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Geatic Heresy: Possibility of Arianism in “Beowulf”

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## Abstract

The epic poem *Beowulf* is an important writing in the Anglo-Saxon literature studies. In the poem, we read that some characters retell stories from the Bible, and utilize a language which implies that their religion is Christianity. However, there is a lack of a very important figure from Christianity: Jesus Christ. Beowulf, the protagonist, is a Geat who were a people linked to the Germanic Goths. Considering the Goths adopted the Christian doctrine of Arianism, which also places Jesus Christ in the background, when they migrated south, the paper proposes this hypothesis: As there is a consistency between Arianism and the depiction Christianity in *Beowulf*, and between the Arian Goths and the Geats, the Christianity depicted in the poem can be of the doctrine of Arianism. To find out the answer to this hypothesis, the paper creates markers of Arianism through the analysis of documents and writings on the doctrine, explains how the Goths came to accept Arianism, and points out the connections between the Goths and the Geats. Utilizing the markers of Arianism created, the paper analyses closely the passages to do with Christianity within the poem, and compares the findings to the markers.

The analysis concludes that indeed, the depiction of Christianity aligns with the markers of Arianism. However, it also points out that because of a lack of documents regarding a more detailed application of Arianism in the lives of its believers, and a lack of documentation about the mysterious "Beowulf Poet", the paper cannot declare the Christianity depicted to be absolutely Arianism. Even without an absolute answer, the paper provides a positive conclusion to the hypothesis proposed and can play the steppingstone on other research in the area, such any future comparisons between other doctrines of Christianity and the poem's depiction of the faith.

*Keywords: Beowulf, Christianity, Arianism, Geats, Goths, Gothic Christianity*

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## Geatic Heresy: Possibilities of Arianism in “Beowulf”

### Introduction

Beowulf is a name that can be found in the forefront when one delves into the literary world of Epic songs and poems. The Anglo-Saxon poem of *Beowulf* tells the story of Beowulf, a Geat hero. The reader learns the feats and accomplishments of Beowulf, reading also of the culture of the time and the location in which the poem is set, offering knowledge especially on the relationship between a lord and those whom are subservient to him, of the way of life in an early Germanic society; be it in war, or in peace, and in life, and by death. However, this epic poem remains a mystery in some aspects; one being the Christian themes that can be found within the poem, as they stand out like a sore thumb in this Germanic story with its strange approach to religion; containing strange references to Christianity, but doing this in an incomplete manner, per se, such as not mentioning Jesus Christ, and being selective in what they approve and what they do not. Can this untold doctrine of Christianity be Arianism of the late Roman Imperial period?

### *Beowulf* and its Origins

Of course, there are other mysteries of the poem as well, such as its author or its date of authoring; much like other Old English works of literature such as *The Wanderer* or *The Dream Of The Rood*. For the former, some scholars seem to be using the term “*Beowulf* Poet”(Robinson 1991:142-159). As such, the author remains anonymous. Its date of authorization is still up to debate by the scholars. The manuscript of the poem is solely from one that is named “Nowell Codex.”, which is said to be written around 975 and 1025; effectively the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century.(Stanley 1981:197-212) However, this manuscript is most likely not the original document containing the poem, as proposed by some scholars. J.R.R Tolkien, whose lecture in 1936 is said to have started the era of modern *Beowulf* criticism,(Orchard 2007: 7) proposes that the story remains too livid an account to be have written any time more in the future than 8<sup>th</sup> century.(Tolkien 1958: 1-22) Tolkien surely placed much importance on *Beowulf*, stating about the author that “His poem is like a play in a room through the windows of which a distant view can be seen over a large part of the

English traditions about the world of their original home.”(Tolkien 1958: 1-22) and singing praises to the author of *Beowulf* by stating: “And this, we are told, is the radical defect of *Beowulf*, that its author, coming in a time rich in the legends of heroic men, has used them afresh in an original fashion, giving us not just one more, but something akin yet different: a measure and interpretation of them all.”(Tolkien 1958: 1-22) He is supported by scholars such as Tom Shippey (Shippey 2007) and Leonard Neidorf (Neidorf; Pascual 2014: 657-673) on this idea. Neidorf further proposes that the poetic structure and the naming traditions support a date around the early 8<sup>th</sup> century when it comes to the date of authorization. (Neidorf 2014) There those whom also propose that *Beowulf* was passed down through orally before the manuscript which was written in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. One Albert Lord proposes so, through highlighting the works of Francis Peabody Magoun. (Lord 1960: 198)

As one can see, there are different theories in regards to the “history” of *Beowulf*. However, the historicity of the context of the poem, of course apart from supernatural traits and occurrences, has a less disputed response. When one takes a look at the historicity of *Beowulf*, they observe that though *Beowulf* as a character is not referenced in any other Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian manuscript or document (Grigsby 2005: 12), many other things within the story, such as the names of other characters and peoples; kings such as Healfdene and Ohthere, clans such as Scyldings and Wulfings do appear in Scandinavian sources. Even some events, such as Hygelac’s raid campaign to Frisia (Netherlands) in 521, are referenced, with this particular example being recorded by Gregory of Tours, a historian who lived in the Merovingian Frankia in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. (Carruthers 1998: 37) Thus, as pointed out by Carl Edlund Anderson in his PhD thesis, the characters are historical figures of 6<sup>th</sup> century Scandinavia. (Anderson 1999: 115) As such, if we take into consideration the parallels between Eadgils’ burial, and the excavation of Gamla Upsalla mounds (Klingmark 2003: 59), the story takes place in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, even though it may have been written on a later date.

### *Beowulf* and the Goths

An important quality of the poem is its duality in regard to the faith of the peoples, and its supposed author. While the characters in the story, and the locations where the story

takes place within the proposed setting time of the 6<sup>th</sup> century should be Germanic pagans, the manuscript itself was recorded by Anglo-Saxon Christians, who had left their pagan faith for Christianity around two centuries before the 7<sup>th</sup> century; the earliest supposed authorization date of the poem by Tolkien. (Leyerle 1991: 146-147) Regardless of any possible causal relationship between the conversion of the recorders of the poem, or the setting of the poem itself, it remains undeniable that the poem dualistically sports themes and motifs from both Christianity and Germanic Paganism. Thus, one should not only consider a duality of faith, but also of the culture of the Poem's heroes as well, and therefore one should also take into consideration another theory that has to do with Geats; the people of Beowulf. Geats are, or rather, were a people from the area which coincides with the modern southern Sweden, by the time around early antiquity, going back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century as recorded as the "Goutai" by the Roman historian Ptolemy. One may observe a similarity with another tribe or people who are also prominent beginning from a similar date: Goths. Of course, there are theories which claim that Geats and Goths are of one and same. Jordanes, a historian in Eastern Roman Empire who was himself a Goth (Jordanes 521: 266), states that the Goths originated from an island named Gotland. He states that in this island live three tribes: Gauthigoths, Ostrogoths, and Vagoths. Ptolemy tells of them as "Wherefore they are disturbed there by the attacks of other tribes. Behind these are the Ahelmil, Finnaithae, Fervir and Gauthigoth, a race of men bold and quick to fight. " Surely, "bold and quick to fight" is a good comment to be made on Geats. (Jordanes 521: 267) The name Ostrogoth, and their prominence in the migration period as one of the major Gothic tribes to migrate into Roman lands is common knowledge. However, if one focuses on the Gautigoths, they may learn that a theory upholds that the name means "Goths who live by the river Gaut"; with the river Gaut coinciding with the modern river "Göta älv"(Gossler-Harris 1909: 887-888); also called "Gautelfr" in Old Norse. (Forsman 2014) The river is located in Götaland; which is the part of land in Sweden which the previously mentioned Gotland Island is located off its coast. If we consider their supposed common origination geography and compare it with the setting of the story itself, which is also in Scandinavia, then it doesn't become too difficult to subscribe to the idea that the Geats may have been related to Goths; even if they are not Goths themselves. Indeed, one can also observe the records of archaeological findings regarding the burial customs of peoples, with correlating stone circle customs found in both Götaland, and Northern Poland in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, which also supports a relation in the least between these peoples. (Kaliff 1921) Christian sources too, support such a notion. In the writings on the life of Saint Anskar, also known as Apostle of the North, it is told that south of Sweden is occupied by a people called



the “Goths.”(Robinson 1921: 901-965) Considering that the man lived in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and made a reference to the same area where Geats lived as occupied by the Goths, we can also point towards a development that occurred in the area after Anskar. The movement of Gothicism; a cultural movement in Sweden that occurred around the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which was about the upholding the Geatic swedes as heroic ancestors, whom were identified with the Goths. (Sondrup; Nemoianu 2004: 143)

Religiously, the migrating tribes were not Christians. However, this would change. Not only Geats, but many other peoples in Scandinavia, many tribes, even Ostrogoths and Visigoths before their migration southwards to the Roman lands as the migration period began were believers of Germanic Paganism, before their conversions to Christianity beginning at 476, with many tribes such as Goths, Gepids, Vandals, Langobards, and Suevi, with Visigoths being the first Gothic sub-tribe to convert.(Schäferdiek; Gschwantler 1975: 350-409) This date is, of course, before the great Christian schism of 1054, which saw the official division between the church of the east, and the west. (Cross; Livingstone 2005) Instead, the mainline Christianity of the Roman Empire by the 5<sup>th</sup> century was the Nicene Creed, which had been adopted after the First Council of Nicaea in 325 with the aims of providing Christians a doctrine of correct belief. (Hefele 1894: 275) However, the Nicene Creed was not the one which the Germanic peoples first converted to, instead it was another doctrine, one named Arianism, which had originated from an Alexandrian presbyter in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, likewise named Arius (Brennecke 2018), whose teaching would prove problematic for the Roman people. Of course, there were reasons for this choice made by the first Germanic converts to Christianity. As such they shall be explained in the following paragraphs.

