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# An Old English Love Poem, a *Beowulf* Summary and a Recommendation Letter from Eduard Sievers: G. J. P. J. Bolland (1854–1922) as an Aspiring Old Germanicist

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## Abstract

This article calls attention to documents relating to the early academic life of G. J. P. J. Bolland (1854–1922). During the late 1870s and early 1880s, Bolland was enthralled by the study of Old Germanic languages and Old English in particular. His endeavours soon caught the eye of Pieter Jacob Cosijn (1840–1899), Professor of Germanic Philology and Anglo-Saxon at Leiden University, who helped the Groningen-born student to further his studies. During his stays in London and Jena, Bolland communicated with prominent scholars, including Henry Sweet, Richard Morris and Eduard Sievers. Bolland's annotated books, hand-written notes and scholarly correspondence provide a unique insight into academic life and student-professor relationships during the late nineteenth century. In addition, Bolland produced an Old English love poem and a *Beowulf* summary that are published here for the first time.

## Keywords

Old English – Old Germanic studies – scholarly correspondence – Old English composition – *Beowulf* – G. J. P. J. Bolland – Pieter Jacob Cosijn – Eduard Sievers – Matthias de Vries – Henry Sweet – Richard Morris – Benjamin Thorpe

## 1 Introduction

“Whether you will ever return as the prodigal son to the table of Father Grimm? That is something I no longer dare hope for.” These words were written by Pieter

Jacob Cosijn (1840–1899), the first professor of Germanic philology and Anglo-Saxon at Leiden University,<sup>1</sup> in a letter to G. J. P. J. Bolland (1854–1922), dated 28 October 1888.<sup>2</sup> Bolland had devoted himself to the study of the earliest phases of Germanic languages for several years, before he had left for Batavia (the Dutch East Indies) in 1881 for a lucrative job as a teacher. During his years in the tropics, Bolland had turned to the study of Greek and Latin as well as philosophy, although Old Germanic philology still kept his interest. In an 1885 letter to Cosijn, he wistfully mentioned his “former Germanicist me” and wrote “old love never dies, and I would love to become a Germanicist again.”<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Cosijn’s prophecy came true: after returning from Batavia, Bolland became Professor of Philosophy at the University of Leiden in 1896 and he would never return to the study of Old Germanic languages.

Bolland turned out to be a controversial professor. Having never obtained an academic degree and coming from an unprivileged background, he was often at odds with his professorial colleagues over various matters, ranging from the proper pronunciation of Greek to greeting protocols. His flamboyant lecturing style made him a popular speaker throughout the Low Countries and he quickly amassed a number of loyal followers, known as his ‘disciples’. In his publications and lectures, Bolland viciously attacked socialism, marxism, the working classes, Freemasons and the Roman Catholic Church. His last lecture, *De teekenen des tijds* [*The Signs of the Times*] (1921), was an explicitly antisemitic and antidemocratic tirade. The lecture caused an uproar and has led to Bolland being associated with the rise of fascism in the Netherlands (see Joosten 1982; *Gerard Bolland*). After Bolland’s death, his personal archive, including his books and correspondence, was housed in the Leiden University Library, where it has benefited many biographical studies.<sup>4</sup> Whereas most biographers have focused on his later years, when Bolland was the country’s most influential philosopher, this article, by contrast, calls attention to his early academic life.<sup>5</sup>

1 For a biographical sketch of Cosijn, see Bremmer (1991).

2 28 October 1888; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL C 2, no. 12. All quotations from the correspondence between Bolland and Cosijn are translated from Dutch without further comment. The letters are published in full, without a translation, in Porck (2018); this edition replaces an imperfect and partial edition by Wigersma (1943; 1944), who omitted letters concerning Old Germanic studies, since these would only interest specialists.

3 2 July 1885; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 14.

4 The early biographies by van den Bergh van Eysinga (1908) and Wigersma (1922) are superseded by Otterspeer (1995); the Royal Library in The Hague offers an extensive online biography (*Gerard Bolland*).

5 Klever (1969) similarly looks at Bolland’s youth and early years, but focuses primarily on his years in the Dutch East Indies.

Bolland's early letters, annotated books and hand-written notes are a treasure trove for scholars of academic history. His correspondence with Cosijn, in particular, provides a unique insight into the evolution of the scholarly study of Old Germanic languages. Personal remarks about several important figures within the field, including Eduard Sievers ("a most sweet man," according to Bolland) and Richard Morris ("a good man, but certainly a poor musician," according to Cosijn),<sup>6</sup> are interspersed with discussions of linguistic peculiarities, questionable etymologies and corrupt editions of, for example, *Beowulf*. Bolland's annotated study books and hand-written notes afford further glances at how this Dutch student mastered the study of Old Germanic philology. Bolland's interests in Old English, in particular, are reflected in a love poem, composed in 1879 in the alliterative style of the English spoken in the early Middle Ages, and a *Beowulf* summary produced in 1880. Both these texts are contextualized in this article and reproduced in the appendices. The material, as this article hopes to show, provides a unique snapshot of a Dutch autodidact student's endeavours to study Old Germanic languages at the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the article aims to show how correspondence was used as a medium for knowledge transfer as well as a convenient way to establish and maintain scholarly networks.

## 2 From a Leiden Jailhouse to a London Apartment: Bolland's Introduction to Old Germanic Studies

G. J. P. J. (Gerard) Bolland had an unfortunate youth. Born to a family of peddlers in Groningen, Bolland lost his father at a young age, which forced his mother to make a living as a prostitute. As a young man of fourteen or fifteen years old and having enjoyed little education, he joined the army in 1868. Bolland proved to be a problematic recruit: he was convicted for cursing and foul language on several occasions, as well as for singing illicit songs. In May 1872, he spent a fortnight in jail, because he had sold his underpants and lied about this to his commanding officer. In January of the following year, he physically assaulted a high-ranking sergeant and was arrested for insubordination. The Groningen-born Bolland would spend the next three years in a Leiden prison (Otterspeer 1995).

6 10 January 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 4. 9 August 1880; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL C 2, no. 2.

His sentence in Leiden proved to be a turn-around in Bolland's life: he began reading books and, following his release from prison, studied hard to become a teacher. He also developed a fascination for comparative philology and gained expertise in the oldest stages of Dutch, English and German. According to an anecdote published in a local newspaper, Bolland would not allow his friends to speak of anything other than Old Germanic sound laws and would even physically assault them if they did not pay attention to his impromptu lessons about Old Norse, Old Saxon and Old English. The author of the anecdote further reports that Bolland was highly pleased with himself when he had finally convinced his friends to each buy a copy of Moritz Heyne's *Kurze Laut- und Flexionslehre der altgermanischen Dialecte* (1862).<sup>7</sup> Bolland also carried his enthusiasm for comparative philology into his classroom. Having landed a job as a schoolmaster in Katwijk in 1876, he soon gained the nickname "Meester Sancritans" [Master Sanskrit], because he would occasionally teach his grammar school students about Sanskrit (Otterspeer 1995: 58–59). His linguistic interests are also evidenced by his publication of an article on the dialect of the city of Groningen in 1879 (Bolland 1879; cf. Noordegraaf 1990). This article appeared in the *Taalkundige Bijdragen* [*Linguistic Contributions*], the journal edited by Pieter Jacob Cosijn.<sup>8</sup> From this moment on, Cosijn and Bolland entertained a lively correspondence that would last until Cosijn's untimely death in 1899.<sup>9</sup>

Cosijn was struck by Bolland's enthusiasm for comparative Germanic philology and encouraged the Katwijk schoolmaster to spend time in London, in order to improve his English language skills. Bolland quit his job on 11 July 1879 and, with the financial assistance of his fiancée's aunts, he travelled to London, where he stayed for the next thirteen months.<sup>10</sup> The move was supported by Cosijn, who, together with Hendrik Kern (1833–1917), Professor of Sanskrit in Leiden, wrote a reference letter for Bolland. The letter, written in English and dated 28 June 1879, reads as follows:

7 "Groningsche Kout," *Stads en Provinciaal Groninger Advertentie-Blad*, 4 April 1896.

