

# La battaglia di Maldon

versione interlineare in anglosassone, inglese e italiano

Il testo anglosassone e la traduzione italiana sono quelle pubblicate in internet da Giuseppe Brunetti (<http://www.maldura.unipd.it>). A questi ho aggiunto il testo inglese pubblicato da Aaron K. Hostetter (<https://oldenglishpoetry.camden.rutgers.edu/battle-of-maldon/>)

1. ... brocen wurde. 2. Het þa hyssa hwæne hors forlætan, 3. feor afysan and forð gangan, 4. hīcgan to handum and to hīge godum. 5. Þa þæt Offan mæg ærest onfunde 6. þæt se eorl nolde yrhðo geþolian, 7. he let him þa of handon leofne fleogan 8. hafoc wið þæs holtes and to þære hilde stop; 9. be þam man mihte oncnawan þæt se cniht nolde 10. wacian æt þam wīge þa he to wæpnum feng. 11. Eac him wolde Eadric his ealdre gelæstan, 12. frean to gefeohte, ongan þa forð beran 13. gar to gube; he hæfde god geþanc 14. þa hwile þe he mid handum healdan mihte 15. bord and brad swurd; beot he gelæste 16. þa he ætforan his frean feohtan sceolde. 17. Ða þær Byrhtnoð ongan beornas trymian, 18. rad and rædde, rincum tæhte 19. hu hi sceoldon standan and þone stede healdan, 20. and bæd þæt hyra randan rihte heoldon 21. fæste mid folman and ne forhtedon na. 22. Þa he hæfde þæt folc fægere getrymmed, 23. he lihte þa mid leodon þær him leofost wæs, 24. þær he his heorðwerod holdost wiste. 25. Ða stod on stæðe, stiðlice clypode 26. wicinga ar, wordum mælde, 27. se on beot ahead brimliþendra 28. ærænde to þam eorle þær he on ofre stod: 29. ‘Me sendon to þe sæmen snelle, 30. heton ðe secgan þæt þu most sendan raðe 31. beagas wið gebeorge; and eow betere is 32. þæt ge þisne garræs mid gafole forgyldon 33. þon we swa hearde hilde dælon. 34. Ne þurfē we us spillan, gif ge spedað to þam, 35. we willað wið þam golde grið fæstnian. 36. Gyf þu þæt gerædest þe her ricost eart 37. þæt þu þine leoda lysan wille, 38. syllan sæmannum on hyra sylfra dom 39. feoh wið freode and niman frið æt us, 40. we willað mid þam sceattum us to scype gangan,	“...should it become broken.” (1) Then Byrhtnoth ordered each of his warriors to release their horses, to hurry them far away, and to go forwards, mindful of their hands and their stout courage. When Offa’s kinsman first understood that the earl would not suffer cowardice, he let his beloved hawk fly from his hands away into the woods and then he advanced to the battle— that was a gesture one could recognize: the young warrior did not wish to waver at war, when he took up his weapons. (5-10) Also Eadric wanted to support his lord, his master in battle so he bore his spear forth to the fight. He had good intentions so long as he could hold with his hands a shield and broad sword—he would validate his vow when the time came to fight before his lord. (11-6) Then Byrhtnoth encouraged his warriors there, riding and ruling, directing his soldiers how they must stand and keep that place, and gave them instruction as to how they should hold their shields correctly, fast with their hands—that they should fear nothing. When he had fortified his fyrd-men graciously, then he alighted amid the ranks, where it most pleased him, in the place where he knew his most loyal hearth-guard to be. (17-24) Then one stood on the shore, sternly calling out, a Viking herald, conversing in many words, he delivered in a vaunt the message of the brim-sailors to that nobleman where he stood on the riverbank: (25-8) “They have sent me to you, the hardy sea-men— they bid you be informed that you must quickly send rings in exchange for protection, and it would be better for you to buy off with tribute this storm of spears, otherwise we should deal in such a hard battle. We needn’t destroy ourselves if you are sufficiently rich— we wish to establish a safeguard in exchange for gold. If you decide this, you who are most powerful here, and you wish to ransom your people and give to the sea-men, according to their own discretion, money in exchange for peace, and take a truce at our hands,	... fosse rotto. Ordinò allora a ogni guerriero d’abbandonare i cavalli, spingerli lontano e avanzare a piedi, fidare nelle mani e in valoroso animo. Non appena comprese, il parente di Offa, che il nobile non voleva tollerare viltà, fece volare dalle mani l’amato falco verso il bosco e avanzò in battaglia; da questo si capiva che il ragazzo non voleva esser fiacco alla lotta quando afferrò le armi. Oltre a lui volle anche Eadric servire il capo, il signore in guerra, e avanti portò l’asta alla lotta; ebbe valoroso intento fintanto che in mano poté reggere scudo e larga spada; mantenne la parola, quando davanti al signore dovette battersi. Byrhtnoth prese allora a schierare i guerrieri, cavalcò e istruì, mostrò ai combattenti come dovevano disporsi e tenere posizione, e li esortò a regger bene gli scudi saldi in pugno e a non aver paura. Quando ebbe con cura schierato l’esercito, smontò tra gli uomini dove più gli era caro, dove più leali sapeva i compagni di focolare. Stette allora sulla riva e imperioso chiamò un messaggero dei vichinghi, proferì parole, minaccioso annunciò dai navigatori del mare un messaggio al nobile sulla sponda dove egli stava: «Mi hanno mandato da te gli arditi marinai, m’hanno ordinato di dirti che puoi mandare alla svelta anelli in cambio di protezione; e per voi è meglio con un tributo evitare questo assalto di lance piuttosto che tra noi ingaggiare così aspra guerra. Non serve tra noi ucciderci, se a voi basta ricchezza, noi siamo disposti per oro a stringer tregua. Se così decidi tu che qui sei il più potente, di voler riscattare la tua gente, pagare ai marinai a loro proprio giudizio un prezzo per la pace e ricever tregua da noi, noi siamo disposti con il soldo a tornare alla nave,
