

0 Hygelac’s only daughter: a present, a potentate and a 0  
peaceweaver in *Beowulf*

5 ALARIC HALL 5

10 The women of *Beowulf* have enjoyed extensive study in recent years, but one has 10  
escaped the limelight: the only daughter of Hygelac, king of the Geats and Beowulf’s  
lord. But though this daughter is mentioned only fleetingly, a close examination of  
the circumstances of her appearance and the words in which it is couched affords  
new perspectives on the role of women in *Beowulf* and on the nature of Hygelac’s  
15 kingship. Hygelac’s only daughter is given as part of a reward to Hygelac’s retainer 15  
Eofor for the slaying of the Swedish king Ongentheow. *Beowulf* refers to this reward  
with the unique noun *ofermaðmas*, traditionally understood to mean “great  
treasures”. I argue, however, that *ofermaðmas* at least potentially means “excessive  
treasures”. Developing this reading implies a less favourable assessment of Hygelac’s  
20 actions here than has previously been inferred. I argue further that the excess in 20  
Hygelac’s treasure-giving derives specifically from his gift of his only daughter, and  
the consequent loss to the Geats of the possibility of a diplomatic marriage through  
which they might end their feud with the Swedes. A reconsideration of Hygelac’s  
only daughter, then, offers new perspectives on the semantics of *ofermaðum*, on  
Hygelac’s kingship, and on women in *Beowulf*.

25 Hygelac’s daughter is mentioned in the speech which is delivered by the messenger 25  
who announces Beowulf’s death to the Geats after Beowulf’s dragon-fight. The  
announcement made, the messenger goes on to describe the career of Beowulf’s  
predecessor Hygelac and the unresolved conflicts between the Geats and their  
neighbours hanging over from Hygelac’s reign. He concludes by predicting the  
30 Geats’ own destruction. The messenger’s speech is dominated by an account of how 30  
Hygelac gained his kingship. The Geats, led by their then king Hæthcyn, Hygelac’s  
older brother, had attacked the Swedes and seized the wife of the Swedish king  
Ongentheow. Subsequently, however, Ongentheow regained his wife, killing  
Hæthcyn in the process. Ongentheow seemed set to slaughter all the remaining  
35 Geatish raiders as well until Hygelac arrived with Geatish reinforcements—two of 35  
whom, Wulf and Eofor, attacked Ongentheow, Eofor killing him. His brother  
Hæthcyn dead and his martial reputation assured, Hygelac ascended to the Geatish  
throne. This narrative closes with the scene (lines 2991–98) which is my concern  
here.<sup>1</sup> It describes how

40 geald þone guðræs geata dryhten 40  
hreðles eafora þa he to ham becom  
iofore ond wulfe mid ofermaðmum  
sealde hiora gehwæðrum hund þusenda  
45 landes ond locenra beaga ne ðorfte him ða lean oðwitan 45  
mon on middangearde syððan hie ða mærdða geslogon ·  
ond ða iofore forgeaf angan dohtor  
hamweorðunge hyldo to wedde

50 When he returned home, the lord of the Geats, 50  
the son of Hrethel [Hygelac], rewarded Wulf and Eofor  
for that battle-rush with *ofermaðmas*.

0 He gave to each of them a hundred thousand [units] 0  
of land and linked rings—no-one in the world  
need have criticised him/they for those rewards, after they won that glory—  
and then he gave to Eofor his only daughter,  
household-honour, a pledge of his favour.

