

**Widsith (Text georgetown.edu/labyrinth)**

Widsið maðolade, wordhord onleac,  
 se þe monna mæst mægþa ofer eorþan,  
 folca geondferde; oft he on flette geþah  
 mynelicne maþpum. Him from Myrgingum  
 5 æþele onwocon. He mid Ealhilde,  
 fælre freoþuwebban, forman siþe  
 Hreðcyniges ham gesohte  
 eastan of Ongle, Eormanrices,  
 wrapes wærlogan. Ongon þa worn spreca:  
 10 "Fela ic monna gefrægn mægþum wealdan!  
 Sceal þeodna gehwylc þeawum lifgan,  
 eorl æfter oþrum eðle rædan,  
 se þe his þeodenstol geþeon wile.  
 þara wæs Hwala hwile selast,  
 15 ond Alexandreas ealra ricost  
 monna cynnes, ond he mæst geþah  
 þara þe ic ofer foldan gefrægen hæbbe.  
 ætla weold Hunum, Eormanric Gotum,  
 20 Becca Baningum, Burgendum Gifica.  
 Casere weold Creacum ond Cælic Finnum,  
 Hagena Holmrygum ond Heoden Glommum.  
 Witta weold Swæfum, Wada Hælsingum,  
 Meaca Myrgingum, Mearchealf Hundingum.  
 þeodric weold Froncum, þyle Rendingum,  
 25 Breoca Brondingum, Billing Wernum.  
 Oswine weold Eowum ond Ytum Gefwulf,  
 Fin Folcwalding Fresna cynne.  
 Sigehere lengest Sædenum weold,  
 Hnæf Hocingum, Helm Wulfingum,  
 30 Wald Woingum, Wod þyringum,  
 Sæferð Sycgum, Sweom Ongendþeow,  
 Scaefthere Ymbrum, Scaefa Longbeardum,  
 Hun Hætwerum ond Holen Wrosnum.  
 Hringweald wæs haten Herefarena cuning.  
 35 Offa weold Ongle, Alewih Denum;

**Transl. soton.ac.uk/~enm/widsith.htm**

Widsith spoke, unlocked his word-hoard,  
 he who had travelled most of all men  
 through tribes and nations across the earth.  
 Often he had gained great treasure in hall.  
 He belonged by birth to the Myrging tribe.  
 Along with Ealhild, the kind peace-weaver,  
 for the first time, from the Baltic coast,  
 he sought the home of Eormanric,  
 king of the Ostrogoths, hostile to traitors.  
 He began then to speak at length:  
 'I have heard of many men who ruled over nations.  
 Every leader should live uprightly,  
 rule his estates according to custom,  
 if he wants to succeed to a kingly throne.  
 Hwala for a time was the best of all,  
 and Alexander too, the noblest of men,  
 who prospered most of all of those  
 that I have heard of across the earth.  
 Attila ruled the Huns, Eormanric the Goths,  
 Becca the Banningas, Gifica the Burgundians.  
 Caesar ruled the Greeks and Caelic the Finns,  
 Hagen the Holmrycgas and Henden the Glomman.  
 Witta ruled the Swaefe, Wada the Haelsingas,  
 Meaca the Myrgingas, Mearc the Hundingas.  
 Theodric ruled the Franks, Thyle the Rendingas,  
 Breoca the Brondingas, Billa the Waerne.  
 Oswine ruled the Eowan and Gefwulf the Jutes,  
 Finn, son of Folcwalda, the Frisian race.  
 Sigehere for many years ruled the Sea-Danes,  
 Hnaef the Hocingas, Helm the Wulfingas,  
 Wald the Woingas, Wod the Thuringians,  
 Saeferth the Sycgan, Ongentheow the Swedes,  
 Scaefthere the Ymbran, Sceaf the Langobards,  
 Hun the Haetware, and Holen the Wrosnan.  
 Hringwald was called the king of the Herefaran.  
 Offa ruled the Angles, Alewih the Danes.

