



Celebration of
SCHOLARS

“God’s war loom”: Mythic Competition in the Epic World of *Beowulf*



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Celebration of Scholars 2013: Exposition of Student and Faculty Research, Scholarship and Creativity

The Poet Activates Mythic Tension

But the Lord was weaving a victory on His war-loom for the Weather-Geats.
Through the strength of one they all prevailed;
They would crush their enemy and come through
In triumph and gladness. (696-700)

Varied Accounts of the Ancient Sword

In front of the Danes:

But the Lord of Men allowed me to behold—
For he often helps the unbefriended—
An ancient sword shining on the wall,
A weapon made for giants, there for the wielding. (1661-1664)

In front of the Geats:

“I beheaded Grendel’s mother in the hall/with a mighty sword” (2138-2139).
“my time had not yet come” (2141).

Depiction of Evil

He had dwelt for a time
In misery among the banished monsters,
Cain’s clan, whom the Creator had outlawed
and condemned as outcasts. For the killing of Abel
the Eternal Lord had exacted a price:
Cain got no good from committing that murder
Because the Almighty made him anathema
And out of the curse of his exile there sprang
Ogres and elves and evil phantoms
And the giants too who strove with God
Time and again until He gave them their reward. (104-114)

War first came into the world
And the flood destroyed the tribe of giants.
They suffered a terrible severance from the Lord;
the Almighty made the waters rise,
drowned them in the deluge for retribution. (1689-1693)



The *Beowulf* manuscript is housed in the British Library of London.

Resolution of Mythic Elements

melted as ice melts
when the Father eases the fetters off the frost
and unravels the water-ropes. He who wields power
over time and tide: He is the true Lord. (1608-1611).

Acknowledgements & References

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Beowulf. Trans. Seamus Heaney. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2000. Print.