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dazzlingly rapid, huggingly genial (G. Meredith), and *vanishingly small*. H. Poutsma¹ draws a rough line of demarcation in the application of these two constructions as follows: "Present participles used as intensives do not take the ending *ly* when they are meant to express a notion understood to be an excess of that denoted by the adjective (or adverb) modified; as in *burning (scalding or smoking) hot*, etc . . . When no such similarity is meant, the participle now mostly takes the suffix; e.g.: *exceedingly* troublesome, *bewilderingly* difficult, etc." His definition of the present standard usage is somewhat scantily formulated. From the above examples it can easily be perceived that a participial intensive without *-ly* is mostly an expression which is semantically cognate with the adjective it qualifies and denotes an excess (often an extreme limit) of the quality expressed by the second constituent of the construction. Both the participle and the adjective qualified are concrete (or clearly perceptible) in meaning. The participle usually denotes an alarming symptom or a concrete phenomenon which indicates that the extreme limit has been attained. Exaggeration is often implied. Convention is, however, the decisive factor. The current participial intensives without *ly* cluster around the adjectives *bright, clean, cold, drunk, full, hot, mad, new, warm, wet, and white*.

NIILO PELTOLA

BEOWULF AND ARCHAEOLOGY

An Additional Footnote

HROTHGAR AND GRENDL'S ARM: *stod on stapole* (926)

Of one prominent feature in the earlier part of *Beowulf*, the royal hall of Heorot wherein the young hero meets the Danish

¹ H. Poutsma, *A Grammar of Late Modern English* II, II, p. 635.

king, wrestles with Grendel and receives his well-earned rewards, neither Scandinavian nor English grave-finds have, naturally, anything to tell. Nor is it easy from the poet's scattered allusions to form a very complete mental picture of the building and its site: for his first hearers he may have felt it sufficient to indicate a royal court housed in surroundings which reproduced, at a higher level of munificence befitting a tale of marvels, the most splendid actual settlement they themselves would know. The pictured reconstructions of Heorot often used to illustrate books about *Beowulf* are not a great help: if not oversimplified or merely impressionistic, they tend to show detail for which there is no real literary or archaeological evidence. Without the contribution of authentic details from outside the poem we are left with rather vague notions of what the poet intended, and must feel unsatisfied concerning the setting of some of the most impressive passages in his story.

One detail concerning the building itself has caused particular dispute. When Grendel desperately breaks from Beowulf's grasp the hero manages to wrench off the right claw and arm to the very shoulder. Hrothgar returning to his hall on the next morning sees this gruesome relic prominently displayed as he stands on *stapol* (926). The place for the claw and arm is several times associated with the roof of the building: *under gearpne hrof* (836), *steapne hrof* (926), *ofer heanne hrof* (983); yet it is accessible to Grendel's mother as she rushes away (1302-03). The word *stapol* regularly means a pillar. Is the arm of Grendel fixed somewhere on the cross-beams or walls inside the hall, and Hrothgar standing near rather than "on" a pillar, or on a flight of steps (presumably leading to an upper chamber or annex building)? Or is the relic on the outside, say on a ledge or porch roof, or Hrothgar standing on some raised external structure to which the word *stapol* might also apply, e.g. a stone or wood platform in the courtyard? Or is there evidence to support yet one more new interpretation?

Corroborative details for Heorot have hitherto been taken

largely from the Scandinavian sagas, from scattered references in which it is possible to get some composite impressions of what typical northern timbered halls looked like. Even so, the Scandinavian hall of the sagas is not a full analogy for Heorot. Not all the details fit: rows of (carved) pillars, portable tables and permanent wall ornaments are not, e.g., clearly mentioned in the poem. Nor is there much help in the way of structural or dimensional detail. Again, Heorot as the royal seat of the Danes corresponds in early Scandinavian records to an actual settlement which is the modern village of Lejre, to the west of the ancient cathedral town of Roskilde in Sjælland. But investigation of this locality seems to have yielded nothing which suggests the poet of *Beowulf* had much local information. Near Lejre stand several ancient grave-mounds, the remains of a large Iron-Age ship monument, and a farm-site which at any rate in modern times has borne the name Hjort, though the latter is known elsewhere in Denmark. The proposed connection of the first elements in the names Hrothgar and Roskilde is disputed. The poet's Heorot is simply, we must assume, a royal hall somewhere in Denmark, and we have nothing to suggest that the impressions of Heorot he tried to convey were not simply based on his own knowledge and experience of large halls in England.