8 Bolland wrote the article in May 1879, in Katwijk. The article concludes with "wordt vervolgd" [to be continued], but a continuation was never published (Bolland 1879: 301).

9 A total of 46 letters, covering the period 1879 to 1899, are preserved in the Leiden University Library (17 letters from Bolland to Cosijn; 29 letters from Cosijn to Bolland), written in Dutch, German and English. The correspondence is edited in Porck (2018).

10 Klever (1969: 11) and Otterspeer (1995: 62) date Bolland's stay from October 1879 to November 1880.

We whose names are underwritten do certify that Mr. G. J. P. J. Bolland, who is going to England with the purpose to perfect his knowledge of the English language, is known to us as a good Dutch and German scholar and a most promising student of comparative philology.

H. Kern

P. J. Cosijn, Professors of the University at Leyden<sup>11</sup>

Bolland probably used this reference letter in order to come into contact with various English scholars.

Bolland's attempts to mingle with the English intelligentsia were not always successful, as was the case with the noted linguist Henry Sweet (1845–1912). In a disgruntled letter to Cosijn, Bolland angrily lashed out against Sweet:

I am happy to say that the celebrities among our [Dutch] linguists seem less condescending than the English half-thinkers appear to me. It is with emphasis and without flattery, that I wouldn't dare to compare you as a Germanicist to H. Sweet; even if that gentleman were the editor of the *Pastoral* [i.e. the Old English translation of Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis*] a thousand times over! And still, you refer me to his work on phonetics as being authoritative?<sup>12</sup>

Bolland next listed a number of errors he had found in Sweet's *A History of English Sounds from the Earliest Period* (1874), a ground-breaking work in historical English phonology. For example, Bolland derided Sweet's suggestion that Modern English *mate* developed from Old English *gemaca* 'companion'.<sup>13</sup> Bolland further explained to Cosijn that he had asked for a meeting with Sweet, but that the latter had never returned his calls:

Having expressed my desire to get acquainted with him some time before, but having received no answer, I have, thinking no evil of this, written to him again, pointing to one thing and another which I have written about above [...] but that Sir did not deign to give me an answer. I am

11 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL A 1, no. 11.

12 10 October 1879; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 1.

13 While Sweet's suggestion makes sense semantically, the change from /t/ to /k/ is unlikely; indeed, the *OED*: s.v. *mate*, notes that English *mate* is a borrowing from Middle Low German *mát*, while *gemaca* still survives today in Scottish and regional English usage as *make* 'partner, spouse'. In other words, Bolland was right: *mate* and *gemaca* are not related.

awfully sorry, but it seems a schoolmaster need not expect deference from a gentleman of Balliol College Oxford.<sup>14</sup>

His grievance concerning Sweet's not having taken the time to meet with him appears to have lingered with Bolland. This much becomes clear from a letter written by Cosijn to Bolland, a year later (24 August 1880). It seems Bolland had managed to get acquainted with Richard Morris (1833–1894), the President of the Philological Society, and the two had compared notes on Sweet's behaviour. Bolland had reported Morris' insights to Cosijn, who wrote back:

Morris' judgement concerning Sweet appears to me to be sound. I have not heard from Sweet for a long time, even though I urged for a speedy reply. But Sweet appears to be 'this' today and 'that' tomorrow. Perhaps he is back in Scandinavia or in Iceland.<sup>15</sup>

In the end, Bolland never met Henry Sweet, much to the former's chagrin. Perhaps Bolland eventually found some solace in the fact that Sweet's revised second edition of *A History of English Sounds*, published in 1888, no longer featured any of the errors he had pointed out.<sup>16</sup> Could it be that Sweet had read Bolland's letter after all?

Cosijn was pleased to note that Bolland had had more luck with Morris than with Sweet. In the same letter of 24 August 1880, Cosijn wrote "I was very pleased to learn that you have met mister Morris. He is an intelligent man, who has edited and translated the Blickling Homilies very well."<sup>17</sup> Cosijn's praise for Morris is remarkable, given the fact that he had mocked Morris' edition of the Old English Blickling Homilies in a letter of only two weeks prior:

In the meantime, I have worked through the *B[lickling] Homilies* and discovered that the rev. R. Morris might be a good man but he certainly is a 'poor musician'. His edition is diplomatically faithful, but that is about all there is to say. His translation, however, is regrettably free and he does not know Anglo-Saxon. [...] The second volume gets so bad near the middle, that I would occasionally spend an hour on just one page. I will see

14 10 October 1879; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 1.

15 24 August 1880; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL C 2, no. 3.

16 For English *mate* and Old English *gemaca*, compare Sweet (1874: 10) and Sweet (1888: 25).

17 24 August 1880; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL C 2, no. 3.

whether I can clean these Augean stables, but that remains to be seen. One single manuscript is always rather difficult.<sup>18</sup>

Cosijn also mentioned a number of specific errors, such as Morris' translation of Old English "risende wulf" as "rising wolf" (Cosijn, correctly, notes it should be translated as "devouring wolf"). Cosijn's comparison of the re-editing of the Blickling Homilies to the Herculean task of cleaning out the Augean stables is interesting, especially given the fact that the edition by Morris (1874–1880) has remained the standard until the present day.

Cosijn was not the only Leiden professor with whom Bolland corresponded from London. One letter and two post cards bear witness to Bolland's attempts to befriend Matthias de Vries (1820–1892), Professor of Dutch in Leiden. In his letter dated 30 May 1880, Bolland expressed his gratitude for having been permitted to contact de Vries and sought to repay the favour by sending along a chronological list of "chief documents of transition English". This list of Middle English texts ranges from *The Grave* to William Langland's *Piers Plowman*; while it is a work in progress, Bolland assured de Vries "it might be a safe guide to a chronological study of English in its periods of transition from the inflected & unmixed to the analytical and hybrid state."<sup>19</sup> The list is of interest as an early attempt to facilitate the study of the transition from Old to Middle English and is, therefore, reproduced as Appendix 1 to this article. In his two post cards, Bolland informed de Vries of recently published books on Early Modern English literature, showcasing his growing interests in later English authors.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the anecdotal newspaper article referred to above mentions that Bolland, upon returning from London, had acquired a taste for Shakespeare, in particular. The article quotes Bolland's praise, in a heavy Groningen accent, of the works of German philologist and Shakespeare scholar Nicolaus Delius (1813–1888): "'n Kerel heur, dei Shakespeare! 'k Neem de houd veur hom af! Dan met de vlakke hand op de uitgave van Delius slaande, riep hij: 'Dat 's mien bibel! 't Bin warkezels, heur dei Duutsers; ze meugen zeggen wat ze willen!'" [That's my boy, that Shakespeare! I take my hat off to him! Next, thumping the edition by Delius with his hand, he shouted 'That's my Bible! They are drudges, these Germans; whatever anyone else might say!'].<sup>21</sup>

His interest in early Middle English and affection for Shakespeare notwithstanding, it was Old English that truly inspired Bolland, in particular its

18 8 August 1880; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL C 2, no. 2.

19 30 May 1880; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1876, no. 1.

20 4 June 1880; 5 September 1880; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1876, nos. 2, 3.