### Arianism

The number of frameworks of thought or principles begotten by Arius are somewhat low; with the only direct account of the man Arius himself being the raising his own ideas coming from a poem written by himself, with the other Arian ideals being mentioned in some letters written also by himself, his followers, and his opponents. The features, or rather, the feature of Arianism mentioned in these letters and the poem are consistent. This feature has to do with the concept of Trinity. Arianism held that “Logos”, which is a title of Jesus Christ, though described as a divine being still, was birthed from God, and thus was subordinate to

God the Father, and unlike God the Father, whom had no beginning, had a beginning. (McClintock; Strong 1867: 45) These can be discerned from the letter of Arius himself, to Eusebius of Nicomedia, another Arian, in which he states that God the Father was unbegotten; deriving his subsistence from anything, unchangeable, and Jesus Christ; Son of God was his only begotten son, further ending with: “We are persecuted because we say that the Son has a beginning but that God is without beginning.”(Peters 1980: 41) Furthermore the letter of Ulfilas; another Arian, to Auxentius of Durostorum, an Arian bishop makes the Arian distinction in the Trinity by stating that God the Father is the unbegotten and the invisible, meanwhile marking Jesus Christ as “only-begotten”, further ending his letter by stating: “Neither God nor Lord/Master, but the faithful minister of Christ; not equal, but subject and obedient in all things to the Son. And I believe the Son to be subject and obedient in all things to God the Father.” (Heather; Matthews 1991: 141) Arius himself, in his poem called “Thalia”, speaks of the same qualities attested to Christ the Son and God the Father, which can be observed early in the poem through the lines “We call him unbegotten, in contrast to him who by nature is begotten. We praise him as without beginning in contrast to him who has a beginning. We worship him as timeless, in contrast to him who in time has come to exist.” (Williams 2002: 62-66, 98-116) Strangely enough, the beliefs of Arius were acceptable, or tolerable in the least to many Orthodox (Nicene) clergymen, which was the reason why the notions of Arianism caused a conflict of thoughts within the church. Because of the amount of sympathy given to the ideas of Arius, it couldn't have been called an individual heresy. (Berdnt; Steinacher 2014: 11, 14)

One should note however that Arianism was not a small, dissident string of thinking which was smothered by the church as it happened with other heresies. It's origins stemmed from the Hellenization of the Eastern Roman Empire, and as it is put: “...was the product of a long period of theological reflection in a highly sophisticated Greek Philosophical culture.”(Willes 2001: 47), and had found believers in high offices of the Empire, including one Emperor Valens. What is the connection between the Germanic Goths and Arianism, one may ask. It would be the Visigoths, who had migrated into Roman territories from and around the lands of Danube, that would first convert into Arianism around the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.( Schäferdiek; Gschwantler 1975: 350-409) This was given ease and speed in the process of conversion by the works of previously mentioned Ulfilas, who was an Arian, and considered himself a Goth in heart and mind; most likely through being raised by Gothic parents. (Kaylor; Phillips 2012:

9) Ulfilas would oversee the creation of Gothic alphabet, and the translation of the Bible to the Gothic language through this alphabet in order to further preach Arianism to the Goths. (Schäferdiek; Gschwantler 1975 2010: 350-409) The First Council of Nikea had declared Arianism to be a heresy in 325. (Ferguson 2005: 267) Therefore, one may find it strange that the Goths were keen on converting into a heretical sect as they migrated. One explanation theorized, as there are no documented manuscripts which offer a reason, was the fact that Arianism had no centralized or provincial organization within the Empire, as it was a group of separate, local, independent churches. Therefore, instead of becoming subordinates to the Roman Church, they would be able to keep their social identities with Arianism, meanwhile becoming Christians. (Russel 1994: 139) This socio-political reasoning can be observed within the choices made by Ostrogoths, another Gothic tribe, which had converted into Arianism. It is said that their doctrine from the majority of the people in Italy would make them resistant to further assimilation with the Italians they ruled. While the rites of Arian Christianity were slow to enter the pagan cult practices, it nevertheless had made them a part of the Christian world. (Russel 1994: 141) In a strange occasion of cohabitation, it is said that the Gothic Arian churches had kept ties with other churches in Western Roman Empire before its collapse. (Amory 2003: 489-554) One may also consider that one of the opponents of Arius, a bishop now hailed as Saint, Athanasius, put forth that Arius' teachings had reduced the Son (Jesus Christ) into a demigod since it did not separate him from the Father and allowed the worship of both of them. As now they were differentiated in spirit, Athanasius stated that this would reintroduce polytheism. (Mahajan 2004) Though there is no proof, if such a notion was known back in the day of Athanasius and Arianism, then perhaps the Goths may have felt a similarity between the Arianism's supposed polytheism and their own Pagan Polytheism. The status of Arianism as a heresy may have even been unknown by the Goths, Salvian writes, as the scriptures regarding it were translated quite poorly in their day, and were interpolated. (Willes 2001: 46) While Arianism had been indeed declared a heresy within the Empire, those within the Empire still saw the conversion of Goths into Arianism; still Christianity even with its heretical doctrines, as a good thing, and it would lead to a more peaceful and neighbourly behaviour, and that they were "grateful." (Willes 2001: 45-46) This coincides with the outlook of Goths from Roman eyes, as one Synesius, a Greek Bishop says: "A man in skins leading warriors who wear the chlamys, exchanging his sheepskins for the toga to debate with Roman magistrates and perhaps even sit next to a Roman consul, while law-abiding men sit behind. Then these same men, once they have gone a little way from the senate house, put on their

sheepskins again, and when they have rejoined their fellows they mock the toga, saying that they cannot comfortably draw their swords in it.”

Indeed, them becoming Christians in the least; even if they did not adhere to the correct doctrine, would have made things more amicable between the peoples of the Empire, and the Goths. Arianism would persist in the successor kingdoms to the Roman Empire, after its fall in 476. The Arian church in Italy, further reinforced by the migrating Arian Goths from Danube would eventually begin to call itself the “Church of the Goths” by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. (Amory 2003: 489-554) Following centuries would see a decline in Arianism. Vandalic Kingdom in North Africa, which had even persecuted Nicene Christians in favour of Arianism (Cameron 2000: 553-559), ceased to house an organized Arian Church when the Eastern Roman Empire conquered the Vandalic Kingdom in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century. This would somewhat coincide with the conversion of Reccared the First, Visigoth king of Iberia into Nicene Creed in 589. (Thompson 1960) The last Arian king in Europe would be Grimoald of Lombards in Italy, who were deposed in 671, the late 7<sup>th</sup> century. (Hodgkin 1895: 73) The conversion of Kings and leaders may imply that Arianism itself would cease to be the main Christian creed within the Germanic peoples by the 8<sup>th</sup>.

If we consider that Tolkien proposes that *Beowulf* cannot have been written in any time in the future than the 8<sup>th</sup> century, it becomes clear that there may be a correlation between *Beowulf*'s proposed authorship date and Arianism in the religious trends of the people which the book contains and writes of. Even though there are no records of Arian missionaries sent to Scandinavia or Northern Europe, with the earliest record of a missionary sent to Scandinavia belonging to one Ansgar, now sainted, who was a Frankish Catholic that was active in the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Herbermann 1913), this may not mean that Arianism had never been to Scandinavia through the interactions of its peoples with Goths of southern Europe and the Goths of the Northern Europe. Disregarding such, it may even have been so that the national identity of the Goths, who as mentioned may be the Geats in *Beowulf*, may have kept Arianism on itself to the point that the authors may have utilized it simply to further highlight this national identity. In consideration of the mentioned links and relations between the Geats in *Beowulf*, and the Goths who had been Arians between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, this paper puts forth the questions of: Do the Christian themes mentioned in *Beowulf* belong into the Arian Creed? If so, can such a separation be made between the potential correlations between Arianism in *Beowulf* with the other creeds of Christianity which were around its authorship in the 8<sup>th</sup> century? The

answers to these questions, whether positive or negative, may lead to implications about the unnamed author or authors of *Beowulf*. Even though, in the end, it may be discerned that there are no correlations between them, perhaps it can be theorized that they kept the religious identities of the peoples they were writing in *Beowulf* in mind. As such, the paper will be approaching *Beowulf* with an Arian standpoint; both in religious aspects through the remnants of its creed, and through cultural aspects through its connection to the Gothic peoples. A hypothesis can then be proposed: Considering the connection between the Goths and the Geats, and the former's affiliation with the doctrine of Arianism in history, then the Christianity found in *Beowulf* can be of Arianism.

