

Passage from Beowulf

Forth he fared at the fated moment,
sturdy Scyld to the shelter of God.
Then they bore him over to ocean's billow,
loving clansmen, as late he charged them,
while wielded words the winsome Scyld,
the leader beloved who long had ruled....
In the roadstead rocked a ring-dight vessel,
ice-flecked, outbound, atheling's barge:
there laid they down their darling lord
on the breast of the boat, the breaker-of-rings,
by the mast the mighty one. Many a treasure
fetched from far was freighted with him.
No ship have I known so nobly dight
with weapons of war and weeds of battle,
with breastplate and blade: on his bosom lay
a heaped hoard that hence should go
far o'er the flood with him floating away.
No less these loaded the lordly gifts,
thanes' huge treasure, than those had done
who in former time forth had sent him
sole on the seas, a suckling child.
High o'er his head they hoist the standard,
a gold-wove banner; let billows take him,
gave him to ocean. Grave were their spirits,
mournful their mood. No man is able
to say in sooth, no son of the halls,
no hero 'neath heaven,—who harbored that freight!

Translation/commentary

Scyld died in the prime of life. He had ordered his men to send his body out to sea. They put their beloved king in his boat and filled it with more treasure, swords, and armor than I've ever seen. They covered him with the treasure, which was sent to sea with his body. He was sent upon the sea just like he had been sent upon the sea of life in his youth. There was a gold banner flying from the mast of the ship, and it flapped with the breeze that carried him away. He and his treasure sailed into the unknown. His people mourned deeply.