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<p>41. on flot feran and eow friþes healdan.  42. Byrhtnoð mabelode, bord hafenode,  43. wand wacne æsc, wordum mælde,  44. yrre and anræd ageaf him andsware:  45. ‘Gehyrst þu, sælida, hwæt þis folc segeð?  46. Hi willað eow to gafole garas syllan,  47. ættrynne ord and ealde swurd,  48. þa heregeatu þe eow æt hilde ne deah.  49. Brimmanna boda, abeod eft ongean,  50. sege þinum leodum miccle laþre spell,  51. þæt her stynt unforcuð eorl mid his werode,  52. þe wile gealgean eþel þysne,  53. Æþelredes eard, ealdres mines  54. folc and foldan. Feallan sceolon  55. hæþene æt hilde. To heanlic me þinceð  56. þæt ge mid urum sceattum to scype gangon  57. unbefohtene, nu ge þus feor hider  58. on urne eard in becomon.  59. Ne sceole ge swa softe sinc gegangan;  60. us sceal ord and ecg ær geseman,  61. grim guðplega, ær we gofol syllon.  62. Het þa bord beran, beornas gangan,  63. þæt hi on þam easteðe ealle stodon.  64. Ne mihte þær for wætere werod to þam oðrum:  65. þær com flowende flod æfter ebban,  66. lucon lagustreamas. To lang hit him þuhte  67. hwænne hi togædere garas beron.  68. Hi þær Pantan stream mid prasse bestodon,  69. Eastseaxena ord and se æschere;  70. ne mihte hyra ænig oþrum derian  71. buton hwa þurh flanes flyht fyl gename.  72. Se flod ut gewat; þa flotan stodon gearowe,  73. wicinga fela wiges georne.  74. Het þa hæleða hleo healdan þa bricge  75. wigan wigheardne, se wæs haten Wulfstan,  76. caþne mid his cynne, þæt wæs Ceolan sunu,  77. þe ðone forman man mid his francan ofsceat  78. þe þær baldlicost on þa bricge stop.  79. Þær stodon mid Wulfstane wigan unforhte,  80. Ælfere and Maccus, modige twegen,  81. þa noldon æt þam forða fleam gewyrcean,  82. ac hi fæstlice wið ða fynd weredon  83. þa hwile þe hi wæpna wealdan moston.  84. Þa hi þæt ongeaton and georne gesawon  85. þæt hi þær bricgeweardas bitere fundon,  86. ongunnon lytegian þa laðe gystas,  87. aþdon þæt hi upgangan agan moston,  88. ofer þone ford faran, feþan lædan.  89. Ða se eorl ongan for his ofermode  90. alyfan landes to fela laþere ðeode;  91. ongan ceallian þa ofer cald wæter  92. Byrhtelmes bearn, beornas gehlyston:</p>	<p>we will go back to our ships with our payment,  and sail away, holding the peace with you.” (29-41)  Byrhtnoth spoke back, raising up his shield,  waving his slender spear, speaking in words,  angry and resolute, giving them answer: (42-4)  “Have you heard, sailor, what these people say?  They wish to give you spears as tribute,  the poisonous points and ancient swords,  this tackle of war that will do you no good in battle.  Herald of the brim-men, deliver this again,  say unto your people a more unpleasant report:  here stands with his troops a renowned earl  who wishes to defend this homeland,  the country of Æthelred, my own lord,  and his citizens and territory. The heathens  shall perish in battle. It seems a humiliation  to let you go to your ships with our treasures  unfought—now you have come thus far  into our country. You must not get our gold  so softly. Points and edges must reconcile us first,  a grim war-playing, before we give you any tribute.” (45-61)  Then, bearing his shield, he ordered his warriors to advance,  all those who stood on the riverbank.  Nor could that army go unto the other because of the water;  where the flood came flowing after the ebb-tide.  The watery streams separated them. It seemed to them too long  before they could muster their spears together.  There they stood in press alongside Pante’s stream,  the greatest of the East-Saxons and the spear-hordes.  Nor could any of them afflict the other side,  except those who were felled by the showering of arrows.  The tide went out—the float-men stood ready,  the many Vikings, eager warriors. (62-73)  Then the shelter of heroes ordered his war-hardened warriors  to keep the bridge. One was named Wulfstan,  keen amongst his kin, he was the son of Ceola,  who with his spear shot down the first man  who was boldest and stepped onto the bridge.  There stood with Wulfstan warriors unafraid,  Ælfhere and Maccus, two proud men,  they did not wish to flee from the ford,  yet they fixedly defended it against their foes,  as long as they were allowed to wield their weapons. (74-83)  When they perceived this and keenly observed  that they had encountered bitter bridge-wardens there,  then the Vikings began to use guile, the hated guests,  asking that they be allowed to have free passage,  faring across the ford, leading their foot-soldiers. (84-8)  This the nobleman allowed, due to his overweening pride—  he gave up too much land to those hated people.  He shouted across the cold water then,  Byrhtelm’s son, while his warriors listened:</p>	<p>riprendere il mare e con voi restare in pace».  Byrhtnoth parlò, levò lo scudo,  scosse l’esile frassino, proferì parole,  irato e risoluto gli diede risposta:  «Lo senti, marinaio, cosa dicono questi uomini?  Sono disposti a darvi lance per tributo,  punte letali e antiche spade,  un corredo d’armi che non vi varrà in guerra.  