

# LINGUISTICS

## *FYRD, HERE, AND THE DATING OF BEOWULF*

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In his discussion of the 11th-century provenance of *Beowulf* in his groundbreaking study, *Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript*, Kevin Kiernan (1981: 23–37) briefly calls attention to the occurrence of *here* in line 1248 as evidence in support of a late date for the poem. As Bosworth-Toller note, *here* “is the word which in the Chronicle is always used of the Danish force in England, while the English troops are always *fyrd*, hence the word is used for *devastation* and *robbery*” (1980: 532). Kiernan thus concludes: “It is inconceivable that this passage [ll. 1246b–1250] could have survived an Anglo-Saxon transmission through Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, and Kent during the Viking Age. The Danish readiness for war, at home and in the *here*, became a virtue to the Anglo-Saxons, and the Danes themselves became a *þeod tilu*, during the reign of Cnut, and surely not in the 9th and 10th centuries” (1981: 21–22). The point is reasserted and elaborated upon in a recent article in *Kentucky Review* (1986), where Kiernan notes (1986: 31) that in the Bosworth-Toller *Supplement* (1972) the word is defined further by the statement: “In that part of the A. S. Chronicle which deals with the struggle between the English and Danes, *here* is always used of the latter, *fyrd* being the term denoting the native force. But in the annals of the eleventh century *here* is used in speaking of the English.” (Bosworth-Toller 1972: 537). The *here*-compounds in *Beowulf*, Kiernan asserts, are clearly used in a positive sense; in contrast, “Beowulf’s cowardly thanes, the ones who run away at the end, are called *fyrdgesteallum*, ‘companions in the *fyrd*’” (1986: 31). On the basis of this additional semantic evidence, Kiernan thus reasserts his contention that *Beowulf* is an 11th-century poem.

There appears to be a fairly widespread tradition among Anglo-Saxon historians of drawing semantic distinctions between the two terms. Paul Vinogradoff, in his *English Society in the Eleventh Century*, writes:

In the eleventh century both terms begin to be employed for the same thing — an army summoned by the king, on the strength of the general principle of

national allegiance, might be called *here*, even if it were composed of Englishmen, or *fyrð*, though it were levied in the Scandinavian provinces, but, originally, the distinction between the *fyrð* as the English host, and the *here* as the enemy's army, the Danish host, is clearly established and consistently kept up.

(Vinogradoff 1908: 22)

Vinogradoff cites in support entries from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the years 921 and 922.<sup>1</sup> In numerous instances elsewhere within the Old English corpus, the semantic distinction between *fyrð* and *here* is clearly made, as in Ælfric's *De populo Israhel*:

Gað nu hraðe ealle unforhte mid wæpnum  
 purh ealle þas fyrde fram ende oð oðrum  
 and ofsleað ealle tomiddes þam folce  
 þa ðe ge gemetað for þyssere mandæde.  
 Ða eode seo mægð by Moyses hæse  
 purh ealne þone here æfre ofsleande,  
 and hi ofslogon on þam dæge þreo and twentig þusenda,  
 and Moyses tobræc and tobrytte þone god  
 eall to duste þa, and þæt gedwyld alode.

(Pope 1968: 643-4, ll. 59—67).

Similar distinctions can be found throughout the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in entries dating before 1016. The Laud chronicle for 851 reads: "7 ge flymdon Brihtwulf Myrcena cining mid his fyrde. 7 foran þa suð ofer Temese on Suðrige. 7 him ge feaht wið Æðelwulf cining. 7 Æðelbald his sunu æt Acléa mid Wæst Sæxna fyrde. 7 þær þæt mæste wæl ge slogon on hæðene here þe we æfre ge secgan herdon" (p. 65). The entry for 871 reads: "Her rad se here to Readingum ... Ða ymb .iiii. night Æðelred cining. 7 Ælfred his broðor þær mycle fyrð to Rædingum ge læddon (p. 71).

This distinction between the pejorative *here* and the positive *fyrð* in the *Chronicle* is what apparently led to the blanket statement in Bosworth-Toller.

<sup>1</sup> All citations from the *Chronicle* are from Charles Plummer (ed.) vol. 1. 1892 and vol. 2 1899, both reprinted in 1952.

