraédenne  |  | say for certain,      (neither) court-counsellors  |
| hæleð under heofenum      hwá þaém hlæste onféng**.**  |  | (nor) heroes under heaven,      who received that cargo**.**  |