Messaggero dei naviganti, torna a riferire,  riporta alla tua gente assai più sgradito annuncio,  che qui sta un nobile onorato con la sua schiera,  che è deciso a difendere questo paese,  la terra di Æthelred, del mio capo,  la patria e il popolo. Devono perire  i pagani in battaglia. Troppo vile mi sembra  che con il nostro soldo ve ne torniate alla nave  incontrastati, ora che così addentro  siete qui giunti nella nostra terra.  Non acqueristerete così agevolmente tesoro;  sarà punta e taglio a decidere piuttosto fra noi,  feroce gioco di guerra, anziché darvi tributo».  Ordinò quindi ai suoi d’avanzare con gli scudi,  così che furono tutti sulla riva.  Non poté per l’acqua una schiera raggiunger l’altra:  affluiva la marea dopo il riflusso,  si serravano le correnti. Troppo sembrò loro  d’attendere di portare lancia contro lancia.  Rimasero spiegati lungo la corrente del Pante,  la formazione dell’Essex e l’esercito vichingo;  non potevano gli uni agli altri arrecar danno,  tranne che per volo di freccia qualcuno cadesse.  Riflui la marea; stettero pronti i marinai,  molti vichinghi bramosi di guerra.  Il protettore d’uomini ordinò di tenere il guado  a un guerriero provetto, si chiamava Wulfstan,  valoroso per stirpe, figlio di Ceola,  che con l’asta trafisse il primo uomo  che più spavaldo avanzò sul guado.  Erano con Wulfstan guerrieri impavidi,  Ælfhere e Maccus, animosi entrambi,  che dal guado non intendevano fuggire,  ma fermamente si difesero dai nemici  fintanto che poterono reggere armi.  Quando s’accorsero e chiaro videro  d’aver trovato aspri guardiani al guado,  ricorsero all’astuzia gli stranieri ostili,  chiesero di poter avere passaggio,  traversare il guado, condurre la truppa.  Il nobile concesse allora per orgoglio  troppo terreno alla gente ostile;  gridò sopra le fredde acque  il figlio di Byrhtelm, ascoltarono i guerrieri:</p>
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<p>93. ‘Nu eow is gerymed, gað ricene to us  94. guman to guþe; God ana wat  95. hwa þære wælstowe wealdan mote’.  96. Wodon þa wælwulfas, for wætere ne murnon,  97. wicinga werod, west ofer Pantan,  98. ofer scir wæter scyldas wegon,  99. lidmen to lande linde bæron.  100. Þær ongean gramum gearowe stodon  101. Byrhtnoð mid beornum; he mid bordum het  102. wyrcan þone wihagan and þæt werod healdan  103. fæste wið feondum. Þa wæs feohte neh,  104. tir æt getohte; wæs seo tid cumen  105. þæt þær fæge men feallan sceoldon.  106. Þær wearð hream ahafen; hremmas wundon,  107. earn æses georn; wæs on eorþan cyrm.  108. Hi leton þa of folman feolhearde speru,  109. [grimme] gegrundene garas fleogan;  110. bogan wæron bysigge, bord ord onfeng.  111. Biter wæs se beaduræs; beornas feollon  112. on gehwæðere hand, hyssas lagon.  113. Wund wearð Wulfmær, wælræste geceas  114. Byrhtnoðes mæg; he mid billum wearð,  115. his swustersunu, swiðe forheawen.  116. Þær wærð wicingum wiperlean agyfen:  117. gehyrde ic þæt Eadweard anne sloge  118. swiðe mid his swurde, swenges ne wymde,  119. þæt him æt fotum feoll fæge cempa;  120. þæs him his ðeoden þanc gesæde,  121. þam burþene, þa he byre hæfde.  122. Swa stemnetton stiðhigende  123. hysas æt hilde, hogodon georne  124. hwa þær mid orde ærost mihte  125. on fægean men feorh gewinnan,  126. wigan mid wæpnum. Wæl feol on eorðan.  127. Stodon stædefæste; stihte hi Byrhtnoð,  128. bæd þæt hyssa gehwylc hogode to wige  129. þe on Denon wolde dom gefeohtan.  130. Wod þa wiges heard, wæpen up ahof,  131. bord to gebeorge and wið þæs beornes stop.  132. Eode swa anræd eorl to þam ceorle,  133. ægþer hyra oðrum yfeles hogode.  134. Sende ða se særinc sūperne gar  135. þæt gewundod wearð wigena hlaford;  136. he sceaƿ þa mid ðam scylde þæt se sceaƿ to bærst,  137. and þæt spere sprengde þæt hit sprang ongean.  138. Gegremod wearð se gudrinc; he mid gare stang  139. wiancne wicing þe him þa wunde forgeaf.  140. Frod wæs se fyrdrinc; he let his francan wadan  141. þurh ðæs hysses hals; hand wisode  142. þæt he on þam færsceaðan feorh geræhte.  143. Ða he oþerne ofstlice sceat  144. þæt seo byrne to bærst; he wæs on breostum wund</p>	<p>“Now is passage granted to you, come quickly to us,  as men to the fight: God alone knows  who will be allowed to control the field of slaughter.” (89-95)  Then the slaughter-wolves waded—caring not for the water—  the Viking army, westward across the Pante,  across the bright waters, carrying their board-shields,  sailing-men to the shore, bearing yellow lindens.  There they stood ready against the ferocious one,  Byrhtnoth and his warriors. He ordered them  to form a shield-wall with their shields and for the army  to hold fast against their foes. Then was the fighting near,  glory in battle. The time was coming  that fated men must fall there. (96-105)  There was shouting heaved up, and ravens circling,  eagles eager for carrion—an uproar was on the earth.  Then they let fly from their hands spears file-hardened,  the spears grimly ground down, bows were busy—  shields were peppered with points. (106-10)  Bitter was the onslaught, warriors fell  on either side, the young men lying down.  Wulfmær was wounded, choosing a slaughter-rest,  Byrhtnoth’s kinsman—he was mightily cut down  with a sword, his sister-son.  There requital was given back to the Vikings—  as I heard it—Eadweard struck down one  mightily with his sword, not withholding his blow,  so that a fated champion fell down at his feet.  For this Byrhtnoth gave his thanks to him,  lord to chamberlain, when he had the chance. (111-21)  They all stood so firmly stiff-minded,  the young warriors in the battle, thinking eagerly  who they could soonest conquer  with their swords, the life of fated men,  the warriors with their weapons. Slaughter fell upon the earth.  