*Parker Chronicle* 921: þa giet æfter þam þæs ilcan geres foran to Martines mæssan fór Ead weard cyning mid West Sexna fierde to Colneceastre, 7 ge bette þa burg 7 ge edneo-wade þær heo ær to brocen wæs, 7 him cirde micel folc tó, ægþer ge on East Englum, ge on East Seaxum, þe ær under Dena an walde wæs; 7 eal se here on East Englum him swor anness, þæt hie eal þæt woldon þæt he wolde, 7 eall þæt friþian woldon þæt se cyng friþian wolde, ægþer ge on sæ, ge on lande; 7 se here þe to Grantan brycege hierde hine ge ces synder lice him to hlaforde 7 to mund boran, 7 þæt fæstnodon mid apum. swa he he hit þa aréd (p. 103).

*Parker Chronicle* 922: Her on ðysum gere betweox gangdagum 7 middan sumera for Eadweard cyng mid firde to Stean forda. 7 het gewyrcean ða burg on suð healf ðære eas, 7 ðæt folc eal ðe to ðære nor þerran byrig hierde, him beah tó, 7 sohtan hine him to hlaforde (p. 103).

Plummer (1952), however, is more cautious: "a host or army, but almost always of the Danish army; the native force is *fyrð*" (*s.v. here*, vol. 1 : 360). The entry for 1006, to cite an instance recorded by Plummer, immediately complicates and obscures the semantic boundaries set forth in Bosworth-Toller: "Ac for eallum þissum se here ferde swa he sylf wolde. 7 se fyrðinge dyde þære land leode ælcne hearm. þet him naðor ne dohte ne inn here ne ut-here" (p. 136). Plummer (1952) notes "*in here* is used of the native force, perhaps as being nearly fatal to the people as the Danes" (*s.v. here*, vol. 1: 360). We might thus wish to read the *Chronicle*-passage as in some sense displaying an artistic or ironic strain, and it would be difficult to argue the point.

But there are instances in the pre-1016 entries in the *Chronicle* and elsewhere in the Old English corpus where *here* is used specifically to denote English troops. Thus while in version D of the *Chronicle* we read in the entry for 910, "Her Ængle. 7 Dene gefuhton æt Totan heale" (p. 97), in the Laud version we read, "Her Engle here 7 Dene ge fuhton æt Teotan heale" (p. 95). In the Laud version of the *Chronicle* for 1013 we are told of Svegen's coming to Sandwich with his fleet up to the mouth of the Humber, "7 swa úpp weard andlang Trentan þet he com to Gegnes burh. 7 þa sona abeah Uhtred eorl. 7 eall Norðhymbra to him. 7 eall þæt folc on Lindesige. 7 syððan þet folc of Fif burhingan. 7 raðe þæs eall here be norðan Wætlinga stræte" (p. 143). Plummer (1952) remarks that "Svegen forced the regular levies of the north-eastern shires to accompany him on his progress southward, their hostages, who were left with Cnut, acting as security for their fidelity" (vol. 2: 191). To complicate the issue further, only a few lines later in the same entry Svegen is described as moving southward "mid fulre fyrde" (p. 143); and later at Bath he is "mid his fyrde" (p. 144). The phrase "mid fulre fyrde" occurs again in the entry for 1014 to describe Æthelred's army: "Ða ccm se cyning Æðelred mid fulre fyrde þider ær hi gearwe wæron to Lindesige" (p. 145).

Additional evidence of this ambiguity in the use of the words *here* and *fyrð* can be found in various other places in the corpus of Old English. In Ælfric's letter to Sigwerd the Israelites are called a *here*: "Nu segð us seo boc, þæt God siððan afedde ealne þone here mid heofonlicum mete..." (Crawford (ed.) 1969: 30, ll. 359—62) (elsewhere he refers to the "hæðenan here," *ibid.* 49, l. 787); in *Christ* 1277a the "heofonengla here" will be able to see the sins of the soul (Krapp and Dobbie (eds.) 1936) in *Exodus* 551b—53a, Moses prepares to address the Israelites: "here stille bad witodes willan, wundor ongeton, modiges muðhæl" (Krapp (ed.) 1931); and in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* we read: "Hwæt sind þæra engla werod buton here. þæs heofonlican cyninges: he is gehaten dominus saboð þæt is heres hlaford oððe weroda drihten." (Thorpe (ed.) 1983 vol. 1: 526. 7). Generally speaking, as far as the *Chronicle* is concerned, the occurrence of *here* applied to English forces is rare in pre-1016



entries. But the exceptions cited from the *Chronicle* and from Ælfric's writings should not be dismissed, especially when the use of the words is employed as evidence in the dating of *Beowulf*.

