Beowulf’s Funeral

The first quatrain conveys the values of Beowulf like a warrior. To underline Beowulf’s importance the Narrator focuses reader’s attention on the huge size of the pyre: “foursquare” (L. 2). From the semantic point of view, the verbs “stacked and decked” (L. 2) tell to the reader how many objects hung on Beowulf’s pyre. The adjectives “heavy” and “shining” (L.L. 3-4) give a high value to the warrior. The sound “s” is current and it creates silence in front of the dead body.

The narrator organizes the narration in chronological order. By the narration, the reader can understand that Beowulf was considered an important person in Anglo-Saxon society. The narrator uses the words “famed” and “beloved” (L. 6). The adjectives use underlines the people’s respect for Beowulf and the verb “beloved” has a final position because affection is more important than fame.

They kindle the fire on a height and they kindle the hugest of all funeral fires because Beowulf was a very important person. The narrator uses the “run-on-line” to give speed to the interpretation. Fumes and smoke creates an image of solemnity. Only the big blaze of death stops their weeping, something of big that sweeps an important person. In addition, the wind stops in front of this rite, it underlines another time the general mourning situation. After the silence, a sense of agony pervades the atmosphere “flames wrought havoc in the hot bone-house, burning it to the core” (L.L. 11-12). Then they cry because they know that they will never get back their lord.

The woman has bound up hair in sign of respect and she wreaks pain. She is spokesperson of her population, a population pervaded by fears: “her nation invaded”, “enemies on the rampage”, “bodies in piles”, “slavery” and “abasement” (L.L. 17-18-19). The reader can understand that society’s organization was horizontal because a woman was selected to be the spokesperson. The use of “run-on-line” gives speed to the narration. The final smoke of Beowulf’s body is gone.

The construction of the memorial is the first priority, because the rests of the fire are waiting their right place, a place worthy of Beowulf. The memorial is very big in sign of the importance of Beowulf. Everyone had to remember him, so the construction could be seen from far away. Only the abilities of good builders are worthy to build this monument.

The quantity of buried jewels is related to the solemnity of the memorial and to the value of Beowulf. The buried trove will never be stolen because now it belongs to Earth. The ancestral reliquary is sign of old glories that are dead such as Beowulf so now it is useless.

The solemn rite of the authorities consecrates Beowulf’s tomb. They mourn for the last time their king, a man who they loved.