They stood steadfast: Byrhtnoth exhorted them,  ordering every warrior to think upon the scrum,  who wished for glory in fighting the Danes. (122-9)  Then one stern in war waded forth, heaving up his weapon,  sheltered by his shield, stepped up against Byrhtnoth.  The earl went just as resolutely to the churl,  either of them intending evil to the other.  Then the sea-warrior sent a southern spear,  that wounded the lord of warriors.  Byrhtnoth shoved it with his shield, so that the shaft burst,  and that spear-head broke so that it sprang out again.  The fighting-warrior became infuriated; he stabbed with his spear  the proud Viking, who had given him that wound.  Aged was the army-warrior; he let his spear go forth  through the neck of the younger warrior, guided by his hand  so that he reached the life of that sudden attacker. (130-42)  Then he swiftly pierced another Viking,  so that the mail-shirt burst—that one was wounded in the breast</p>	<p>«Ora vi è dato spazio, venire svelti da noi  uomini allo scontro; Dio solo sa  chi sarà padrone del campo di strage».  Avanzarono i lupi di strage, dell’acqua  non si curarono i vichinghi, a ovest sul Pante,  sulla chiara acqua recarono gli scudi,  portarono a terra i tigli i marinai.  Là contro i feroci stavano pronti  Byrhtnoth e i suoi; con gli scudi egli ordinò  di formare il riparo di guerra e di reggere  saldi contro i nemici. Era vicino lo scontro,  gloria in guerra; era venuto il tempo  che dovevano cadere i destinati.  Si levarono strida; rotearono i corvi,  l’aquila avida di carogna; ci fu strepito in terra.  Dalle mani scagliarono aste dure come lime,  fecero volare lance [crudelmente] affilate;  furono all’opera gli archi, scudo ricevette punta.  Aspro fu l’assalto; caddero guerrieri  da entrambe le parti, giacquero gli armati.  Fu ferito Wulfmær, scelse giaciglio di morte  il parente di Byrhtnoth; fu da spade,  il figlio della sorella, spietatamente trucidato.  Ne fu dato compenso ai vichinghi:  ho sentito che Edward abbatté uno  spietatamente con la spada, non ricusò il colpo,  così che gli cadde ai piedi il destinato;  di ciò gli disse grazie il signore,  al ciambellano, quando ne ebbe l’occasione.  Così stettero saldi i risoluti  guerrieri in battaglia, fortemente intenti  a chi con la punta per primo potesse  a uomo destinato vincere la vita,  con le armi i combattenti. Caddero a terra i morti.  Resistertero tenaci; li incitò Byrhtnoth,  esortò che fosse intento alla lotta  chi volesse conquistar gloria sui danesi.  Avanzò un provetto in guerra, sollevò l’arma,  lo scudo a riparo e si portò verso il guerriero.  Del pari risoluto andò il nobile verso il plebeo,  ognuno di loro meditava male all’altro.  Il marinaio lanciò un’asta del sud  così che fu ferito il signore d’uomini;  egli spinse con lo scudo così che l’asta si spezzò,  e la punta vibrò finché rimbalzò via.  S’adirò il guerriero; con una lancia colpì  il fiero vichingo che gli inferse la ferita.  Era esperto il combattente; fece trapassare all’asta  il collo del nemico; la mano la diresse  così che all’incursore egli raggiunse la vita.  Rapido poi ne trafisse un altro  così che si lacerò la maglia; quello fu ferito nel petto</p>
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<p>145. þurh ða hringlocan, him æt heortan stod  146. ætterne ord. Se eorl wæs þe bliþra,  147. hloh þa modi man, sæde Metode þanc  148. ðæs dægweorces þe him Drihten forgeaf.  149. Forlet þa drenga sum daroð of handa,  150. fleogan of folman þæt se to forð gewat  151. þurh ðone æpelan Æþelredes þegen.  152. Him be healfre stod hyse unweaxen,  153. cniht on gecampe, se full calfice  154. bræd of þam beorne blodigne gar,  155. Wulfstanes bearn, Wulfmær se geonga,  156. forlet forheardne faran eft ongean;  157. ord in gewod þæt se on eorþan læg  158. þe his þeoden ær þearle geræhte.  159. Eode þa gesyrwed secg to þam eorle;  160. he wolde þæs beornes beagas gefecgan,  161. reaf and hringas, and gerenod swurd.  162. Þa Byrhtnoð bræd bill of sceðe,  163. brad and bruneccg, and on þa byrnan sloh;  164. to raþe hine gelette lidmanna sum,  165. þa he þæs eorles earm amyrd,  166. feoll þa to foldan fealohilte swurd,  167. ne mihte he gehealdan heardne mece,  168. wæpnes wealdan. Þa gyt þæt word gecwæð  169. har hilderinc, hyssas bylde,  170. bæd gangan forð gode geferan.  171. Ne mihte þa on fotum leng fæste gestandan;  172. he to heofenum wlat:  173. ‘Gehance þe, ðeoda Waldend,  174. ealra þæra wynta þe ic on worulde gebad.  175. Nu ic ah, milde Metod, mæste þearfe  176. þæt þu minum gaste godes geunne,  177. þæt min sawul to ðe siðian mote,  178. on þin gewæld, þeoden engla,  179. mid friþe ferian. Ic eom frymði to þe  180. þæt hi helsceaðan hynan ne moton’.  181. Ða hine heowon hæðene scealcas,  182. and begen þa beornas þe him big stodon,  183. Ælfnoð and Wulfmær begen lagon  184. ða onemn hyra frean feorh gesealdon.  185. Hi bugon þa fram beaduwe þe þær beon noldon:  186. þær wurdon Oddan beam ærest on fleame,  187. Godric fram guþe, and þone godan forlet  188. þe him mænigne oft mear gesealde;  189. he gehleop þone eoh þe ahte his hlaford,  190. on þam gerædum, þe hit riht ne wæs,  191. and his broðru mid him begen ærndon,  192. Godwine and Godwig guþe ne gymdon,  193. ac wendon fram þam wige and þone wudu sohton,  194. flugon on þæt fæsten and hyra feore burgon,  195. and manna ma þonne hit ænig mæð wære,  196. gyf hi þa geearnunga ealle gemundon</p>	<p>through the ring-locks, the poisonous point  stood at his heart. The earl was the happier,  then he laughed, the mindful man, said thanks to the Measurer  for the day’s work which the Lord had given him. (143-8)  Then some Viking warrior let go a spear from his hand,  flying from his fist so that it went too deeply  through the noble thane of Æthelred.  