

Beowulf, una leggenda che non tramonta mai

The most famous example of Anglo-Saxon literature survived (still exists, sopravvissuta) is Beowulf, a collection of short poems which became a complete story in Northumberland in the 6th century. The story tells the adventures of the Scandinavian hero, Beowulf, who comes from Sweden to help Hrothgar, king of Jutland. Hrothgar built his palace near the sea, but a monster, Grendel, who lives in a sea-cave, devours (eat, mangia) his thanes (lords, signori locali) . One night, when Grendel appears in the hall, Beowulf fights and kills him. Grendel's mother tries to take revenge (vendicarsi), but Beowulf kills her too. The second part of the poem opens 50 years later. Beowulf is old, but still strong. He is the wise (saggio) and loved king of his land. But one day a dragon comes to destroy the country. Beowulf kills the dragon, but dies for the burning breath (respiro di fuoco) of the dragon and the story closes with his burial (sepoltura). The stresses and the alliteration which characterize the poem help to memorize the lines. Beowulf is a very important picture of the Saxon life in their early period it shows the important women's role (ruolo) while, in the Graeco-Roman system, men had absolute power. Women could marry only with their own consent and everything they possessed remain their property (possesso) even after their marriage. They could also rule a kingdom if their husbands died. Recently the story has been adapted into a movie, Beowulf, directed by Robert Zemeckis in 2007.