### Data and Methods

Before any research begins properly, adequate acknowledgements will be handed out and a thorough literary analysis will be held on the topic. After, firstly, *Beowulf* itself is read and the passages and excerpts that has to do with themes of Christianity is marked. These passages then are close-read and disseminated line by line. Frederick Klaeber's "*Beowulf, Fourth Edition*", which is usually held as the standard for many scholars and students on the matters of *Beowulf* is held as the source of the original text in old English. In addition to this, translations of *Beowulf* by J.R.R Tolkien and Seamus Heaney are utilized as "checks", in order to both ensure a sameness of interpretation between the translations, and also to see if there are differences between translations which may provide an approach sought out by this paper's standing on Arianism. Once these passages were thoroughly read and marked as necessary, they became the focus of the second phase, which is be about the search for markers, words, sentences, themes, concepts, and etc. that has to do with Arianism. One must keep in mind, the lack of any findings will provide an outcome to the research as well, as the passages are still analysed and their lack of any correlation with Arianism is mentioned and marked thoroughly. In order to create correlation markers for Arianism and Gothic culture, the letters of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia, letters of the Arian Ulfilas to Auxentius of Durostorum, *Review of Arius: Heresy and Tradition* by Rowan Williams, and of course, *Thalia*, the poem of Arius himself, will be utilized. In addition to these, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation.* by James C. Russel, *Arianism: Roman Heresy And Barbarian Creed*" by Guido M. Berndt and

Roland Steinacher, *The Cambridge Companion To The Trinity* by Peter C. Phan, *History Of The Goths* by Herwig Wolfram, “*The Goths*” by Peter Heather and *Gaut’s Descendants: Gothic Religion and Culture In Germania* by Aelfric Avery are used in addition to the main sources of Arian and Gothic religious markers, as they contain detailed information regarding to religious practices, cultural traits, and general history of the Goths. After the application of the said markers into what has been read in *Beowulf*, the paper provides a commentary on the findings of the analysis. It goes without saying that whether any answers to the questions proposed in the introduction can be found from the analysis is mentioned and is further commented. The paper concludes with any potential implications it may lead to, and highlights any possible further steps on the research in order to expand it either in other similar areas such as Anglo-Saxon literature, and comments on the possibilities of further research in regards to Arianism.

## Literary Review

After a thorough search of databases, it has become apparent that no research has ever been conducted on the topic of how *Beowulf* can contain themes of Arianism. However, there are much research conducted, articles and books written on Christian themes in *Beowulf*, and Arianism within the Early Germanic Peoples, including the Goths. For the sake of practicality, the Literary Review part will be divided into two, with the first part being about Arian Christianity and its spread amongst the Goths.

*Heresy And Authority In Medieval Europe* by Edward Peters is a good point to begin, as early in the book, he allocates a part for how orthodoxy and heresy was defined in antiquity. He points that doctrines apart from the orthodox—right doctrine from false gospels and doctrines were warned against by Jesus Christ himself to his believers. Interestingly, he states that very early Christians, whose beliefs were based on holy scripture, had quite the amount of solidarity of belief and practice; even when they were scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Haeresis—heresy, which meant a specific doctrine to counter the Christian truth, began to appear after the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. It can be discerned then that the splits happening in the original Christian doctrine began to appear as Christianity began to spread amongst the

populace. Peters also highlights how Arianism played an important role in the establishment of an understanding of an Orthodox Christianity, as before the Council of Nicea in 325 to address the followers of Arius, such a discussion on the authority level had not been needed. Rowan Williams' *Arius. Heresy and Tradition* is also paramount, as it talks of both the spread of the Arian heresy and its religious politics in the Roman Christian landscape, as well as explaining its theological approach on a detailed manner. It must also be stated here, as the perimeters of Arianism for the paper will have to do with Arianism's interpretation of the concept of Trinity, Peter C. Phan's *The Cambridge Companion To The Trinity*, which also goes on to define Arianism, and similar terms to it, such as Unitarianism. While Peters and Williams offer a good introduction to the conception of Arianism and the political effects it had on the Empire, we must consult a different book in order to discern more of its effects on the Goths, who would be the ones that would go to integrate Arianism unto their cultural identity. As such, a great book written on this is *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* by James C. Russel. Russel manages to highlight the transformations early Goths went through during the migration period; especially during the times when they began to settle into the old Roman Empire lands. Especially important that he points out to the reasons why the Goths chose Arianism over the Nicene Creed once their conversion began, and how it affected their following years after the fall of Rome, offering both sociohistorical and sociopsychological aspects to their transformation from Germanic Paganism. While Russel provides much about the relationship between Goths and Arianism, perhaps one can find his style somewhat "archiving." Thus, to expand on this relationship, utilizing another text can be wise. Thus, to further reach the delicate points about the spread of Arianism and its intricate politics within the Gothic culture, as well as its early spread and the efforts of Ulfilas, one would find Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher's *Arianism: Roman Heresy And Barbarian Creed*. favourable, which also speaks of Arianism towards its official sunset within the Visigothic Spain and Lombardic Italy, meanwhile pointing out the effect it had on the other provinces of the former Roman Empire. Creating a link between the focus on Arianism and its roots and its connection to the Goths however, is conducted in Maurice Wiles' *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism Through the Centuries*. In the chapter "End of Arianism", perhaps ironically, he explains how Arianism is rooted in much deeper origins stemming from Greek philosophy, and as some others also point out, how Goths came to take Arianism as a feature of their cultural identity, to the point that Arianism is sometimes referred as Gothic Christianity;

again, a point stated by the others, before, this time fitting with the chapter's name, explaining how it died down as a doctrine.

As pointed out, there isn't a group of research conducted in regards to Arianism and Beowulf, thus as pointed out, we should focus on the Christianity in Beowulf. In regards to the research conducted on Christianity in *Beowulf*, William Whallon's *The Christianity of Beowulf* offers much on the matter—even if it does not talk of Arianism. Not only it explains some of the Christian themes and concepts of the poem, it also goes into much detail on how these themes could have come to be within the poem, also arguing whether the Christianity within the story was intended or not. He further comments on Beowulf, and whether his people can be Christians too or not, and provides a worthy discussion on the matter. While Whallon focuses mostly on the identity of the Christianity within the poem itself, Margaret E. Goldsmith in her *The Christian Perspective in Beowulf*, starts by arguing in regards to the Christianity of the poet. She discusses on whom could have been an inspiration for the stories, pointing out similarities between the style of certain writers, such as Gregory the Great, and the scenes within *Beowulf*, and further discussing the parallels between the themes in *Beowulf* and biblical stories and mythology. She further goes on to theorize that the Christianity within the Poem may have roots within the agency of its poet, who may have had a large role in “Christianizing” the characters and the setting, which makes serious implications about why any potential themes about Arianism may have been implemented-- if any. *The Christian Language and Theme of Beowulf*” in *Companion to Old English Poetry*. by Aertsen and Bremmer goes onto speculate about the identity of the author, and as Goldsmith does, also points out the different ways they may have implemented Christianity within the poem. In addition though, Aertsen and Bremmer also theorize on the language utilized when themes of Christianity are apparent. Edward B. Irving JR. in “*The Nature Of Christianity in Beowulf*” further debates on the identity of the Christianity in the poem, quite shrewdly goes through the effort of providing a quantity analysis of the “Christian words” of the poem, and divides the responsibility of these Christian themes between Beowulf, the poet, and the remaining characters—which goes parallel with Goldsmith's notions of the Poet being more Christian than the characters within the poem which further assures the theory of the poet Christianizing the poem and the characters. Adversely, he proposes opinions against some Christian notions within the poem, for example, stating that Grendel's genealogy and identity can be explained through the folklore around trolls which can be found in Scandinavian and German folklores.



Further adversely, he goes on to propose that Hrothgar has the standpoint to religion as a passive man would; expecting help from God without much effort and points out that his approach to religion is quite mercurial through the words he speaks. He also goes onto note that any other character in the Holy Trinity, apart from God, is absent. This is quite paramount in importance, as it has direct implications about the answers to the questions raised in the introduction of the paper; Arianism, by placing Jesus as a subordinate to God the Father, in a manner, dashes away with the concept of the Holy Trinity that is important in mainstream Christian doctrines such as Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Whallon draws attention to the intricacies of how Trinity may have been implemented in *Beowulf*, but does not point out the lack of Jesus from the references made in the poem. Irving also points out that the detection of the themes around the crucifixion of the Christ within *Beowulf*, even if this detection is sound as, he puts it, is quite ambiguous; whereas in comparison, *The Song of Roland*, which he points out that just as *Beowulf*, it belongs firmly within the Germanic-heroic tradition, has no ambiguity whatsoever when it comes to God and Christ. One can see that the stated literary texts—though they have bordering spheres of topics, each add a metaphorical piece of the puzzle when it comes to the Christian motifs and themes in *Beowulf*. Of course, we cannot say that this puzzle ever has an end, but we can point out that any research in regard to Arianism is lacking within these extensive pieces. However, if we need to point out, of course arguably, the most important text on *Beowulf* studies, we simply cannot skip or skim over Frederick Klaeber's "*Beowulf, Fourth Edition*." The book contains a myriad of researchers and writers, taking a step forward and showing commentaries with the said research on each chapter of the poem in the "Commentary" chapter. Its fourth edition updates the research work conducted on *Beowulf* since 1950 and gives an almost universal authority on the book in regards to *Beowulf*. Its extensive glossary is a boon for any researcher who would write anything about *Beowulf*.

### Analysis

For the sake of practicality, the analysis is to be divided into several parts. First part has to do with chapters that contain Christian themes. These are: "Hrothgar's Sermon" and "Scop's song." After these are analysed line by line, then the isolated cases of references to Christian motifs are analysed.

## Hrothgar's Sermon

Constantine and the Arian connection.

The parts associated with the so called "Hrothgar's sermon begins with Beowulf's speech after returning to Heorot victorious with the beast Grendel's head. The text has references to God in clear words too, however first we should take a look at another potential reference to a Christian myth. At the beginning of the speech, beginning from the line 1652, Beowulf says:

'Hwæt, wé þe þás saélác, sunu Healfdenes  
léod Scyldinga, lustum bróhton  
tíres tó tácne þe þú hér tó lócast.