One stood by his side, a young warrior not fully grown,  a boy in the battle, who very bravely  pulled the bloody spear out of the warrior,  the son of Wulfstan, Wulfmær the young,  let go the exceedingly hard spear go back again;  the point travelled in, so that he who had laid his lord  previously onto the earth was wounded sorely. (149-58)  Then an armored man came up to the earl—  he wished to carry off the rings of the warrior,  the armor and the accoutrements and the ornamented blade.  Then Byrhtnoth drew out his sword from its sheath,  broad and brown-edged, and struck him in the byrnin.  Too quickly some sail-man hindered him,  when he wounded the arm of that earl.  The golden-hilted sword fell to the ground—  neither could he hold the stern blade,  or wield his weapon. Nevertheless the hoary battle-warrior  spoke a word, emboldening his fighters,  ordered them to go forth as good comrades;  then he could not stand fast on his feet for long. (159-71)  Byrhtnoth looked to heaven:  ‘I thank you, Wielder of peoples,  for all these joys that I have experienced in the world.  Now I have, mild Measurer, the greatest need  that you should grant my spirit the good  that my soul may be allowed to venture unto you  into your keeping, Prince of Angels  ferrying with peace. I am a suppliant to you  that these hell-harmers shall not be allowed to injure it.’ (172-80)  Then the heathen warriors cut him down  and both of the men who stood beside him,  Ælfnoth and Wulfmær, both lay there,  when they gave up their lives beside their lord. (181-4)  Then they retreated from the battle spineless in the fray.  There the son of Odda was first to flight,  Godric from the fight, and abandoned the good man  who many times often given him a horse;  he leapt on the steed which his lord owned,  in those trappings which he had no right to take,  and his brothers were with him, both running away,  Godwine and Godwig, caring not for the fight,  but they turned from the war and sought the forest,  flying into the fastness and protecting their lives,  and more men as well, more than was proper,  if they had remembered all their favors</p>	<p>attraverso la cotta d’anelli, nel cuore gli s’infinse  punta letale. Tanto più ne esultò il nobile,  rise il fiero, disse grazie a Dio  del giorno di lavoro che il Signore gli aveva dato.  Scagliò allora un vichingo una lancia dalla mano,  la fece volare dal pugno così che troppo penetrò  nel nobile vassallo di Æthelred.  Gli era a fianco un armato ancor giovane,  un ragazzo in battaglia, che con baldanza  estrasse dal guerriero l’asta cruenta,  il figlio di Wulfstan, Wulfmær il giovane,  rispedì indietro la durissima arma;  la punta penetrò così che a terra giacque  chi aveva il suo signore gravemente ferito.  Un uomo in armi s’avvicinò al nobile;  voleva prendere i bracciali del guerriero,  veste e anelli, e la spada adorna.  Byrhtnoth estrasse la lama dal fodero,  larga e lucente, e colpì sulla maglia;  troppo rapido lo prevenne un marinaio,  quando al braccio ferì il nobile,  cadde a terra la spada elsa d’oro,  egli non poté reggere la dura lama,  tenere l’arma. Ancora disse parole  il guerriero canuto, incoraggiò gli uomini,  esortò i valorosi compagni ad avanzare.  Poi non poté più in piedi restar saldo;  guardò verso il cielo:  «Io ti ringrazio, Rettore dei popoli,  di tutte le gioie che al mondo ho provato.  Ora ho, Dio misericordioso, massimo bisogno  che tu conceda prosperità al mio spirito,  così che possa da te giungere la mia anima,  in tuo potere, Signore degli angeli,  venire in pace. Io ti sono supplice  che non possano nuocerle i nemici infernali».  Lo abbattono allora gli uomini pagani,  insieme ai due guerrieri che gli erano a lato,  Ælfnoth e Wulfmær giacquero entrambi  quando a fianco del signore resero la vita.  Disertò allora lo scontro chi non volle esservi:  i figli di Odda si diedero per primi alla fuga,  Godric fuggì dalla battaglia e abbandonò quel grande  che tante volte molti cavalli gli aveva dato;  saltò sul destriero che apparteneva al suo signore,  sugli ornamenti, come giusto non era,  e con lui i suoi fratelli scapparono entrambi,  Godwine e Godwig alla guerra non badarono,  ma si ritrassero dalla battaglia e cercarono il bosco,  fuggirono al riparo e scamparono la vita,  e con loro più uomini di quanto fosse retto,  se avessero tutti ricordato i benefici</p>
