

# BEOWULF: BROKEN DOWN

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ORIGINAL PAPER:

PORCK, T., + STOLK, S. (2017). MARKING BOUNDARIES IN BEOWULF: ÆSCHERE'S HEAD, GREDEL'S ARM AND THE DRAGON'S CORPSE. *AMSTERDAMER BEITRÄGE ZUR ÄLTEREN GERMANISTIK*, 77(3-4), 521-540. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1163/18756719-12340090](https://doi.org/10.1163/18756719-12340090)

PROJECT CREATED FOR THE CLASS:

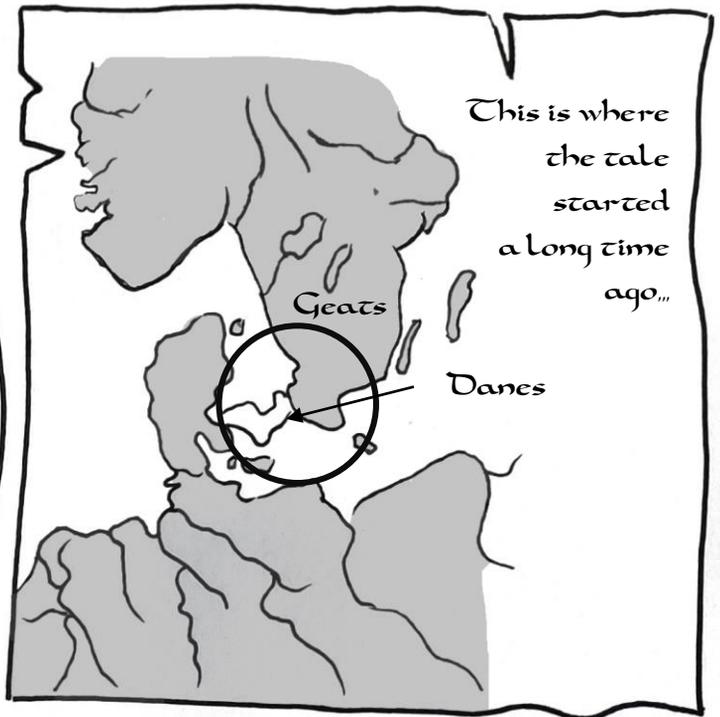
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Beowulf  
Broken Down:

an introduction to  
the poem  
&  
a short summary of  
Marking Boundaries  
in Beowulf



...and these are the figures: both friend and foe

Beowulf



Aeschere

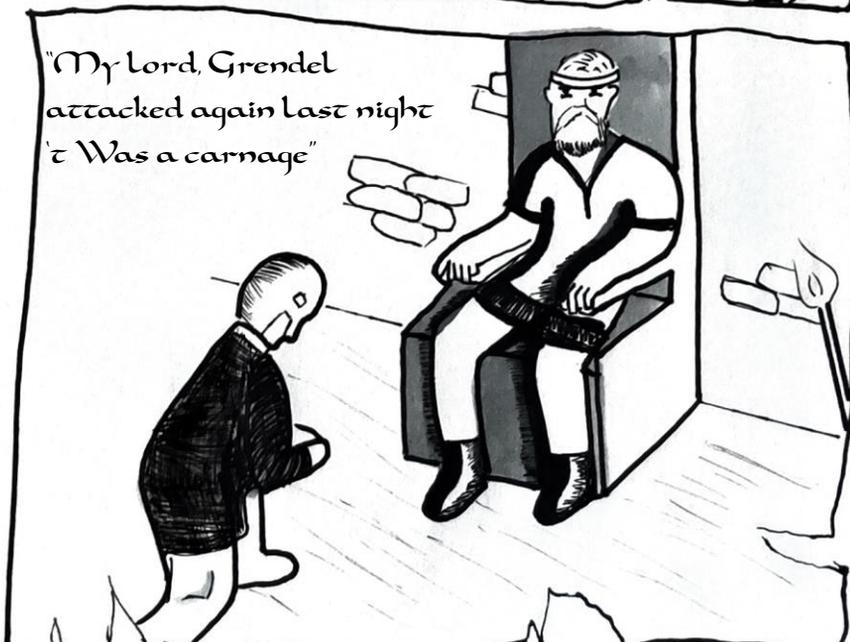
Grendel



King Hrothgar



Grendel's  
mother





There must be something we can do



Thus Hrothgar summons Beowulf, hero of the Geats

Though danger lurks nearby, the mead hall filled with boisterous talks and joy spurred on by hope