Which can be translated to "Son of Half-Dane, we are pleased to bring you. You see before you a sign of glory." While this sign of glory refers to the remainder of the sword which Beowulf used to slay Grendel's mother, which is only a hilt, the *Beowulf poet* can also be making a underhanded reference to the vision of Constantine I. Lucius Caecilius Firmanius Lactantius; an early Christian author living in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in his work "*Lucii Caecilii liber ad Donatum Confessorem de Mortibus Persecutorum. (The book of Lucius Caecilius to Donatus the Confessor, concerning the Deaths of the Persecuted)*" tells the story that while Constantine I, the Roman Emperor; though at this point co-emperor with Maxentius I, saw a cross lit up in the sun, and saw the words "In hoc signo vinces", which is translated into: "In this sign, you will conquer." (Haaren; Poland 2006: 229) After this, he goes on to receive a dream from Christ, explaining that he should use this sign in battle against his enemies, after which he goes onto Battle of the Milvian Bridge. The battle opened the path for Constantine the Great's ascension to being the sole Emperor of the Roman Empire, when he would go down in history as the first Christian Emperor of Rome. While the reader can observe that indeed the words "You see before you a sign of glory" And "In this sign you will conquer" Are not the same, one can also observe a similarity between them as both offer a sign of glorious auspices, and are credited to God, as Beowulf will do in the following lines. If the theory of Tolkien, which upholds that the accounts of *Beowulf* are so vivid that it cannot have been written any time after the 8<sup>th</sup> century, then the *Beowulf poet* using a Christian story of glory which was relatively new (at least more new than it was back then than it is now in 21<sup>st</sup> century), is not far from reason, and remains plausible; though it would warrant that

indeed this *Beowulf poet* was quite learned and educated in Early Christianity and its spread in the Roman Empire. An interesting connection, perhaps coincidental, perhaps intentional; in regard to the reasoning of the *Beowulf poet*, is that Constantine the Great was baptized by Eusebius of Nicomedia in 337. If one may ask the connection between this and the paper, the knowledge that Eusebius was an Arian is of paramount importance. *The Beowulf poet* may have known Eusebius as he held quite an amount of gravitas and influence in the Empire. In addition to some sources stating that he was a relative of Constantine the Great (Drake 2002: 395), he would become one of the most fervent supporters of Arius (Jones 1978: 121) and is told to be the first person contacted by Arius after the man was excommunicated from Alexandria in 321. (Young; Teal 2012: 59) He held such influence that he was able to oust and exile his political opponents who had spoken against him in the Council of Nicaea in 325 some years after his return from exile. (Roldanus 2006: 84) If the *Beowulf poet* indeed wanted to utilize an Arian approach on how some characters approach to Christianity, then he may have been inspired by Constantine’s story of receiving the sign of the cross. One thing that can be held against this theory, however, is the fact that Constantine himself had convoked the First Council of Nicaea, which had negative outcomes for Arians. (Norwich 1996: 54-57) This may go against the idea of the *Beowulf poet* taking inspiration from a story of Constantine.

#### Hrothgar’s Wisdom.

This, however, has nothing to do with the words spoken by the characters of *Beowulf*, and is merely an independent observation. Thus, focusing on the words of the character we see the first direct reference to God in the “Hrothgar’s Sermon.” Between the lines 1655-1658, Beowulf says:

Ic þæt unsófte ealdre gedígde  
 wigge under wætere· weorc genéþde  
 earfoðlice· ætrihte wæs  
 gúð getwaéfed nymðe mec god scylde·

This can be translated into: “I barely survived the battle underwater. It was hard-fought, a desperate affair That could have gone badly; if God had not helped me;” There is no doubt that the “God” here isn’t a mismatch or a mistranslation too, as even the word in the original

text is the same. The word alone, though perhaps inadequate in regard to the analysis that can be conducted, remains without any reference to Jesus Christ, or any Son of God, and the identity of the God seems here to be of a unified one without any references to the Trinity. Interestingly, Klaeber's *Beowulf* states that here, Beowulf acknowledges the help and intervention of God—as he does again in line 1661 too, not much unlike the narrator's own similar acknowledgements. (Fulk, Bjork; Niles 2008: 211) Which brings us the next immediate reference to God; on which we are provided with a title. Between the lines 1659-1664, Beowulf tells:

ne meahte ic æt hilde mid Hruntinge  
 wiht gewyrcean þeah þæt waépen duge  
 ac mé geúðe ylða waldend  
 þæt ic on wáge geseah wlitig hangian  
 ealdsweord éacen --oftost wísode  
 winigea léasum-- þæt ic ðý waépne gebraéd.

(I could not in the battle with Hrunting, bring about anything, though that weapon is excellent, but to me granted, men's Ruler, that I saw on the wall, hanging fair, a mighty ancient sword, --most often He has guided the one deprived of a friend—that I the weapon drew.)

Seamus Heaney in his translation also translates this title of God as: “Lord of Men” (Heaney 2000: 53) There can be some discussion made on whom the Lord refers to here, as Jesus Christ was also referred to as “Lord.” However, we must also consider the following: The reference to the Abrahamic God as “Lord” has roots in Hebrew practice of calling God “YHWH”, also spoken as Yahweh. However, as this name of the God was found too sacred, it was replaced in Synagogues with Adonai (“My Lord”), which translates from Hebrew to Greek as Kyrios (“Lord.”)(Mahajan 2008) Old Testament also has the title “El Shaddai” granted to God, which translates from Hebrew as El (“God”) Shaddai (“Lord”), usually transformed into “God the Lord” in a more literary sense. (Berkhov 2017: 47-51) Thus, many translations of the Bible also refer to God as Lord, which is also said to be stemming from the Jewish practice of Adonai. (NASB 1995). With this in mind, it is not beyond reason to say that the usage of “Lord” here may be referring to God the Father, as well as God the Son. Though this title would have a meaning leaning more towards God the Son if the title also contained “Saviour”, its lack thereof again points the reader to a more unified sense of God

without any signs of the Trinity. His quality of “providing a friend to those whom lacking it” also does not refer to any identity of the God within the Trinity especially, as again it can be seen as a unifying quality. Next usage of “God” is in the lines 1683, when the narrator says: “...godes andsaca”, referring to Grendel, which can be translated into “God’s adversary,” also translated as: “God-cursed fiend” by Heaney. (Heaney 2000: 54) God is said to have many enemies: Those who abandon his teachings, demons, Satan, devils, etc. This description of Grendel as an adversary of God lacks the forgiveness and compassion that Jesus Christ, as the Son of God would preach to his followers and believers on Earth. Even if we approach Heaney’s translation, then this identity of God must be God the Father still, or at least a unified concept of God, as he is said to have cursed Grendel. God is known to curse, of course, such as when he curses Adam and Eve, though on the grounds that they were deceived into going against the word of God by eating the apple, and God cursing the Serpent of the stated reason. Surely then, it is within reason that this reference cannot be to Christ the Son. Of course, of the curses of Jesus Christ, the story of the fig tree comes to mind, but even this is said to be uncharacteristic of him (Strauss 2015: 64), and that it may not be held in the same scope of cursing as it was meted against a property rather than people or animals. (Keener 1999: 503-504)

The next part is interesting, as the narrator tells that Hrothgar recognizes the origin of the hilt of Beowulf’s sword as belonging to the biblical “Giants”, most likely referring to the “Nephilim.” Hrothgar tells between lines 1689-1694:

fyrngewinnes syðþan flód ofslóh  
 gifen géotende gíganta cyn—  
 frécne geférdon· þæt wæs fremde þéod  
 écean dryhtne· him þæs endeléan  
 þurh wæteres wylm waldend sealde—  
 swá wæs on ðaém scenum scíran goldes  
 þurh rúnstafas rihte gemearcod

(...of ancient strife, when the flood slew, the pouring ocean, the race of giants--, they fared terribly; that was a tribe foreign, to the eternal Lord; them the end-reward, through the surging of waters, the Ruler granted--, also was on the sword-hilt, of shining gold...)

We can observe here that God is referred to as “the eternal Lord” being eternal is of course, a known trait of the God of the Bible; something also given unto Jesus Christ as well. However, if we are to see that the tinges of Arianism in the poem are not a coincidence, and indeed the author is trying to depict some characters as Arians, or in the least, show the doctrines of Christianity which exists in the poem as Arianism, then indeed, the logic of Arius can be applied. As stated in the introduction, Arianism argues that God the Father is indeed eternal, being unbegotten, eternally existing both to the past and unto the future. In comparison, God the Son; Jesus Christ also is eternal unto the future, they argue, but was begotten by God at one point. The “Eternal” here, can be a reference to such. The other name given to him here is “Ruler.” This is universal enough that it mostly does not belong to a specific doctrine. As stated in 1 Chronicles 29:12: “Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.” (Hengeveld 2011) Thus, ruler here, as told, is a common title of God. Then the reader is told that Hrothgar begins to speak. In his speech where he talks of his ancestors, specifically Heremod, he invokes God again. Between the lines 1713-1717, he says:

bréat bolgenmód    béodgenéatas  
 eaxlgesteallan    oþ þæt hé ána hwearf  
 maére þéoden    mondréamum from  
 ðéah þe hine mihtig god    mægenes wynnun  
 eafeþum stépte    ofer ealle men

(...he felled in a furious spirit his companions at table, shoulder-comrades, until he alone passed, famous king, from the joys of man, though him mighty God with joys of strength, powerfully exalted over all men...)

Here we see that God is seen as the one who decides one’s fate; as it did for Heremod, raising him over other man with strength and power. This is strange, as Hrothgar continues to tell that even with such exaltation, he managed to fall from grace and did unlikeable things to his people. If God, truly has a plan for every one of his children as he says to Jeremiah, then logically, Heremod’s fall from grace is also a part of God’s plan, and Heremod is not really to blame. (Hengeveld 2011) However, this is a theological issue –“The Predestination Problem” which sometimes clashes with the free-will concepts within some religious frameworks. As

far as Arianism goes regarding the invocation of God here, the manner is quite neutral, and could belong to any other doctrine, as well as Arianism.