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<p>197. þe he him to duguþe gedon hæfde.  198. Swa him Offa on dæg ær asæde  199. on þam meþelstede, þa he gemot hæfde,  200. þæt þær modelice manega spræcon  201. þe eft æt þærfe þolian noldon.  202. Þa wearð afeallen þæs folces ealdor,  203. Æþelredes eorl. Ealle gesawon  204. heorðgeneatas þæt hyra heorra læg.  205. Þa ðær wendon forð wlance þegenas,  206. unearge men efston georne;  207. hi woldon þa ealle oðer twega,  208. lif forlætan oððe leofne gewrecan.  209. Swa hi bylde forð bearn Ælfrices,  210. wiga wintrum geong, wordum mælde,  211. Ælfwine þa cwæð, he on ellen spræc:  212. 'Gemunu þa mæla þe we oft æt meodo spræcon,  213. þonne we on bence beot ahofon,  214. hæleð on healle, ymbe heard gewinn;  215. nu mæg cunnian hwa cene sy.  216. Ic wylle mine æþelo eallum gecyþan,  217. þæt ic wæs on Myrcon miccles cynnes;  218. wæs min ealda fæder Ealhelm haten,  219. wis ealdorman woruldgesælig.  220. Ne sceolon me on þære þeode þegenas ætwitan  221. þæt ic of ðisse fyrde feran wille,  222. eard gesecan, nu min ealdor ligeð  223. forheawen æt hilde. Me is þæt hearma mæst:  224. he wæs ægðer min mæg and min hlaford'.  225. Þa he forð eode, fæhðe gemunde,  226. þæt he mid orde anne geræhte  227. flotan on þam folce, þæt se on foldan læg  228. forwegen mid his wæpne. Ongan þa winas manian,  229. frynd and geferan, þæt hi forð eodon.  230. Offa gemælde, æscholt asceoc:  231. 'Hwæt þu, Ælfwine, hafast ealle gemanode  232. þegenas to þearfe, nu ure þeoden lið,  233. eorl on eorðan, us is eallum þearf  234. þæt ure æghwylc oþerne bylde,  235. wigan to wige, þa hwile þe he wæpen mæge  236. habban and healdan, heardne mece,  237. gar and god swurd. Us Godric hæfð,  238. earh Oddan bearn, ealle beswicene:  239. wende þæs formoni man, þa he on meare rad,  240. on wlancan þam wige, þæt wære hit ure hlaford;  241. forþan wearð her on felda folc totwæmed,  242. scyldburh tobrocen. Abreoðe his angin,  243. þæt he her swa manigne man aflymde'.  244. Leofsunu gemælde and his linde ahof,  245. bord to gebeorge; he þam beorne oncwæð:  246. 'Ic þæt gehate, þæt ic heonon nelle  247. fleon fotes trym, ac wille furðor gan,  248. wrecan on gewinne minne winedrihten.</p>	<p>that Byrhtnoth had done for them to their glory. (185-97)  So Offa had told him earlier in the day  in the meeting-place when he held a moot,  that there were many speaking proudly  who would not endure the tough going. (198-201)  Then the leader of the people was felled,  Æthelred's earl; all saw him,  his hearth-retainers, that their lord lay down.  Then there the proud thanes went forth  uncowardly men hastened eagerly;  they all wished one of two things—  to give up their lives or revenge their dear lord. (202-8)  So the son of Ælfric encouraged them forwards,  a warrior young in winters, speaking in words,  Ælfwine then spoke, saying valiantly:  "I remember the occasions when we often spoke at mead,  when we heaved up boasts on the benches,  heroes in the hall, about the dire struggle;  now one can find out who is brave.  I am willing to reveal my lineage to all,  that I was from a great family in Mercia;  my old father was called Ealhelm,  a wise alderman, blessed with worldly things.  The thanes among that people must not reproach me,  that I wished to go from this army,  seeking my country, now my lord lies  cut down in the battle. To me that is the greatest harm—  he was both my kinsman and my lord." (209-24)  Then he went forwards, mindful of the feud,  so that with his spear he wounded one float-man  among his people, so that he lay upon the earth,  killed by his weapon. Then he urged on his comrades,  his friends and allies, to go forwards. (225-9)  Offa spoke, shaking his spear-haft:  "‘So, Ælfwine, you have urged us all,  thanes at the need, now that our lord lies,  an earl upon the earth. There is a need  for all of us to exhort the other,  warriors into warfare, so long as he can  hold and keep his weapons: the stern sword,  the spear and the good blade. Godric,  the cowardly son of Odda, has betrayed us all.  Too many men believed, when he rode away on a horse,  upon that proud steed, that it was our lord.  Because of that our people are broken up here in the field,  the shield-wall is shattered. Damn his deeds,  which encouraged so many a man to flee!" (230-43)  Leofsunu spoke next and heaved his shield up,  his shield as shelter; he said to the warrior:  "‘I promise that I will not flee from here  one step of the foot, but I will go further,  avenging in this struggle my friendly lord.</p>	<p>che egli aveva fatto in loro favore.  Così gli aveva detto Offa quel giorno  all'assemblea, quando egli tenne consiglio,  che molti là parlavano coraggiosamente  che poi al bisogno non intendevano reggere.  Era stato abbattuto il capo dell'esercito,  il nobile di Æthelred. Lo videro tutti  i compagni di focolare, che giaceva il signore.  Avanzarono allora i fieri seguaci,  si precipitarono di slancio gli intrepidi:  volevano tutti delle due cose l'una,  perdere la vita o vendicare l'amato.  Così li incoraggiò il figlio di Ælfric,  guerriero giovane d'anni, proferì parole,  Ælfwine disse, parlò con coraggio:  «Ricordo quante volte parlammo all'idromele,  allorché sulle panche demmo parola,  guerrieri nella sala, di ardua lotta;  ora si può provare chi è valoroso.  Io voglio il mio lignaggio far conoscere a tutti,  che sono tra i merciani di grande stirpe;  mio nonno era chiamato Ealhelm,  saggio ealdorman, prospero al mondo.  Non devono fra quel popolo biasimarmi i vassalli  che io voglia lasciare questa leva,  cercare la patria, ora che giace il mio capo  trucidato in battaglia. Per me è questo il dolore più grande:  egli era sia mio parente che mio signore».  Avanzò poi, fu memore della faida,  così che con la punta raggiunse uno  tra i navigatori, che a terra giacque  disfatto dalla sua arma. Esortò poi gli amici,  i commilitoni e compagni ad avanzare.  Parlò Offa, scosse il frassino:  «Tu, Ælfwine, tutti hai esortato  i seguaci al bisogno, ora che giace il nostro signore,  il nobile al suolo, a noi tutti è necessario  che ciascuno di noi incoraggi l'altro,  guerriero alla battaglia, fintanto che arma  può reggere e tenere, dura lama,  lancia e buona spada. Ci ha Godric,  il vile figlio di Odda, tutti traditi:  moltissimi crederono, quando s'allontanò sul cavallo,  sul fiero destriero, che fosse il nostro signore;  si sbandò perciò qui in campo l'esercito,  si scompigliò la fortezza di scudi. Male lo incolga  per avere così tanti uomini qui messo in fuga».  Parlò Leofsunu e levò il tiglio,  lo scudo a riparo; rispose al guerriero:  «Io prometto che di qui non voglio  fuggire lo spazio di un piede, ma voglio avanzare,  vendicare in guerra il mio signore e amico.</p>
