

APPENDIX

The State of the *Beowulf* Manuscript 1882–1983

There is a lingering notion among *Beowulf* scholars, despite Chauncey Tinker's effort to dispel it eighty years ago,¹ that the *Beowulf* manuscript is slowly but inexorably crumbling away in its modern home in the British Library. The gloomy news for a general audience is that the manuscript, "charred at the edges by the fire" that decimated the Cotton Library in 1731, "continues to deteriorate year by year."² A scholarly audience gets the same impression from Norman Davis, who gives us a reproduction of an old transliteration beside new photographs of the manuscript. He says, "Zupitza's transliteration . . . has permanent value as a record of what he could see in the manuscript in 1880–2,"³ a comment that certainly implies that Zupitza was able to see more in the manuscript a century ago than we can see today. In fact, with the aid of modern artificial lighting, notably fibre-optic and ultra-violet light, we can see far more in the manuscript today than Zupitza was able to see in 1882.

The manuscript of course sustained considerable fire-damage along the edges of every leaf as well as around the holes burnt on the last folio, but these areas are in no worse shape today than they were in

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1. *The Translations of Beowulf: A Critical Bibliography*, Yale Stud. in Eng. 16 (1903: repr. New York, 1968), 7–8.

2. A Kent Hieatt, "Introduction," *Beowulf and other Old English Poems*, trans. Constance B. Hieatt (Indianapolis, Ind., 1979), p. 1.

3. *Beowulf Reproduced in Facsimile from the Unique Manuscript British Museum MS. Cotton Vitellius A. xv, with a Transliteration and Notes by Julius Zupitza*, 2nd ed. (containing a new reproduction of the manuscript with an introductory note by Norman Davis), EETS 245 (London, 1959; repr. 1967), v.

1882. The rest of the text is arguably as legible now as it was in 1705, when Wanley copied the extracts for his *Catalogue* before the fire. We have no cause, at any rate, to think that he could see the now damaged readings at the bottom of 129r, for he copies *aldor . . . ase*, all that we can see today, at line 15, and does not attempt to copy the last line and a half of the page.⁴ The Thorkelin transcripts tell a similar story for 129r, 179r and v, the first three lines of 180v and 198v. Apart from readings that have crumbled away from fire-damage, neither A nor B provides any reading that we cannot see as well or better today.⁵ Moreover, ultra-violet light allows us to read some words not visible to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers, and continuing technological advances, in particular electronic photography and digital image-processing, give us some legitimate hope for future discoveries in this manuscript.⁶

Although scholars have profitably used ultra-violet light to restore readings that were invisible to Zupitza,⁷ no one has yet tried to verify the "covered readings" Zupitza laboriously read, without the aid of bright artificial light, beneath the protective paper frames around each leaf of Cotton Vitellius A. xv. Kemp Malone, who could have used modern artificial lighting to verify them for his facsimile edition of the Nowell Codex, made no special effort to read beneath the frames.⁸

4. Humphrey Wanley, *Antiquæ Literaturæ Septentrionalis Liber alter . . . Catalogus Historico-Criticus* (Oxford, 1705) (and, in facsimile, Eng. Ling. 1500–1800 248 (Menston, Wisc., 1970)), 218.

5. The *Thorkelin Transcripts of Beowulf in Facsimile*, ed. Kemp Malone, EEMF 1 (Copenhagen, 1951), 1, 65–67 and 89–90 for A, and 1a, 101a–2a, 104a and 140a for B.

6. For two successful applications of electronic photography and digital image-processing to medieval manuscripts, see John F. Benton, Alan R. Gillespie and James M. Soha, "Digital Image-Processing Applied to the Photography of Manuscripts: with Examples Drawn from the Pincus MS of Arnald of Villanova," *Scriptorium* 33 (1979): 40–55, and John F. Benton, "Electronic Subtraction of the Superior Writing of a Palimpsest," forthcoming in *Techniques de déchiffrement des écritures effacées*, ed. Jean Irigoien. There is an electronic camera (the Video Spectral Comparator, or VSC-2) now available in the Conservation Laboratory of the British Library, but as yet no equipment for digital image-processing.

7. See A. H. Smith, "The Photography of Manuscripts," *London Med. Stud.* 1 (1938): 200–2, for ultra-violet readings from the last page of *Beowulf*, and Kevin S. Kiernan, "*Beowulf*" and the "*Beowulf*" Manuscript (New Brunswick, NJ, 1981), for ultra-violet readings of scribal erasures in the manuscript.

8. *The Nowell Codes (British Museum Cotton Vitellius A. XV, Second MS)* EEMF 12

Fibre-optic light is especially well suited to this task, since it provides a high-intensity light-source without heat. As a result, we can now place an extremely bright light directly behind a covered reading without subjecting the manuscript to heat.

In July and August 1982, and once again in August 1983, I systematically checked all of Zupitza's notes with the aid of fibre-optic light.⁹ I discovered that, although they are extremely accurate as far as they go, Zupitza's notes do not record hundreds of letters and parts of letters that still survive in the manuscript, recto and verso. While the paper frames only cover readings on the versos, paste and tape that secure the vellum leaves to the frames similarly hide or obscure readings on the rectos as well. In many areas the paste seems to have discoloured and sometimes disintegrated the ink; but, by holding bright light behind (and sometimes directly over) these areas, it is normally easy to distinguish pen-strokes from heavy paste, opaque tape, shine-through, shrinkage, tears, wrinkles, holes, dirt and charred vellum. Fibre-optic light reveals forty-nine whole letters and ten virtually whole letters where Zupitza saw nothing, 118 whole letters where he saw only part of a letter, and 171 parts of letters where he saw either nothing at all or considerably less than what actually remains in the manuscript.

To facilitate collation, this paper presents the results of my search in the format of Zupitza's notes, by folio and line number. Like Zupitza, I adhere to the old foliation written on the manuscript and printed with Zupitza's transliteration.¹⁰ Malone is cited by page and column (for example, M50.2), to contrast his readings with mine and Zupitza's without adding the confusion of a conflicting foliation. Unless other-

(Copenhagen, 1963), 49–109. With better lighting than Zupitza had, Malone was able to see some readings that Zupitza could not. But Malone's cautious, yet fundamental, reliance on Zupitza for covered readings repeatedly appears in phrases like "gone or covered" and "may or may not be whole," corresponding to analogous statements in Zupitza's notes.

9. The instrument available in the Students' Room transmits light through a bundle of fibres; the one now available in the Conservation Laboratory, however, transmits a somewhat clearer light through a tube of fibres with a liquid centre.

