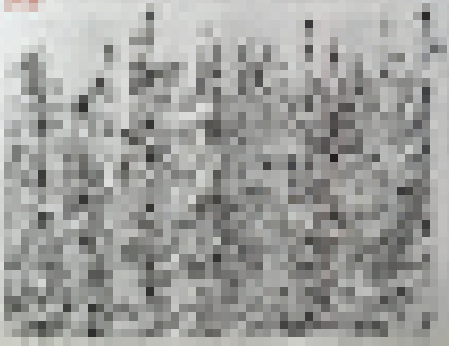
XII. Grendel cometh into Hart: of the strife betwixt him and Beowulf

GAME then from the moor/land, all under the mist/bents,
Grendel a/going there, bearing God's anger.
The scather the ill one was minded of mankind
To have one in his toils from the high hall aloft.
'Neath the welkin he waded, to the place whence the wine/house,
The gold/hall of men most yarely he wist
With gold plates fair colour'd; nor was it the first time
That he unto Hrothgar's high home had betook him.
Never he in his life/days, either erst or thereafter,
Of warriors more hardy or hall/thanes had found.
Came then to the house the wight on his ways,
Of all joys bereft; and soon sprang the door open,
With fire/bands made fast, when with hand he had touch'd it;
Brake the bale/heedy, he with wrath bollen,
The mouth of the house there, and early thereafter
On the shiny/fleck'd floor thereof trod forth the fiend;
On went he then mood/wroth, and out from his eyes stood
Likest to fire/flame light full unfair.
In the high house beheld he a many of warriors,
A host of men sib all sleeping together,
Of man/warriors a heap; then laugh'd out his mood;
In mind deem'd he to sunder, or ever came day,
The monster, the fell one, from each of the men there
The life from the body; for befell him a boding
Of fulfilment of feeding: but Weird now it was not
That he any more of mankind thenceforward

Should eat, that night over. Huge evil beheld then
The Hygelac's kinsman, and how the foul scather
All with his fear/grips would fare there before him;
How never the monster was minded to tarry,
For speedily gat he, and at the first stour,
A warrior a/sleeping, and unaware slit him,
Bit his bone/coffer, drank blood a/streaming,
Great gobbets swallow'd in; thenceforth soon had he
Of the unliving one every whit eaten
To hands and feet even: then forth strode he nigher,
And took hold with his hand upon him the high/hearted,
The warrior a/resting; reach'd out to himwards
The fiend with his hand, gat fast on him rathely
With thought of all evil, and besat him his arm.
Then swiftly was finding the herdsman of foul deeds
That forsooth he had met not in Middle/garth ever,
In the parts of the Earth, in any man else
A hand/grip more mighty; then wax'd he of mood
Heart/fearful, but none the more outward might he;
Hence/eager his heart was to the darkness to hie him,
And the devil/dray seek: not there was his service
E'en such as he found in his life/days before.
Then to heart laid the good one, the Hygelac's kinsman,
His speech of the even/tide; uplong he stood
And fast with him grappled, till bursted his fingers.
The eoten was out/fain, but on strode the earl.
The mighty fiend minded was, whereso he might,
To wind him about more widely away thence,
And flee fenwards; he found then the might of his fingers
In the grip of the fierce one; sorry faring was that
Which he, the harm/scather, had taken to Hart.
The warrior/hall dinn'd now; unto all Danes there waxed,

Grendel devoureth a Geat



To the castle-abiders, to each of the keen ones,
To all earls, as an ale-dearth. Now angry were both
Of the fierce mighty warriors, far rang out the Hall-house;
Then mickle the wonder it was that the wine-hall
Withstood the two war-deer, nor welter'd to earth
The fair earthly dwelling; but all fast was it builded
Within and without with the banding of iron
By crafty thought smithy'd. But there from the sill bow'd
fell many a mead-bench, by hearsay of mine,
With gold well adorned where strove they the wrothful.
Hereof never ween'd they, the wise of the Scyldings,
That ever with might should any of men
The excellent, bone-dight, break into pieces,
Or unlock with cunning, save the light fire's embracing
In smoke should it swallow. So uprose the roar
New and enough; now fell on the North-Danes
Ill fear and the terror, on each and on all men,
Of them who from wall-top hearken'd the weeping,
Even God's foeman singing the fear-lay,
The triumphless song; and the wound-bewailing
Of the thrall of the Hell; for there now fast held him
He who of men of main was the mightiest
In that day which is told of, the day of this life.