se wæs þara manna modgast ealra,  
 no hwæþre he ofer Offan eorlscype fremede,  
 ac Offa geslog ærest monna,  
 cnihtwesende, cynerica mæst.  
 40 Nænig efeneald him eorlscipe maran  
 on orette. Ane sweorde  
 merce gemærde wið Myrgingum  
 bi Fifeldore; heoldon forð siþpan  
 Engle ond Swæfe, swa hit Offa geslog.  
 45 Hroþwulf ond Hroðgar heoldon lengest  
 sibbe ætsomne suhtorfædran,  
 siþpan hy forwræcon wicinga cynn  
 ond Ingeldes ord forbigdan,  
 forheowan æt Heorote Heaðobeardna þrym.  
 50 Swa ic geondferde fela fremdra londa  
 geond ginne grund. Godes ond yfles  
 þær ic cunnade cnosle bidæled,  
 freomægum feor folgade wide.  
 Forþon ic mæg singan ond secgan spell,  
 55 mænan fore mengo in meoduhealle  
 hu me cynegode cystum dohten.  
 Ic wæs mid Hunum ond mid Hreðgotum,  
 mid Sweom ond mid Geatum ond mid Supdenum.  
 Mid Wenlum ic wæs ond mid Wærnum ond mid wicingum.  
 60 Mid Gefþum ic wæs ond mid Winedum ond mid Gefflegum.  
 Mid Englum ic wæs ond mid Swæfum ond mid ænenum.  
 Mid Seaxum ic wæs ond Sycgum ond mid Sweordwerum.  
 Mid Hronum ic wæs ond mid Deanum ond mid Heaþoreamum.  
 Mid þyringum ic wæs ond mid þrowendum,  
 65 ond mid Burgendum, þær ic beag geþah;  
 me þær Guðhere forgeaf glædlicne maþþum  
 songes to leane. Næs þæt sæne cyning!  
 Mid Froncum ic wæs ond mid Frysum ond mid Frumtingum.  
 Mid Rugum ic wæs ond mid Glommum ond mid Rumwalum.  
 70 Swylce ic wæs on Eatule mid ælfwine,  
 se hæfde moncynnes, mine gefræge,

He was the bravest of all those men,  
 but could not defeat Offa in deeds of arms,  
 and the noble Offa while still a boy  
 won in battle the greatest of kingdoms.  
 No-one of that age ever achieved  
 more glory than he did. With his sword alone  
 he marked the border against the Myrgings  
 at the mouth of the Eider. Angles and Swedes  
 observed it after that as Offa had won it.  
 Hrothwulf and Hrothgar, nephew and uncle,  
 held peace together for many years  
 after they had driven off the Heathobard tribe  
 and beaten down Ingeld's line of battle,  
 cut down at Heorot the Heathobard force.  
 So I travelled widely through foreign lands,  
 through distant countries, and there I met  
 both good and bad fortune, far from my kin,  
 and served as a follower far and wide.  
 And so I can sing and tell a tale,  
 declare to the company in the mead-hall  
 how noble rulers rewarded me with gifts.  
 I was with the Huns and the glorious Goths,  
 with the Swedes and with the Geats and with the South-Danes.  
 I was with the Wenlas, the Waerne and the Wicingas.  
 I was with the Gefthan, the Winedas and the Gefflegan.  
 I was with the Angles, the Swaefe and the Aenenas.  
 I was with the Saxons, the Sycgan and the Sweordweras.  
 I was with the Hronan, the Dean and the Heathoreamas.  
 I was with the Thuringians and with the Throwendas  
 and with the Burgundians: there I gained a torc.  
 There Guthhere granted me splendid treasure  
 as reward for my song; that king was not tight-fisted.  
 I was with the Franks, with the Frisians and the Frumtingas.  
 I was with the Rugians, the Glomman and the Romans.  
 I was in Italy with Aelfwine too:  
 of all men he had, as I have heard,

leohteste hond lofes to wycenne,  
 heortan unhnæaweste hringa gedales,  
 beorhtra beaga, bearn Eadwines.  
 75 Mid Sercingum ic wæs ond mid Seringum;  
 mid Creacum ic wæs ond mid Finnum ond mid Casere,  
 se þe winburga gewæld ahte,  
 wiolena ond wilna, ond Wala rices.  
 Mid Scottum ic wæs ond mid Peohtum ond mid Scridefinnum;  
 80 mid Lidwicingum ic wæs ond mid Leonum ond mid  
 [Longbeardum,  
 mid hæðnum ond mid hælepum ond mid Hundingum.  
 Mid Israhelum ic wæs ond mid Exsyringum,  
 mid Ebreum ond mid Indeum ond mid Egyptum.  
 Mid Moidum ic wæs ond mid Persum ond mid Myrgingum,  
 85 ond Mofdingum ond ongend Myrgingum,  
 ond mid Amothingum. Mid Eastþyringum ic wæs  
 ond mid Eolum ond mid Istum ond Idumingum.  
 Ond ic wæs mid Eormanrice ealle þrage,  
 þær me Gotena cyning gode dohte;  
 90 se me beag forgeaf, burgwarena fruma,  
 on þam siex hund wæs smætes goldes,  
 gescyred sceatta scillingrime;  
 þone ic Eadgilse on æht sealde,  
 minum hleodryhtne, þa ic to ham bicwom,  
 95 leofum to leane, þæs þe he me lond forgeaf,  
 mines fæder eþel, frea Myrginga.  
 Ond me þa Ealhild oþerne forgeaf,  
 dryhtcwen duguþe, dohtor Eadwines.  
 Hyre lof lengde geond londa fela,  
 100 þonne ic be songe secgan sceolde  
 hwær ic under swegle selast wisse  
 goldhrodene cwen giefe bryttian.  
 ðonne wit Scilling sciran reorde  
 for uncrum sigedryhtne song ahofan,  
 105 hlude bi hearpan hleoþor swinsade,  
 þonne monige men, modum wlonce,  
 wordum sprecaþ, þa þe wel cuþan,  
 þæt hi næfre song sellan ne hyrdon.

