

## The Ruin

Wrætlic is þes wealstan, wyrde gebræcon;  
burgstede burston, broснаð enta geweorc.  
Hrofas sind gehrorene, hreorge torras,  
hrungeat berofen, hrim on lime,

scearde scurbeorge scorene, gedrorene,  
ældo undereotone. Eorðgrap hafað  
waldend wyrhtan forweorone, geleorene,  
heardgripe hrusan, oþ hund cnea  
werþeoda gewitan. Oft þæs wag gebad

ræggar ond readfah rice æfter oþrum,  
ofstonden under stormum; steap geap gedreas.  
Wonað giet se ...num geheapen,  
fel on  
grimme gegrunden

scan heo...  
...g orþonc ærsceaft  
...g lamrindum beag  
mod mo... ...yne swiftne gebrægd  
hwætred in hringas, hygerof gebond

weallwalan wirum wundrum togædre.  
Beorht wæron burgræced, burnsele monige,  
heah horngestreon, heresweg micel,  
meodoheall monig dreama full,  
oþþæt þæt onwende wyrd seo swiþe.

Crungon walo wide, cwoman woldagas,  
swylt eall fornom secgrofra wera;  
wurdon hyra wigsteal westen stapolas,  
brosnade burgsteall. Betend crungon  
hergas to hrusan. Forþon þas hofu dreorgiað,

ond þæs teaforgeapa tigelum sceadeð  
hrostbeages hrof. Hryre wong gecong  
gebrocen to beorgum, þær iu beorn monig  
glædmod ond goldbeorht gleoma gefrætwed,  
wlonc ond wingal wighyrstum scan;

seah on sinc, on sylfor, on searogimmas,  
on ead, on æht, on eorcanstan,  
on þas beorhtan burg bradan rices.  
Stanhofu stodan, stream hate wearp  
widan wylme; weal eall befeng

beorhtan bosme, þær þa baþu wæron,  
hat on hreþre. þæt wæs hyðelic.  
Leton þonne geotan  
ofer harne stan hate streamas  
un...

Wondrous is this wall-stead, wasted by fate.  
Battlements broken, giant's work shattered.  
Roofs are in ruin, towers destroyed,  
Broken the barred gate, rime on the plaster,

walls gape, torn up, destroyed,  
consumed by age. Earth-grip holds  
the proud builders, departed, long lost,  
and the hard grasp of the grave, until a hundred  
generations of people have passed. Often this wall  
outlasted,  
hoary with lichen, red-stained, withstanding the  
storm,  
one reign after another; the high arch has now  
fallen.  
The wall-stone still stands, hacked by weapons, by  
grim-ground files. ...

Mood quickened mind, and the mason,  
skilled in round-building, bound the wall-base,

wondrously with iron.  
Bright were the halls, many the baths,  
High the gables, great the joyful noise,  
many the mead-hall full of pleasures.  
Until fate the mighty overturned it all.

Slaughter spread wide, pestilence arose,  
and death took all those brave men away.  
Their bulwarks were broken, their halls laid waste,  
the cities crumbled, those who would repair it  
laid in the earth. And so these halls are empty,

and the curved arch sheds its tiles,  
torn from the roof. Decay has brought it down,  
broken it to rubble. Where once many a warrior,  
high of heart, gold-bright, gleaming in splendour,  
proud and wine-flushed, shone in armour,

looked on a treasure of silver, on precious gems,  
on riches of pearl...  
in that bright city of broad rule.  
Stone courts once stood there, and hot streams  
gushed forth,  
wide floods of water, surrounded by a wall,  
in its bright bosom, there where the baths  
were, hot in the middle.

Hot streams ran over hoary stone

...þæt hringmere hate  
þær þa þaþu wæron.  
þonne is  
...re; þæt is cynelic þing,  
huse ..... burg....

into the ring

from The Exeter Book, 10<sup>th</sup> century  
trans. Sian Echard