**BEOWULF’S CHARACTERISATION**

**Beowulf hears about Grendel and decides to travel from his home in Geatland (southern Sweden) to Heorot (in northeast Denmark) to see if he can help out.**

When he heard about Grendel, Hygelac's thane

was on home ground, over in Geatland.

There was no one else like him alive.

In his day, he was the mightiest man on earth,

high-born and powerful. He order a boat

that would ply the waves. He announced his plan:

to sail the swan's road and search out that king,

the famous prince who needed defenders.

Nobody tried to keep him from going,

no elder denied him, dear as he was to them.

Instead, they inspected omens and spurred

his ambition to go, whilst he moved about

like the leader he was, enlisting men,

the best he could find; with fourteen others

the warrior boarded the boat as captain,

a canny pilot along coast and currents.

Time went by, the boat was on water,

in close under the cliffs.

Men climbed eagerly up the gangplank,

sand churned in surf, warriors loaded

a cargo of weapons, shining war-gear

in the vessel's hold, then heaved out,

away with a will in their wood-weathered ship.

Over the waves, with the wind behind her

and foam at her neck, she flew like a bird

until her curved prow had covered the distance

and on the following day, at the due hour,

those seafarers sighted land,

sunlit cliffs, sheer crags

and looming headlands, the landfall they sought.

It was the end of their voyage and the Geats vaulted

Over the side, out on the sand,

And moored their ship. There was a clash of mail

And a thresh of gear. They thanked God

For that easy crossing on a clam sea.

**CHARACTERISATION’S ANALYSIS – Beowulf**

The object of the present work is to analyse Beowulf’s characterisation in the verse taken into consideration, which is an extract of the epic-heroic poem *Beowulf*.

In order to achieve the goal the present work will first provide the narrator’s methods to introduce the character, and on a second moment will consider how connotative choices add to meaning.

The narrator initially introduces the character in media res, using the telling technique to plunge him into the situation. Furthermore, the speaker doesn’t refer to him with his proper name, instead he addresses him with the subject personal pronoun “he”. As a result the reader is curious to find out the identity of the addressee. The suspense is increased by the alliterative sound “h”, “he heard”.

In addition, the narrator highlights his uniqueness with the absolute negation “no one else” and the simile “like him” in the expression “there was no one else like him alive”, which acquires a superlative meaning. Also, the adjective “alive” connotes his courage too.

The uniqueness is then put into a better focus with the use of the absolute superlative adjective “mightiest”, usually associated to gods or divinities, and the alliteration of the consonant sound “m”, “mightiest man”. His divine nature his also underlined by the expression “on earth”, which creates a syntactical and semantic parallelism with the previous “on home ground”, that connotes his heroic qualities.

The speaker refers to his social extraction, “Hygelac’s thane”, to highlight his power. This justifies the following use of the verbs “ordered” and “announced”, that once again underlines his authority.

His competence is connoted with the line: “he ordered a boat that would ply the waves”, that displays his knowledge in the naval field.

Also, the verb “announced” recalls the religious related “Annunciation” that conveys a sacral aura.

With the anaphoric structure of the absolute negations “nobody” and “no elder denied” his uniqueness is once again put into focus and draws the reader’s attention. His high reputation and trustworthiness is underlined with the lines “nobody tried to keep him from going”, “no elder denied him”, “they inspected omens”, “spurred his ambition to go” and the adjective “dear”.

The simile “like the leader he was” describes and connotes his ability and successfulness in leading and his competence is once again connoted with his actions, such as “moved about” and “enlisting man”.

The adjective “warrior” conveys his generosity and willingness to go and help as well as his courage, meanwhile the adjective “captain” and the expression “canny pilot” recall his leader-like qualities, his experience, his high reputation and his cleverness.

In conclusion, the narrator implicitly conveys the character’s faith with the expression “They thanked God” referring to his people’s faith. Indeed, “God” hints at the Christian religion.