5 The unique word *ofermaðum* here has hitherto been understood—to cite a few 5  
standard authorities—to mean “a very valuable treasure, a treasure of surpassing  
worth”, “costly treasure”, “exceeding treasure” or “exceedingly great treasure”.<sup>2</sup>  
Gneuss, indeed, considered it an example of words which prove that “noun and  
10 adjective combinations with *ofer* in the sense of ‘great x’ are semantically and 10  
morphologically perfectly legitimate and do occur”.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding *ofermaðum*,  
and the frequent difficulty of deciding confidently how we should interpret the  
prefix, there are convincing examples of *ofer-* in the sense ‘great’ and as a simple  
15 intensifier, among them *oferþearf* (“great need”), *oferneod* (“great necessity”), and  
*ofereald* (“very old”).<sup>4</sup> But “exceedingly great treasure” is not, at a lexical level, 15  
the most obvious interpretation of *ofermaðum*: more often, and with less frequent  
ambiguity, the Old English prefix *ofer-* denotes excess, implying “excessive treasure”.  
Regardless of how we understand it in *The Battle of Maldon*, *ofermod*, literally  
20 “over-courage”, is clearly attested otherwise in the negative sense of “pride”.  
*Ofer(ge)drync* (“drunkenness”), *ofereaca* (“surplus”), *ofergemet* (“excess”), *ofer-* 20  
*mete* (“gluttony”), *oferlufu* (“excessive love”), and copious other examples are  
available.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, in Middle English “the most frequent sense” of *over-* “is  
25 ‘excessive(ly)’ etc., about 42 per cent of the *over-* words”; the sense of “superior” 25  
accounts for only about 15 per cent.<sup>6</sup> Since *ofermaðum* occurs only once in Old  
English, it is not unlikely that it was coined by the *Beowulf*-poet. Encountering the  
word for the first time, *Beowulf*’s audience would presumably have been more likely  
30 to infer the common meaning “excessive-” rather than the rarer “superior-”. The  
word might have been coined, of course, partly for metrical convenience, but with  
unrivalled skill and a large lexicon of treasure to draw on, the *Beowulf*-poet cannot  
35 be assumed to have invented *ofermaðum* merely to escape a metrical tight spot 35  
without considering the likelihood that it would be interpreted to denote excess. The  
reading of *ofermaðmas* as “excessive treasures” was undoubtedly possible for Anglo-  
Saxons, and if nothing else introduces to *Beowulf* an ambiguity which deserves  
further consideration.

35 Proceeding to the context in which *ofermaðum* appears, we are left in no doubt 35  
that Hygelac gave more to Wulf and Eofor than he needed to. Whether *him* in line  
2995 implies that no-one could reproach Hygelac for giving the land and rings as a  
reward, or that no-one could reproach Wulf and Eofor for receiving them, the poem  
40 states explicitly that land and rings were sufficient reward for killing Ongentheow. It 40  
then adds, however, that Hygelac also gave away his only daughter (in a note  
marked off, and thereby arguably emphasised, by the manuscript pointing). If  
*ofermaðum* does imply excess, then it is clear that Hygelac’s daughter is the part of  
his reward to Wulf and Eofor which he neither need nor should have bestowed. Two  
45 issues arise here: is the criticism of Hygelac which is implicit in my reading consistent 45  
with other parts of the poem? And where is the excess in Hygelac giving away his  
daughter specifically? The answer to the latter question is surely that women in  
*Beowulf* are important resources for rulers wishing to forge peace-treaties through  
political marriages. At the point when Hygelac gave his rewards to Wulf and Eofor,  
50 the Geats and the Swedes had each lost a king. Hygelac, the new king of the Geats, 50  
had an ideal opportunity to make peace with his new counterpart, and in the world  
which *Beowulf* portrays, a marriage alliance be an obvious component in such  
diplomacy. Such a marriage would, moreover, afford a symbolic counterbalance to

0 the Geats' previous theft of Ongentheow's wife. But Hygelac married his daughter 0  
 instead to reward a key perpetrator of the feud. I consolidate and elaborate this  
 reading here first by discussing *Beowulf's* portrayal of Hygelac and then its portrayal  
 of political marriages.

5 We might note, before assessing *Beowulf* itself, that although Hygelac's other 5  
 appearance in Anglo-Saxon literature, in the *Liber monstrorum*, puts him at the less  
 monstrous end of a spectrum of anthropomorphic monsters, the fact that he is  
 included there at all is hardly flattering.<sup>7</sup> In *Beowulf* itself, Hygelac enjoys the  
 reflected glory of his retainer Beowulf, and Beowulf's own devotion to him  
 10 itself encourages respect.<sup>8</sup> But Kaske and Irving have emphasised Hygelac's 10  
 faults.<sup>9</sup> His first appearance as an protagonist in the poem is marked by his  
 startlingly to-the-point speech at Beowulf's return from Denmark, in which he shows  
 that he had misjudged Beowulf's youthful potential and had opposed his journey  
 (lines 1987–98). Hygelac does not emerge as much of an orator here; moreover, we  
 15 know from a speech by Beowulf elsewhere in the poem that “snotere ceorlas” (“wise 15  
 men”) had advised his journey to Denmark (lines 415–18; cf. 2183–89). The  
 implication, if we do not take this merely as an inconsistency, is that Hygelac is not  
*snotor*.