21 "Groningsche Kout," *Stads en Provinciaal Groninger Advertentie-Blad*, 4 April 1896.



relation to Dutch. This much becomes clear from the various books on Old Germanic languages that Bolland left to the Leiden University Library. His copy of Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Grammatik* (1822–1840), for instance, is heavily annotated, but only in the sections on Old English. His annotations often take the form of Dutch cognates for Old English words, including Dutch *reiger*, *loeien* and *ritselen* for Old English *hrāgra* 'heron', *hlōwan* 'to low' and *hrīstlan* 'to rustle'.<sup>22</sup> A similar interest in the connection between Old English and Dutch is found in his copy of Benjamin Thorpe's translation of Rasmus Rask's *A Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Tongue* (1830). In one of the margins, he wrote "Is *þoterian* perhaps our *stotteren*, like throat our *strot*?" – an attempt to link Old English *þoterian* 'to cry out' to Dutch *stotteren* 'to stutter' on account of a perceived similarity with the relationship between English *throat* and Dutch *strot* 'throat'.<sup>23</sup> Bolland was also aware of the fact that evidence from Dutch dialects could be relevant for the understanding of Old English. In one of his first letters to Cosijn, he appended a list of features of the Katwijk dialect, noting "Aren't there many interesting Saxon things in the Katwijk dialect?"<sup>24</sup>

Bolland's list of Katwijk features was no doubt intended to impress Cosijn with his acquired knowledge of Old English. Indeed, in the same letter, Bolland also boasted of studying Joseph Bosworth's parallel edition of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels (Bosworth 1865) for a few hours every day. Furthermore, Bolland expressed his disdain for Bosworth's poor understanding of Old English vowel length:

Whatever you have said about English editors concerning accentuation cannot be applied to him; he clearly accentuates on the basis of theory; for instance, *tibi* is for him *þē*, but *is* and *nos he* and *ge. ii=þu*. Since he

<sup>22</sup> Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL 4 B 10.

<sup>23</sup> English *throat* and Dutch *strot* are indeed related; the so-called 's-mobile' (present in the Dutch variant, but absent in the English variant) was identified by Dutch linguist Joseph Schrijnen in 1891 (cf. de Vaan 2017). An etymological connection between Old English *þoterian* 'to cry, lament' and Dutch *stotteren* 'to stutter' has, thus far, not been established.

<sup>24</sup> 10 October 1879; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 1a. Bolland noticed, for instance, that the Katwijk people pronounced Standard Dutch *zweep* 'whip' as "zwīp", with a long *i*, as they did in early medieval England: cf. Old English *swīpa* 'whip'. He correctly realized that the study of Dutch dialects like that of Katwijk could be a good basis for studying older language phases: the conservative Katwijk dialect contains a number of influences from Ingveonic, a grouping of ancient Germanic languages spoken around the North Sea, one of which is Old English. The characteristic Katwijk pronunciation of Dutch *water* 'water', with a bilabial or 'English' *w* and a 'bleating' *aa*, corresponds, for example, to the Old English form of the word: *wæter*. On Bolland's notes on the Katwijk dialect, see Porck (2017).

does not distinguish between diphthongs, he has overlooked the fact that *sceān* does not have a diphthong, that it is *śān* and, so, gives us the reading *scean* repeatedly. Etc. This gentleman is professor of Anglo-Saxon. Do I have the right not to esteem such scholars?<sup>25</sup>

As it happens, Bolland's criticism of Bosworth's approach to vowel length was justified: the incorrect forms *he*, *ge*, *pu* and *scean* ought to be lengthened *hē*, *gē*, *pū* and *sceān*.<sup>26</sup> Bolland did not soon forget his aversion to Bosworth's edition; in his *Notes and Gleanings. An Explanatory List of Names and Titles Relating to English Institutions* (1891), a reference work for students of English published twelve years later, Bolland referred to Bosworth's edition as "a convenient, though not a very scientific one" (Bolland 1891: 266).

If Bolland's intention had been to impress Cosijn with his knowledge of Old English, he certainly succeeded. In one of his letters, Cosijn deplored the fact that Richard Morris did not devote himself to Old English and, at the same time, expressed his high expectations for Bolland's future contributions to the field:

Too bad that he does not completely devote himself to Anglo-Saxon. The English appear to leave this to the Germans. But we Dutchmen shall show that we are there too, won't we, young 'iron-eater'?<sup>27</sup>

Cosijn's expectations may well have been raised by another proof of excellence that Bolland had sent him earlier: an artistically wrought Old English love poem.

### 3 An Old English Love Poem

Perhaps the most interesting find in the Bolland-Cosijn correspondence is an Old English love poem entitled "se glēo-mann" [the minstrel], composed by Bolland himself. The poem, reproduced in full as Appendix 2, is divided into four sections of thirty half lines each. The poem describes how a minstrel

25 10 October 1879; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 1.

26 In his edition, Bosworth had followed manuscript accentuation which is not phonological. Old English vowel length was a particularly controversial issue in the nineteenth century; see the contributions by Thomas and Bock to this volume.

27 24 August 1880; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL C 2, no. 3.

serenades his beloved underneath her window on the morning before a battle. During the battle, the minstrel continues to sing his song:

Hūru mīnum hām-stede	Indeed! To my homestead
Hēah-byrig lēofre	to the lofty town of my beloved
Ēstum ic fultum an	I gladly grant the help
Earma mīnra!	of my arms!
Heorte and hyge-þanc	The heart and thoughts
Hylde gemynda	the grace of my remembrance
On būr-getelde bēoþ	are in the dwelling
Beorhtre lēofan mægðe.	of the bright dear maiden. <sup>28</sup>

BOLLAND, “Se glēo-mann”, ll. 15–22; cf. ll. 45–52, 75–82

In the last section, the minstrel is mortally wounded and, for the last time, recites his lyrics, changing the words of the last four half lines into “Lāc ic an lustlice / Līfes mīnes! Heorte mīn and hylde / Heonan sweltende flēogaþ / On būres benc-þele / Beorhtre lēofan mægðe” [I gladly grant the sacrifice of my life! My heart and grace fly, dying, hence to the bench-plank of the hall of the bright dear maiden] (ll. 107–112). The poem was probably written for Bolland’s fiancée Klazina Bakker, who had stayed behind in Groningen while Bolland was in London.

The poem bears witness to Bolland’s extensive knowledge of the technicalities of Old English poetry. The two half lines in each set are connected through the alliteration of the first three stressed syllables – an impressive regularity that is often lacking from most surviving Old English poems, including parts of *Beowulf*. Bolland was also able to coin various poetic compounds that are not found in the Old English poetic corpus, including “sceaft-rōf” [spear-brave] (l. 5), “heoru-stapa” [sword-stepper] (l. 34), “dēaþ-sēoce” [death-sick] (l. 64) and “ord-mecg” [sword-warrior] (l. 100). A number of the martial terms Bolland used in his poem are *hapax legomena* from *Beowulf*, showing Bolland’s great familiarity with the Old English epic (for which, see below).<sup>29</sup>

To my knowledge, this poem is the earliest attempt at Old English composition by someone from the Netherlands. The practice was somewhat more common in England (see, e.g., Murphy 1982; Robinson 1993; Jones 2013), where, by the nineteenth century, composing Old English was also considered a didactic

28 The Modern English translation is mine; Bolland provided a Dutch translation.

29 These include “ferhðfrec” [bold-spirited] (l. 43), “wael-hlem” [noise of battle] (l. 56), “frēo-burg” [noble town] (l. 59) and “benc-þele” [bench-plank] (l. 111); see the notes in Appendix 2 for references to line numbers in *Beowulf*.

tool. Henry Sweet, for instance, wrote an Old English prose paraphrase of *Beowulf* for his *First Steps in Anglo-Saxon* (1897) to provide access to the poem for absolute beginners (Sweet 1897: 39–67). Professor Walter W. Skeat (1835–1912) even developed an English – Old English word list in 1879, which would have facilitated writing one's own Old English compositions (Skeat 1879). Since Skeat's word list was published for private distribution only, Bolland is unlikely to have used it for his own Old English poem. A work that may have come in handy was his own copy of the two-volume *Sprachschatz der angelsächsischen Dichter* by C. W. M. Grein, the first specialized dictionary of Old English poetry.<sup>30</sup> On its flyleaves, Bolland wrote two poetic phrases that clearly show his interest in Old English poetry: “bēo ðū on ōfeste!” [be in haste!], a line from *Beowulf*, and “būgan oððe berstan” [to bend or to break], a line from *The Dream of the Rood* that would have appealed to Bolland for its similarity to the Dutch idiomatic phrase *buigen of barsten*.

