

Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg edited, with intro., bibliog. notes, glossary, & appendices by Fr. Klaeber. 3rd ed. with first & second supplements. D. C. Heath & Co., Boston. Copyright, 1922, 1928, 1936, 1941, and 1950.

p.civ p. ciii Contradictions, incongruities, and obscurities that have been detected in the story can, as a rule, be removed or plausibly accounted for by correct interpretation of the context and proper appreciation of some prevalent characteristics of the old style and narrative method. Instances of apparent incoherence, omissions, repetitions, digressions, or irrelevant passages can no longer be accepted as proof of the patchwork theory, since analogous cases have been traced in many Old English poems of undoubted single authorship, in addition to examples from other literatures. A number of inconsistencies may also be naturally explained by the use of conventional elements, that is, current motives and formulas of style, or by imperfect adaptation or elaborate refashioning of old saga material. Chrono-incompatibilities as observed in the case of Hrōðgar, Beowulf, and (perhaps) Hygd are straightened out without difficulty. Variations in detail between Beowulf's report of his experiences in Denmark and the actual story of the first two divisions furnish no basis for the charge of separate workmanship (see note on 1994 ff.). Nor would it be at all reasonable to insist throughout on impeccable logic and lucidity of statement, which would indeed be strangely at variance with the general character of Beowulf and other Old English poems.

That the Christian elements have not been merely grafted on the text, but are most intimately connected with the very substance of the poem, has been remarked before.<sup>5</sup> . . .

No serious differences of language, diction, or meter can be adduced in favor of multiple authorship.<sup>7</sup>

p. cvi In explanation of some discrepancies and blemishes of structure and execution it may also be urged that very possibly the author had not complete plan of the poem in his head when he embarked upon his work, and perhaps did not finish it until a considerably later date.

p. cvii It is possible, of course, that certain changes involving additions were made by the author himself or by a copyist who had some notions of his own. But the necessity of assuming any considerable interpolations cannot be conceded.

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5. on p. I The Christian elements are almost without exception so deeply ingrained in the very fabric of the poem that they cannot be explained away as the work of a reviser or later interpolator.