Soon the time for Beowulf to show his might will come



Grendel was back in Heorot

Grendel and Beowulf fought with strength foreign to most kin and no weapon could pierce Grendel's skin





With his bare hands,  
Beowulf rips off  
Grendel's arm



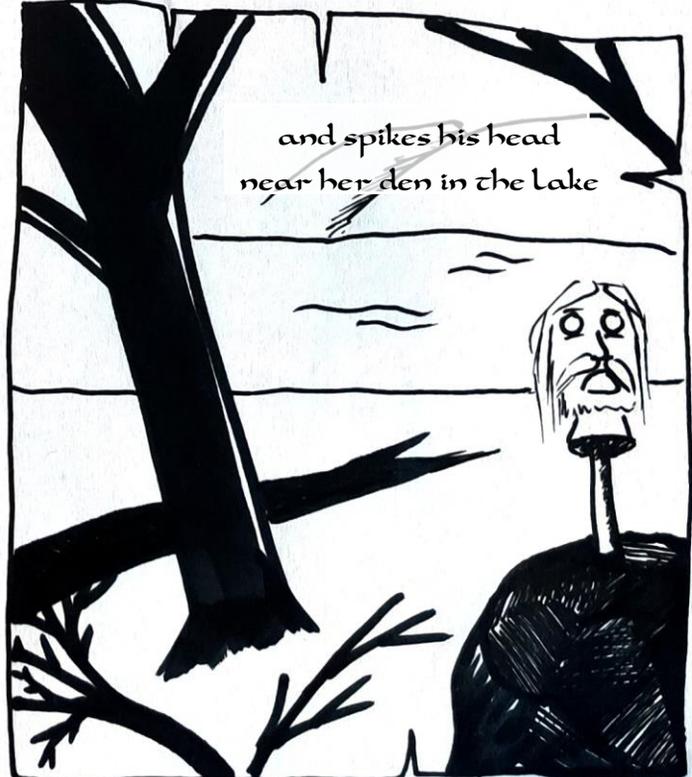
The Danes and Geats  
celebrate their victory whilst  
Grendel returns to his den  
where his mother waits for him

After hearing his tale,  
she wants to avenge him

And so Grendel's mother makes  
her way to Heorot



kills Eschere



and spikes his head  
near her den in the lake

The murder of Hrothgar's  
right hand man could not go  
unpunished and so Beowulf  
dives deep down into lake,  
To the monster's den



Beowulf kills mother and son



And so there was peace at last



Time goes by and our hero ages, a  
gift not many can receive.  
Then the peace Beowulf brought  
through bloodshed was threatened  
by another monster



A dragon was mauling  
and murdering,  
no man could stop it.

No man, but Beowulf



The battle was won, but at the cost of Beowulf's life.  
The hero has met his demise.  
So ends the tale of Beowulf

LET'S DISSECT THE FOLLOWING THREE PARTS; ÆSCHERE'S HEAD, GRENDEL'S ARM, AND THE DRAGON'S CORPSE



BOUNDARY MARKERS COULD BE USED TO SIGNAL DANGER, THEY COULD WARN PEOPLE TO STAY IN OR STAY OUT

IN THIS CASE, ÆSCHERE'S HEAD SERVES AS A WARNING TO OUTSIDERS: STAY OUT OR ELSE...



(PORCK & STOLK, 2017)

THIS IS DIFFERENT THAN THE STAKING OF GRENDEL AND HIS MOTHER'S HEADS

THEIR HEADS WERE NOT A WARNING BUT A TROPHY

THE "HEAD STAKES" WERE PARADED AROUND AND NOT USED IN THE "TRADITIONAL" ANGLO-SAXON WAY: DISPLAYED NEAR BORDERS



(PORCK & STOLK, 2017, P. 524)

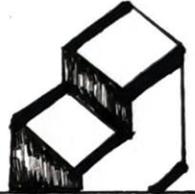
THEN, IF GRENDEL'S HEAD WAS A TROPHY, WHAT WAS HIS ARM?