While the poem, and the Dutch translation Bolland provided, are not without some minor mistakes,<sup>31</sup> Bolland's “se glēo-mann” is a definitive sign of the former Groningen hooligan's aptitude for the study of Old English. Indeed, Bolland's talents were acknowledged by Cosijn and Kern, who composed a renewed reference letter, dated 27 December 1879, this time explicitly mentioning Bolland's expertise in Old English:

We whose names are under-written do herewith testify that Mr. G. J. P. J. Bolland is known to us as having successfully studied Old English (Anglo-Saxon), as well as other ancient Teutonic languages, Gothic, Old High German and Old Saxon.

H. Kern, Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Leyden

P. J. Cosijn, Professor of Old German at the same university<sup>32</sup>

#### 4 Bolland and *Beowulf*

The influence of *Beowulf* on Bolland's own Old English composition is hardly surprising: Bolland owned various editions of *Beowulf* and studied them closely.

<sup>30</sup> Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL 10 E 24–25.

<sup>31</sup> Notably, given his disdain for Bosworth's accentuation, Bolland occasionally forgot to add length marks to a number of words, including “anunga” (ll. 87, 117) for *ānunga* ‘certainly’.

<sup>32</sup> Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Bolland A 1, no. 12. This letter was written in English and the spelling “successfully” is theirs.

In his first letter to Cosijn, for example, he expressed his disgust over various printing errors in an edition by the philologist Benjamin Thorpe (1782–1870):

That I have every right to despise Thorpe's horrible edition of the *Beowulf*,  
I will demonstrate with a number of issues from the prologue:

14 ... *eyren-pearfe ongeat*  
15 *ep hie ær drugon* ...  
22 *fæt hine on ylde eft gewunigen*  
23 *Pil-gesipas* ...  
24 ... *lóf-dædum sceal*  
25 *in mægþa gehwære wan gepeón*  
29 ... *twá he selfa hæd*  
33 *ísig and út-fús ó-elinges fær.*

etc, etc. What do you think? Here is the work of a member of the Society of Netherlandish Literature at Leiden!<sup>33</sup>

All the errors noted by Bolland are accurate: “eyren-pearfe” for “fyren-pearfe” (*Beowulf*: l. 14); “ep” for “pe” (*Beowulf*: l. 15); “fæt” for “pæt” (*Beowulf*: l. 22) and so on. Nevertheless, his frustration directed at Benjamin Thorpe personally is unwarranted. After all, these errors are not found in Thorpe's first edition, published in 1855 (Thorpe 1855), but had been introduced in the second edition of his work, published posthumously in 1875 (Thorpe 1875). Apart from this scornful letter of a Dutch student to his professor, the errors in the second edition of Thorpe's *Beowulf* appear to have gone unnoticed, since they were retained in the third edition of 1889 (Thorpe 1889).

Thorpe's *Beowulf* edition was by no means the only work on *Beowulf* that Bolland had read. His *Beowulf* edition of choice appears to have been Moritz Heyne's *Beovulf: Angelsächsisches Heldengedicht* (3rd edn, 1873), which according to Niles (2015: 245) “was long admired as the most authoritative edition of *Beowulf*”. In Bolland's heavily annotated copy, now kept in the Leiden University Library, he added various notes on grammar as well as partial Dutch translations.<sup>34</sup> He also scribbled interpretations in the margins, noting, for instance, that “se fróða fäder Óhteres” (*Beowulf*: l. 2929) referred to the Swedish King Ongentheow. As with Thorpe's edition, Bolland appears attuned to pointing out printing errors and added five corrigenda to Moritz's list of “bemerkte

33 10 October 1879; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 1.

34 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL 1 E 9.

Druckfehler im Texte" [printing-errors noticed in the text].<sup>35</sup> By contrast, the two-volume *Beowulf* edition, published in 1882–1884, by Alfred Holder, contains no notes at all, nor do his copies of Karl Müllenhof's *Beowulf: Untersuchungen über das angelsächsische Epos und die älteste Geschichte der germanischen Seevölker* (1892) and Cosijn's *Aanteekeningen op den Béowulf* (1892).<sup>36</sup> By the time Bolland had acquired these books, it seems his interest in Old English was waning. Cosijn's book was a gift by the author himself, who wrote "*Viro spectatissimo* G. J. P. J. Bolland *m.a.*" [to the most esteemed man G. J. P. J. Bolland, my friend] on the book's title page, a clear sign that the two stayed in touch even after Bolland had turned his back on Old Germanic philology (for which, see below).

Another instance of Bolland's early interest in *Beowulf* has come down to us in the form of two unpublished, hand-written notebooks, both written in English. The first notebook is headed "Early English Literature" and contains two essays, on Old English literature and "Transitional English" (i.e. early Middle English), respectively.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the book contains a brief survey entitled "Landmarks for a chronological survey of Literature in North-America," lists of English expressions and proverbs, and a chronological overview of Arthurian literature. The essay on Old English features a brief analysis of *Beowulf*:

A conspicuous specimen of Anglosaxon poetry is the epic poem of Beowulf, which consists of far more than three thousand lines. It is the oldest extant epic in any Germanic language and strongly tastes of ancient heathenism, in spite of a few traces of Christianity, which may be later interpolations. Its hero sails from a land of the Goths to a land of the Danes, where he frees a chief of the name of Hrôthgar from the attacks of the marsh fiends Grendel and his mother, two monsters lurking in neighbouring fens and moors. In course of time Beowulf comes to be a ruler himself, and in this capacity is deadly wounded at last in a struggle with a fire-spitting dragon that had infested the environs of his residence. He is buried in great state under a barrow on a promontory which rises high above the sea.

35 Bolland also made various corrections in the text itself. E.g., for *Beowulf*: l. 791, he corrects Heyne's "päge" into "däge".

36 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL 1 E 52–53; BOL 12 E 2; BOL 12 F 139.

37 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL A 48, b.

This short summary of *Beowulf* is followed by an evaluation of the historical value of the poem, which lies in its depiction of “the actual life of ancient Germanic leaders”:

Real events have been transformed into legendary marvels in this story of old Teutonic exploits, but the actual life of ancient Germanic leaders is vividly painted. We read of feasts in the mead-hall, of the leader and his hearth-sharers, of their customs and manners, and of rude beginnings of a courtly ceremony. There is much boastful talk and reliance upon strength of hand in the poem, and a practical spirit of adventure that seeks peril as a commercial speculation. For the hero is undisguisedly a tradesman in his sword.

Following Daniel Haigh (1819–1879) (for which, see Shippey & Haarder 1998: 315–317), Bolland next relates the scenery of *Beowulf* to Yorkshire:

The original scene of the story was probably a corner of the isle of Saeland opposite to Gothland, but though England is never mentioned it seems that the scenery for its existing English shape was taken from the coast of Yorkshire, between Whitby and Bowlby Cliff.

Next, Bolland completes his analysis with a few words about the *Beowulf* manuscript (London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A.xv):

The manuscript in which the poem has been preserved belongs to the Cottonian library in the British Museum and is held to have been written in the tenth century. It has been much damaged in course of time and shows many gaps; especially the 32d, the 33d, and the 44th or last canto have come down to us in a fragmentary state.

Bolland may have had nothing new to add to the scholarship of *Beowulf*, but it is interesting to see that he gave the poem such a prominent place in his survey – the analysis of *Beowulf* precedes his discussion of Cædmon, for instance.

The second hand-written notebook, with the title “A Short Chronological List of English Literature,” was intended for publication.<sup>38</sup> The work spans over three hundred pages and features a chronological list of landmark publications, interspersed with summaries of well-known works, such as Milton’s

<sup>38</sup> Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL A 48, a.