Hrothgar goes unto invoking God again shortly after, but not only invokes his name; also goes unto some detail on the relationship between God and men between the lines 1722-1739:

Ðú þé laér be þon·  
 gumcyste ongit· ic þis gid be þé  
 áwræc wintrum fród. Wundor is tó secganne  
 hú mihtig god manna cynne  
 þurh sídne sefan snyttru bryttað  
 eard ond eorlscipe· hé áh ealra geweald·  
 hwílum hé on lufan laéteð hworfan  
 monnes móðgeþonc maéran cynnes  
 seleð him on éþle eorþan wynne  
 tó healdanne hléoburh wera·  
 gedéð him swá gewealdene worolde daélas  
 síde ríce þæt hé his selfa ne mæg  
 for his unsnyttrum ende geþencean·  
 wunað hé on wiste· nó hine wiht dweleð  
 ádl né ylðo né him inwitsorh  
 on sefan sweorceð né gesacu óhwaér  
 ecghete éoweð ac him eal worold  
 wendeð on willan· hé þæt wyrse ne con.

(You learn by this, understand human virtue; I this tale for you recited, old and wise in winters. Wonder is to say how mighty God to mankind according to deep understanding, dispenses wisdom, land and noble qualities; he has control of all; at times He in delight lets go, the heart's thought of some man, of glorious kin, gives to him in his own homeland, earthly bliss, to command a stronghold of men, makes subject to him from the world's portions, a wide kingdom, that he himself cannot, in his ignorance conceive the end he lives on in abundance; they hinder him not a bit, sickness nor age,

nor him evil sorrow, darkens in his soul, nor strife anywhere, sharp-hate appears, but to him all the world, turns on his pleasure; he does not know it worse.)

These words from Hrothgar seem to be giving an explanation to the previously mentioned predestination problem, saying that God allows such control to certain humans, and that sometimes they believe his material blessings are eternal. However, we can discern a certain authority of the God mentioned here. The lines "...how mighty God to mankind according to deep understanding, dispenses wisdom, land and noble qualities; he has control of all..." God as the dispenser of land and qualities, though of course, not within any bible, has a similar sense in the way that God favours humans out of all races in his creation, and such can be found in Psalm 115:16 (Hengeveld 2011) for example: "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath He given to the children of men." How does this concern Arianism? It can work against it. There are some arguments that say "As Christ is also the God the Father's agent in creation, so then the preincarnate Christ is also the Creator of all that exists, says the Apostle Paul.(Gundry 2009) Such a notion is supported within the Bible if one also believes thus so, in John 1:3, it says: "All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created."(Hengeveld 2011)) However, this also supports an Arian approach as well: everything is created through him (God), and as such, this must include God the Son, as God himself is already unbegotten. Even with the divinity inside him, God the Son, was at one point, begotten by God the Father, again, through Him.

#### Possibility of Christ, and Saint George

Returning to the notion of God favouring humans with land and wisdom, and giving them the right to rule, then it would not be beyond reason to hold that this God referred to herein Hrothgar's words must be God "the Creator", who bestows traits to races, and sets the order of things in his creation. As such, while it can indeed do so, God here can refer to God the Father himself without referring to God the Son. Interestingly enough, for the entirety of the "Sermon of Hrothgar", there are no references made directly to Jesus Christ, or even the Trinity; none by Beowulf, by wise Hrothgar, and not even by the author, which can have strange implications. Hrothgar, towards the end of the "sermon" chapter, speaks of the responsibilities given unto man by God and how men deal with such charges; though the "men" he speaks of here seems to be the nobility, as the previous examples he gives, such as Heremod, are all Kings that came before Hrothgar, with their virtues and vices. The message



he gives to Beowulf then, is that he should recognize the gifts bestowed upon him by God in the form of might, power, and capability. Some comparisons can be drawn between Hrothgar's message to Beowulf, and bible. In Luke 12:48, it is said: "But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Hengeveld 2011) The author may have wanted to draw a correlation between the story of Luke, and Hrothgar. If he truly did, then this may be a vote for the acknowledgement of Jesus Christ's acceptance in *Beowulf*; Luke the Evangelist had lived in the time of Jesus Christ, and had spread his gospel after his death, and biblical ascension. However, as there is no means of confirming this correlation; stemming from the unknown identity of *Beowulf*'s author, then for the sake of aligning *Beowulf*'s Christian themes with Arianism, we can ignore this correlation.

Another story with which some correlations can be drawn between *Beowulf* and Christian tradition without acknowledged clear references is the story of Saint George, the Dragon slayer. Though the background of Saint George is debated by historians, the story of Saint George is set on either Cappadoica, or Libya. George was a soldier of the Roman Army, who saved the daughter of a local king by slaying the dragon whom she was presented as a sacrifice to sate its hunger. The legend goes that he did this by stating that he would do so if the King and his people would consent to converting to Christianity. As George is successful in his charge, the King, and the city of "Silene" does so, becoming Christians, with the King building the church to Blessed Virgin Mary on the site where the dragon was slain, where it became a blessed hospice for the sickly. (Voragine 1230-1298) This story too, acknowledges Christ as well; the mere mention of Blessed Virgin Mary is enough. However, while parts of his story had survived until *Legenda aurea*, this was from the Greek tradition, in which Saint George was a soldier in the Roman Army, but then because of his faith, was executed, and martyred. (Guiley 2001: 129) In the hagiography *Legenda aurea*—The Golden Legend, written by Jacobus de Voragine in the years between 1259-1266, we see the first mention of Saint George slaying a dragon. (Voragine 1230-1298: Introduction) Because this paper refers to the writing dates offered by Tolkien in regards to *Beowulf*, the date which the story of Saint George slaying the dragon is late, much after the supposed writing of *Beowulf*. Therefore, it cannot have been the reference for Beowulf's slaying of the Dragon. Thus, the references which acknowledge Jesus Christ in this story, can be ignored. Hrothgar's sermon introduces us to one of the most "Christian" characters of the story, Hrothgar, as told in *The Nature of*

*Christianity in "Beowulf"* by Irving Jr., Hrothgar's speeches make up for the %17 of the Christian allusions in the poem, followed by Beowulf at 13%. (Irving 1984: 9) Through analysis, we can conclude that he indeed does not make any reference to Jesus Christ, but makes a good number of references to God, and his titles. So far, this gives some credence to the argument of Arianism, but we should be cautious still, as the lack of mentions to Jesus Christ, or "God the Son", does not automatically make this Arianism; one can be a catholic evade invoking Christ, opting to invoke God directly instead (though surely, this would be strange.)

### Scop's Song

#### The Creation

Another chapter that one can observe a clear reference to Christianity is actually quite close to the opening of the Poem, where the reader is given a description of Heorot and Hrothgar. The chapter also provides some descriptions and insight on what seems to be Grendel's heritage. We read between the lines 89-98:

þær wæs hearpan swég  
 swutol sang scopes· sægde sé þe cūþe  
 frumsceaft fira feorran reccan·  
 cwæð þæt se ælmihtiga eorðan worhte  
 wlitebeorhtne wang swá wæter bebúgeð·  
 gesette sigehréþig sunnan ond mónan  
 léoman tó léohte land-búendum  
 ond gefræt Wade foldan scéatas  
 leomum ond léafum· líf éac gesceóp  
 cynna gehwylcum þára ðe cwice hwyrfaþ·

(...there was the harmony of the harp, the sweet song of the poet; he spoke who knew how, the origin of men to narrate from afar; said he that the almighty one, wrought the earth, (that) fair, sublime field, bounded by water; set up triumphant the sun and moon, luminaries as lamps for the land-dwellers, and adorned the corners of the earth, with limbs and leaves; life too He formed, for each of the species which lives and moves.)

As one can observe, this is quite similar to the story of Creation found in the Bible, Genesis 1, and there are lines that go parallel in meaning, which goes: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters...And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters...And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so...And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,..."(Hengeveld 2011) As stated, the lines are quite similar; to the point that it almost confirms that this is indeed the song of creation. So, where does this stand in regard to Arianism? The feat of Creation, and how God stands in accordance with it is referred by Arius in his poem "Thalia", where he says: "We praise him as without beginning in contrast to him who has a beginning. We worship him as timeless, in contrast to him who in time has come to exist. He who is without beginning made the Son a beginning of created things." (Williams 2002: 62-66, 98-116) Thus it can be discerned from the lines that Arius himself held God as timeless and without beginning, from which all things come; by which quality he sees Jesus Christ, Son of God unequal to God the Father, the Creator.

As there are no direct references made to Jesus Christ in the song of the Scop; the bard who sings the song of creation in Heorot's Hall, then we can say that indeed, there is nothing that holds this part back from belonging to the doctrine of Arianism; with the important note that there isn't anything keeping it from belonging to any other doctrine that treats Creation the same either. However, there is the idea that this "Song of Creation" may not be the Christian one and can be attributed instead to the *Völuspá* (Taylor 1966: 119-130), where it says:

"Gap var ginnunga, enn gras hvergi. Áðr Burs synir biðdom um ypþo, þeir er miðgarð, mæran scópo; sól scein sunnan á salar steina, þá var grund gróin grænum lauki.",

Which translates into: "Earth was nowhere to be found, nor heaven. There was a huge chasm and grass nowhere, before the sons of Bur raised up lands. they shaped the middle-world. The sun shone from the south on the stones of earth, then green leeks grew on the ground."