the readiest hand to do brave deeds,  
 the most generous heart in giving out rings  
 and shining torcs, Eadwine's son.  
 I was with the Sercings and with the Serings.  
 I was with the Greeks and Finns, and also with Caesar,  
 who had the power over prosperous cities,  
 riches and treasure and the Roman Empire.  
 I was with the Irish, with the Picts and the Lapps.  
 I was with the Lidwicingas, the Leonas and the Langobards,  
 with the Haethenas and the Haelethas and with the Hundingas.  
 I was with the Israelites and with the Assyrians,  
 with the Hebrews and the Indians and with the Egyptians.  
 I was with the Medes and the Persians and with the Myrgingas,  
 with the Moabites and Ongendmyrgingas and with the Amothingas.  
 I was with the East-Thuringians and with the Ofdingas,  
 with the Eolas and the Philistines and with the Idumeans.  
 And I was with Eormanric throughout his reign.  
 There the king of the Goths granted me treasure:  
 the king of the city gave me a torc  
 made from pure gold coins, worth six hundred pence.  
 I gave that to Eadgils when I came home,  
 as thanks to my lord, ruler of the Myrgingas,  
 because he gave me land which once was my father's.  
 And then Ealhild, Eadwine's daughter,  
 noble queen of the household, gave me another;  
 her fame extended through many lands  
 when I used my song to spread the word  
 of where under the heavens I knew a queen,  
 adorned with gold, most generous of all.  
 Then Scilling and I with our clear voices,  
 before our glorious lord, struck up our song;  
 sung to the harp, it rang out loudly.  
 Then many men with noble hearts  
 who understood these things openly said  
 that they had never heard a better song.

110	ðonan ic ealne geondhwearf    eþel Gotena, sohte ic a gesiþa    þa selestan; þæt wæs innweorud    Earmannices. Heðcan sohte ic ond Beadecan    ond Herelingas, Emercan sohte ic ond Fridlan    ond Eastgotan, frodne ond godne    fæder Unwenes.	From there I travelled through the Gothic homeland -- I always sought out the best companions -- that was Eormanric's household guard! I visited Hehca and Beadeca and the Herelingas, Emerca and Fridla and Eastgota, the wise and virtuous father of Unwen.
115	Seccan sohte ic ond Beccan,    Seafolan ond þeodric, Heaporic ond Sifecan,    Hliþe ond Incgenþeow. Eadwine sohte ic ond Elsan,    ægelmund ond Hungar, ond þa wloncan gedryht    Wiþmyrginga. Wulfhere sohte ic ond Wyrmhære;    ful oft þær wig ne alæg,	I visited Secca and Becca, Seafola and Theodric, Heathoric and Sifeca, Hlith and Incgentheow. I visited Eadwine and Elsa, Aegelmund and Hungar, and the proud household of the Withmyrgingas. I visited Wulfhere and Wyrmhære; there battle often raged
120	þonne Hræda here    heardum sweordum ymb Wistlawudu    wergan sceoldon ealdne eþelstol    ætlan leodum. Rædhere sohte ic ond Rondhere,    Rumstan ond Gislhere, Wiþergield ond Freoþeric,    Wudgan ond Haman;	in the Vistula woods, when the Gothic army with their sharp swords had to defend their ancestral seat against Attila's host. I visited Raedhere and Rondhere, Rumstan and Gislhere, Withergield and Freotheric, Wudga and Hama.
125	ne wæran þæt gesiþa    þa sæmestan, þeah þe ic hy anihst    nemnan sceolde. Ful oft of þam heape    hwinende fleag giellende gar    on grome þeode; wræccan þær weoldan    wundnan golde	They were by no means the worst of companions, even though I happen to mention them last. Often a whistling spear flew from the army, screaming on its way to the enemy line; there the exiles Wudga and Hama
130	werum ond wifum,    Wudga ond Hama. Swa ic þæt symle onfond    on þære feringe, þæt se biþ leofast    londbuendum se þe him god syleð    gumena rice to gehealdenne,    þenden he her leofað."	gained twisted gold, men and women. So I have always found throughout my travels that the lord who is dearest to all his subjects is the one God grants a kingdom of men to have and to hold while he lives on earth.'
135	Swa scriþende    gesceapum hweorfað gleomen gumena    geond grunda fela, þearfe secgað,    þoncword sprecaþ, simle suð oþþe norð    sumne gemetað gydda gleawne,    geofum unhneawne,	Wandering like this, driven by chance, minstrels travel through many lands; they state their needs, say words of thanks, always, south or north, they find some man well-versed in songs, generous in gifts,
140	se þe fore duguþe wile    dom aræran, eorlscipe æfnan,    oþþæt eal scæceð, leoht ond lif somod;    lof se gewyrceð, hafað under heofonum    heahfæstne dom.	who wishes to raise his renown with his men, to do great things, until everything passes, light and life together; he who wins fame has lasting glory under the heavens.