No standing English Heorot survives, though recent excavations at Old Yeavinger in Northumberland, guided by aerial photography, have revealed traces of rectangular wood structures thought to be a royal hall and its subsidiary houses going back to the seventh century. A complex of buildings outlined by crop-marks has under skilled investigation resolved itself into a royal settlement which, from its early periods (the age of the Northumbrian kings Æthelfrith, ca. 593-616, and Edwin, 616-632) to its last (probably the reign of Ecgrith, 670-685, as indicated by the finding of a gold coin dated ca. 670), passed through various fluctuations of fortune: destruction by burning (most obviously the ravaging by the Welsh king Cadwallon and

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his ally Penda of Mercia in 632, Bede's *H.E.*, iii. 1), rebuilding and extending (in the more prosperous times of Oswald, who ruled until 641), and final abandonment.

The largest hall appears to have been nearly 100 feet long and some 45 feet wide, and was at one stage or another surrounded by about twenty smaller buildings, up to 50 feet long, two being servants' quarters (with sunken floors, and no doubt permanently occupied), one apparently a temple, the rest probably private apartments for noblemen or chieftains in attendance on the king. A full report of the finds is in preparation, but suggestive points of similarity with Heorot and its surroundings already emerge. Foundation trenches some seven feet deep suggest the main hall was quite a lofty and impressive structure. Both ends seem to have been provided with a porch. It appears to have been rebuilt not less than three times on much the same site, twice with solid timber walls from eight to ten inches thick, later with a different construction involving thin planks, a style possibly introduced in Oswald's time and perhaps based on ideas he or Aidan had gained from the monastery of Iona (*H.E.*, iii. 3). The hall-site revealed little in the way of furnishings, but the very absence of pottery remains may suggest the royal mode of life was on a rich scale and involved glass or gold vessels on a par with Beowulfian life, while pairs of iron cleats, once set regularly in the longer south-north walls, may have been used to secure hangings like the tapestries which sometimes adorned the interior of Heorot (994 ff.). The cluster of out-houses reminds us especially of Hrothgar's private "bower" (921), the "inn" assigned to Beowulf (1299 ff.), and many scattered allusions to a staff of officials and menials. It may throw some light on the suspect passage (175-188) which describes Hrothgar's Danes as practising sacrifices in heathen temples (*æt hærgtrafum* 175), if we may indeed assume that the poet had in mind an actual site like Yeavering which early on in its history had contained a heathen sanctuary set up near the king's court. A spectacular additional

feature at Yeavering, preserved and indeed enlarged through the various vicissitudes of the settlement, is a wedge-shaped timber grandstand complete with a platform and windscreen, no doubt modeled on a section of an abandoned Roman amphitheater, and now thought to have been the site of a royal moot, recalling the famous allusion in *Beowulf* to a decision by the king's 'witan' (1098).

It might even be tentatively proposed that, in the passage under discussion, the *stapol* on which Hrothgar stands may be some pillared structure serving as a dais for the king when he addressed his council. Until more is known of Yeavering this is of course conjecture. And in fact Yeavering was, as Bede shows, only one of several royal estates in Northumbria. Its largest hall appears to offer a fair resemblance in shape and dimensions, if not yet in structure or details, to the large and impressive Heorot. For a fuller conception of all these we are however also able to call into requisition the important investigations, completed in 1942, at Trelleborg, near Slagelse on the west coast of Sjælland, and the several closely associated Danish sites which have come to light since.

Trelleborg revealed itself as a viking fortress established ca. 1000, perhaps by Svein 'Forkbeard' the father of Cnut. It was built on a massive scale and with astonishing mathematical precision, a vivid actual setting for the strict regimental life of the vikings as depicted in the *Jómsvíkinga saga*. With the overall plan and structural details we are not here concerned. Inside the circular inner fortress at Trelleborg clear ground-traces remained of what had been sixteen large timber houses, of the same shape and size, arranged to pattern in four blocks, together with a few small rectangular buildings, probably log huts, thought to have served as guard-houses for sentries and as more private quarters for the chiefs of the settlement. In the outer ward, mostly in a row arranged radially with the inner fortress, traces were found of fifteen more large houses, slightly shorter than the inner ones but identical with them in

pattern. For nearly all the thirty-one large houses there are the marks (now preserved in cement outlines) of a practically full complement of holes or spaces for posts, fire troughs, doorways, pits, outer wall planks and interior partitions. The building evidence is in fact so abundant and so uniform that it has been found possible to assemble, a little way inland from the outermost rampart, a full-size replica of a typical large house (open to visitors), for which very little beside the detail available on the spot was needed.