*Paradise Lost*, Spencer's *Faerie Queene* and Thomas More's *Utopia*. Writing to his friend Harmen de Vries (1858–1920) on 8 April 1880, Bolland laid out his plans to publish his “Short Chronological List” as a reference work for prospective teachers of English.<sup>39</sup>

A short Chronological List of English Literature, with analyses & explanatory notes, being intended as a help for the memory of all who teach or study English Literature.

The work runs from Caedmon {675 AD} down to the present time, and will take up a volume of some 400 pages. I hope I can be useful in presenting to my countrymen a sort of “crib” which will enable them to look over the whole range of English Literature without much pains of research. All I will say for myself is that I wish there were such works in other languages, but so far as I know there does not exist one book of the sort. The work has, of course, no merit at all for originality: in compiling it I have largely availed myself of the historical & critical works existing. But don't you think it might be of use? Imagine a man who reads English, but has no time or calling for a set study of its Literature: he will find in my book a chronologic account of all leading works, with copious statements of plots, and notes explanatory. But perhaps the book would find no customers, at least not enough, considering the size of our fatherland.<sup>40</sup>

Over a century before the existence of popular online reference works such as *SparkNotes* and *Wikipedia*, Bolland was already aware of a potential market for student summaries.

For the Anglo-Saxon period, Bolland dwells at length on *Beowulf*, providing a five-page summary (see Appendix 3 below). This summary is fairly detailed and accurate, his incorrect notion that the dragon clutches Beowulf in its talons and infuses him with its venom notwithstanding (the dragon fatally bites Beowulf in the neck). The text holds few surprises for readers who are familiar with the poem, but it is as useful today as it would have been in the 1880s. Bolland's use of highly idiomatic English is noteworthy—not bad for a twenty-six-year-old Dutch autodidact student, who had spent the first twenty-five years of his life in the gutter of Groningen and a Leiden jailhouse!

39 Bolland may have anticipated a demand for books like this, following the changes to the Dutch educational system in 1863 which introduced various types of secondary schools and created new groups of teachers, including ones who had not attended University.

40 8 April 1880; Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ph.1.16(a). This letter is written in English. My thanks are due to Klaas van der Hoek (Amsterdam) for his help in providing digital images of this letter.



## 5 Bolland as a Student of Eduard Sievers in Jena

Clearly, Bolland had made the most of his stay in London and, upon his return, he did extremely well on his examination for an English teaching diploma. Cosijn, impressed with Bolland's stellar performance, now wished to send his pupil to the University of Jena to study with Eduard Sievers (1850–1932), the rising star of Germanic philology. This time, Cosijn's support consisted of more than a reference letter: he made a financial contribution and asked various colleagues to do the same. Cosijn and his colleagues ultimately amassed an amount of fl. 1,045, enough to allow Bolland to study for at least a year in Germany to acquire a doctoral degree, starting in December 1880. In return for Cosijn's magnanimous gesture, Bolland promised to keep the Leiden professor well informed about academic life in Jena.

Bolland's weekly schedule in Jena consisted of classes taught by Sievers, Carl Cappeller (1840–1925) and Berthold Delbrück (1842–1922). With Sievers, Bolland took five hours of Old Germanic philology, one hour of general phonetics and an additional two-hour reading group of Old High German; he further attended three hours of elementary Sanskrit, taught by Cappeller, and another two hours of Latin syntax with Delbrück.<sup>41</sup> Overall, Bolland appears little impressed by these classes: Delbrück might have a clear voice, but his lectures were uninteresting; Cappeller's voice was unpleasant and his classes consisted of little more than copying out paradigms from grammars; Sievers' lectures were bearable, but Bolland noted that the classes were dumbed down to accommodate his fellow students. Especially the reading group for Old High German turned out to be a let-down for Bolland: every week they would read a text from Wilhelm Braune's *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch* (1875) and the classes were incredibly tedious. "The study of Old High German does not quench any thirst," Bolland wrote to Cosijn, "it has no literature. All those confessions and sermons and prayers make for the most horrible reading material. It is with incredible reluctance that I have read Braune's *Lesebuch*."<sup>42</sup>

Cosijn had warned Bolland not to expect too much from the classes at Jena and that he might learn more from personal contact with his professors.<sup>43</sup> Bolland appears to have taken that advice to heart and soon developed a friendly acquaintance with Sievers; the two would often get together and talk about philological as well as private matters. For instance, Sievers confided in

41 Bolland to Harmen de Vries, 15 January 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 2788, no. 1.

42 17 January 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 6.

43 27 December 1880; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL C 2, no. 4.

Bolland that he was seriously considering a job offer from Harvard University. Bolland wrote to Cosijn that he thought it likely that Sievers would accept the lucrative offer, especially since the latter had told him that he had only decided to specialize in Germanic philology for the money and was willing to give up on the field if he should move to Harvard:

He tells me that if he gets the job he will say farewell to Germanic studies and that he never felt any special love for the field, but simply chose it because it was the cheapest available. Everything, he says, that he ever wrote was published for the money [...]. Imagine the look on my face when he calmly told me this. One would have thought that such a man had a heart for the cause.<sup>44</sup>

In the end, Sievers would stay in Jena, because they offered him a higher salary (cf. Germann 1968). Before this pay raise, Bolland reported that he was shocked that Sievers earned as little as he did and noted that it had consequences for the man's library: he did not even own a copy of the *Brut*, an omission Bolland greeted with "bewilderment implicating reproof."<sup>45</sup>

Bolland was equally unimpressed by the living conditions of Sievers' colleagues. Carl Cappeller, in particular, appears to have lived in a most unimpressive bachelor's flat and smoked horrible, cheap cigars. Bolland notes:

These professors, as far as I can see, do not live wealthily. Professor Cappeller is unwed; when I saw a French novel on his table, I thought to myself: if I have to grow old like that I would rather shoot myself in the head (he must be in his fifties!).<sup>46</sup>

Berthold Delbrück's accommodation was not much better: he did not even have a carpet in his room.

As the weeks rolled on, Bolland appears to have become more disillusioned with his life in Jena. Writing to his friend Harmen de Vries, he summarized:

I don't like Jena one bit. It is a town of about 10,000 inhabitants, about 450 students and as poor as a field-rat. [...] Everything looks really German, that is poor. Even the houses of the rich are bare. No carpets on the floor,

44 10 January 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 3.

45 10 January 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 3.

46 10 January 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 3. A "French novel" was a nineteenth-century euphemism for "a salacious book" (Holder 2007: s.v. *French novel*). I am indebted to Rolf H. Bremmer Jr for this reference.

perhaps a rug in the corner with a table. [...] Cigars: expensive and bad. Beer: pretty good, 9 cents a glass. Salary for the Professor of German, Dr. Sievers: fl. 1,450 annually. Food: horrible.<sup>47</sup>

Besides the dreariness of the town, Bolland missed his fiancée and was unimpressed by his fellow students. Although he got on well with Georgios Hatzidakis (1843–1941), who later held the first chair of Linguistics and Indian Philology at the University of Athens and with whom Bolland discussed accentuation in Greek,<sup>48</sup> other students failed to impress. Not only did they drink too much (up to four large pitchers per evening), they also showed too little passion and autodidactic talent for the field. As a result, Bolland noticed, the professors made their classes too elementary. “Professor Sievers’ readings have held little value for me recently,” he wrote to Cosijn, “Whatever he tells his students of Old High German is known to everyone who has an inkling of the ABC of Germanic studies.”<sup>49</sup>

Overall, it seems that Jena, despite its good reputation in the field of philology (see Germann 1968: 305), was somewhat of a disappointment for Bolland. His growing disenchantment was probably caused, in part, by the fact that he had received a profitable offer to teach at a secondary school in the Dutch East Indies. Daniel Steyn Parvé (1825–1883), the man who had been Bolland’s examiner and had personally signed his teaching diploma in 1880, had recommended Bolland for the position at the Colonial Office. The job offered financial security and a pension for Bolland and his wife-to-be. Bolland jumped at the chance and, much to Cosijn’s understandable chagrin, he left Jena before the end of January, only a month and a half after he had arrived.