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<p>249. Ne þurfon me embe Sturmere stedefæste hælæð  250. wordum ætwtitan, nu min wine gecranc,  251. þæt ic hlafordleas ham siðie,  252. wende fram wige; ac me sceal wæpen niman,  253. ord and iren'. He ful yre wod,  254. feaht fæstlice, fleam he forhogode.  255. Dunnere þa cwæð, daroð acwehte,  256. unorne ceorl, ofer eall clypode,  257. bæd þæt beorna gehwylc Byrhtnoð wræce:  258. 'Ne mæg na wandian se þe wrecaþ þenceoð  259. frean on folce, ne for feore murnan'.  260. Þa hi forð eodon, feores hi ne rohton;  261. ongunnon þa hiredmen heardlice feohtan,  262. grame garberend, and God bædon  263. þæt hi moston gewrecaþ hyra winedrihten  264. and on hyra feondum fyl gewyrcaþ.  265. Him se gysel ongan geornlice fylstan;  266. he wæs on Norðhymbron heardes cynnes,  267. Ecglafes bearn, him wæs Æscferð nama.  268. He ne wandode na æt þam wiplegan,  269. ac he fysde forð flan gehehe;  270. hwilon he on bord sceat, hwilon beorn tæseð,  271. æfre embe stunde he sealde sume wunde  272. þa hwile ðe he wæpna wealdan moste.  273. Þa gyt on orde stod Eadweard se langa  274. gearo and geornful; gylpwordum spræc  275. þæt he nolde fleogan fotmæl landes,  276. ofer bæc bugan, þa his betera leg.  277. He bræc þone bordweall and wið þa beornas feaht  278. oðþæt he his sincgyfan on þam sæmannum  279. wurðlice wrec, ær he on wæle læge.  280. Swa dyde Æþeric, æþele gefera,  281. fus and forðgeom, feaht eomoste,  282. Sibirhtes broðor and swiðe mænig oþer  283. clufon cellod bord, cene hi weredon.  284. Bærst bordes lærig and seo byrne sang  285. gryreleoða sum. Þa æt guðe sloh  286. Offa þone sælidan, þæt he on eorðan feoll,  287. and ðær Gaddes mæg grund gesohte.  288. Raðe wearð æt hilde Offa forheawen;  289. he hæfde ðeah geforþoð þæt he his frean gehet,  290. swa he beotode ær wið his beahgifan  291. þæt hi sceoldon begen on burh ridan,  292. hale to hame, oððe on here crincgan,  293. on wælstowe wundum sweltan.  294. He læg ðegenlice ðeodne gehende.  295. Ða wearð borda gebræc. Brimmen wodon  296. guðe gegremode; gar oft þurhwod  297. fægges feorhhus. Forð ða eode Wistan,  298. þurstanes suna, wið þas secgas feaht;  299. he wæs on geþrang hyra þreora bana,  300. ær him Wigelines bearn on þam wæle læge.</p>	<p>The steadfast men of Sturmere will not need  reproach me with words, now my friend has fallen,  that I should travel lordless home,  turned from the war, but I shall take up my weapon,  both point and iron." He went forth full angry,  fought steadfastly, despising to flee. (244-54)  Dunnere then spoke, brandishing his spear,  a humble churl, calling out over all,  asking that every warrior avenge Byrhtnoth:  "Nor can he flinch back at all who intends to avenge  his lord in these folk, nor mourn for his life." (255-9)  Then they went forth, reckoning not of their lives.  These retainers fought sternly, fierce spear-bearers,  and they asked God that they be allowed to avenge  their friendly lord and work downfall among their foes. (260-4)  Then their hostage helped eagerly:  he was of sturdy stock from Northumbria,  Ecglaf's son, he was named Æscferth.  He did not flinch back at all at the war-play,  but he sent forth arrows very frequently;  sometimes he shot into a shield, sometimes he skewered a warrior,  more than once in awhile he gave someone a wound,  so long as he was allowed to wield weapons. (265-72)  Still at the van stood Eadweard the tall,  ready and eager, speaking boastful words  that he would not flee a foot of land,  or bend backwards while his superior lay dead.  He broke the Viking shield-wall and with their warriors fought.  until he had worthily avenged his treasure-giver  upon the sea-men, before he too lay dead among the slain. (273-79)  So did Ætheric, a noble comrade,  quick and eager to go forth and earnestly fight.  Sibirht's brother and very many others  clove the curved shields, the fierce men defended themselves—  they burst the rims of shields, and the byrnlic sang out  a certain terror-song. Then in the battle  Offa struck a Viking, so that he fell to the earth,  and there the kinsman of Gad sought the ground.  Offa was rapidly hewn down in the battle—  though he had accomplished what he had promised his lord,  as he earlier vowed to his ring-giver  that they should both ride to the city,  healthy to home, or in the battle perish,  in the place of slaughter, killed by wounds:  he lay like a true thane close to his lord. (280-94)  There was a crashing of shields. Seafarers came forth  enraged in the fight; the spear often went right through  the life-houses of the fated. Then Wistan went forth,  Thurstan's son, he fought against the warriors—  he was in the press, the killer of three of them,  before Wigelin's son lay dead among the slain.  There was a stern moot there. They stood fast,</p>	<p>Non avranno motivo attorno a Sturmer gli strenui guerrieri  di biasimarmi, ora che è caduto il mio amico,  che senza signore io torni a casa,  abbandoni la battaglia; ma deve arma prendermi,  punta e ferro». Irato avanzò,  combatté risoluto, disdegnò fuga.  