It was discovered that throughout the settlement the original unit of measurement had been the 'Roman' foot which equals roughly $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches (296 mm.): the inner houses were 100 Roman feet long (about 32 yards), the outer 90 (about 29 yards). All the large houses were laid out on an ellipse, shortened to make the two gable-ends straight, but leaving the long walls with a slight convex curve which resembles a ship without its bows. This distinctive pattern may date back to a time when inverted ships furnished the model for dwelling houses, or even replaced them, or, if each large house at Trelleborg were assigned to a ship's crew, may represent a local innovation in some sense reflecting the viking life at sea. All the large houses were partitioned into three rooms, a small one at each gable-end separated one from the other by a large main hall, about 19-20 by 9-8 yards. The gable rooms led out from the hall; they had no outer door, and where their partitions went completely across the building were conceivably used for refuse or for the storage of food and other supplies.

The main hall had, in its center, below the floor level, a rectangular pit, lined with stones, which served as the hearth. Each hall had two doors, not centrally placed opposite the hearth but more to one end, up by the partitions separating the gable rooms. These pairs of doors were always arranged diagonally across the hall, and in the large houses of the inner fortress the doorways had been planned so that no two adjacent houses had their exits facing, evidently a careful precau-

tion against confusion in an emergency when the warriors issued from their houses *en masse*. Round each longitudinal wall ran a broad continuous wooden bench, resting on posts and wide enough for men to sleep on it side by side, with head or feet to the wall: the conjecture is that in each house no fewer than 75 men could be comfortably accommodated in this way. Inside only two houses of those examined in detail was there evidence of the hall itself having been laid with a plank floor; presumably most were of earth or clay. In only five houses, all in the outer ward, are there traces to suggest the roofs were supported by interior rows of high pillars such as are mentioned in the sagas.

The house walls were built on the stave principle, with thick vertical and slightly curved planks set in the ground at close intervals and grooved for thinner planks to be slotted between them, a more primitive arrangement than the most celebrated early (eleventh-century) example of stave walls, at Urnes church in Sogn, Norway, where the planks were stood on a ground sill. But at least in the view of the constructors of the replica house, the Trelleborg houses had their own protection from bad weather, an outer gallery or colonnade which ran completely round each house to a width of over a yard, and had its own small plank roof set round on spaced wooden pillars.

For nearly all the foregoing details the evidence of ground traces is entirely reliable. Of roofs there naturally remained no vestige, and in building the replica house decisions as to the roof shape and manner of support had to be based on architectural considerations and contributory evidence from elsewhere, such as the house-shaped casket of ca. 1000 now in Kammin cathedral, Pomerania, the Bayeux Tapestry designs and, rather earlier, the (ninth and tenth-century) 'hog-back' stone tombs of Northumbria and Scotland. The weight of evidence suggested a roof distinctively arched or hump-backed, like the keel of an inverted ship, with projecting purlins at each

gable-end and cross-beams along the sides. In the replica house one other interesting detail has been admitted: the two outermost rafters at each gable-end continue upwards and outwards a short way after they cross at the roof ridge, giving the effect of a pair of large spread antlers. This is a conjectural detail, but one which the comparative evidence makes likely, and especially interesting as suggesting a practical motive for the choice of 'Heorot', hart, as a hall-name in *Beowulf* and descriptive terms for it such as *hornreced* (704), "horn-building," and *banfag* (780), "bone-adorned."

There is in fact much detailed comparison possible between the Trelleborg houses and Heorot. The importance of the site is increased by the tendency of recent archaeological work to show that it was not, after all, a unique achievement. It certainly does not in itself give an impression of being the work of inexperienced builders. Three similarly equipped viking fortresses have recently been investigated in Denmark, on Nonnebakken in Odense, Funen, at Fyrkat Mølle south of Hobro in Jutland, and at Aggersborg on the north bank of the Limfjord, opposite Løgster. At Aggersborg, which is dated rather later than the rest, the houses were of logs, not staves, and rather larger than those of Trelleborg, but otherwise not very different. Outlines of two houses of the Trelleborg type have now been found in the viking cemetery at Lindholm, to the north of Aalborg. At Ismantorp on the Swedish island of Öland, near the village of Långlöt, stand the remains of a large stone fortress, probably dating from as early as the fifth century, but revealing, in a more primitive and less regular fashion, many striking parallels to the layout of Trelleborg, including houses or barracks arranged both radially and in blocks. The analogy of Ismantorp in particular may encourage us to feel that the Trelleborg large houses, despite their being at least two centuries later than the probable date when *Beowulf* was composed, and thus some five centuries later than the period of Scandinavian history drawn upon for the back-

ground of the poem, can provide us with, not just a picture, but a working model of a traditional hall which in many of its salient features is one with the poet's Heorot. English influences in Trelleborg and analogous sites in England, notably the circular Roman (originally Iron-Age?) fortress known as Wareham Camp, on the estuary of the river Stiffkey, near Wells in Norfolk, have been tentatively proposed by more than one Danish archaeologist. Danes in England who settled in the Five Boroughs were, in at least two of them, Leicester and Derby, occupying Roman town-sites. The ship-shape of the houses has already been compared to Northumbrian 'hog-backs.' The use of the Roman foot and the general similarity of the Danish Trelleborgs to the plan of a standard Roman camp are other possible derivations from Britain.