XIII. Beowulf hath the victory: Grendel is hurt deadly and leaveth hand and arm in the Hall

DAUGHT would the earls' help for anything thenceforth
That murder-comer yet quick let loose of,
Nor his life-days forsooth to any of folk
Told he for useful. Out then drew full many

Grendel overcome

Of Beowulf's earls the heir-loom of old days,
For their lord and their master's fair life would they ward,
That mighty of Princes, if so might they do it.
For this did they know not when they the strife dreed,
Those hardy-minded men of the battle,
And on every half there thought to be hewing,
And search out his soul, that the ceaseless scather
Not any on earth of the choice of all irons,
Not one of the war-bills, would greet home for ever.
For he had forsworn him from victory-weapons,
And each one of edges. But his sundering of soul
In the days that we tell of, the day of this life,
Should be weary and woeful, the ghost wending elsewhere
To the wielding of fiends to wend him afar.
Then found he out this, he who mickle erst made
Out of mirth of his mood unto children of men
And had fram'd many crimes, he the foeman of God,
That the body of him would not bide to avail him,
But the hardy of mood, even Hygelac's kinsman,
Had him fast by the hand: now was each to the other
All loathly while living: his body-sore bided
The monster: was manifest now on his shoulder
The unceasing wound, sprang the sinews asunder,
The bone-lockers bursted. To Beowulf now
Was the battle-fame given; should Grendel thenceforth
Flee life-sick awayward and under the fen-bents
Seek his unmerry stead: now wist he more surely
That ended his life was, and gone over for ever,
His day-tale told out. But was for all Dane-folk
After that slaughter-race all their will done.
Then had he cleans'd for them, he the far-comer,
Wise and stout-hearted, the high hall of Hrothgar,

And sav'd it from war. So the night-work he joy'd in
And his doughty deed done. Yea, but he for the East-Danes
That lord of the Geat-folk his boast's end had gotten,
Withal their woes bygone all had he booted,
And the sorrow hate-fashion'd that afore they had dreed,
And the hard need and bitter that erst they must bear,
The sorrow unlittle. Sithence was clear token
When the deer of the battle laid down there the hand
The arm and the shoulder, and all there together
Of the grip of that Grendel 'neath the great roof up-builded.

XIV. The Danes rejoice; they go to look on the slot of Grendel, and come back to Hart, and on the way make merry with racing and the telling of tales

THERE was then on the morning, as I have heard tell it,
Round the Gift-hall a many of men of the warriors:
Were faring folk-leaders from far and from near
O'er the wide-away roads, the wonder to look on,
The track of the Loathly: his life-sundering nowise
Was deem'd for a sorrow to any of men there
Who gaz'd on the track of the gloryless wight;
How he all a-weary of mood thence awayward,
Brought to naught in the battle, to the mere of the nicors
Now fey and forth-fleeing, his life-steps had flitted.
There all in the blood was the sea-brim a-welling,
The dread swing of the waves was washing all mingled
With hot blood; with the gore of the sword was it welling;
The death-doom'd had dyed it, sithence he unmerry

In his fen-hold had laid down the last of his life,
His soul of the heathen, and hell gat hold on him.

A warrior tells of Sige-mund

THENCE back again far'd they those fellows of old,
With many a young one, from their wayfaring merry,
Full proud from the mere-side on mares there a-riding
The warriors on white steeds. There then was of Beowulf
Set forth the might mighty; oft quoth it a many
That nor northward nor southward beside the twin sea-floods,
Over all the huge earth's face now never another,
Never under the heaven's breadth, was there a better,
Nor of wielders of war-shields a worthier of kingship;
But neither their friendly lord blam'd they one whit,
Hrothgar the glad, for good of kings was he.
There whiles the warriors far-famed let leap
Their fair fallow horses and fare into flyting
Where unto them the earth-ways for fair-fashion'd seemed
Through their choiceness well kenned; and whiles a king's thane,
A warrior vaunt-laden, of lays grown bemindful,
E'en he who all many of tales of the old days
A multitude minded, found other words also
Sooth-bounden, and boldly the man thus began
E'en Beowulf's wayfare well wisely to stir,
With good speed to set forth the spells well areded
And to shift about words. And well of all told he
That he of Sigemund erst had heard say,
Of the deeds of his might; and many things uncouth:
Of the strife of the Wælsing and his wide wayfarings,
Of those that men's children not well yet they wist,
The feud and the crimes, save Fitela with him;
Somewhat of such things yet would he say,
The eme to the nephew; e'en as they aye were
In all strife soever fellows full needful;

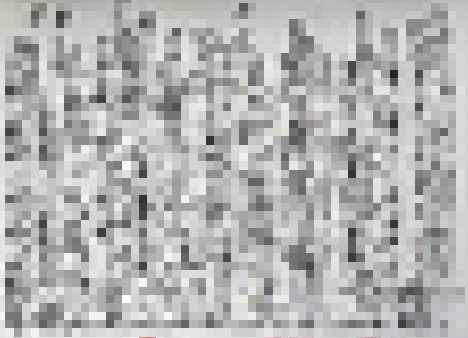
Wælsing, or Son of Wæls, i.e. Sigemund, who was father (& uncle) of Fitela by his sister Signy. This is told at length in the Icelandic Vol-sung Story: where Fitela is called Sinfjötli.