10. For the many advantages of the manuscript foliation over the 1884 foliation Malone follows, see my "The History and Construction of the Composite Codex," *Beowulf and the "Beowulf" Manuscript*, pp. 65–169, esp. 71–110. The use of the manuscript foliation will present no difficulties for readers of Malone's notes, because Malone begins his discussion of each folio by locating the folio number on the manuscript.

wise noted, brackets, dots and colons in the readings follow Zupitza's transliteration. Abbreviations, however, are not expanded. The main purpose of the following entries is to provide additional notes to Zupitza's facsimile edition of *Beowulf* or to supplement or correct Zupitza's notes. An ancillary aim is to show to what extent Malone's notes are deficient in this respect. Whenever a note in Zupitza is passed over, the reader may presume that Zupitza's remarks are accurate, although it should be kept in mind that almost all of his notes could be profitably rewritten now that technology can help us give more precise and detailed descriptions.

- 129r** 7 *gebād* The top of *d* can still be seen above *a*, because the vellum shrank inward here from the heat of the fire. (M50.1: *d* gone.)
- 129v** 19 *þon* Some opaque substance above *þon* obscures and discolours the mark of abbreviation Kōlbing correctly read in the manuscript. (The ink is grey, instead of brown.) (M50.2 reads *þon*.)
- 130v** 2 *bearn* *b* gone, *ea* intact, with *e* and the left side of *a* only covered. (M51.1: *be* and part of *a* gone or covered.)
- 4 *sealde* Both high *s* (along the burnt edge) and *e* intact, but covered. (M51.1: *se* partly gone, partly covered.)
- 5 *ða* A small part of the right side and cross-stroke of *ð* survives, this and *a* partly covered. (M51.1: nearly all *ð* gone.)
- 132r** 1 *cwæð* The top of *c* gone, *w* intact, *æ* split in two by a tear, *ð* survives except for most of the cross-stroke, the beginning of which is visible on the *e*-head of *æ*. (M51.2: *ð* without tip and cross-mark.)
- 5 *sceatas* The second high *s* split by a tear, but a bit of the upper part survives as well as the bottom. (M51.2: no comment.)
- 132v** 1 *gantas* Most of caroline *s* and perhaps a bit of the lower right of *a* survive under the paper to the left of a tear. (M51.2: line now begins with *þa*.)
- 133v** 1 *scua* *a* and all but the bottom of *u* gone (M52.2: *u* gone), *sc* partly covered, the top of *c* gone.
- 3 *sin* The top of caroline *s* survives (M52.2: *s* gone), *i* and the first stroke of *n* covered.

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- 4 *cunnon* *c* gone, the first stroke of *u* only covered. (M52.2: first minim of *u* gone or covered.)
- 6 *nes* *n* gone, a covered *e* (if it is not shine-through) apparently survives. (M52.2: *e* gone.)
- 8 *fage* The tip of the *f*-descender and the bottom of *a* survive under a covered tear (M52.2: *fa* gone), *g* virtually intact (cf. M52.2: a bit damaged, partly covered).
- 134r 1 *heofena* The top of the *h*-ascender gone, parts of *n* and *a* only obscured by the paste and tape. (M52.2: no comment.)
- 134v 1 *peah* The bottom tip of the first and almost all of the second stroke of *h* survive. (M53.1: only bit of very bottom left.)
- 2 *hæl* *h* and most of the *a*-bow of *æ* gone (Zupitza and M53.2 thought *a*-bow only covered).
- 135r 1 *geseah* The top of *h* not gone, but leaning to the right of a tear (cf. M53.2).
- 135v 4 *poht* The descender of *p* torn, but intact. (M53.2: *p* from AB.)
- 136v 1 *mas* The bottom of *a* and most of *s* survive. (M54.1: *mas* gone.)
- 8 7 The abbreviation for *ond* intact under the paper. (M54.1: bottom of sign for *ond* gone, rest covered.)
- 137r 1 *wrað* *w* and the top of *ð* gone, *ra* intact. (M54.2: *rað* partly gone, partly covered.)
- 138v 5 *pæm* Part of the top of *p* covered, but the entire word legible in strong light. (M55.1: *pæ* gone.)
- 6 *madmas* Parts of the last two strokes of the first *m* survive. (M55.1: only bit of *m* left.)
- 7 *in* *i* intact, but covered. (M55.1: *i* partly gone.)
- 139r 1 *hearda* *h* and all except the extreme bottom of *e* gone, the first *a* wanting its upper left side and *d* part of its ascender. (M55.2: *e* gone.)
- 139v 2 *mum* The first two strokes of the first *m* survive under the paper. (M56.1: last minim of first *m* left, partly covered.)
- 141r 3 *to* *o* gone, *t* clear (cf. M57.1: *t* a bit shrunken and distorted but easy to read).

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- 141v 1 *mærða* *m* intact, but covered except for the bottoms of the last two minims (cf. M57.1: nearly all covered but seems practically whole).
- 143v 2 *duge* Most of *d* survives under the paper. (M58.1 unclear—refers to “what was left of *d*” when Thorkelin made his transcript.)
- 144r 1 *brego* The tops of *br* gone, *e* intact (cf. M58.1: only rounded part of *b* left, some of *r* gone or covered).
- 144v 1 *wealhþeon* *w* gone, the first *e* only torn. (M58.2: part of *e* gone.)
gefysed *gef* intact, *y* lacks its dot and the tip of its right side, *s* lacks its top, *e* intact, *d* lacks its ascender (both shrunken). (M58.2: not much of *sed* left, its remains nearly all covered.)
- 146r 1 *ful tum* *fu* and *t* intact, the top of *l* gone, only the bottoms of *u* and of the first two strokes of *m* survive. (M59.1: *fu*, lower part of *l*, three faded minims that may make an *m*, between remains of *l* and *m* traces of unidentifiable letters.)
- 146v 5 [*g*]ehran Though only *an* really clear, everything except *g* pretty certain in strong light (a minim stroke erased after *n*). (M59.2: “our ultra-violet photograph makes *hran* 5 practically certain, though *r* lost most of its descender by fading . . .”; cf. Zupitza-Davis: “the letters preceding *an*, about which Zupitza was uncertain, appear clearly as *hr*” (p. xiii).)
- 147A
- (131)v 1 *he* The top of *h* only covered. (M60.1: only tip of *h* gone.)
2 *on* *o* gone, the first stroke of *n* covered. (M60.1: only second minim of *n* left.)
4 *þæt* The shine-through from *fe* on the recto very dark, but between them a faint *t* still visible. (M60.1: *t* gone.)
7 *endum* *e* faded, but intact under the paper. (M60.1: *e* gone.)
- 147r 2 *para* Intact. (M60.2.)
pe Only the bottom part of the perpendicular stroke and the left side of the loop of *p* survive, *e* gone. (M60.2: top and bottom of *p* gone, middle part seems whole, though greatly shrunken.)