Although Bolland’s stay in Jena was cut short, he did leave an impression. Eduard Sievers agreed to write him a reference letter, which reads:

The undersigned declares herewith that he knows Mister G. J. P. J. Bolland from Groningen to be a scientifically capable young scholar, who has extensively and thoroughly studied both general Germanic linguistics and also, especially, German.

Dr E. Sievers,  
Professor Ord. of German Philology at Jena University.<sup>50</sup>

47 15 January 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 2788, no. 1.

48 27 January 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 2788, no. 1.

49 21 January 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 7.

50 “Der Unterzeichnete erklärt hiermit dass er Herrn G. J. P. J. Bolland aus Groningen als einen wissenschaftlich tüchtigen jungen Gelehrten kennen gelernt hat, welcher sowohl in allgemeiner germanische Sprachwissenschaft als speciell auch im Deutschen gründliche und

Indeed, Sievers remembered his Dutch student some eighteen years later, when Bolland wrote to him. In his reply, dated 17 September 1899, Sievers expressed how pleased he was to have heard from Bolland again and hoped that his former student was satisfied with his current position.<sup>51</sup>

## 6 Conclusion: Bolland's Farewell to Old Germanic Studies

After leaving Jena, Bolland sent a number of apologetic letters to Cosijn. He offered to pay Cosijn and his colleagues back the money they had donated and tried to explain that the teaching job in the Dutch East Indies would secure him the financial stability he had long sought. Of course, he wrote, he would rather have become a professor in English or Germanic philology, but those jobs were unavailable for people without a proper university degree, like himself. He pointed out that this was not at all for lack of skill and even claimed that the recently appointed Professor of German in Groningen, Barend Sijmons (1853–1935) “knows as much about the subjects as I do [...] and when it comes to Germanic literature and English in all its phases he is greatly my inferior.”<sup>52</sup> Be that as it may, Bolland's decision had been made and he left for Batavia on 23 April 1881.

In the blistering heat of the Dutch Indies, Bolland soon found out it was impossible to keep up with developments in the field of Old Germanic studies. He first turned to the study of Latin and Greek, before discovering philosophy. With all the energy and enthusiasm that he had formerly invested in the study of Old English, he now devoted himself to the philosophy of Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906). All the while, he kept up his correspondence with Cosijn. The latter even helped him to find publishers for his philosophical writings and, as noted above, sent him a signed copy of his *Aanteekeningen op den Béowulf* [*Notes on Beowulf*] (1892). Cosijn proved himself a true friend,

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eingehende Studien gemacht hat. Dr. E. Sievers, Ord. Professor der deutschen Philologie an der Universität Jena.”; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL A 1, no. 14.

51 17 September 1899; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL B 1899. Bolland appears to have written to Sievers in the year of Cosijn's death, asking for recommendations for Cosijn's replacement as Professor of Germanic Philology and Anglo-Saxon. It seems Bolland had suggested Hendrik Kern for Cosijn's vacant chair and Sievers agreed with this choice. Nevertheless, Cosijn was succeeded by C. C. Uhlenbeck (1866–1951). The letter by Bolland to Sievers has not been preserved.

52 24 February 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 9. In another letter, Bolland mockingly notes that Sijmons was unfamiliar with the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (30 March 1881; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1762: c, no. 10). On Sijmons, see de Wilde (2007).

when, in 1896, he nominated Bolland for the professorial chair of Philosophy at Leiden University. A day after Bolland's inaugural lecture, Cosijn wrote to him: "You did not dream of this as an assistant schoolmaster in Katwijk! That's how it goes!"<sup>53</sup> Over the next few years, until Cosijn's death from a lingering illness in 1899, the two entertained an amicable correspondence (see Porck 2018).

At Cosijn's funeral, Bolland was one of three speakers and commemorated Cosijn as "een trouw raadsman en vriend" [a loyal counsellor and friend].<sup>54</sup> Nine years later, as Bolland's first biographer van den Bergh van Eysinga (1908: 201) reports, Bolland still had a photograph of Cosijn on the wall of his study: "Diens beeltenis aan den wand van Bolland's studeervertrek legt nog heden ten dage getuigenis af van de dankbare piëteit, die deze jegens zijne voormalige beschermers blijft koesteren" [His picture on the wall of Bolland's study still bears witness to the grateful piety that he cherishes for his former protectors]. Indeed, the correspondence between Bolland and Cosijn reveals that Bolland owed much to the professor who wrote the following words to him in 1880:

I have a solid conviction that you can be made into something and I consider it my duty to show the way that I consider to be the right way to those who cherish scholarship and work diligently. I do not get paid for this. But a teacher at a university is morally obliged to do so.<sup>55</sup>

Cosijn, for as far as we can establish on the basis of the correspondence discussed in this article, certainly fulfilled this moral duty.

As a medium of knowledge transfer and a way to establish and consolidate scholarly networks, the letters between Bolland and Cosijn are indicative of the importance of correspondence in university circles at the end of the nineteenth century. In addition, the behind-the-scenes glimpses these letters provide of academic life in Leiden, London and Jena make visible the vital role student-professor relationships played in a young scholar's early career. In this respect, at least, the nineteenth century is not all that different from today.

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53 24 March 1896; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL C 2, no. 22.

54 "Uitvaart prof. Cosijn," *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 30 August 1899, the 4 o'clock edition.

55 8 June 1880; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BOL C 2, no. 1.

Fletcher and Oliver Traxel. I also thank Mart van Duijn (curator at Leiden University Library) for digitizing the correspondence between Bolland and Cosijn.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1: G. J. P. J. Bolland, "Landmarks for a Chronological Survey of Transition-English"*

In a letter to Matthias de Vries, dated 30 May 1880, Bolland appended a list of publications that he considered crucial for the study of the development of early Middle English. The list, the first of its kind according to Bolland, is intended as "a safe guide to a chronological study of English in its periods of transition from the inflected & unmixed to the analytical and hybrid state."<sup>56</sup> The list is reproduced below, without an attempt to modernize spelling or layout.

- 1125 Poem of the Grave {Max Rieger p. 124}.<sup>–57</sup>
- 1154 Last Record in the Chronicle.–
- 1200 St. Margaret the Maiden and Martyr.– Holy Maidenhead.–
- 1205 Laghamon's Brut.– Bishop Poor's Rule of Nuns.
- 1225 Ormulum.–
- 1230 The Life of St Juliana {a prose tale in 2 texts}.–
- 1250 Rimed Versification of Genesis & Exodus.–
- 1258 English proclamation of Henry III {Latham, the English Lang. 314. Very incorrect.– Angus 77}.<sup>–58</sup>
- 1275 Romance & Prophecies of Thomas of Ercildoun.–
- 1280 Poem of the owl & Nightingale.–  
Lays of King Horn & Havelok the Dane.–
- 1290 Walter of Exeter's romantic History of Guy of Warwick.–
- 1298 Robert of Gloucester's Riming Chronicle.–
- 1300 Michael of Kildare's {?} Satire of the Land of Cockayne.–
- 1303 Robert manning de Brunne's "Handling Sin".
- 1307 Elegy on the Death of Edward I {Warton, Hist. of Engl. Poetry. Section II. Very incorrect}.<sup>–59</sup>

56 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LTK 1876, no. 1.