However, this theory clashes with the theories that this paper accepts as a given. Though *Völuspá* can be found in Codex Regius of Iceland, which is thought to be written around late 1200s, a team from University of Cambridge in 2018 suggested that the poem may date back to 961, which is later than the date given by Tolkien unto the writing date of *Beowulf*.

(Rateliff 2007: Appendix III) There is also the matter that some scholars believe *Völuspá* had already been influenced by Christianity (Gunnell, Lassen 2013: 240), with Henry Adams Bellows stating that the author of *Völuspá* would have had knowledge of Christianity.

(Bellows 1936: 2) Thus, even if the theory that creation song of *Völuspá* is the one which is sang by the Scop in Heorot, its independence from Christian myth; or lack thereof, can still be argued. Right after this description of the song of Creation, we are given the reason why Grendel attacks Heorot, with the description of his heritage, between the lines 102-114:

wæs se grimma gaést    Grendel háten  
maére mearcstapa    sé þe móras héold  
fen ond fæsten·    fifelcynnes eard  
wonsaéli wer    weardode hwile  
siþðan him scyppend    forscriften hæfde  
in Caines cynne    þone cwealm gewræc  
éce drihten    þæs þe hé Ábel slóg·  
ne gefeah hé þaére faéhðe    ac hé hine feor forwræc  
metod for þý máne    mancynne fram·  
þanon untýdras    ealle onwócon  
eotenas ond ylfe    ond orcnéäs  
lange þrage·    hé him ðæs léan forgeald.

(...this ghastly demon was named Grendel, infamous stalker in the marches, he who held the moors, fen and desolate strong-hold; the land of marsh-monsters, the wretched creature ruled for a time, since him the Creator had condemned, with the kin of Cain; that killing avenged, the eternal Lord, in which he slew Abel; this feud he did not enjoy, for He drove him far away, the Ruler, for this crime, from

mankind; thence unspeakable offspring all awoke: ogres and elves and spirits from the underworld; also giants, who strove with God, for an interminable season; He gave them their reward for that.)

The reader can see clear allusion to Biblical stories of Cain killing Abel, the Deluge, and the Giants. *Klaeber's Beowulf*, in the Commentaries, rightfully points out the source of these in the bible as Genesis. 4, 6: 2, 6:4 and 6: 5-7, 7:1-24, however, also notes that this may not be the immediate source, and it may have also been derived from the Hebrew Tradition, such as *Book of Enoch*, and the Irish *Sex Aetates Mundi*. (Fulk, Bjork; Niles 2008: 122-123)

Regardless of its origins, there is something to be said about both the references to God, and the including of these stories in the poem *Beowulf*. The reader can observe that the God is given titles such as “The eternal Lord”, and “the Creator.” While the appliance of these titles to a mentality of Arianism had been spoken of in the previous parts about Lord being the title of God, and an explanation of the Creation by God, without Jesus Christ, a new point that can be discerned from this telling of the Cain and Abel, the Deluge, and the Giants stories, is that all these stories happen chronologically before the time of Jesus Christ, with Cain and Abel being the first children of Adam and Eve, and the deluge that was sent out to wipe out all life on earth; including the Giants, which only Noah, his family, and the animals he managed to save survived. As these are all antediluvian period stories; which are from the time between the fall of man (the story of Adam and Eve, and the flood, then we can raise the point indeed that God referred to here can be God before Jesus Christ's creation in the sense Arianism upholds: God was timeless and had no beginning, but Jesus Christ had a beginning, and while he is timeless towards the future, he cannot be timeless towards the beginning.

Through this reasoning, we can theorize that the usage of these stories and references to God are completely in line with the teachings of Arianism. A comment that can be made however, is that the narrator, or the author of the poem makes a reference to Elves, which are of Norse and Germanic folklore traditions. Coincidentally, another similarity that can be drawn between *Beowulf* and *Völuspá* is the manner when Grendel arrives, he disrupts peace. As it is also told in *Völuspá* “Teflðo í túni teitir voro, var þeim vættergis vant ór gulli, unz þriár qvómo þursa meyar, ámátcar mióc, ór iötunheimom.”, which translates to “They played at tæfl [a chess-like board game] in the court, and were happy. They lacked no gold, until three came to them from the world of the giants, giant-maidens with terrifying power” (Taylor 1966: 119-130) While indeed there is a similarity, previously, some comments had been made in regard to the chronological differences between the writing of *Völuspá* and *Beowulf*. If any

inspiration indeed was taken between the two, then by the accepted date of writing in this paper, then it must have been the former taking inspiration from the latter.

### Affirmation of Arianism

Similar to such, there is another reference made to the God's authority over the earth's ways in the passages just before Hrothgar's sermon, and it can affect the Arian approach to the poem, as the reader will see. As Beowulf fights Grendel's Mother, we read between the lines 1605-1611:

Þá þæt sweord ongan  
 æfter heaþoswáte hildegicelum  
 wígbil wanian· þæt wæs wundra sum  
 þæt hit eal gemealt íse gelícost  
 ðonne forstes bend fæder onlaéteð·  
 onwíndeð waélrápas sé gewæld hafað  
 saéla ond maéla· þæt is sóð metod.

(Then that sword began, caused by the gore of battle in cycles of battle, the war-bill to wane; that was a great wonder, that it all melted, so like ice, when frost's bond the Father loosens, unwinds water-ropes, who has control, of times and seasons; that is the true Creator.)

Previously, the role God played on the creation was explained in the "Scop's song", where many correlations between the Bible's Genesis and Scop's Creation song is drawn, and how the manner in which it is written so can lead to an understanding and application that is in line with the standing point and teachings of Arianism; mainly that it did not need "the Son", or Jesus Christ to be read as it was, and could function only with "God the Son." However, in these lines, we are given a very important title for God; which is "the Father." Ensuring nothing was lost in translation, we can also take a look at Heaney's translation, in which he translates the sentence as: "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." Ensured it is that this is indeed the Father, then we must address a quite simple logical conclusion: The existence or reference to a father also implies by the quality of such a title, the existence of a son as well; or any manner of offspring. As, the entity referred to here is God himself, then

logically, the implied offspring of such would be Jesus Christ—Son of God. We must consider; Arianism does not completely ignore Jesus Christ as the Divine, nor that it does not recognize his divinity. It is only that he is not equal in his divinity to the father. As such, he may not receive an equal amount of worship in comparison to God the Father, and as the idea this paper proposes, may even go unmentioned. Thus, the Son of God—or God the Son, who in this passage is merely implied through the title of God himself, does not break away from the Arian teachings, and the passage here can still be seen as in line with Arianism. While of course, previously, the paper has set the main diverging tenet of Arianism as the Son of God being begotten whereas the God himself is misbegotten, it was also stated in the explanations given of the teachings of Arius that Jesus Christ himself is still Divine, even if begotten, and his mere presence itself is not a danger to an Arian argument. However, as mentioned in the previous part in which the God and the relation he has with creation, this particular sentence has nothing that stops it from belonging to any Christian doctrine other than Arianism as well. Hence, its effect on the argument on whether the themes of Christianity in the poem stems from an Arian standpoint is not strong.

#### Isolated Cases of Christian Themes

Apart from passages which were analysed akin to “chapters”, there are many cases of Christian themes becoming apparent in the poem. Now, these isolated passages are analysed and it are deduced if they can be aligned with the tenets of Arianism. First one of these cases happen quite soon in the poem, between the lines 12-17, it is said:

Ðaém eafera wæs    æfter cenned  
 geong in geardum    þone god sende  
 folce tó frófre·    fyrenðearfe ongeat·  
 þæt híc aér drugon    aldorléase  
 lange hwíle·    him þæs líffréä  
 wuldres wealdend    woroldáre forgeaf:

(To him an heir was born then, young in the yards, God sent him, to comfort the people; He had seen the dire distress, that they suffered before, leader-less, a long while; them for that the Life-Lord, Ruler of Glory, granted honour on earth.)

We can see that while there is indeed a clear reference to God by his name, we are also given two titles: Life-Lord, and Ruler of Glory. While these titles can appear primitive, when compared to a more contemporary tradition, Heaney translates them as: "...Lord of Life, The glorious Almighty..." (Heaney 2000: 1) which is quite more similar to the titles we know of God from the bible. Lord of Life most likely refers to him being the Creator of life itself; which stems from him being the Creator himself. The God being the Creator, and the manner such a charge is applied in *Beowulf* and drawn a correlation between Arianism and it, was discussed previously when the paper explained the Scop's song; deducing that while it fits into the teachings of Arianism, and does not particularly refer to a Son of God particularly, it can also belong to any other Christian doctrine. "Glorious Almighty" here seems to be a reference to the omniscient power of God. If the God is indeed the unbegotten supreme divinity, then indeed such a title fits well for such a being. However, it is difficult to see a manner or theme that particularly refers to Arian teaching, and imposing such to this title would be, as the saying would go, would be spreading the argument thin. However, the reader can observe another Christian theme: The passage is about Beowulf, and how he came to be. We read that God himself had sent this child as he saw the distress; the dangers they were in, and how they had suffered. As the passage says indeed, "to comfort the people." Being sent by God down to earth in order to take people away from their distress and suffering, of course, can be an allegory to the biblical birth of Jesus Christ. John 3:16-17 states this clearly: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (Hengeveld 2011) The correlation between some of the themes between Jesus Christ does not end there however. As Beowulf becomes a king, so is Jesus Christ is supposed to be as can be discerned with his dialogue with Pilate in John 18:37: "Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this because I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (Hengeveld 2011) As Beowulf is also some of the few characters who makes praise to God and Christian values, we can almost propose that Beowulf is the "missing Son of God" through correlations and similarities between stories. After all, as Jesus Christ dies for the sins of the people, Beowulf dies also protecting his people, from the Dragon.