The point concerning the ambiguity of *here* and *fyrð* in pre-1016 texts is driven home by Ruth Waterhouse (1973) in her article, "Semantic Development of Two Terms within the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,'" Waterhouse finds that "*here* has come to be used almost exclusively to hostile Danish forces" [at the end of the first period of the Danish incursions, ca. 925], but that "it can be used flexibly to refer to a particular group of invaders, as well as to a larger concourse of the invaders reinforced by the Danelaw settlers" (1973: 97). She cites further the *Chronicle* entry for the year 894, where Hæsten's force is called a *here*: "In the same year, a contingent of East Anglian and Northumbrian settlers sails round the coast to besiege Exeter, and it is called both *here* (and again in the 895 annal) and *sciphære*" (Waterhouse 1973: 97). In brief, the semantic differences between *here* and *fyrð* are ones that are not so much racial (as in "Englisc *fyrð*" versus "þa Deniscan *here*") as they are distinctions of invading versus defending forces. But at times the difference is a matter concerning military terminology, where a *fyrð* could refer to a specific part of the Wessex levy and "*here* could even comprehend in its area of reference the English army" (cf. Waterhouse 1973: 100).

In the introduction to his *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions*, C. Warren Hollister (1962) notes that while early studies, particularly those by Napier (1895) and Larson (1904), "restricted the term *here* to the Danish invaders", the *Chronicle* "does not bear them out. In the eleventh century, 'fyrð' and *here* are used interchangeably" (Hollister 1962: 3, n. 2). From 1013 onwards, the distinction between *here* and *fyrð* in the *Chronicle* becomes obscured. The Laud entry for 1016 speaks of Cnut's *here* and of Eadmund's *fyrð*, and that for 1018 mentions that "se here ferde þa sum to Denmearcon" (p. 155); but then there is a clear slacking off in the use of both words in the *Chronicle* until some 30 years later: *fyrð* appears again in the entries beginning in 1049, *here* in entries beginning in 1048, with one occurrence in the entry for 1025 to describe the Swedish army and another in C1045 to describe Edward's naval forces. When the two words appear again, there is virtually no distinction made in their use. As Plummer (1952) notes in his glossary, both *fyrð* and *here* are used to describe Godwin's army in the entry for 1052 in the D-version: "hy woldon Godwines fyrð gesecan"; "7 cwæð hine [Godwin] ut lage 7 eall here hine" (p. 175). In the same entry Edward's opposing army is also called both a *here* and a *fyrð*: "...ongean þone cyng 7 agean þone here þe mid him wæs"; "7 leton beodan mycele fyrde heora hlaforde to helpe" (p. 175). In the entry for D1052 Harold's attacking army is a *here*, and in the entry for C1066 we read of Tostig's *fyrde*, which Harald attacks "mid myccelum here Engliscra manna" (E1066, pp. 197-8). In this instance, Kiernan (1986)

finds support for his contention that after 1016 *fyrð* now takes on negative connotations while *here* positive ones. But in the entry for E1068 King William travels south with his *fyrð*, while in E1073 he leads the "Englisc here" against France; that same invading force is called an "Englisc fyrde" in the corresponding entry in D. In the entries for 1076 and 1081 William's forces are described as a *fyrð*, but the entry for 1079 similarly calls Malcolm of Scotland's invading forces a great *fyrð*. When William learns of Cnut Sveinsson's attack on England, he returns from Normandy "mid swa myccelan here ridendra manna" (E1085, p. 215). On the strength of these examples, we can agree with Hollister when he concludes; "The terms 'fyrð' and *here* have also been defined too narrowly. In the eleventh century the two terms were virtually synonymous: both meant 'military force'" (Hollister 1962: 7).

As a final piece of evidence we can note that in the crucial year 1016 the opposing English and Danish forces are at one point collectively called *heras* (p. 150) in the *Chronicle*. By this stage, both *here* and *fyrð* seem to fall together and lose their particular national identification at a moment when, given the political and military climate, strict boundaries between Dane and Englishman were beginning to become obscured.