57 Reference to Rieger (1861).

58 References to Latham (1848) and Angus (1861).

59 Reference to Wharton (1774).



- 1315 Poems of Adam Davy {Warton, Section VI}.–  
 1320 Cursor Mundi {a Northumbrian poem of ab. 24000 lines, carrying the scripture story of the world, with legends intermixed, through 7 ages, from the Creation till Doomsday}.–  
 1325 Sir Gawin & the Green Knight.–  
 1327 Will. of Shoreham's prose version of the Psalter.  
 1330 R. Manning de Brunne's transl. of Peter of Langtoft's French Chronicle of England.–  
 1340 Michael of Northgate's Againbite of Inwit.–  
 Richard Rolle of Hampole's Prick of Conscience.–  
 Alliterative Romance of King Alexander.–  
 1350 Alliterative song of Joseph of Arimathea.–  
 English version of the romance of William & the Werwolf.–  
 1352 Lawrence Minot's War-lyrics.–  
 1356 Sir John Mandeville's English Version of his Travels.–  
 1362 A-text of William {Langley}'s Vision.–

### *Appendix 2: G. J. P. J. Bolland, "Se glēo-mann" (1879)*

The following is an Old English love poem that Bolland sent to Pieter Jacob Cosijn on 10 October 1879. Bolland's original Dutch translation has been replaced with a facing Modern English translation that mostly follows the Old English (exceptions are noted in the footnotes). The layout, half lines instead of long lines, reflects Bolland's original layout; line numbers have been added for the sake of reference. I have replaced Bolland's original length marks (which look like lengthened circumflexes) with macrons. Bolland occasionally forgot to add length marks to a number of words, including "siðe" (l. 13) for *sið* 'journey', "eala" (l. 91) for *ēalā* 'Oh' and "anunga" (ll. 87, 117) for *ānunga* 'certainly'; the missing length marks have not been added.

#### *Se glēo-mann*

#### *The minstrel*

	Glōwende lufan glēde,	Glowing with the glow of love
	Glædlicum mægð-frēode,	of delightful love for his bride,
	Birnende æfter blæde,	yearning for fame,
	Beorhtnisse hlisan,	for the brightness of glory,
5	Sceaft-rōf gydda scop,	the spear-brave <sup>60</sup> singer of songs,

60 Bolland's Dutch translation of *sceaft-rōf* reads "manhaftig" [manly, brave] – the compound *sceaft-rōf* 'spear-brave' seems to be his own coinage and is not attested in Old English poetry.

	Scearp hrēðe <sup>61</sup> mecg, Hatigende sorhfulle hēafas On hearne nealles Eode under ēag-þyrl 10 Æmes lēofre. Gamen-wudu <sup>63</sup> grētte Gearu luf-songe; Swæslice nehstan siðe Song morgen-grētinge: 15 Hūru mīnum hām-stede Hēah-byrig lēofre Ēstum ic fultum an Earma mīnra! Heorte and hyge-þanc 20 Hylðo gemynda On būr-getelde bēoþ Beorhtre lēofan mægðe. Glædlīce glōwan Glēde wæl-gīfrum 25 Lufan and blāde lēane Læcan sprēote, Feohtan for fæder-ēðle And fægere idese Dæd-cēnum gydda dihtere 30 Gedēfe is!	the sharp, brave warrior, hating sorrowful lamentations, not at all aware of danger <sup>62</sup> he went under the window of the house of his beloved. He greeted his play-wood ready for a love-song; graciously, for the last time he sang his morning-greeting: Indeed! To my homestead <sup>64</sup> to the lofty town of my beloved I gladly grant the help of my arms! The heart and thoughts the grace of my remembrance are in the dwelling of the bright dear maiden. To glow gladly with battle-eager glow for the reward of love and fame to throw with the spear, to fight for the father-land and the fair lady to the deed-brave poet of songs that is fitting!
2	Ponne mid helme on hēafode Hārre comp-þecene	Then with the helm on his head with the hoary battle-covering

61 Probably an adjectival rendering (otherwise not attested) of Old English *hrēð* ‘triumph’; Bolland’s Dutch translation reads “dapper” [brave].

62 The Old English translates to “not at all in danger”, but Bolland translates “onbekommerd” [unaware of danger].

63 An Old English kenning for ‘harp’, uniquely found in *Beowulf*: ll. 1065a, 2108a.

64 Bolland translates “geboortegrond” [birth-ground]; the reference is to the Dutch town Groningen, where Bolland was born and where his fiancée Klazina Bakker lived while he stayed in London.

	Stōp hilde-stearc	he advanced the battle-brave
	Heoru-stapa <sup>65</sup> mōdige,	the brave sword-stepper,
35	Mid hearpan on handa	with the harp in his hand
	Hyse dēorlic	the worthy man
	Gyddode cræftigne gilp,	recited a powerful song,
	Gim-cwide <sup>66</sup> sang.	sang a precious song.
	Trum-līce trȳwe	completely loyal
40	Træd comp-lāstas,	he trod the tracks of battle,
	Lof-herunge lofestrān	about the praise of his most beloved
	Gelōme cwæð;	he often spoke;
	Ferhðfrec <sup>67</sup> feohtere	the bold-spirited fighter,
	Hilde-fūs gyddode:	ready for battle, recited:
45	Hūru mīnum hām-stede	Indeed! To my homestead
	Hēah-byrig lēofre	to the lofty town of my beloved
	Ēstum ic fultum an	I gladly grant the help
	Earma mīnra!	of my arms!
	Heorte and hyge-þanc	The heart and thoughts
50	Hyldo gemynda	the grace of my remembrance
	On būr-getelde bēoþ	are in the dwelling
	Beorhtre lēofan mægðe.	of the bright dear maiden.
	Gūþ-ræse gearo	Ready for the warlike attack,
	Georn feoht-brōgan	eager for the terrors of battle
55	For hlisan and hluttre lufan	for fame and out of pure love
	wæl-hlem <sup>68</sup> ic sēce.	I seek the noise of battle.
	Nēþan wille ic nearo,	I want to venture upon difficulties,
	Nēþa gryrelicra	and against hateful enmities
	Friðean frēo-burg <sup>69</sup>	protect the noble town
60	fræ-beorhte <sup>70</sup> lofestrān!	of my exceedingly bright most beloved!

3

Ponne swāt-fāh hilde-sweord	When the blood-stained battle-sword
Swēgende was,	was crashing,

65 The kenning *heoru-stapa* 'sword-stepper, i.e. warrior' appears to be Bolland's own coinage – it does not occur in the Old English corpus.

66 Another one of Bolland's own coinages: 'jewel-song'.

67 This word is uniquely found in *Beowulf*: l. 1146a.

68 This word is uniquely found in *Beowulf*: l. 2969b.

69 This word is uniquely found in *Beowulf*: l. 693a.

70 A genitive form, *fræ-beorhte*, is expected here, in order to match the Dutch translation, which has a possessive construction, as reflected in the Modern English translation.

- Sigon frēcne secgas  
 Dēaþ-sēoce<sup>71</sup> on wange:  
 65 Dræp þonne driht-bearn  
 Drýslice fēond-sceaðan,  
 Feaht hilde-fūs  
 Fāru-wegas hēawende,  
 Sprēotas tō-sprungon,  
 70 Sprengdon hāle byrnan,  
 Sweord gæfon wæl-swingas,  
 Swulton weras bennum.  
 Eallunge wæs he ān-ræd  
 On yrr to singenne:  
 75 Hūru mīnum hām-stede  
 Hēah-byrig lēofre  
 Ēstum ic fultum an  
 Earma mīnra!  
 Heorte and hyge-þanc  
 80 Hyldo gemynda  
 On būr-getelde bēoþ  
 Beorhtre lēofan mægðe.  
 For lofestrān ealdres linnan,  
 Ālecgān feorh-dagas,  
 85 For blāde wāpen blendan,  
 Blēdan for gūð-hrēðe  
 Anunga orettan  
 Ēðelan cynnes  
 Gūð mōdum gydd-scōpe  
 90 Gilp-dæd wasan sceal!
- when the brave warriors fell,  
 death-sick on the field:  
 then the people-child found  
 the terribly hostile enemies,  
 battle-ready he fought,  
 hewing pathways,  
 spears sprang apart,  
 the heroes scattered armours,  
 the swords gave murderous strokes,  
 warriors died of their wounds.  
 He was entirely resolved  
 to sing energetically:<sup>72</sup>  
 Indeed! To my homestead  
 to the lofty town of my beloved  
 I gladly grant the help  
 of my arms!  
 The heart and thoughts  
 the grace of my remembrance  
 are in the dwelling  
 of the bright dear maiden.  
 To lose his life for his most beloved,  
 to lay aside his life-days,  
 to mix the weapons for fame,  
 to bleed for battle-glory  
 certainly for the champion  
 of noble stock,  
 for the battle-minded song-singer,  
 it must be a glorious deed!