20 In the scene where Hygelac makes his speech, his court is prominently described 20  
 with reference to his wife Hygd, and through her contrast with another queen whose  
 name is conventionally, but disputably, read as Modthrytho.<sup>10</sup> “Wis welþungen”  
 (“wise, accomplished”), Hygd exhibits a canny understanding of the political  
 necessities of her volatile world which Modthrytho lacks. The characterisation is  
 fitting, as her name transparently means “thought”. Moreover, we later discover  
 25 that after Hygelac's death, Hygd was to ask Beowulf to become king instead of her 25  
 son Heardred. Beowulf refused, but in consequence Heardred was killed and  
 Beowulf's accession merely delayed (lines 1925–31, 2367–76): it would appear that  
 Hygd's judgement, then, was sound. The contrast which *Beowulf* draws between  
 Hygd and Modthrytho invites the further comparison of Hygelac both with his  
 30 prudent wife and with Modthrytho's husband Offa. Neither Hygelac's actions nor 30  
 his name—probably meaning “thought-play”—makes the comparison with Hygd  
 favourable.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, *Beowulf* observes that Modthrytho's husband Offa  
 “wisdomes heold/eðel sinne” (“held his homeland with wisdom” ll. 1959–60), which,  
 as Orchard has emphasised, is hard to say of Hygelac.<sup>12</sup>

35 Most importantly, however, *Beowulf* describes Hygelac's disastrous raid on the 35  
 Franks—four times, “more often”, by Brodeur's reckoning, “than any other event”  
 (1959, 79; lines 1202–14, 2349–99, 2492–2509, 2910–21). In the first account, the raid  
 is explicitly undertaken “for wlencu” (“out of pride”), Hygelac losing not only his  
 life but also the “Brosinga mene” (“neck-ring of the Brosingas”) given to him by  
 40 Beowulf (lines 1192–1214). Characteristically, *Beowulf* juxtaposes Hygelac's raid 40  
 with some other events in the history of the neck-ring: it was given to Beowulf as a  
 reward for a worthy and successful foreign expedition, and it had previously been  
 successfully brought by Hama from enemy territory (lines 1192–214). Hygelac fails  
 to match up either to Beowulf or to Hama in his use of the treasure—and the political  
 45 consequences of this failure are far-reaching.<sup>13</sup> 45

50 The final account of Hygelac's raid on Frisia is that of the messenger who 50  
 mentions *ofermaðmas*. First, he explains that Beowulf has fallen (lines 2900–10), but  
 he goes on to refer to Hygelac's raid on the Franks, describing how it is one of the  
 reasons why the Geats can expect a disastrous period of strife, as the Franks seek  
 revenge (lines 2910–21). He then continues by saying “Ne ic te Sweoðeode sibbe oððe  
 50 treowe/wiht ne wene” (“nor do I hope for/expect any peace or faithfulness from the 50  
 Swedes”; lines 2922–23), his explanation for this culminating in Hygelac's gift of

0 *ofermaðmas*. The messenger follows the mention of *ofermaðmas* immediately with the comment 0

þæt ys sio fæhðo ond se feondscipe  
wælnið wera ðæs ðe ic [wen] hafo  
5 þe us seceað to sweona leoda 5

That is the feud and the enmity,  
the slaughter-hatred of men, of which I have expectation,  
for which the people of the Swedes will attack us...

10 The juxtaposition of this bitter statement with Hygelac's victorious gift-giving is 10  
entirely compatible with the conclusion that Hygelac's military success was, in the  
long run, fatally undermined by his failure to bestow his daughter wisely in the  
interests of peace. Even if we choose to view Hygelac positively on the basis of other  
15 parts of *Beowulf*, then, the idea that the messenger is criticising Hygelac 15  
complements the rest of his speech neatly.

Despite marshalling several of the criticisms of Hygelac described above, and  
characterising him as "a simple-minded and reckless marauder", Irving considered  
that

20 the other great event in Hygelac's life sets him in a much better light. It is the way he acts at the battle 20  
of Ravenswood, where with great panache he rescues a trapped Geatish army and later rewards the  
young warriors Wulf and Eofor for their killing of the Swedish king Ongentheow... Here he performs  
as a fine king, both gallant and generous... Ravenswood is an event we are presented with to judge  
for ourselves, and we surely judge it favourably, not listening to words but looking at actions. On the  
25 basis of these, we can say truly that it is too bad the Geats lost this good king in his prime.<sup>14</sup> 25

Rereading *ofermaðmas* suggests a more consistent assessment of Hygelac. His victory  
at Ravenswood is magnificent, but his response to that victory belongs to a long list  
of Geatish diplomatic failures.

