

Modern English *Beowulf* Passage Handout

Lines 1-3

So. The Spear-Danes in days gone by
and the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness.
We have heard of those princes' heroic campaigns.

Lines 4-7a

There was Shield Sheafson, scourge of many tribes,
a wrecker of mead-benches, rampaging among foes.
This terror of the hall-troops had come far.
A founding to start with,

Lines 7b-11

he would flourish later on
as his powers waxed and his worth was proved.
In the end each clan on the outlying coasts
beyond the whale-road had to yield to him
and begin to pay tribute. That was one good king.

Lines 12-16a

Afterwards a boy-child was born to Shield,
a cub in the yard, a comfort sent
by God to that nation. He knew what they had tholed,
the long times and troubles they'd come through
without a leader;

Translation from Heaney, Seamus. *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.