Parlò poi Dunnere, brandì l'asta,  semplice contadino, gridò forte,  chiese a tutti di vendicare Byrhtnoth:  «Non può ritrarsi chi di vendicare pensi  il signore in campo, né curarsi della vita».  Avanzarono allora, non fecero conto della vita;  si batterono strenuamente i seguaci,  i feroci armati d'asta, e pregarono Dio  di poter vendicare il loro signore  e amico e abbattere i loro nemici.  Alacrememente li aiutò l'ostaggio;  era fra i northumbri di valorosa stirpe,  figlio di Ecglaf, Æscferth il suo nome.  Dal gioco di guerra non si ritrasse,  ma a ripetizione scagliò frecce;  a volte colpì scudo, a volte lacerò guerriero,  inflisse ferite in continuazione  fintanto che poté reggere armi.  Ancora in prima fila era Edward il lungo,  pronto e ansioso; proclamò spavaldo  che non voleva fuggire di un piede di terra,  volgere le spalle, ora che giaceva il suo capo.  Irruppe nel muro di scudi e si batté con i nemici  finché il donatore di tesori sugli uomini di mare  onorevolmente vendicò, prima di giacere fra i caduti.  Così fece Ætheric, nobile compagno,  alacre e impetuoso, combatté con foga,  il fratello di Sibirht e moltissimi altri  fransero lo scudo adorno, si difesero da valorosi.  Si spezzò il bordo dello scudo e la maglia cantò  canto di terrore. Nello scontro colpì  Offa il vichingo, così che questi cadde a terra,  e il parente di Gadd cercò il suolo.  Subito fu Offa trucidato in battaglia;  ma aveva adempito a quanto promise al signore,  così come aveva dato parola al donatore d'anelli  che dovevano entrambi far ritorno alla fortezza,  salvi a casa, oppure cadere in combattimento,  sul campo di strage perire di ferite.  Giacque da seguace a fianco del signore.  Ci fu schianto di scudi. I vichinghi avanzarono  rabbiosi di guerra; lancia spesso trapassò  corpo di destinato. Si portò avanti Wistan,  figlio di Thurstan, si batté con i nemici;  nella mischia fu l'uccisore di tre di loro,  prima che il figlio di Wigelin giacesse fra i caduti.</p>
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<p>301. Ðær wæs stið gemot. Stodon fæste  302. wigan on gewinne. Wigend cruncon  303. wundum werige. Wæl feol on eorþan.  304. Oswold and Eadwold ealle hwile,  305. begen þa gebroþru, beornas trymedon,  306. hyra winemagas wordon bædon  307. þæt hi þær æt ðearfe þolian sceoldon,  308. unwaclice wærna neotan.  309. Byrhtwold mæpelode, bord hafenode,  310. se wæs eald geneat, æsc acwehte;  311. he ful baldlice beornas lærde:  312. ‘Hige sceal þe heardra, heorte þe cenre,  313. mod sceal þe mare, þe ure mægen lytlað.  314. Her lið ure ealdor eall forheawen,  315. god on greote. A mæg gnomian  316. se ðe nu fram þis wigplegan wendan þenceð.  317. Ic eom frod feores; fram ic ne wille,  318. ac ic me be healfre minum hlaforde,  319. be swa leofan men licgan þence’.  320. Swa hi Æþelgares bearn ealle bylde,  321. Godric to guþe. Oft he gar forlet,  322. wælspere windan on þa wicingas;  323. swa he on þam folce fyrmest eode,  324. heow and hynde oðþæt he on hilde gecranc.  325. Næs þæt na se Godric þe ða guðe forbeah ...</p>	<p>warriors in the warfare, warriors perishing,  warriors wearied by wounds.  The slain fell to the earth. (296-303)  Oswold and Eadwold all the while  both of them brothers, encouraged the warriors,  their friendly companions they urged with their words  that they must endure there in their need,  not weakly, using their weapons. (304-8)  Bryhtwold spoke out, heaving his shield  (he was an old comrade), brandishing his spear;  very boldly he advised the warriors:  “Resolution should be the tougher, keener the heart,  the mind should be greater when our power diminishes.  Here lies our lord, all chopped up,  a good man on the gravel. He will always regret it,  he who thinks to turn away from this war-play.  I am old in life—I don’t wish to wander away,  but I’m going to lie down by the side of my lord,  beside these beloved men.” (309-19)  So Æthelgar’s son emboldened them all,  Godric to the fight. Often he let go of his spear,  the slaughtering spear flying into the Vikings,  so he went forth, first in that crowd,  hewing and maiming, until he perished in the battle.  This certainly was not the Godric who flew from the fight... (320-5)</p>	<p>Fu accanito incontro. Stettero saldi  i combattenti nella lotta. Stramazzarono i guerrieri  stremati di ferite. Caddero a terra i morti.  Per tutto il tempo Oswold e Eadwold,  entrambi i fratelli, incoraggiarono gli armati,  incitarono i loro parenti e amici, dissero  che al bisogno dovevano reggere,  e senza fiacchezza far uso d’armi.  Parlò Byrhtwold, levò lo scudo,  era un vecchio servitore, brandì il frassinio;  con grande ardore ammaestrò i guerrieri:  «L’animo deve essere più risoluto,  il coraggio maggiore, quanto minore si fa la nostra forza.  Qui giace trucidato il nostro capo,  il potente nella polvere. Sempre avrà motivo di dolersi  chi ora intenda ritrarsi da questo gioco di guerra.  Io sono vecchio d’anni; di qui non voglio muovermi,  ma io al fianco del mio signore,  accanto al tanto amato intendo giacere».  Li incoraggiò tutti anche il figlio di Æthelgar,  Godric alla guerra. Spesso scagliò lancia,  vibrò asta mortale contro i vichinghi;  avanzò anche primo tra gli uomini,  abbatté e atterrò finché cadde nello scontro.  Non era il Godric che era fuggito dalla guerra ...</p>
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