30 This rereading of *ofermaðmas* and of Hygelac is predicated on the assumption that 30  
Hygelac could have disposed of his daughter more effectively. But, as has long been  
noted, *Beowulf* focuses on two unsuccessful political marriages, those of Hildeburh  
and of Freawaru (lines 1063–1159, 2020–69),<sup>15</sup> and this portrayal does not  
discourage one from accepting Beowulf's own observation (lines 2029–31) that

35 oft seldan hwær · 35  
æfter leodhryre lytle hwile  
bongar bugeð þeah seo bryd duge

40 It tends to be rare that 40  
the slaughter-spear rests [for even] a short while  
after the fall of men, even though the bride may suffice.

45 Conceivably, Hygelac did well to abandon peacemaking and to concentrate instead 45  
on rewarding his retainers. Ongentheow's successor seems to have been his son  
Onela, and *Beowulf*'s defective line 62 has often been emended to make him brother-  
in-law to the Danish king Hrothgar.<sup>16</sup> It is possible, then, that Onela was already  
married when Ongentheow died; but this is rather empty speculation. Equally,  
*Beowulf* certainly refers to dynastic infighting over Ongentheow's succession (lines  
2379–96). If Hygelac had given his only daughter to Ongentheow's first successor, he  
50 might simply have found that he had backed the wrong horse and been no better off 50  
than before. But the dispute over the Swedish throne seems to have been encouraged  
by the Geats, who gave support to Onela's nephews against Onela himself. The

0 Geats not only lost their own king Heardred in the process, but the involvement on Onela's side of Weohstan also ensnared his son Wiglaf in the feud (lines 2611–25), which spells further trouble for the Geats when Wiglaf succeeds Beowulf. This train of events gives ample reason to think that whatever the obstacles, the Geats would have done better to encourage peace and stability rather than conflict in their relations with the Swedes. 5

Hill's recent reanalysis of feuds in *Beowulf*, and the place of women in them, supports these arguments. His readings of the failure of peacemaking focus not on the women and marriages involved, but on other failures of the men: in Hildeburh's case Finn's imposition of humiliating terms upon the Danes, in Freawaru's the Danes' parading of arms seized from the groom's people at her wedding.<sup>17</sup> As Beowulf's words imply, it is not the brides in these narratives who are at fault: it is men who are unable, "æfter leodhryre", to keep from further violence. Hill argued further that *Beowulf* also presents a powerful counter-example to its pessimistic portrayals of Hildeburh and Freawaru, in Hrothgar's queen Wealhtheow.<sup>18</sup> Although the poem hints at how she lacks power to constrain impending feuding within her children's generation (lines 76–85, 1163–87), there is no suggestion that her own marriage to Hrothgar has been anything but a success. That Wealhtheow came from a people other than the Danes is suggested by her identification at her first appearance as "ides helminga" (line 620), though it might in theory be that the Helmingas were a scion of the Danish people. Her foreign origins are also suggested, however, by her name, which literally means "foreign servant/slave".<sup>19</sup> *Beowulf*'s audience, as Robinson and Harris have shown, was surely attuned to the significance of unusual, lexically meaningful names and their literary implications, and there is no reason why *Wealhtheow* should not have been among these.<sup>20</sup> Reading Wealhtheow as a prominent example of a peace-pledge between peoples was discouraged by Sklute's assessment in 1970, reprinted in 1990, of the meaning of *friðusibb*, the hapax legomenon by which Beowulf characterises Wealhtheow when he describes Hrothgar's court to Hygelac: Beowulf calls her the "friðusibb folca" ("*friðusibb* of (the) peoples", line 2017). Sklute rightly emphasised that the similar epithet *freoðuwebbe* ("peace-weaver") need not imply that its bearer wove peace through marriage, but rather through her part in diplomatic negotiations; he then assumed that *friðusibb* "seems to function in the same way".<sup>21</sup> But as Hill pointed out, and as the *Dictionary of Old English* entry for the word implies, this ignores the semantics of *friðusibb*'s second element, which are entirely different from those of *webbe*. *Sibb*, when denoting a person, is surely to be taken in the sense "relation" or, if the person is to be understood metaphorically as their place in a kin-group, "relationship", making Wealhtheow the "peace-relation(ship) of the peoples".<sup>22</sup> Much the most likely interpretation of this is that Wealhtheow was married from the Helmingas to the Danes, in an inter-group exchange which was surely successful. 40