- 147v**
- 1 *for* *f* gone, *o* survives except for a bit of the upper left, *r* survives except for a bit of the top. (M60.2: *fo* and some of *r* gone.)
 - 2 *his* The first stroke of *h* gone, the second (over the shine-through from the recto), like *i* and a small part of *s*, only covered. (M60.2: *h* gone.)
 - 6 *manna* The first stroke of *m* gone, most of the second and all of the third only covered. (M61.1: first two minims of *m* gone.)
- 148v**
- 4 *eft gewiton* *eft* gone, *g* only covered. (M61.1: *g* gone.)
 - 8 *ge* The top and right side of *g* survive, covered, like part of *e* (M61.1: *g* gone.)
- 149r**
- 4 *wide* Only indistinct traces of *wid* survive, obscured by the shine-through, *e* clear, but shrunken and abraded. (M61.2: lower part of descender of *wynn* plain, *ide* gone.)
 - 5 *ne* *e* shrunken and on an angle, its left side obscured by the paste, but legible. (M61.2: *e* gone.)
 - 7 *wolde* *de* gone except for the top of the *d*-ascender under the tape (M61.2: *de* gone.)
- 149v**
- 4 *ofer* *o* gone, *f* intact, but faded (M61.2: *f* covered but visible recto through leaf.)
 - 5 *he* *h* gone, part of the *e*-head and tongue survives under the paper. (M61.2: *he* gone.)
 - 7 *wearð* *w* gone, *e* intact, but half-covered by the heavy paper and further obscured by the shine-through. (M62.1: *e* nearly all gone, tongue and possibly bit of head left.)
 - 8 *snude* Bits of high *s* visible on the left edge of the frame. (M62.1: *s* gone.)
- 150r**
- 2 *self* *se* intact, the bottom of *l* and all of *f* gone. (M62.1: *e* nearly whole.)
- 150v**
- 1 *scuccum* *s* intact, but its bottom part covered. (M62.1: bottom of *s* gone or covered.)
 - 2 *drihtnes* The bottom of *d* gone, the *r*-descender only torn. (M62.1: most of *d* and descender of *r* gone.)
 - 3 *ærne* *ær* gone except for the upper right side of *r* (M62.1: *r* gone), this and the first stroke of *n* covered.
 - 4 *secgan* All but a bit of the middle of *s* gone (M62.1: *s* gone), *e* and a small part of *c* covered.
 - 5 *ðone* *ð* survives under the paper except for the left side of its loop. (M62.1: *ð* gone.)

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- 8 *me* *m* intact, but its first stroke charred, its second a bit faded and both covered. (M62.1: only third minim of *m* left.)
- 151r 3 *ic* *c* virtually intact, but shrunken. (M62.2.)
6 *mihtig* *tig* gone, the *h*-ascender visible and distinct from the shine-through in strong light. (M62.2: *h* gone.)
- 151v 3 *god* The bottom of *g* gone, the rest and part of *o* covered. (M62.2: *g* gone.)
- 152r 2 *mægpe* *e* gone, light from behind shows *p* intact, but partly shrunken (FS poor). (M63.1: bow of *p* gone.)
6 *hicgende* The edge shrunken, the tape wrinkled and opaque, but all except the right side of the final *e* seems intact and *d* clear. (M63.1: *de* gone.)
7 *heo* The first side of *h* survives, distinct from the shine-through of *h* from the verso (cf. Kölbing and Wülcker). (M63.1: *h* gone.)
- 13 *beorn* The middle of *e*, all of *o* except for its top and *m* gone. (M63.1: *e* torn, displaced, *o* gone.)
- 152v 1 *laf* *la* gone, *f*, minus its descender, only covered (no space between *laf* and *frece*). (M63.1: *f* gone.)
- 153v 1 *wunde* *w* gone, the shrunken *u* seems intact (M63.2: *u* partly gone), and the rest of the word except small portions of *de* covered.
- 154v 1 *to* Gone except for the right side of *o*, only covered. (M64.1: *o* gone.)
wolcnum *w* partly covered, but intact (M64.1: gone or covered), the tips of *ol* covered.
5 *gifrost* *g* gone, *i* and the greater part of *f* covered, part of *r* a little faded. (The vellum is rather transparent here, as well.) (M64.1: *i* gone.)
- 155r 8 *his* The top of *h* split, the top of *s* gone. (M64.2: top of *h* gone, rest not easy to read.)
- 155v 1 *leodum* *l* gone, *e*, a small part of *o* and the top of *d* covered. (M65.1: *e* partly gone.)
2 *nes* The top of caroline *s* survives. (M65.1: *s* gone.)
3 *benc* *b* gone, *e* only covered. (M65.1: *e* gone.)
6 *godan* Except for the beginning of its top-stroke, *g* survives, but covered, like the top of *od* (cf. M65.1: remains of *g* covered).

- 156r** 7 *pōn* An abbreviation for *ne* over *o* (the stroke begins with a tiny hole and is covered with peeling tape), while the second stroke of *n*, but not the ligature, gone. (M65.1: presumably mark of abbreviation already gone when B made his copy.)
- 10 *hwæt t* shrunken, but intact. (M65.2: *t* hardly legible, though not all gone.)
- 156v** 1 *gas ga* gone, caroline *s* intact under the paper. (M65.2: *s* gone.)
- 2 *gefragen ge* gone except for the bottom of *e*. (M65.2: *e* gone.)
- 3 *le lgone*, the *e*-head and tongue intact, but covered, faded and worn. (M65.2: *e* gone.)
- 6 *searo s* and the bottom of *e* gone, the *e*-head and most of *a* covered. (M65.2: *e* gone.)
- 8 *ta t* apparently intact, its top corresponding to the split edge of the vellum. (M65.2: *t* damaged, its remains covered.)
- 18 *heal h* intact, but its ascender split and obscured by the heavy paste and paper. (M65.2: *h*-ascender gone.)
- 157r** 11 *dryht ht* and the dot over *y* gone (cf. M66.1).
- 15 *cwom* The last stroke of *m* faded and obscured by the paste and tape. (M66.2: third minim of *m* partly gone.)
- 157v** 1 *beag bea* gone, the top half of *g* survives, faded and covered, to the upper right of a small hole. (M66.2: *g* gone.)
- 4 *hringed* Only the *h*-ascender gone, the rest of *h* and a bit of the *r*-descender covered. (M66.2: most of *h* gone.)
- 5 *peaw p* gone, *e* and half of *a* only covered. (M66.2: bit of *e* gone.)
- 6 *ge g* intact, but covered. (M66.2: *g* somewhat damaged.)
- 158r** 1 *dream* Bits of the loop and ascender of *d* survive to the left of a split. (M67.1: *d* nearly all gone.)
- 6 *gife e* seems intact, but shrunken. (M67.1: *e* shrunken, charred, nearly headless.)
- 158v** 1 *healle* The top of the *h*-ascender gone, *ea* intact, but covered, *lle* gone. (M67.1: upper part of *hea* gone.)
- 2 *heard he* gone, most of *a* intact under the paper, part of *r* covered as well. (M67.1: *a* gone.)