## 4

- Eala! Hæleð fēol heolfrig,  
 Gehearmod ecge,  
 Fæge on wæl-felde  
 On feoht-wange sweltende,  
 95 Sāh on gesæcce,  
 From sadole drēas,
- Oh! The hero fell, bloody,  
 harmed by the sword,  
 fated to die on the field of the slain,  
 dying on the field of battle,  
 he sank down in the fight,  
 he fell from the saddle,

71 Another one of Bolland's own coinages.

72 "On yrr" literally means 'in anger, in fury'; the translation 'energetically' is a rendering of Bolland's Dutch translation "opgewekt".

	Drepen sceaðena mæle drēorigum	found by the enemies' bloody sword
	Dryslīcum brande,	the terrible weapon,
	Ealles butan eg-san	completely without fear
100	Ord-mecg <sup>73</sup> ðurh-wunode,	the sword-man stood fast,
	Lēoð-cwīde cwæð on līnde	Recited a poem on his shield,
	Līnnende ealdres;	losing his life;
	Hlīnigende on hleoþ-sclīde <sup>74</sup>	leaning on his protective shield
	Hlēoðor-gydd sang:	He sang a loud song:
105	Hūru mīnum hām-stede	Indeed! To my homestead
	Hēah-byrig lēofre	to the lofty town of my beloved
	Lāc ic an lustlīce	I gladly grant the sacrifice
	Līfes mīnes!	of my life!
	Heorte mīn and hyl-do	My heart and grace
110	Heonan sweltende flēogaþ	fly, dying, hence
	On būres benc-þele <sup>75</sup>	to the bench-plank of the hall
	Beorhtre lēofan mægðe.	of the bright dear maiden.
	For lufan and lof-herunge	For love and praise
	On lāce sīgan,	to die in battle,
115	Sweltan for swæsre	to die for one's dear
	Swētre lofestrān	sweet most beloved
	Anunga orettan	certainly for the champion
	Æðelan cynnes	of noble stock,
	Dæd-hwatum songa dihtere	for the deed-brave poet of songs
120	Gedēfe is!	that is fitting!

### *Appendix 3: Beowulf summary from G. J. P. J. Bolland, "A Short Chronological List of English Literature" (1880)*

This five-page summary of *Beowulf* is found in Bolland's "A Short Chronological List of English Literature" (1880) and is of interest as an early, unprinted student summary of the Old English epic. The text is written in English and the spelling has not been modernized.

Hrōdghâr, a Danish King and descendant of Scild Scefing, the mighty warrior, causes a grand hall to be built, to which he gives the name of Heorot. This hall is soon made a scene of slaughter by the mighty attacks of Grendel, a fiendish being, that lives in gloomy marshes and carries off at one time no less than thirty thanes, whom he devours in his retreat. These dreadful visitations continue for

73 Another one of Bolland's own coinages, cf. *ordwiga* 'sword man'.

74 Another one of Bolland's own coinages.

75 This word is uniquely found in *Beowulf*: ll. 486a, 1239a.

a period of twelve years. Intelligence of this calamity having reached Bêowulf, the valiant son of Ecgthêow and a nephew to Hygelâc the King of the Geats, he sets out to rid the Danes of the monster. In company with fifteen other warriors he sails from home. When reaching Hrôdhgâr's realm he is desired by an outpost standing on the extreme point of the land to give his name and tell the reason of his coming. After a parley Bêowulf and his companions are brought before Hrôdhgâr, who recapitulates all that he has suffered from Grendel; all then sit down to drink. During their potations Hunferth, a quarrelsome and envious courtier, taunts Bêowulf on the subject of a swimming match between the latter and Breca, prince of the Brontings. Bêowulf however retorts effectually and related the perils he underwent at the bottom of the sea in his struggles with the nickers. Wealhthêow, Hrôdhgâr's queen, then stepping in, presents the mead-cup to the guests; after a while she and her consort retire to rest, leaving Bêowulf & his companions in the hall.

Whilst the other warriors are snoring Bêowulf awaits the coming of Grendel. At last the latter suddenly appears and gets hold of a sleeping warrior whom he devours. He then is caught by Bêowulf, whose companions run to his assistance; but they find that the monster's carcass is proof against their weapons. Bêowulf, however, grasps him & tears his arm from his shoulder; so mutilated Grendel succedes in escaping to his fen-dwelling. All the people are eager to behold Grendel's hand & arm; the praises of Bêowulf are sung and one of the King's thanes recites the heroic deeds of Sigemund Waelsing & Fitela his son & nephew. After this a horse race is held. Heorot is restored to its former splendour and at a great feast Bêowulf & his companions are munificently rewarded for their services. A glee-man having sung some heroic deeds Bêowulf is presented with a rich dress & golden collar.

When the warriors have betaken themselves to sleep Grendel's mother, bent on vengeance for her dead son, enters the hall; the warriors rousing themselves she hastens back, not however without taking with her Aeschere, an old friend of Hrôdhgâr's. When hearing of this new disaster Beowulf courageously resolves to attack the monsters in their own retreat, and accompanied by Hrôdhgâr he sets out on an exploring expedition towards the marshes. On their way they find Aesc-here's head lying on the bank of a lake. Notwithstanding its horrid aspect and the monstrous beings it contains, Bêowulf makes up his mind for a descent, armed as he is with a famous sword named Hrunting, lent him by Hunferth. Having plunged into the water he encounters Grendel's mother, and an awful struggle ensues. After an anxious suspense Hrodhgâr sees the brave Gêat reappear a victor, with Grendel's head for a trophy, which is borne before Bêowulf in triumph. Bêowulf presents Hrôdhgâr with the hilt of a magic sword found by him in the sub-marine cave; the blade of this goodly weapon melted away when

he slew the witch, through the heat and venom of her blood. The monsters now being destroyed once for all, the Danish King & Beowulf take leave of each other. Richly endowed with presents Bêowulf and his warriors return home. They find a welcome reception, and Bêowulf relates his story to Hygelâc, his kinsman.

By a series of subsequent events Bêowulf becomes the successor on the throne of the Gêats; in the latter part of his reign a dragon begins to sorely invest the neighbourhood of the residence. This monster is the keeper of a treasure hid in a mound and laid down there by some prince in by-gone days. He has been enraged by the theft committed by a subject of Bêowulf's, who, having to meet the demands of his master, has ventured in his despair to invade the spell-bound cave. The dragon begins to vomit forth glowing embers and devastates the whole neighborhood. If the dreadful foe is not to lay waste every particle of land the old king must make an effort to overcome him. Bêowulf accordingly prepares for the conflict. In the ensuing struggle the old hero is reduced to great straits; valiantly the noble Wiglaf, his kinsman comes to his help, notwithstanding the cowardice of the followers of the King, who seized by a panic, have fled to a wood.

The fight continues; Bêowulf's sword, Naegling, snaps asunder and the dragon clutches the aged hero in his talons. Wiglâf having wounded the dragon, Bêowulf draws his knife with which he puts an end to the struggle by cutting the monster through the middle. But though a victor now he feels his own death too to be at hand, the dragon having infused his venom into his veins. Sitting on a stone he bids Wiglâf go and bring the treasure from the cave, that, having looked at it, he may die in peace. Coming back from this mission Wiglâf finds his lord dying; and Bêowulf breathes his last after having given his faithful kinsman his directions for the funeral. Bitterly are the king's men reproached by Wiglaf having left their prince in the lurch at the time of his need, after having received so many favors at his hands. The funeral pile is constructed according to the wishes of the dying king, and a mound is erected in Hrones-naes as a token of remembrance, that the sailors who will afterwards pass by it, call it Bêowulf's mount.