How Sigemund slew the Worm

And full many had they of the kin of the eotens
Laid low with the sword. And to Sigemund upsprang
After his death/day fair doom unlittle
Sithence that the war/hard the Worm there had quelled,
The herd of the hoard; he under the hoar stone,
The bairn of the Atheling, all alone dar'd it,
That wight deed of deeds; with him Fitela was not.
But howe'er, his hap was that the sword so through/waded
The Worm the all/wondrous, that in the wall stood
The iron dear/wrought: and the drake died the murder.
There had the warrior so won by wightness,
That he of the ring/hoard the use might be having
All at his own will. The sea/boat he loaded,
And into the ship's barm bore the bright fretwork
Wæls' son. In the hotness the Worm was to/molten.
Now he of all wanderers was widely the greatest
Through the peoples of man/kind, the warder of warriors,
By mighty deeds; erst then and early he throve.
Now sithence the warfare of Heremod waned,
His might and his valour, amidst of the eotens
To the wielding of foemen straight was he betrayed,
And speedily sent forth: by the surges of sorrow
O'er long was he lamed, became he to his lieges,
To all of the athelings a life/care thenceforward.
Withal oft bemoaned in times that were older
The ways of that stout heart many a carle of the wisest,
Who trow'd in him boldly for booting of bales,
And had look'd that the king's bairn should ever be thriving,
His father's own lordship should take, hold the folk,
The hoard and the ward/burg, and realm of the heroes,
The own land of the Scyldings. To all men was Beowulf,

In the Volsung Story it is Sigurd the son of Sigmund who slays the Worm

Heremod is here & elsewhere put forward as an example of a bad chieftain. Of his story nothing is known outside of this book



The Hygelac's kinsman to the kindred of men-folk
More fair unto friends; but on Heremod crime fell.

Hrothgar comes to Hart

SO whiles the men flyting, the fallow street there
With their mares were they meting. There then was the morn-light
Thrust forth and hasten'd; went many a warrior
All hardy of heart to the high hall aloft
The rare wonder to see; and the King's self withal
From the Bride-Bower wended, the warder of ring-hoards,
All glorious he trod and a mickle troop had he,
He for choice ways beknown; and his Queen therewithal
Meted the mead-path with a meyny of maidens.

XV. King Hrothgar and his thanes look on the arm of Grendel. Converse betwixt Hrothgar and Beowulf concerning the battle.

QUT then spake Hrothgar; for he to the hall went,
On the staple a-standing the steep roof he saw
Shining fair with the gold, and the hand there of Grendel:
FOR this sight that I see to the All-wielder thanks
Befall now forthwith, for foul evil I bided,
All griefs from this Grendel; but God, glory's herder,
Wonder on wonder ever can work.
Unyore was it then when I for myself
Might ween never more, wide all through my life-days,
Of the booting of woes; when all blood-besprinkled
The best of all houses stood sword-gory here;
Wide then had the woe thrust off each of the wise
Of them that were looking that never life-long

Hrothgar gives praise to Beowulf

That land-work of the folk they might ward from the loathly,
from ill wights and devils. But now hath a warrior
Through the might of the Lord a deed made thereunto
Which we, and all we together, in nowise
By wisdom might work. What! well might be saying
That maid whosoever this son brought to birth
According to man's kind, if yet she be living,
That the Maker of old time to her was all-gracious
In the bearing of bairns. O Beowulf I now
Thee best of all men as a son unto me
Will love in my heart, and hold thou henceforward
Our kinship new-made now; nor to thee shall be lacking
As to longings of world-goods whereof I have wielding;
full oft I for lesser things guerdon have given,
The worship of hoards, to a warrior was weaker,
A worser in strife. Now thyself for thyself
By deeds hast thou fram'd it that liveth thy fair fame
for ever and ever. So may the All-wielder
With good pay thee ever, as erst he hath done it.
THEN Beowulf spake out, the Ecgtheow's bairn:
That work of much might with mickle of love
We framed with fighting, and frowardly ventur'd
The might of the Uncouth; now I would that rather
Thou mightest have look'd on the very man there,
The foe in his fret-gear all worn unto falling.
There him in all haste with hard griping did I
On the slaughter-bed deem it to bind him indeed,
That he for my hand-grip should have to be lying
All busy for life: but his body fled off.
Him then I might not (since would not the Maker)
from his wayfaring sunder, nor naught so well sought I