It cannot be said, then, that a clear distinction obtains between *fyrð* and *here* in post-1016 *Chronicle* entries; and although such free exchange of terms is less common in the pre-1016 *Chronicle* entries, it nevertheless does exist. In addition, Ælfric's interchange of both *here* and *fyrð* in his writings further undermines a case for consistently applied semantic boundaries where these two words are concerned.

How does this evidence from the *Chronicle*, Ælfric, *Exodus*, *Christ*, and the *Catholic Homilies* bear on the question of the dating of *Beowulf*? To begin with, it must be conceded that the evidence is slim: *here* occurs only three times in *Beowulf*, while compounds with *here* occur twenty-one times. Compounds with *fyrð* are markedly fewer in number; only six occur, and the word does not occur at all as a simplex. The simplex *here* appears in lines 1248, 2347, and 2638. The first two occurrences are decidedly positive, referring to Hroðgar's and Beowulf's troops. The third reference is used by Wiglaf in speaking of the retainers who have abandoned Beowulf in the final battle against the dragon:

	"Ðe he usic on herge geceas
to ðyssum siðfate	sylfes willum,
onmunde usic mærdða,	ond me þas maðmas geaf,
þe he usic garwigend	golde tealde,
hwate helmberend...	

(2638b—2642a)

<sup>2</sup> All quotations are from Fr. Klaeber (ed.) 1922, reprinted in 1950.



The reference could be construed as negative, in that it refers to cowardly thanes. On the other hand, if *here* is perceived as carrying positive connotations we might, as with the entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 1006, see the use of *here* in this case as ironic. In either case, however, the reference stands as ambiguous.

A more clear-cut instance demonstrating the unfeasibility of advancing a semantic distinction between *here* and *fyrð* as a means of dating a work obtains in lines 1641 and 2476, where *frome fyrðwate* occurs in both places. The scene of the first example shows the Geats returning from the mere bearing the prize of Grendel's head upon their war-spears:

	feower scoldon
on þæm wælstenge	weorcum geferian
to þæm goldsele	Grendles heafod, —
oþ ðæt semninga	to sele comon
frome fyrðwate	feowertyne
Geata gongan.	
	(1637b—1642a)

The use of the compound *fyrðwate* is decidedly positive. But compare this occurrence with that in line 2476, where *fyrðwate* refers unambiguously to the Swedes:

þa wæs synn ond sacu	Sweona ond Geata
ofer wid wæter	wroht gemæne,
herenið hearda,	syððan Hreðel swealt,
oððe him Ongenðeowes	eaferan wæran
frome fyrðwate,	freode ne woldon
ofer heafo healdan....	
	(2472—2477a)

While Kiernan (1986) asserts that the word *fyrð* underwent pejoration by the time of Cnut (and during the time in which *Beowulf* was supposedly composed), these two examples indicate that in the poem *fyrð*-compounds operate without any specifically negative or positive connotations attached to them.

A more elaborate example appears in the description of the fight between Beowulf and Grendel's mother. In line 1443a Beowulf puts on his *herebyrne*, which in line 1504a is also described as a *fyrðhom*; in line 1511b, Beowulf's *heresyrcan* protects him from the attacks of the sea-creatures; and in line 1553a Beowulf's *herenet* protects him against the creature's *seax*. In each instance the *here*- and *fyrð*-compounds used to refer to Beowulf's war-corslet are clearly positive, for with it he is saved from the savage attacks of the mere-dweller.

As a final example, the compound *heregriman* in lines 2049a and 2605a similarly undercuts the idea that the compounds contain clear semantic dis-

tinctions. The first occurrence describes the Heaðobards as they look upon the heirlooms of their ancestors fallen in battle but which are now worn by the Danes:

“Meaht ðu, min wine,	mece gecnawan,
þone þin fæder	to gefeohte bær
under heregriman	hindeman siðe,
dyre iren,	þær hyne Dene slogon,
weoldon wælstowe,	syððan Wiðergyld læg,
æfter hæleþa hryre,	hwate Scyldungas?”
	(2047—2053)

In the second instance, the compound is used to describe Beowulf as he is oppressed by the dragon's poisonous flames: “geseah his mondryhten/under heregriman hat prowian” (2604b—2605).

It is not necessary to belabor the point by citing every instance in which *here* and *here*- and *fyrð*-compounds occur in the poem. The issue at hand is whether or not *here* and *fyrð* can be clearly distinguished as being pejorative or positive, respectively; and the inevitable conclusion is that no such distinction can be made.