Between the lines 377 and 384 Hrothgar tells:

Ðonne sægdon þæt saélífende  
 þá ðe gifsceattas Géata fyredon  
 þyder tó þance· þæt hé þrítiges  
 manna mægen-cræft on his mundgripe  
 heaþoróf hæbbe· hine hálig god  
 for árstafum ús onsende  
 tó West-Denum· þæs ic wén hæbbe·  
 wið Grendles gryre·

(Further, it has been said by sea-farers, they who our gifts of coins ferried for the Geats, thither in thanks, that he thirty men's strength in the grip of his hand, renowned in war, has; him holy God, in benevolence, has sent to us, to the West-Danes, of this I have hope, against Grendel's terror.)

These lines too, support that Beowulf is indeed sent by God himself down to earth, to play the role of a saviour—a title also given to Jesus Christ through his sacrifice made for the people. However, even as intriguing as this may be, taking this theory as a given and confirming that indeed this is indeed a clear allegory for Jesus Christ may be pushing the limits of what can be taken as a proof that Jesus Christ, or Son of God is mentioned in the story. Hence, any notion it may have to with Arianism is moot and should be ignored for the purpose of this paper. Even if it was, however, as pointed before, the existence of Jesus Christ himself is not against the doctrines of Arianism. On the contrary, the Son being created and sent forth to the people of the earth only gives more credence to the Arian argument that the Son of God was begotten. The same occurs between the lines 379-384, where it says:

þæt hé þrítiges  
 manna mægen-cræft on his mundgripe  
 heaþoróf hæbbe· hine hálig god  
 for árstafum ús onsende  
 tó West-Denum·

(...that he thirty, men's strength, in the grip of his hand, renowned in war, has; him holy God, in benevolence, has sent to us, to the West-Danes, of this I have hope, against Grendel's terror;...)

Where the reader can see another case of Beowulf being sent by God himself to help the Danes. The implications of this has been touched upon in the immediate previous part, and the authority this passage can have on the argument regarding Arianism is quite ineffective—indeed the God alone can be Arius' God, but also can belong to any other doctrine as well.

Diverting from this topic to a bit, we can observe that just like some other passages, our mysterious, but confirmedly Christian author makes some comments on the religion of the Danes, telling between the lines 175-180:

hwílum hie gehéton   æt hærgtrafum  
wígweorþunga·   wordum baédon  
þæt him gástbona   géoce gefremede  
wið þéodþréaum·   swylc wæs þéaw hyra·  
haéþenra hyht·   helle gemundon  
in módsefan·   metod hie ne cúþon

(...sometimes they pledged at holy temples, sacred honouring, in words bid, that them the demon-slayer would offer succour, from the plight of the people; such was their habit: the hope of heathens; on hell they pondered, in the depths of their hearts.)

Passages such as this give credit to the arguments that it was the author themselves were the ones who “Christianized” the original story; which gives some chance also to the argument that if the author was the one who add christian elements to these peoples, he may have utilized what he knew about Geats, or Goths; the latter’s doctrines of Arianism to be exact. The following lines between 180-188:

metod hie ne cúþon  
daéda démend·   ne wiston hie drihten god  
né hie húru heofena helm   herian ne cúþon  
wuldres waldend.   Wá bið þaém ðe sceal  
þurh slíðne níð   sáwle bescúfan  
wihte gewendan·   wél bið þaém þe mót

æfter déaðdæge drihten sécean

ond to fæder fæþmum freoðo wilnian.

(...the Creator they did not know, the Judge of deeds, they were not aware of the Lord God, nor yet they the Helm of the Heavens were able to honour, Glory's Wielder. Woe be to him who must, through dire terror, thrust his soul into fire's embrace; hope not for relief, or to change at all; well be he who may, after death-day seek the Lord, and in his Father's arms yearn towards peace.)

Here, we see that God has been granted new titles: “the Judge of Deeds” and “Glory’s Wielder.” These seem to work to grant the God his almighty and Divine authority on matters, and do not particularly make any reference to any certain doctrinal understanding which can provide the argument of this paper any support. However the lines: “Well be he who may seek the Lord, and in his Father's arms yearn towards peace.” Can prove quite vital. Here, the figure referred by whomever is the “Father” depends on how the passage is translated. One can read this as “seeking the Lord; Jesus Christ, and yearn towards peace in the arms of God the Father. This would indeed confirm a solid and credible reference to Jesus Christ himself. However, translations made by people particularly learned on the matter; such as Seamus Heaney, translate the passage as: “But blessed is he, Who after death can approach the Lord, And find friendship in the Father’s embrace.” (Heaney 2000: 6) This situates the Father as another title of the Lord; God, referred to here with his title of “Father.” This takes away the notion that Lord here refers to Jesus Christ, as it makes the reference clearly to God the Father; implying that he is the father of all. The effect such a title can have on the Arianism argument has been discussed before: God can utilize the title Father without referring to Jesus Christ, and it may not particularly refer to his station in the Trinity. While this can range between belonging to any other doctrine to clearly supporting an Arianism argument, this passage is made out of words belonging to the author; therefore any effect it can have on the characters within the story can be held separately to a degree.

Another passage which has to do with Christianity; or at least, that can have something to do with Christianity, happens during the “flyting”; a species of a jousting of words, between Beowulf and Unferth. Between the lines 581 to 589, Beowulf says:

Nó ic wiht fram þe

swylcra searoníða secgan hýrde

billa brógan· Breca naéfre gít

æt heaðoláce      né gehwæper incer  
 swá déorlice      daéd gefremede  
 fágum swordum      --nó ic þæs gylpe—  
 þeah ðú þinum bróðrum      tó banan wurde  
 héafodmaégum·      þæs þú in helle scealt  
 werhðo dreogan      þeah þín wit duge·

(Not a whit of thee, in such strife of conflict, have I heard told, of bill-blade terror; Breca never yet, at battle-play, nor either of you, so boldly performed a deed, with bright swords --I do not boast of this-- nevertheless, you your brothers' killer were, near relatives; for that you must with Hel, suffer torment, though your mind is strong.)

As this flyting can be somewhat difficult to understand through a direct translation, we can utilize Heaney's translation; which tells: "Now, I cannot recall any fight you entered, Unferth, That bears comparison. I don't boast when I say That neither you nor Breca ever were much Celebrated for swordsmanship Or for facing danger in the battlefield. You killed your own kith and kin, So for all your cleverness and quick tongue, You will suffer damnation in the pits of hell." (Heaney 2000: 18) The first point of content is that the direct translation translates "Hell" as "Hel"; "Hel" was also a concept in the faith of Germanic and Scandinavian pagans. By the word itself, indeed it may be difficult to derive a "belonging" of the concept to Christianity or Paganism. While taking it as a Pagan understanding is possible, with the aims and concepts this paper has pointed out previously, seeing it in a Christian concept too, is quite simple, as Beowulf itself refers to the Cain and Abel; the first murder in the biblical history of the mankind; which also happens to be a fratricide, and sends Cain and his descendants into a mark of shame and cursed for eternity; forcing him to wander the earth. It needs no deep explanation that Christianity indeed sees it as a sin, and presumably, fratricide would be punished by torment in hell. The passage alone itself however, either through the reference to Hell, or the morbidity of fratricide, makes small to no effect on the poem's relationship between its Christian themes and Arianism; as both of the points made in this passage can belong to any other Christian doctrine as well.

As pointed out before, the poem also has a number of Divine interventions; either direct, or through causality. Beowulf, either truly himself, or as told by the narrative, for example, relies on such as he fights Grendel. Between the lines 1269 and 1276, it is written:

þaér him áglaéca    ætgráepe wearð·  
 hwæpre hé gemunde    mægenes strenge  
 gimfæste gife    ðe him god sealed  
 ond him tó anwaldan    áre gelyfde  
 frófre ond fultum·    ðý hé þone féond oferwóm·  
 gehnaégde helle gást·    þá hé héan gewát  
 dréame bedaéled    déapwíc séön,  
 mancynnes féond.

(there with him the troll    came at close grips; yet he remembered    the great strength, generous gift,    which God gave him, and he on the One-Ruler's    favour relied, comfort and support;    by this he overcame the fiend, subdued the spirit of hell;    then wretched he went, deprived of joy,    to see his place of death, that foe of mankind.)

As we can see, God's blessing and powers are given credit by Beowulf, or the narrator, in the victory he has over Grendel. Here, in regards to the argument proposed by the paper, the usual lack of the "Son the God" from the Trinity can be observed as usual; this of course, does not mean particularly that it cannot be stemming from any other doctrine, but nevertheless fits into the mentioned lack of mentions of Jesus Christ. However, as Grendel is mentioned as "the foe of the mankind", "the spirit of hell", and "fiend", it aligns with the notion that Beowulf here is an allegory of Jesus Christ himself, and Grendel, with his plethora of hellish titles, is an allegory for Satan. Indeed, Jesus Christ is also said to have battled Satan; though usually through more implied means such as getting tempted in the Wilderness in Matthew 4:1:11, where Jesus also triumphs over the temptations of the Devil through the word and blessings of God. (Hengeveld 2011) If so, then indeed, this unspoken allegory can be a confirmation of a reference to Jesus Christ, and the Son of God. However, as pointed out before about the issue, as there is no confirmation about this theory, so its effect on the argument proposed by this paper becomes quite weak. As with victory, so we are told that defeat and loss also come through the command of God. During Beowulf's fight with the dragon, we are given between lines 2324 and 2332:

Þá wæs Bíowulfe bróga gecýðed  
 snúde tó sóðe þæt his sylfes hám  
 bolda sélest brynewylmum mealt  
 gifstól Géata· þæt ðám góðan wæs  
 hréow on hreðre hygesorga maést·  
 wénde se wísa þæt hé wealdende  
 ofer ealde riht écean dryhtne  
 bitre gebulge· bréost innan wéoll  
 þéostrum geþoncum swá him geþýwe ne wæs.