There is good reason, then, to think that Hygelac would have been wise to use his daughter to bring about peace rather than to reward a killing. Understanding *ofermaðmas* to mean "excessive treasures" makes sense linguistically and contextually. Identifying Hygelac's only daughter as both a potential token in diplomacy and as the portion of Hygelac's *maðmas* which he should not have given to Wulf and Eofor fits recent readings of *Beowulf*. The congruence of the linguistic and literary evidence affords a reliable platform from which we may gain a significant new perspective on *Beowulf*'s attitude to women and diplomacy. Diplomatic marriages are a central feature of *Beowulf*'s political world, and one which the poem's wiser characters would encourage. Where such marriages fail, it is because of the flaws of men and not of women or marriages *per se*; the flawed man identified here is Hygelac. 50

## NOTES

This paper gained much in its genesis from a discussion with Norman Gray during a session of an Old English reading group, to whom I am indebted. The reading group was held under the auspices of the Glasgow Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

- 1 I base my quotation on Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson (eds), *“Beowulf”: An Edition with Relevant Shorter Texts* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), restoring the capitalisation and punctuation of the manuscript and enclosing editorial additions in square brackets, on the basis of Kemp Malone (ed.), *The Nowell Codex: British Museum Cotton Viellius A. XV, Second MS*, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, 12 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1963).
- 2 Respectively: Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1898), s.v. *ofermāðum*; John R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4<sup>th</sup> rev. edn by Herbert D. Meritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), s.v. *ofermāðum*; Fr. Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boston: Heath, 1950), p. 382; Mitchell and Robinson, *“Beowulf”*, p. 283.
- 3 Helmut Gneuss, *“The Battle of Maldon 89: Byrhtnoð’s ofermod Once Again”*, *Studies in Philology*, 73 (1976), 117–37 (at p. 124).
- 4 E.g. “Forði is ælcum men oferþearf, þæt he him georne wið þone leahter gebeorge” (“Therefore there is an *oferþearf* upon each person, that he protect himself zealously against that sin”), Arthur Napier (ed.), *Wulfstan: Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien nebst Untersuchungen über ihre Echtheit*, *Sammlung englischer Denkmäler in kritischen Ausgaben*, 4 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883), p. 134; “Gif hwa þonne for hwilcre untrumnesse oððe for hwilcre oferneode fæstan ne mæge, cyðe þæt his scrifte” (“If anyone then cannot fast because of any lack of strength or because of any *oferneod*, he should make it known to his confessor”), N. R. Ker, “Three Old English Texts in a Salisbury Pontifical, Cotton Tiberius C 1”, in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of the History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickens*, ed. by Peter Clemons (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1959), pp. 262–279 (at p. 278); “Forði þonne ... ælc oþer, oferylde and geogeþe, healde his endebyrdnesse” (“Therefore ... let each other [person], the *oferylde* and the young, keep his place”), Arnold Schröder, *Die angelsächsischen Prosabearbeitungen der Benediktinerregel*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), p. 155 (the phrase has no direct parallel in the original, LXIII.7, Rudolf Hanslik (ed.), *Benedicti Regula, Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, 75 (Vindobonae: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1960), p. 146). The examples were found by searching the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English, 2000); accessed from <<http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/o/oec/>>, 4–3–2005.
- 5 See Gneuss, *“The Battle of Maldon”*, esp. 124–28; Hans Marchand, *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-Formation: A Synchronic-Diachronic Approach*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Munich: Beck, 1969), §2.45. I have not been able to consult Martin Röhlings, *Das Prefix ‘ofer-’ in der altenglischen Verbal- und Nominalkomposition mit Berücksichtigung der übrigen germanischen Dialekte* (Heidelberg, 1914).
- 6 *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952–2001); accessed from <<http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/m/mec/>>, 4-3-2005, s.v. *ofer-*.
- 7 Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the “Beowulf”-Manuscript*, rev. edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 109–10, 113–14, 258.
- 8 Cf. Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, *The Art of “Beowulf”* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), pp. 78–87; Stanley B. Greenfield, “Geatish History: Poetic Art and Epic Quality in *Beowulf*”, *Neophilologus*, 47 (1963), 211–17 (at pp. 214–16); Lawrence E. Fast, “Hygelac: A Centripetal Force in *Beowulf*”, *Annuaire Mediaevale*, 12 (1971), 90–99; John McNamara, “*Beowulf* and Hygelac: Problems for Fiction in History”, *Rice University Studies*, 62.2 (Spring 1976), 55–63 (at pp. 61–62).
- 9 R. E. Kaske, “*Beowulf*”, in *Critical Approaches to Six Major English Works: “Beowulf” through “Paradise Lost”*, ed. by R. M. Lumiansky and Herschel Baker (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), pp. 3–40 (at pp. 17–26, summarising a series of earlier articles there cited); Edward B. Irving, Jr., “Heroic Role-Models: *Beowulf* and Others”, in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honor of Jess B. Bessinger, Jr.*, ed. by Helen Damico and John Leyerle, *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 32 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1993), pp. 347–72 (at pp. 359–62); see also Kemp Malone, “Hygelac”, *English Studies*, 21 (1939), 108–119 (at pp. 113–14).
- 10 On Modthrytho’s relationship with Hygd see recently Marijane Osborn, “The Wealth They Left Us: Two Women Author Themselves through Others’ Lives in *Beowulf*”, *The Heroic Age*, 5 (2001), <<http://members.aol.com/heroicagel/homepage.html>>, accessed 31-1-2005, paras 13–17; also Tom Shippey, “Wicked Queens and Cousin Strategies in *Beowulf* and Elsewhere”, *The Heroic Age*, 5 (2001), <<http://members.aol.com/heroicagel/homepage.html>>, accessed 31-1-2005. On Modthrytho’s name (and for the argument that it is in fact Fremu) see Robert D. Fulk, “The Name of Offa’s Queen: *Beowulf* 1931–3”, *Anglia*, 122 (2004), 614–39.
- 11 R. E. Kaske, “‘Hygelac’ and ‘Hygd’”, in *Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur*, ed. by Stanley B. Greenfield ([Eugene]: University of Oregon Books, 1963), pp. 200–6,