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- 159r** **1** *mode mo* gone, *d* intact, *e* split and its top damaged. (M67.2: *de* damaged.)
 3 *secg ec* and what is left of the top half of *g* shrunken together, the bottom of *g* gone. (M67.2: *c* not whole, *g* gone.)
- 159v** **1** *swy[lc] scolde* Only *colde* left, all of *c* and the tops of the other letters covered. (M67.2: *c* gone.)
 15 *ic i* split in two, but otherwise intact. (M67.2: *i* gone.)
- 160v** **1** *þe e* partly survives (on an angle) under the paper. (M68.1: *e* gone.)
 3 *sec s* gone, *ec* clear with light from behind. (M68.2: nearly all *e* and most of *c* covered.)
 8 *wes es* intact, but partly covered and *e* rather faded. (M68.2: *e* gone.)
- 161v** **1** *fuslic fu*, the bottom of *s* and (after a tear) the bottom of *l* or *i* left. (M69.1: *lic* gone.)
 2 *f[yrð]* Though obscured by the shine-through from *o*, what appears to be an *l* (not a *d*) survives under the paper before *leoð*. (M69.1: only *leoð* left.)
 4 *sund* The second minim of *n* survives, but covered. (M69.1: *n* gone.)
 8 *ton* Except for the start of its top-stroke *t* intact, but faded and covered. (M69.1: *t* partly gone.)
- 162r** **1** *mengan* Only *men* and part of the bottom loop of *g* survive. (M69.1: *g* gone.)
- 162v** **4** *BEOWVLF E* not quite intact, nor could it have been for Zupitza (or Malone). The pencilled tracings on the paper frame, recto, show that this part had already crumbled off. (M69.2: *E* whole, mostly covered.)
- 163r** **12** *leoðo* The second *o* gone, the cross-stroke of *ð* intact along the upper edge of a crack. (M69.2: right side of cross-stroke gone.)
- 163v** **1** *leoht* Part of the ascender and second stroke of *h* survive under the paper. (M69.2: *h* gone.)
 7 *nołde* The right side of *n* survives, *o* destroyed by a small hole, both covered. (M70.1: *n* gone, *o* gone or covered.)
 8 *ðeodne* *ð* gone, the top of *e* and all of *od* intact, but covered except for the *d*-ascender. (M70.1: *ðeo* gone or covered.)

- 10 *hrægl* *hr* gone, *æ* intact, but half covered. (M70.1: part of *æ* gone or covered.)
- 11 *þ his* Both the abbreviation for *þæt* and the *h*-ascender intact under the paper. (M70.1: crossed thorn and top of *h* gone.)
- 13 *ða* *ð* torn at the bottom, but intact though covered. (M70.1: *ð* gone.)
- 164v
- 11 *fela* *f*'s two bars and *e* clear with light from behind. (M71.1: *fē* illegible.)
- 12 *oflor* The left side of the first *o* gone, the *f*-descender only torn. (M71.1: most of *of* gone.)
- 13 *hroð* The left side of *h* gone, the rest and part of *r* covered. (M71.1: *h* gone.)
- 14 *fote* *fo* intact, but partly covered. (M71.1: *f* partly gone.)
- 165r
- 2 *brim* *m* not torn. (M71.1: no comment.)
- 165v
- 1 *to þæs* Only the *e*-part of *æ*, covered, and *s* survive. (M71.1: *æ* gone.)
þær *r* intact, but partly covered. (M71.1: some of *r* gone or covered.)
- 2 *inne* At least two minims from *inn* survive on a misplaced chip of vellum (see r2). (M71.1: only *e* left.)
- 6 *gast* *g* shrunken, but intact, most of it and the bottom of *a* covered (vellum brittle, cracked and slightly displaced). (M71.2: *g* damaged.)
- 166v
- 4 *ageald* The loop of the first *a* gone, the rest and the bottom of *g* covered. (M71.2: first *a* gone.)
- 6 *hatost* *h* and the lower corner of the *a*-bow gone, the rest and part of the first *t* covered. (M72.1: *a* gone.)
- 9 *hit* *h* gone, *i* and the greater part of *t* only covered. (M72.1: *i* gone.)
- 167r
- 1 *sceat* The bottom of high *s* on the charred edge. (M72.1: *sceat* gone.)
- 6 *dryhtne* *ne*, *t* except for part of its top and the tip of the *h*-ascender gone. (M72.1: *t* gone.)
- 167v
- 1 *hæleðum* Only *eðum* survives, *e* under a tear, covered except for its base, *ð* split by the tear and partly covered. (M72.2: *e* gone.)

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- 3 *Ne geweox* *Ne* gone, *g* appears to be intact, but partly covered (the first *e* of *geweox*, inserted above *w*, barely visible in FS). (M72.2: *g* partly gone.)
- 4 *le7* *le* and a bit of the top of the abbreviation for *ond* gone, the rest of the top covered. (M72.2: top-stroke gone.)
- 6 *steallan* *ste* gone except for part of the *e*-head. (M72.2: *e* gone.)
- 7 *den* *d* gone, *e* only covered. (M72.2: *e*, or its remains, covered.)
- 10 *de* *d* gone, *e* intact, but mostly covered. (M72.2–73.1: only end of tongue of *e* left.)
- 11 *hord* *h* gone except for the bottom of its second stroke, *o* only covered. (M73.1: *h* gone.)
- 12 *num* *n* intact, but covered. (M73.1: *n*, or its remains, covered.)
- 14 *lo* The top of *l* survives along the covered edge. (M73.1: *l* gone.)
- 168v 1 *waldend* *wal* gone, the first *d* shrunken, but intact, this and most of *e* covered. (M73.2: first *d* gone.)
- 3 *lane* Gone except for the head and tongue of *e*. (M73.2: *e* gone.)
- 9 *magnes* *m* gone, *æ* shrunken (the *a*-bow perhaps slightly damaged), *g* intact. (M73.2: *æ* partly gone.)
- 13 *oððe* *o* gone except for a bit of the right side, this, like the first *ð*, covered. (M73.2: *o* gone.)
- 14 *ceð* *c* gone, *eð* intact, but partly covered. (M73.2: *e*, or its remains, nearly all covered.)
- 15 *ofer* The left side of *o* gone, the rest covered. (M73.2: *o* gone.)
- 16 *ra* The left side of *r* intact, but faded and covered. (M73.2: only lower part of second down-stroke of *r* left.)
- 17 *leac* The curved bottom of *l* survives, the rest may coincide with the edge of the paper frame. (M73.2: *l* gone or covered.)
- 18 *dan* *d* intact under the paper (cf. M73.2).
- 169r 5 *sym* The perpendicular part of high caroline *s* visible, but obscured by the paste and shine-through of the *r*-descender. (M74.1: *s* gone.)
- 169v 1 *ða com* Indistinct traces of *m* and possibly *o* survive (on an angle because of a tear in the vellum). (M74.1: *om* gone.)