The use of *fyrð* and *here* for the dating of *Beowulf* also has implications for the dating of *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*, which is contained in the same MS. Kiernan writes:

The letter exhibits clear, explicable cases of linguistic change, amelioration of the word *here*, “Danish army,” and pejoration of the word *fyrð*, “English army.” These words had definite connotations for the Anglo-Saxons. (Kiernan 1986: 30)

And further:

Alexander consistently refers to his special Greek forces as a *here*, the equivalent of the Anglo-Saxon “select *fyrð*”, and to his combined forces as a *fyrð*, the same as the Anglo-Saxon “great *fyrð*.” He notably refers to his enemies as a *fyrð*, the term the Anglo-Saxons reserved for themselves in both senses of the word. In this text, the linguistic pejoration of *fyrð* (the enemy) and amelioration of *here* (the good guys) can only be explained by assuming that the translation was made sometime after 1016, after the Danish conquest. (Kiernan 1986: 31)

The search for a rigorously maintained and historically accurate system of distinction with regard to military terminology in the Old English version of the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* is a vain endeavor, not least because Kiernan skirts the issue of whether a distinction between *here* and *fyrð* based (in his view) on a contemporaneous Anglo-Danish situation must of necessity carry over into a fictive epistle from Alexander the Great to his friend and teacher Aristotle that is concerned with Macedonian and Indian armies.



For our purposes, however, we will focus on the nature of the military terminology and its bearing on Kiernan's arguments. The passages set forth for comparison offer parallel passages from the Old English text, the Latin text from Pfister's critical edition (1910), and the Latin version in the Anglo-Saxon MS, Oxford, Corpus Christi College 82 (12th century)<sup>3</sup>:

pa het ic blawan mine byman & pa fyrd faran. pa hit ða wæs sio endlefte tid dages & we forð ferdon (p. 16, ll. 13–16).

Hora deinde undecima sonante bucina manducavi ego et feci coenare *omnes milites meos* et accensae sunt lucernae aureae prope duo milia (p. 26)

... hora deinde undecima instante [*sic*] bucina cibum et ipse cepi et *militibus* capere imperavi (pp. 85–6)

Compare with:

pa wæs þær eft gesomnad micel fyrd indiscra monna & þæra elreodigra þe ða lond budon. & we þa wið þæm gefuhton (p. 25, ll. 10–12).

... quia *collecti barbari* et *Indi* in unum novam pugnam contra nos committere cogitabant (p. 28).

Vbi *collectis barbarorum indorumque* uiribus noua conspirantes bella cognoueram ... (pp. 88–9).

In the first case, Alexander's army is called a *fyrð*; in the second, that of his enemy, the Indian king Porus, is referred to as a *fyrð* as well.

The apparent lack of discriminatory use of *fyrð* by the translator or the Old English *Epistola* is evidenced even more sharply in the following passages:

pa we ðær eft edniowunga hæfdon micle gefeoht . & xx . daga ic þær mid *minre fyrde* wið him wicode sioðpan we þa þonon ferdon þa wæs hit on seofon nihta fæce . þæt we to þæm londe & to þære stowe becwoman þær *porrus se cyning mid his his fyrde wicode* (p. 26, ll. 3–9).

Stetimus ibi per viginti dies, ut haberet requiem ipse *exercitus* et postea in septem dies uenimus in illo loco, ubi prius *Porus* consideret *cum collecto suo exercitu*, antequam cum eo pugnaremus (p. 89).

Ocio facto mox dierum .vii. itinere peruenimus ubi *porus cum collecto* considerat *exercitu* propriae dedicioni magis quam praelio (p. 28).

And further:

Hæfd ic þa þæs kyninges wic & his fæstenu gesceawod þe he *mid his fyrde* in gefaren hæfde. ða sona on morgne þæs ða eode *porrus se kyning* me on hond *mid ealle his ferde & dugoþe* þa he hæfde ongieten þæt he wið me gewinnan ne meahte.