Of Grendel's hand

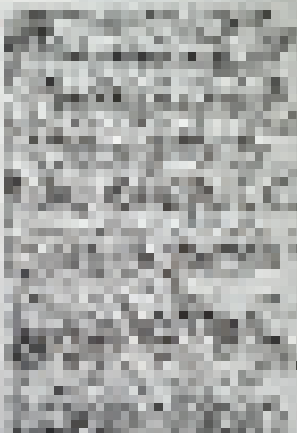
The life/foe; o'er mickle of might was he yet,
The foeman afoot: but his hand has he left us,
A life/ward, a/warding the ways of his wending,
His arm and his shoulder therewith; yet in nowise
That wretch of the grooms any solace hath got him,
Nor longer will live the loathly deed/doer,
Beswinked with sins; for the sore hath him now
In the grip of need grievous, in strait hold to/gather'd
With bonds that be baleful: there shall he abide,
That wight dyed with all evil/deeds, the doom mickle,
For what wise to him the bright Maker will write it.
THEN a silenter man was the son there of Ecglaf
In the speech of the boasting of works of the battle,
After when every atheling by craft of the Earl
Over the high roof had look'd on the hand there,
Yea, the fiend's fingers before his own eyen,
Each one of the nail/steads most like unto steel,
Hand/spur of the heathen one; yea, the own claw
Uncouth of the War/wight. But each one there quoth it,
That no iron of the best, of the hardy of folk,
Would touch him at all, which e'er of the monster
The battle/hand bloody might bear away thence.

XVI. Hrothgar giveth gifts to Beowulf

THEN was speedily bidden that Hart be withinward
By hand of man well adorned, was there a many
Of warriors and wives, who straightway that wine/house,
The guest/house, bedight them: there gold/shotten shone
The webs over the walls, many wonders to look on

They feast in Hart again

for men every one who on such things will stare.
WAS that building the bright all broken about
All withinward, though fast in the bands of the iron;
Asunder the hinges rent, only the roof there
Was saved all sound; when the monster of evil
The guilty of crime/deeds had gat him to flight
Never hoping for life. Nay, lightly now may not
That matter be fled from, frame it whoso may frame it.
But by strife man shall win of the bearers of souls,
Of the children of men, compelled by need,
The abiders on earth, the place made all ready,
The stead where his body laid fast on his death/bed
Shall sleep after feast. Now time and place was it
When unto the hall went that Healfdene's son
And the King himself therein the feast should be sharing;
Never heard I of men/folk in fellowship more
About their wealth/giver so well themselves bearing.
Then bow'd unto bench there the abounders in riches
And were fain of their fill. Full fairly there took
A many of mead/cups the kin of those men,
The sturdy of heart in the hall high aloft,
Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Hart there withinward
Of friends was fulfilled; naught there that was guilesome
The folk of the Scyldings for yet awhile framed.
GAVE then to Beowulf Healfdene's bairn
A golden war/ensign, the victory's guerdon,
A staff/banner fair/dight, a helm and a byrny:
The great jewel/sword a many men saw them
Bear forth to the hero. Then Beowulf took
The cup on the floor, and nowise of that fee/gift
Before the shaft/shooters the shame need he have.
Never heard I how friendlier four of the treasures,



Gifts given to Beowulf

All gear'd with the gold about, many men erewhile
On the ale-bench have given to others of men.
Round the roof of the helm, the burg of the head,
A wale wound with wires held ward from withoutward,
So that the file-leavings might not over fiercely,
Were they never so shower-hard, scathe the shield-bold,
When he 'gainst the angry in anger should get him.
Therewith bade the earls'-burg that eight of the horses
With cheek-plates adorned be led down the floor
In under the fences; on one thereof stood
A saddle all craft-bedecked, seemly with treasure.
That same was the war-seat of the high King; full surely
Whenas that the sword-play that Healfdene's son
Would work, never failed in front of the war
The wide-kenn'd one's war-might, whereas fell the slain.
SO to Beowulf thereon of either of both
The Ingwines' high warder gave wielding to have,
Both the war-steeds and weapons, and bade him
well brook them.
Thuswise and so manly the mighty of princes,
Hoard-warden of heroes, the battle-race paid
With mares and with gems, so as no man shall blame them,
E'en he who will say sooth aright as it is.