- 2 *wæron* Only *n* survives, intact, but partly covered. (M74.1: *n* somewhat damaged, partly covered.)
- 3 *farene* *fa* and the left side of *r* gone except for its top, the right side only covered. (M74.1: *r* gone.)
- 7 *þæs* *þ* and *æ* except for its *e*-tongue gone, *s* mostly covered. (M74.1: *e* gone.)
- 10 *þa* The middle part of the *þ*-perpendicular, distinct from the shine-through, survives on the burnt edge. (M74.1: *þ* gone.)
- 12 *þær* *þæ* gone except for the bottom of *e*, covered. (M74.2: *æ* gone.)
- 13 *gar* *g* gone, *a* intact, but partly covered. (M74.2: all or most of *a* left.)
- 15 *Beo* *Be* gone, *o* intact, but covered. (M74.2: all or part of *o* left.)
- 170r 11 *fe* *e* obscured by the paste and tape, but clear with light from behind (a faint *a* seems to follow it, but may be shine-through). (M74.2: bit of *e* gone, rest blurred.)
- 170v 3 *gyf* *y* split, but otherwise seems intact. (M75.1: *y* nearly all gone.)
- 4 *mod* The third minim of *m* may remain, most of *o* covered. (M74.2: *m* gone.)
- 7 *ge* Some of the top half of *g* survives, this and a bit of *e* covered. (M74.2: *g* gone.)
- 8 *þe* The right side of the *e*-head and tongue survive. (M74.2: *e* gone.)
- 9 *de* *d* gone, *e* survives, but obscured by the paste, tape, shrinkage and shine-through from *g*. (M74.2: *e* gone.)
- 12 *hea* *h* gone, *e* intact. (M75.1: bit of *e* gone.)
- 13 *leode* The top of *l* survives a little to the left of the shine-through from the *h*-ascender. (M75.1: *l* gone.)
- 15 *de* *d* intact, but mostly covered. (M75.1: *d* may or may not be whole.)
- 171v 2 *cwæð* *cwæ* gone, very little (if any) of *ð* gone, its cross-stroke survives along the edge of the covered vellum. (M75.2: *ð* mostly gone.)
- 10 *rþre* The first *r* and perpendicular stroke of *þ* gone, the rest of it covered. (M75.2: *þ* gone.)
- 11 *drefan* *d* gone except for part of its ascender, covered along with a bit of *r*. (M75.2: *d* gone.)

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- 13 *segl* The covered bottom of *s* torn, but intact. (M75.2: *s* may or may not be whole.)
- 172r 5 *meah* Only the first minim of *m* survives. (M76.1: only very bottom of first minim left.)
- 6 *gestreon eon* gone except for the first side of *e* along the edge. (M76.1: *e* gone.)
- 12 *ðe e* shrunken, but virtually intact at the edge. (M76.1: part of *e* gone, rest shrunken, charred.)
- 172v 1 *weotode* A bit of the *w*-bow survives and *eo* intact, but covered. (M76.1: *w* gone, first *e*, or its remains, covered.)
- 2 *seophðan seo* gone except for the upper right corner of *o*. (M76.1: *o* gone.)
- 4 *moste* The first two minims of *m* gone, the third and the left side of *o* only covered. (M76.1: *m* nearly all gone, rest covered.)
- 173r 1 *ge* Though obscured somewhat by the paste and tape, the bottoms of both letters survive to the upper left of *l* in *eðel* in the next line (the shrinkage and rip before *l* pulled the vellum out of place). (M76.2: presumably *ge* already gone when B made his copy.)
- 173v 1 *siððan* The letters before *ððan* obscure, partly because the vellum here is transparent and worn. I read uncial *s* and *i*: what looks like a dot (for *y*) may be the start of uncial *s*, while the curved stroke beneath it looks like the bend of the right side of this *s*; the next stroke is almost certainly *i*, marred by a small hole in the middle (cf. *iððan* A; B's later *sy* was formerly *.i*). (M76.2: *sy* partly gone, partly covered, partly visible.)
- 5 *ða* Though partly covered, *ð* seems virtually intact (perhaps the tip of the ascender gone). (M77.1: part of *ð* gone.)
- 174v 2 [*d*]*uguðe* Only the lower right corner of the second *u*, most of *ð* (both covered) and *e* survive. (M78.1: second *u* gone.)
- 3 *on ende on* gone, *ende* intact, with the first *e* and bits of *n* covered. (M78.1: first *e* gone.)
- 175r 4 *higes* The first stroke of *h*, though obscured by the paste and tape and coinciding with the shine-through of *l* from the verso, seems to survive. (M78.2: *h* gone.)

- 10 *syððan* The second stroke of *n* intact except for some that has chipped off at the upper right (cf. M79.1).
- 175v 2 [*a*]*brocene ab* gone, most of *r* survives under the paper. (M79.2: *r* not whole, its remains covered.)
- 12 *eatol e* and the left side of *a* gone, the right side only covered. (M79.2: *a* gone.)
- 16 *grendel g* intact, but partly covered. (M80.1: some of *g* gone.)
- 176r 1 *hangode* All gone except perhaps for the beginning of *h*. (Someone seems to have rubbed the vellum here with a pencil.) (M80.1: *h* gone.)
- 9 *hui[cð]am* Only *hui* survives (Zupitza is mistaken that *i* is instead the shine-through of *m* from the verso, for light from the back shows that the *m* is not in the right position—the *i* is obscured by the paste; cf. M80.2).
- 176v 1 *fricgende* The top of *gen* damaged and *en* faded as well, followed by a space, the *d*-ascender gone, the second *e* intact (M81.1: *g* and *de* damaged, *en* blurred.)
- 3 *mel* A bit of the bottom of *l* survives. (M81.1: *l* gone.)
- 5 *rihte* *r* gone, most of *i* survives. (M81.1: *l* gone.)
- 10 *dæg* Traces of the right side of the *g*-loop survive. (M81.1: *g* gone.)
- 11 *oðer* *oð* gone, most of the *e*-head survives, covered, above *r*. (M81.1: *e* gone.)
- 17 *genge* The *e*-head and *nge* survive. (M81.1: first *e* gone.)
- 20 *ne on* The second stroke of the first *n* survives under the paper, *o* intact, but torn. (M81.1: first *n* shrunken, displaced downward, partly gone, rest covered, *o* somewhat damaged.)
- 177r 5 *ƿ* The first side of the cross-stroke survives. (M81.2: *ƿ* gone.)
- 177v 1 *geaf* The tops of *ge* survive on the displaced strip of vellum. (M82.1: *ge* damaged.)
- 2 [*min*]*ne min* gone except for a bit of the bottom of *n*, *ne* intact except for a bit of the top of *n*. (M82.1: first *n* gone, most of first minim of second *n* gone, rest and top of second minim covered.)
- 4 *ywan* The top of the *w*-bow intact, but covered. (M82.1: *w* gone.)