- 0 modified by Fred C. Robinson, "The Significance of Names in Old English Literature", in *The Tomb of Beowulf" and Other Essays on Old English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 185–223 (repr. from *Anglia*, 86 (1968), 14–58) (at pp. 213–17). 0
- 12 Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to "Beowulf"* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), p. 223.
- 13 On Hygelac's failure, R. E. Kaske, "The Sigemund-Heremod and Hama-Hygelac Passages in *Beowulf*", *PMLA*, 74 (1959), 489–94 (at pp. 490–91); cf. Gillian R. Overing, *Language, Sign, and Gender in "Beowulf"* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), pp. 51–53; on consequences see Brodeur, *The Art of "Beowulf"*, pp. 81–82. 5
- 14 "Heroic Role-Models", p. 362.
- 15 See Overing, *Language, Sign and Gender*, pp. 68–112 (rev. as Gillian R. Overing, "The Women of *Beowulf*: A Context for Interpretation", in *Beowulf: Basic Readings*, ed. by Peter S. Baker, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England, 1/Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1431 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), pp. 219–60). 10
- 16 E.g. George Jack (ed.), *Beowulf: A Student Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 31 n. to line 62.
- 17 John M. Hill, *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic: Reconstructing Lordship in Early English Literature* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), pp. 48–49, 53–68. Shippey, "Wicked Queens", para 15, has also suggested regarding Freawaru's marriage that "the successful strategy for Hrothgar might have been not to waste Freawaru on a foreign and less immediate threat, by having her marry a stranger, but to have her defuse a closer threat by marrying her first cousin Hrothulf". Though somewhat speculative, this reading is attractive, and would bring another example of a misplaced marriage into *Beowulf*. 15
- 18 *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic*, pp. 52, 59, 64.
- 19 The etymology has been disputed—see Helen Damico, *Beowulf's Wealththeow and the Valkyrie Tradition* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 58–68—but this is not significant for the synchronic meaning of the name within the poem. 20
- 20 Fred C. Robinson, "Personal Names in Medieval Narrative and the Name of Unferth in *Beowulf*", in *The Tomb of Beowulf" and Other Essays*, pp. 219–23 (repr. from *Essays in Honor of Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams*, ed. by Howard Creed (Birmingham, AL: Birmingham-Southern College, [1970]), pp. 43–48); cf. "The Significance of Names", pp. 212–17; Anne Leslie Harris, "Hands, Helms, and Heroes: The Role of Proper Names in *Beowulf*", *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 83 (1982), 414–21. 25
- 21 L. John Sklute, "Freodunwebbe in Old English Poetry", in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 204–10 (rev. from *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 70 (1970), 534–40 (at p. 208)).
- 22 Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, s.v. *sib[b]*; Hill, *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic*, p. 153 n. 8; cf. *Dictionary of Old English* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies for the Dictionary of Old English Project, Center for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 1988- ), s.v. *fr̥þu-sibb*. 30
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