Heorot was both more and less than a viking fortress. Like Trelleborg, it is described in terms which suggest a self-contained disciplined communal settlement, established by a king, well guarded, conveniently based near the coast, and laid out with pavements (320) and separate houses for chiefs (921, 1299 ff.). However, no clear reference is made to exterior fortifications or to a large series of dwelling houses. Heorot, unlike the austere Trelleborg houses, was alone and outstanding, and, in keeping with its aristocratic associations, lavishly decorated, gold on the outside (308, 1799-1800), tapestries on occasion within (994-995). The iron clamps or braces mentioned by the poet (721-722, 773-775) do not appear in a Trelleborg house. Heorot is not, so far as we can gather, specifically ship-shaped or arch-roofed. Yet the general impression remains that Heorot was a solitary elaborate unit of what the Trelleborg vikings developed and adapted into a multiple settlement.

We may return finally to our special problem concerning the place, inside or outside Heorot, where Grendel's claw and arm were displayed. If in fact the Trelleborg houses did have a gallery or colonnade, a supplementary outer roof running right round the building including the doorways, some such

structure would seem a very suitable place for what the poet had in mind. And might not the *stapol* where Hrothgar stands be a simple metonymy for this pillared construction? He came up to the hall, stood at the covered porchway or colonnade, and viewed the arm, most obviously set on that part of the colonnade roof which served as a ledge or porch above a door. This interpretation makes intelligible the other references to the position of the arm, in particular the placing of it by Beowulf *under geapne hrof* (836), that is below the main roof of the hall, beside the warriors who see it as *ofer heanne hrof* (983), on top of the colonnade roof which was higher than a man but within reach of Grendel's mother.

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L. WHITBREAD

A DEFECTIOE POTUS SUI

A Sapiential Basis for 'ealuscerwen' and 'meoduscerwen'

I

Dryhtsele dyncede;	Denum eallum wearð
ceasterbuendum,	cenra gehwylcum,
eorlum ealuscerwen.	Yrre wæron begen,
repe renweardas.	Reced hlynsoðe.

(*Beowulf*, 767-770)¹

Of the many cruces in *Beowulf*, that of the *ealuscerwen* which comes upon the Danes in the course of Beowulf's fight

¹ All quotations of and references to Old English poetry are from *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, 6 vols. (New York, 1931-53), by line number.

with Grendel remains perhaps the most perplexing, and certainly the most discussed.¹ The etymological evidence provides a standoff,² and the external testimony can lead to a number of contradictory opinions, many of which are plausible, none certain. The best of the recent examinations of the problem argues for an interpretation of the crucial word as a "dispensing of ale," – an ironic metaphor indicating the terror which follows unexpectedly upon the usual joys of feasting;³ but the parallels which have been cited over the years in support of this reading are not always appropriate for the context of *Beowulf*. Yet evidence of this sort is all there is to go on, and the present re-examination of the problem, which argues for reading "deprivation of ale," proposes only to present a different and, hopefully, more appropriate context in which to view it.

The *poculum mortis* metaphor, as an example of which many

¹ In his note to line 769, Dobbie observes that "more has been written about this word than any other in *Beowulf*." His is a careful and impartial survey of the mass of scholarship on the crux. For a more detailed summary of the earlier work, see Johannes Hoops, *Kommentar zum Beowulf* (Heidelberg, 1932), pp. 97-98. Some studies more recent than Dobbie's edition are cited in note 3 below.

² In brief, *ealuscerwen* and *meoduscerwen* occur only once each in the poetry. If *-scerwen* is from a *-wa-*stem **scerwan* (Gmc. **skarwjan*) related to OE *scean*, then a good case is made for the meaning "dispensing." If, on the other hand, it is a form of the simplex of *bescerwan*, with no difference in meaning, then the sense of "deprivation" is clearly called for.

³ G. V. Smithers, "Five Notes on Old English Texts," *English and Germanic Studies*, IV (1951-52), 65-85 (see especially pp. 67-75). Carleton Brown, "*Poculum Mortis* in Old English," *Speculum*, XV (1940), 389-99, had arrived earlier at the same conclusion with different evidence, as had Albert S. Cook, "Bitter Beer-drinking," *MLN*, XL (1925), 285-88. See also R. M. Lumiansky, "The Contexts of O. E. 'ealuscerwen' and 'meoduscerwen'," *JEGP*, XLVIII (1949), 116-26; and Edward Irving, "*Ealuscerwen*, Wild Party at Heorot," *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, XI (1966) 161-68.