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- 6 *hygelac* *hy* gone except for the top of the right side of *y*, *g* intact except for the left side of the loop. (M82.1: *y* gone, *g* partly gone, partly covered.)
- 178r 6 *ge* *Gone* except for the beginning of *g*, obscured by the paste and tape. (M82.2: *g* gone.)
- 8 *ðeod[nes]* Traces of the left side of *d* survive along the broken edge. (M82.2: *d* gone.)
- 178v 1 *drihten* *dr* and most of *i* gone, *hten* intact except for the *h*-ascender (both *h* and *n* split by a tear). (M83.1: *i* gone, only second down-stroke of *h* left.)
- 2 [*wen*]*don* *d* seems intact, but the heavy paste obscures the left side. (M83.1: most of *d* gone or covered.)
- 3 *from* *fr* and the left side of *o* gone, its right side covered. (M83.2: *o* gone.)
- 4 *menn* *me* gone, the first *n*, distinct from the strong shine-through, only covered. (M83.2: first minim of first *n* gone.)
- 8 *on* The second stroke of *n* intact, but covered. (M83.2: *n* gone.)
- 11 *bam* The second stroke of *a* survives under the paper. (M83.2: *a* gone.)
- 12 *lond* *l* and the left side of *o* gone, the rest of *o* covered. (M83.2: *o* gone.)
- 14 *eft* The front of the *e*-head and the top of *f* survive, but covered. (M83.2: *e* gone.)
- 179 For a discussion of the readings on the palimpsest, see Kiernan, "*Beowulf*" and the "*Beowulf*" Manuscript, pp. 219–43.
- 180r 1 *nah hwa* The extreme top of *nah* damaged, *h* in *hwa* seems intact. (M87.1: tip of second *h* gone.)
- **f[eormie]* There is no palaeographical justification for the bracketed restoration (Grein). The curved stroke that survives after *f* looks more like the side of an *a* or *o* than an *e* (there is no sign of a middle-stroke); moreover, the vestige of a descender is not the bottom of *r*, since it clearly curves inward, like a *g*-loop; between the *f* and this apparent *g* there does not seem to be enough room for a digraph as wide as *eo* (cf. *feorm* . . . in line 4). (M87.1: part of *e* gone, only bottom of *r* left ("if the letter is an *r*; it might be any letter with a descender").)

- 18 *uht* *h* intact and the start of the *t*-bar survives, but both slightly out of place (the vellum distorted by heat). (M87.1–2: bottom of *h* a bit damaged, *t* gone.)
- 180v 1 . . . *nan* The first *n* covered, the first stroke of the second *n* torn (these letters clear with light from behind). (M87.2: . . . *ða*: for MS . . . *nan*; “Z[upitza’s] long restoration *swiðe ondrædað* at the head of the line could hardly be bettered. . . .”
bearn (B) The bottom of the first letter closes, but this may be a distortion from the erasure; the remainder of B’s reading is supported by the ink traces except for the second stroke of *n*, now gone. An alternative reading, well supported by B, the manuscript, the sense and the alliteration, would be *hearm*. (M87.2: *h:r*: for B’s *bearn*; “restoration *hord* (Z) at the end of the line seems certain, though two letters are illegible and *h* has lost its ascender.”)
- 3 *wintrum* *win* gone except for covered traces of the second stroke of *n*. (M87.2: *n* gone.)
- 14 *stearc* Part of *ste* covered, *a* intact, but torn at the tail. (M88.1: bottom of *a* a bit damaged.)
- 20 *guman* *g* intact, but partly covered, *u* torn (cf. M88.1).
- 181r 2 *þære* Only the *þ*-descender and the left side of the bow survive (the latter somewhat obscured by the paste and tape). (M88.1: only descender of *þ* left, *æ* gone.)
- 10 *drinc* The left side of *c* survives at the edge. (M88.2: *c* gone.)
- 181v 1 *wolde*. Only the point survives, barely covered. (M88.2: line now begins with *wæs*.)
gesyne *gesy* intact, but partly covered. (M88.2: line now begins with *wæs*.)
- 8 *geleah* The top right of *g* survives, *e* intact, but partly covered. (M88.2: *g* gone, *e* partly gone, partly covered.)
- 19 *kyning* There are faint traces of the vertical stroke of *k* directly above the torn *h*-ascender at the beginning of the next line. (M89.1: Malone states bottom of stroke can be seen in facsimile, but mark he refers to is torn top of *h*.)
- 182r 1 *wisse he* Only the tips of *ss* gone, *h* intact. (M89.1: *h* not whole.)
- 12 *gares ga* and most of the first stroke and top of *r* left. (M89.2: most of *r* gone.)

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- 19 *gebeaten* Only the second stroke of *n* gone, the first survives below the *e*-head even in FS. (M89.2: *n* gone.)
- 182v 7 *earn* *ea* gone except for the off-stroke from *a*, part of *r* covered. (M89.2: *a* gone.)
- 11 *hygelac* Most of the *h*-ascender gone, the rest of *h* and the bottoms of *y* and *g* only covered. (M89.2–90.1: *h* gone.)
- 15 *de* *d* gone, *e* only covered. (M90.1: part of *e* gone, rest covered.)
- 183v 5 *wisian* *w* gone except for the bottom tip of the descender (M91.1: *w* gone), covered along with part of *is*.
- 14 *wine* *w* gone except for the tip of its descender (M91.1: *w* gone), *i* intact except for a bit gone at its base, the rest of *i* covered, *n* torn.
- 184v 2 *to* Only the bottom of *t* and most of *o* survive, both covered. (M91.2: *t* gone.)
- 4 *ðes* *ð* intact, but its shrunken loop partly covered. (M91.2: *ð*, or its remains, covered except for part of cross-stroke.)
- 14 *linde* *lin* torn through the middle, but not much missing from any of the letters, though *li* and part of *n* are covered (the base of *l* obscured by the shine-through of *ð*). (M91.2: “of the first two letters I see only the upper part of *l* (Z saw also a bit of what he thought was *i*); the upper left corner of *n* is gone.”)
- 185r 11 *onsæge* *e* gone, *æg* intact, but torn. (M92.1: *æg* torn, some of *g* gone.)
- 185v 8 *breost* The extreme tip of the *b*-ascender gone, the rest only covered. (M92.2: ascender of *b* nearly all gone.)
- 11 *hilde* The first stroke of *h* torn, but apparently intact. (M92.2: lower part of upright of *h* nearly all gone.)
- 14 *ðelode* *ð* intact except for the tip of its ascender, but half covered. (M92.2: much of *ð* gone.)
- 15 *ic* The bottom of *i* survives under the frame. (M92.2: most of *i* gone.)
- 186r 1 *elles* *es* obscured by the paste and tape, but with light from behind only the top of *s* appears to have gone. (M92.2: *es* gone.)
- 3 *hates* *te* faint, but visible with light from behind, high *s* visible with direct light except for its top (coinciding with the shine-through of *s*). (M92.2: *te* gone, *s* headless, shaft seems whole.)