IT WAS NOT PARADED AROUND OR DISPLAYED AT THE BORDER. INSTEAD, BEOWULF HUNG IT, WITHOUT CEREMONY, AT HEOROT



THE ARM WAS MEANT TO SHOWCASE HOW MUCH STRONGER THE GEATS ARE THAN THE DANES

BY HANGING IT AT HEOROT, A TEMPORARY BORDER WAS DRAWN BETWEEN THE GEATS AND DANES

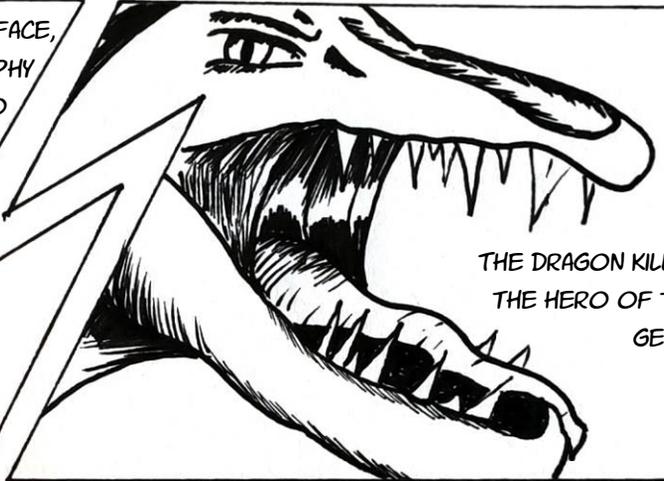


(PORCK & STOLK, 2017, P.533)

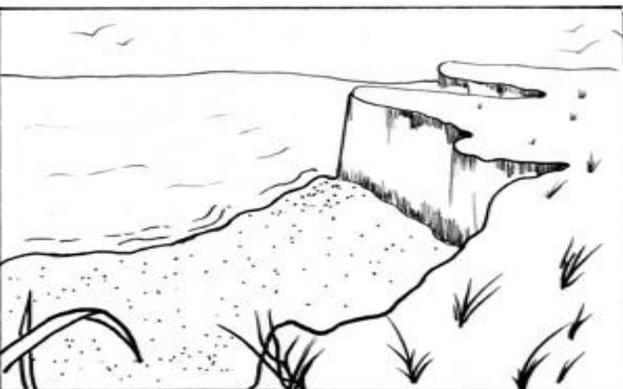
THE ARM WAS A SLAP TO THE FACE, THE HEAD WAS A TROPHY BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DRAGON'S CORPSE?



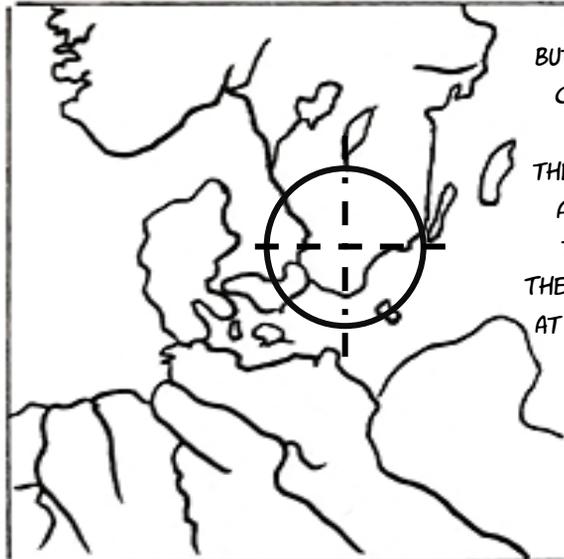
(PORCK & STOLK, 2017, P.533)



THE DRAGON KILLED THE HERO OF THE GEATS



SO THEY THREW IT INTO THE SEA TO GET RID OF THE CONSTANT REMINDER THAT BEOWULF WAS GONE NOT ONLY THAT....



BUT THE DEATH OF BEOWULF MEANT THAT THE GEATS HAD A TARGET ON THEIR BACKS. THEY WOULD BE AT THEIR MOST VULNERABLE

THAT CONCLUDES THE BEOWULF: BROKEN DOWN....

FOR THE ORIGINAL SOURCE, PLEASE HAVE A LOOK AT:

[MARKING BOUNDARIES IN BEOWULF: ÆSCHERE'S HEAD, GRENDEL'S ARM AND THE DRAGON'S CORPSE](#)