(Then was to Beowulf the danger made known, quickly in truth, that his own home, the finest of dwellings, in waves of heat melted, the throne of the Geats; that was to the good man, a grief in his heart, of the mind-sorrows the greatest; the wise man thought that he the Ruler, against ancient law eternal Lord, had bitterly angered; inside his breast welled, with thoughts of gloom, such was not usual for him.)

The reader should focus on the last sentences, which Heaney translates into a more contemporary style as: “It threw the hero into deep anguish and darkened his mood: The wise man thought he must have thwarted, Ancient ordinance of the eternal Lord, Broken His commandment...” (Heaney 2000: 74) We read that Beowulf somehow thinks, or attributes the terror that has befallen him into an infringement he had on the rules, or commandments of God. However, as spoken of before, this vengeful, retributive God, who punishes those that go against his laws and rules, is in a contrast to the God of Jesus Christ. We see here that the God depicted here instead, is similar to the God of “Wrath” of the Old Testament, who commands revenge from his followers from the wrongdoers, such as when he does against the Babylonians in Psalm 137, in which he tells: “...Remember, Lord, what the Edomites did, on the day Jerusalem fell. “Tear it down,” they cried, “tear it down to its foundations!” Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is the one who repays you, according to what you have done to us. Happy is the one who seizes your infants, and dashes them against the rocks.”(Hengeveld 2011) The Old Testament is based on the 24 books of the Tanakh; the Hebrew Bible; which are a collection of religious writing of Israelites, depicting events that have occurred before the time of Jesus Christ, such as the captive and exile of the Israelites in the hands of Babylonians.(Jones 2000: 215) As such, if this is indeed the God of the Old

Testament, then it is normal that there isn't a mention of Jesus Christ, and God can function without Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This proves another issue for the argument of the paper; however, as Arianism too, accepts that Jesus Christ was of divine blood, and played a grand role in the spread of the word of God. If God here is indeed the God of the Old Testament, then this doesn't put it on the aligning course with Arianism; on the contrary, it only works to keep itself away from the later doctrines of Christianity, and as such, has no effect on the argument made on the paper.

### Analysis Results

Throughout the markers stated before the analysis to be identified within the poem; being any mentions of "God", Christian terminology, and possible references made to Christian tradition and culture, indeed there aren't any mentions of Jesus Christ, or Jesus Christ as the "God the Son" of the Holy Christian Trinity, and any possible mentions to the figure also depend on theories which cannot be confirmed, such as character of Beowulf being an allegory to Jesus Christ himself. Any usage of titles such as "the Lord" which are shared both by Jesus Christ and God the Father, have been addressed, and it was argued that such titles can function without Jesus Christ—some of them dating to traditions before his birth even. This relegates any mentions made to the Christian God belonging to "God the Father" of the Trinity, or a unified sense of the Christian God without any references made to the Trinity. This seemingly unitarian sense aligns with the paper's proposal that the Christianity in *Beowulf* can be of the doctrine of Arianism. Arianism indeed, is sometimes seen as a unitarian doctrine (Mahajan 2004), as it practically forsakes the facets of the Trinity by making Jesus Christ subservient to God the Father, through taking away his unbegotten quality. If this is the case, then indeed the Christianity within *Beowulf* can be Arianism. However, Arianism itself is not against any mention of Jesus Christ. More knowledge and information on how Jesus Christ stood as a figure within the daily religious life and practices of an Arian would have been vital, but as there isn't any information about such surviving to this day, we can only presume. Surely, as the son of God still in Arianism, his importance could not be denied—even if he cannot be held to the same importance as God himself. Here, while the lack of any mentions of Jesus Christ coincides with what logically an Arian

approach would be indicated, the fact that Arianism itself does not completely throw away Jesus Christ takes the absolute positive reply to the theory proposed in the paper. This leaves us with this: While it makes perfect sense for the Christianity in *Beowulf* to be of Arianism, it would be dishonest to claim that it is indeed one hundred percent Arianism just because there are not any mentions of Jesus Christ. While it would indeed be strange; the lack of any mentions of Jesus Christ, the invoking of God in the poem can also be of any other doctrine as we do not have a proven negative when it comes to the standing between God the Father and God the Son.

### Theories

Theory A: Conveniently fitting a narrative into something that isn't.

The fact that there are no mentions of Jesus Christ, nor of any facets of the Sacred Christian Trinity, aligns with the tenets offered by the teachings of Arius. However, as there are no direct references made to Jesus Christ's standing within the "pantheon" of Christianity within the poem, these series of positive returns to the theory proposed by the paper can simply be a coincidence. The returns align, but the sources of these returns do not have anything to do with each other. Aligning effect does not mean aligning cause also. Therefore the paper would simply be inserting a contemporary theory into a framework it did not belong. To use a more casual language, it would be forcing an argument into a place it did not share any affiliation with whatsoever.

Theory B: Taking the aligning parameters as proof.

The manner in which any references made to God without any mentions of Jesus Christ, or the concept of the Holy Trinity, though not proving the existence of Arianism in the poem in an absolute sense, is considerable, and cannot be dismissed; especially considering the possible connections between Goths and Geats mentioned in the introduction. We must then look at the mysterious *Beowulf* poet. If we consider the implications that the poem existed before it was written down by this mysterious poet, and the notions that it was indeed this poet who made the addition of many Christian themes as Irving argues in *The Nature Of Christianity in Beowulf*, then we can propose another theory: our mysterious poet indeed was the one who Christianized the poem, and observing the similarities between Goths and Geats; considering that in his day, such a memory would be quite fresher, he may have drawn a



connection between Goths and Geats, and may have decided to display the latter as Arian Christians. Though we do not know if this mysterious poet was the one who added such a part, but we know that this person indeed most likely knows about Arianism; as he also writes of Vandals in the poem: Wulfgar; one of the heroes in *Heorot*, is a Vandal leader, whose regarding lines can be found starting in 348. Though of course, as Vandals were also a group of people who migrated south through similar routes to Goths, there may have been those who stood behind in their ancestral lands. Regardless, the mention of a Vandal; whose people were one of the chief believers of Arianism in the Great Migration Period, tells us that indeed, the poet may have most likely known of their beliefs as well. Therefore, if the mysterious poet made a conscious decision to depict the Geats as Arian Christians, it is natural that he may have avoided any mentions of Jesus Christ to depict them as accurately as he thought how they would have been. If the poet lacked any documents on how Arians conducted themselves in their daily lives, then the choice of keeping Jesus Christ; or any reference to the Holy Trinity, may have felt enough to depict them as Arians. Klaeber himself also has a comment about the poet, stating that:

A poet displaying such familiarity with the teachings and spirit of Christianity could not have been a transitional Christian. It is not improbable that he was a member of the clergy; only this could explain the aggressively moralizing tone. In any case, he had received a monastic education and was a devoted follower of the Christian religion; indeed, it had become second nature for him to see all things in a Christian light. (Klaeber 1912: 69)

Indeed, for a Christian living in early middle-ages, seeing the references made to God, and Bible, but not to Jesus Christ, may have been enough to depict a firm difference between the Geats depicted, and the readers.

It comes to how one considers the lack of any mentions of Jesus Christ and the Trinity within the poem enough reasoning that this Christianity can indeed be Arianism. While the arguments put forth in the second are sound, and are valid, as told, the research analysis lacks an absolute answer to the question proposed by the paper: While we lack an absolute positive or negative answer, the Christianity in the poem can indeed be the depiction of what the mysterious poet would have thought to be Arianism, as either consciously, or through coincidence, its themes coincide with doctrines of Arianism.

## Conclusion

Theory A leaves us with pretty much nothing, of course. Thus, if we take Theory B as the de jure answer to the question proposed towards the end of the introduction, then more research about the links between Arianism and *Beowulf* can be conducted; while this paper give effort to analyse it from a religious standpoint, considering that religion and culture were quite more intertwined before the Enlightenment Era, one can conduct a research about the cultural markers of Goths and those whom have accepted Arianism at one point, and then try to compare such with the cultural themes in *Beowulf*, to try and see if there are any connections. Alternatively, this paper can be held as a part of a series of research projects which try to analyse *Beowulf* from the standpoints of Christian doctrines which have been condemned as being heresies; for example, approaches from dualistic doctrines, or other non-dualistic but heretical doctrines such as Nestorianism can prove an interesting matter in trying to figure out the themes of Christianity within *Beowulf*. This paper can also become one in the series of an Arianism-focused research on Anglo-Saxon literature, or early English Literature, where works of the said groupings are analysed from a standpoint of Arianism. In regard to the question, or the hypothesis proposed about whether *Beowulf*'s Christianity is of the doctrine of Arianism or not, we have in our hands an educated presumption of yes. If in the future by any chances a more detailed knowledge on how Arian Christians worshipped, lived their daily lives, and how they spoke arises through an archaeological finding or a document, then this paper can be re-evaluated to reach a further level of certainty. It is indeed the lack of documentation about the religious culture of Arianism, and the lack of knowledge about the mysterious "Beowulf Poet" that leaves us apart from total certainty in the reply to the hypothesis offered. Until the mentioned potential findings are acquired, the idea that Arianism is existent in *Bewoulf* can be entertained with high probability.

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