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- 6 *sceal* Only *sce* survives, *e* with a faded head visible in bright light. (M92.2: only down-stroke of *e* seems to be left.)
- 8 *mode* All intact, but parts of *d* and *e* faded (*e*, on the edge, is seen best with strong light from behind). (M92.2: *e* gone.)
- 186v 1 *ge* Partly covered, but intact except for the upper right corner of the *e*-head. (M93.1: some of *g* and more of *e* gone.)
- 187v 19 *ða* The bottom of *ð* torn and mostly covered. (M94.2: *ð* partly gone.)
- 20 *geolwe* *g* apparently intact, but somewhat out of place because of a tear in the vellum after it (cf. M94.2).
- 188r 2 *ecgū* *g* apparently intact, but somewhat distorted by heat and its top obscured by the paste, *ū* gone. (M94.2: top of *g* a bit damaged.)
- 188v 1 *mæl* The bottom of *l* survives under the paper. (M94.2: *l* gone.)
- geman* *g* intact, but partly covered. (M94.2: *g*, or its remains, partly covered.)
- þonne* Only *þon* and the first stroke of the second *n* survive. (M94.2: second *n* gone.)
- 2 *wegeheton* *w* and the top of the first *e* gone (M94.2: *e* gone), *g* intact, but partly covered. (M94.2: bit of *g* gone.)
- 13 *mede* The first stroke of *m* covered. (M95.1: first minim of *m*, or its remains, covered.)
- 14 *man* The first stroke of *m* covered, the second obscured by a curled piece of the paper frame. (M95.1: first minim of *m* gone, second covered.)
- 189A
(197)r 1 *geare* *r* torn and only the base and tongue of the faded final *e* survive. (M95.1: *e* gone [influenced by B?].)
- 14 *wið* Only the bottoms of these letters survive. (M95.2: *ð* gone.)
- 20 *nægling* The first *g*-loop faded, the second stroke of the second *n* gone, vestiges of the second *g*-loop (split by a tear in the vellum) survive in the manuscript, truncated in FS. (M96.1: second *g* gone.)
- 189A
(197)v 4 *mine* Only the top of the second stroke of *m* and the third stroke survive, with *i*, covered. (M96.1: first two minims of *m* gone.)

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- 18 *deaf* *d* covered, but seemingly intact except perhaps for the top of its ascender. (M96.1: *d* not quite whole.)
- 189v 2 *heold* *he* intact under the paper, but *e* faded, perhaps rubbed like *o*. (M97.1: upper part of *h* and head of *e* gone.)
- 4 *gretan* *g* and the bottom of the *r*-descender gone, the rest of *r* and the torn *e* covered. (M97.1: some of *e* gone.)
- 5 *mæl* *m* gone, *æ* (except for the tail of its *e*-part) preserved by the tape over the very thin vellum, *l* torn, but intact. (M97.1: *æ* gone.)
- 6 *searo* Caroline *s* lacks a bit at its top and bottom, *ea* intact under the paper. (M97.1: *se* gone, most of *a*, or its remains, covered.)
- 8 *fean* The *f*-descender preserved to the left of a split in the vellum above *w* in *waldend* in the next line (M97.1: *f* gone), *e* and the lower left corner of *a* gone, the rest of *a* covered.
- 13 *since* *si* gone, *nce* torn and partly covered. (M97.1: *n* gone.)
- 15 *gīmas* Only a tiny piece of the bottom of *g* gone. (M97.1: bottom of *g* gone.)
- 190v 6 *mid* *m* intact under the paper. (M97.2: only top of third minim of *m* visible, even when leaf held up to light, letter may or may not be whole.)
- 15 *bohte* *bo* gone except for the faded right side of *o*, covered and split by a tear, the *h*-ascender also torn and covered. (M98.1: *o* gone, ascender of *h* partly gone.)
- 17 *heado* The first stroke of *h* gone (M98.1: *h* gone), the rest of *h*, *e* and half of *a* covered.
- 191r 11 *gewát* The accent mark coincides with a tear above *a* (cf. M98.2).
- 191v 1 *hwearf* *h* torn, but its covered ascender preserved on the right side of a tear (cf. M98.2).
- 12 *næs* A very small part of *æ* covered, not gone (cf. M98.2).
- 17 *mela* The top of the first stroke of *m* faded rather than gone. (M98.2: top of first minim of *m* gone.)
- 192v 1 *becwom* The top of the *b*-ascender gone and the loop almost entirely filled with a taped hole. (M99.1: upright of *b* covered except for rounded bit at bottom, rest of *b* gone.)
- swyrdgifu* *rd* partly covered, but intact, *gifu* gone except for a bit of the *g*-loop under the paper. (M99.1: *g* gone.)

- 7 *XL*:- Was *LX* (not *XLI*), the original *X* erased and rewritten to the left of *L* by another hand. (M99.2): “obviously there was an erasure but I cannot make out what was erased, though *Z*[upitza] makes a good guess.”)
- 193r 13 *on med* *on* barely torn at the bottom, the first two minims of *m* damaged at the bottom, its third minim and *ed* gone except for the top of the *d*-ascender. (M100.1: *d* gone.)
- 193v 1 *earmre m* torn, the top of the first stroke survives to the right of a tear. (M100.1: *m* torn, top of first minim gone.)
teoh he The top of *t* torn, but survives (M100.1: upper right corner of *t* gone), both the *h*-ascenders covered, the final *e* blurred, but legible (cf. M100.1–2).
- 13 *hilde h* torn through the middle, the bottom of its first stroke gone, the top survives (M100.2: upright of *h* gone), the rest of *h*, most of *i* and parts of *lde* covered.
- 194r 1 *won reðing ð* (not *d*), its cross-stroke slightly torn at the right, but unmistakable with light from behind (cf. A, *pace* M100.2).
- 194v 19 *maðma* The first *m* intact, but heat-damage has pulled its first two minims to the upper left. (M101.1: nearly all of first *m* gone or covered.)
- 20 *[po]d* The *d*-ascender intact under the paper. (M101.1: nothing visible before sign for *ond*, anything there covered.)
- 21 *[geboh]te* What looks like the top of another *t* precedes *te*. (M101.1: line now begins with *te*.)
- 198v Davis: “The last page . . . , the photographer found after long experiment gave better results by ordinary light” (p. v). According to Smith, “in some cases less is visible now than formerly (judging by the editions of the poem), but on the other hand some new readings . . . have been deciphered . . .” (Zupitza-Davis, p. viii). Fibre-optic light reveals more than Smith could see.
- 1 *meowle* . . . After *meowle*, on the covered edge of a large rip, the tops of some letters (perhaps the tips of an *e*-head and a caroline *s*, i.e. . . *es*) can be seen (but no sign of a *b*-ascender).
- heorde* The tops of *h* and *r* covered, *de* intact under the paper. (M104.2: *de* gone.)