Ond of þæm feondscipe þe us ær betweonum wæs þæt he seoðpan wæs me freond & *eallum greca herige & min gefera & gefylcea* . & ic him ða eft his rice ageaf & þa ðære unwendan are þæs rices þe he him seolfa næniges rices ne wende. þæt he ða me eall his goldhord æteowde . & he þa ægþer ge mec ge eac *eall min werod* mid golde gewelgode . & herculis gelicnisse & libri ðara twegea goda he buta of golde gegêat & geworhte & hie butu alette in þæm eastdæle middangeardes (pp. 28: 17–29: 15).

<sup>3</sup> The Old English text and the text in the Corpus Christi College Ms. are from Stanley Rypins (ed.) 1924.

Tunc pugnavi cum Indis et vici eos, sicut volem, et tuli regna, quae tenerat Porus rex, et postea reddidi ea illi. Postquam vidit, quia reddidi ei honorem suum, manifestavit mihi thesauros suos, quos ego nesciebam, unde et ego me ipsum et *comites meos et universum exercitum* divitem feci. Tunc Porus rex factus est amicus *Macedonibus*, quibus fuerat antea inimicus, et deinde portavit me, ubi erant statuæ de auro, quas ibi posuerat Liber pater et Hercules, qui fuerunt dii apud paganos. Cumque voluisse scire, si fusiles essent ipse statuæ, omnes eas perforare feci, cumque invenissem, quia fusiles essent, feci implere ipsa pertusa de auro (p. 29).

Mox cum indiis contuli manum superatisque ita ut uolebam erepta armis poro regna restitui. Qui ut insperato honore dignatus est mihi thesauros suos manifestavit quos tantos esse ignorabam ex quibus me et *comites meos et niversum* dictavit *exercitum* factusque amicus ex hoste *macedonibus* ad herculis liberique trophea nos duxit. In orientis autem ultimis horis aurea utraque deorum constituta erant simulachra quae an solida essent ego scire cupiens omnia perforavi et cum uiderem solida simili metallo compleui liberumque et herculum deuotis uictimis placavi (pp. 89–90).

By Kiernan's theory, *here* would have come to mean by the reign of Cnut the forces of the allies; *fyrð* those of the enemy.<sup>4</sup> The picture that actually emerges (since, even in the pre-1016 chronicles *fyrð* and *here* were on occasion used interchangeably) is one of variation (even within the few passages cited above). Three terms are used to translate *exercitus*: *fyrð*, *here*, and *werod*<sup>5</sup>. When Alexander refers to his Macedonian soldiers, we usually find *Greca here* in the Old English *epistola*; other than that, the terms seem to have no distinct roles: *min fyrð* is what Alexander at times call his army. No particular and exact relationship seems to exist between the Old English and the Latin in this regard (which also does not employ an exact or technical system of reference for Alexander's troops, which, by the invasion of India in 327–325 B.C., with the introduction of oriental infantry and cavalry, were even more complexly organized, with terms to match the new ranks and divisions).<sup>6</sup> Often the Old English will give something like *mid minre fyrde* (or *herige*) where the Latin is silent: such expansions, saying what the more concise

<sup>4</sup> If he is right, David N. Dumville has put to rest Kiernan's claim that *Beowulf* was composed and copied during the reign of Cnut. See Dumville 1988, as well as Dumville 1987 (especially his discussion of the emergence of a new bookhand (1987: 178–9). Dumville (1988) places the Nowell Codex, by palaeographic evidence, in the period 997–1016, that is sometime between the middle of Æthelred the Unready's reign and his death in 1016.

<sup>5</sup> Of interest here are the following entries in the Harley glossary (Oliphant (ed.) 1966): *Expeditio .i. preparatio. exercitus, hergung. ferd.* (E607, p. 165); *Expeditionibus. exercitibus, fyrðum.* (E608, p. 165); *Faccus. exercitus. here.* (F56, p. 174); *Falanx .i. exercitus. multitudo militum. cohors. preat. herig. fepa .i. sextem dclxvi.* (F80, p. 175).

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion of the military terminology pertinent to Alexander's army, see Bosworth 1988: 259–77.



Latin leaves unsaid, are characteristic of many Old English translations from the Latin.

The evidence from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, from Ælfric, from the *Epistola Alexandri*, and, more pointedly, from *Beowulf* itself argues against Kiernan's claim that what we have is clear linguistic evidence which can be used in dating the poem to the 11th century. If linguistic evidence is to be counted as reliable in the dating of Old English works, it must prove itself capable of being consistent and unambiguous under scrutiny.

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