- 5 *swealg* Torn down the middle, parts of some letters gone, other parts covered; with light from behind I see the tops of *sw*, the bottom of *w*, *eal* almost intact and the top and bottom of *g*. (M106.1–2: top of *s*, bottom of *w*, most of *e*, no *a*, nearly all of *l*, top stroke of *g*)
- hlæo* Neither *hlæw* nor *hleō*, but a combination of the two, a variant spelling of *hleō*. (M106.2: “Z[upitza] read . . . *hleō* (footnote; *hl* . . . in his text) and this is also Smith’s reading (photo) but if I read the MS aright it has *hlweo* by metathesis for *hleow* and this reading comes out clearly in Z’s facsimile, much less clearly but surely, I think, in the present one; Davis notes that the word “does not appear to be *hleō* because there is too much space between *l* and *e*; *hlæw* would fit best” . . . but he does not reckon with metathesis.”)
- 6 *gesyne* The first *e* visible in strong light. (M107.1: “Davis sees traces of *e* in the new facsimile and so do I; in Z’s I see the down-stroke better but the head not so well as here.”)
- 13 *hyt* All intact, including the dot over *y*. (M107.2–108.1: “my reading *hy* is that of the new facsimile (or so I think), though the dot over the *y* is poorly centered; the first down-stroke after *h* is slanting, as one would expect for *y* . . . and the second one slants the other way, again as it does in *y*, and proceeds downward in a tail thin and faint but visible; after it I see vestiges of the top of a *t* but none of a curving down-stroke. . . .”)
- 15 *.e.ġ* Before *cwiðan e, g* and an abbreviation for *e* seem clear in bright light. (M108.1: “the illegible word at the head of the line is commonly restored as *ceare* (Grein) but Z in his text finds room here (rightly, I think) for only four letters. . . .”)
- 21 *monðwærust* The bottoms of the first two minims of *m* under the tape, followed by a hole, the bottom of *o*, most of the tops of *nð* (including the cross-stroke, divided by a small hole), *w* gone, the tops of *æx*, only *ust* intact. (M109.1: *monðwær* gone except for top of *æ* and bit of *r*)

As the preceding entries show, the *Beowulf* manuscript is not in worse shape today than it was in 1882. Combined, the evidence is overwhelming that the protective paper frames of the 1845 Gough binding successfully stopped the crumbling at the edges of the manuscript. At the

same time it must be admitted that the current binding is not a safe or useful way to preserve a treasure of the stature of *Beowulf*. It is true that the paper frames securely hold the vellum leaves in place, while the binding tightly holds the paper frames together. But, because the vellum leaves are cockled and perhaps somewhat thicker than their paper frames, the binding is actually much smaller than the codex it is meant to bind. Thus the covers give little protection, since the book is always ajar.

Soon it may be expedient for the British Library to attempt to provide a safer method of preserving the manuscript, perhaps one that can also reveal all of the readings that are now covered by the paper frames. Experiments are already under way in the Conservation Laboratory of the British Library for resuscitating the vellum of manuscripts damaged in the Cottonian Library fire. One method recently tested on BL Cotton Otho B. xii was developed by I. K. Belaya of the Department of Book Hygiene and Restoration at the V. I. Lenin Library in Moscow.¹¹ By this method the paper frames could be removed and the vellum processed with a 10% solution of urea and a 1–2% spermaceti emulsion, which restore the original texture and resilience to the skin without apparently affecting the text. The leaves are then pressed, first between sheets of wax paper and thick cardboard, and then between filter-paper and glass, until the spermaceti has thoroughly permeated the parchment and dried. According to Belaya, “facts from physico-mechanical testing of parchments processed with a 10% solution of urea, and with urea followed by greasing with a 2% spermaceti emulsion, indicate that [these substances] have a beneficial effect on old parchment.”¹²

If some such process proves to be reliable enough to use on the *Beowulf* manuscript, there would be many accompanying benefits. Most of the manuscript could be safely stored away in separate polyester slip-cases, even while tourists would be able to see more of it than two facing pages. For instance, parts of *The Wonders of the East*, *Beowulf* and *Judith* could be displayed simultaneously. The benefits to scholars would be manifold as well. For a start, they could study parts of the

11. See I. K. Belaya, “Softening and Restoration of Parchment in Manuscripts and Bookbindings,” and “Instructions for the Softening of Parchment Manuscripts and Bookbindings,” *Restaurator* 1.1 (1969), 20–48 and 49–51.

12. *Ibid.* pp. 30 and 36.

manuscript without disappointing the tourists. With the vellum leaves out of their paper frames codicologists might be able to prove the construction of the original gatherings, if it turns out that the original folds were not destroyed in the fire, but instead split by Gough when he prepared the paper frames. Textual scholars would be able to see without fibre-optic light the hundreds of readings that are now hidden by the paper frames. And photographers could furnish, for the first time, a reasonably full reproduction of the remarkable text that has come down to us from a thousand years ago.

Despite these many advantages, however, I would not recommend removing the paper frames, since some chips of vellum are now obviously held in place by tape alone. I would strongly recommend, though, that Cotton Vitellius A. xv be rebound in two or more separate parts, as has been done with Cotton Nero A. x, the *Gawain* manuscript. The combination of the Southwick and Nowell codices is, after all, a seventeenth-century innovation. In a conventional new binding, guards could be added at the spine to alleviate pressure on the vellum leaves when the book is open. Another possibility is "incapsulation" in a post binder, whereby each framed leaf could be placed in a Melinex (polyester) sleeve, as has been recently done with Cotton Vitellius A. vii.¹³

Anyone who has studied the *Beowulf* manuscript, even in facsimile, must be saddened by the lamentable state it is now in. The outside edges and the last page were badly burnt in the fire of 1731. Though much of the edges survived to the late eighteenth century, they apparently crumbled away, folio by folio, as Thorkelin and his hired scribe made their now indispensable transcripts. Bits of the edges were no doubt sacrificed, as well, when tracings of them were made for the 1845 binding, and it appears that the paste used to secure the leaves to the frames caused some fading and obliteration of the text. But we have no reason to believe that the manuscript deteriorated between 1845 and Zupitza's transcript, and good reason now to believe that it has not been further damaged since 1882. Indeed, by virtue of modern technology, especially fibre-optic light, we can even say that, for us, the manuscript is in far better condition today than it was 101 years ago.

13. I wish to thank Mr. Anthony Parker, Senior Conservation Officer in the Department of Manuscripts at the British Library, for patiently answering my questions and for giving me access to the equipment in the Conservation Laboratory.