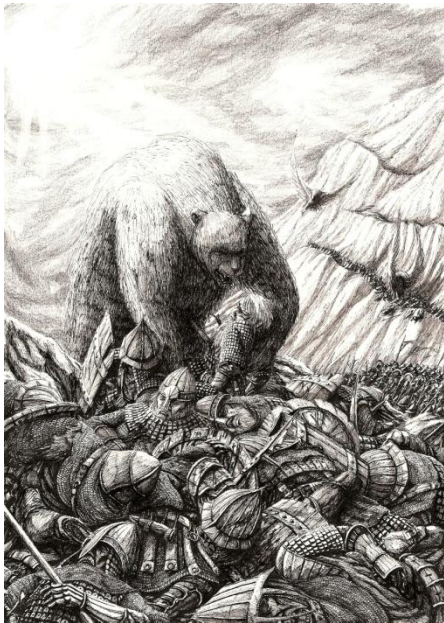


Dark Age Heroes and Bear Figures

Review by Rob Morgan

The issue of a set of Beowulf and Grendel in both 15mm and 28mm by Mick Yarrow Miniatures here in the UK has proved very welcome indeed. Both figures, particularly the 15mm pair, have the mystical edge that always seems to crop up in Dark Ages warfare. Grendel with arm raised is a big figure and has uses far beyond the basic scenario. It would make a good Orc, or an opponent for just about any hero of Norse or even medieval mythology. In 28mm Grendel's huge, and I can see use for this monster with even 6mm figures, or the Kremlin 1/300th Viking warships. Beowulf's a neat figure, and makes a good commander or leader, Arthurian or Saxon.

Figure 1 Beorn finds Thorin by Tulikoura



Of course the potential for magic and mystery on the table top early medieval battlefield is almost endless. Mick Yarrow produces a couple of good bear figures. Bear figures? Well, yes. Don't forget the concept of the "shape-shifter" well known in Viking and early European mythology. In ancient Denmark, King Hrolf Kraki, no mean warrior himself, possessed a loyal champion in Bothvar Bjarki, who was famed through all the Kingdoms of the North for fighting in the ranks of the King's army as a bear, while his human form slept in the Mead Hall. Beowulf's name's derived from a bear who takes the honey from bees. Across England and the Celtic World, bear-warriors were legendary and if you recall Tolkien's "The Hobbit," Beorn, the huge fighter, took part in the Battle of the Five Armies (now there's a wargame, gentlemen!) in his bear form. Further back in history, Tacitus describes the German Harii warriors in ursine terms, fighting at night, and blackened like bears.

The Mick Yarrow bear figure I used stands 30mm tall, it's 15mm or 20-25mm scale, even 28mm at a pinch, but that's a matter for personal choice -- the figure fits in any of them. Head back and on two legs, in a fighting pose, with a chain around its neck. The arms of the bear are at its side, but both paws can easily be drilled to take a spear or axe or sword. Mick can provide a 40mm boar spear, long Danish axe, short axe or sword from his substantial range. A slung-round Viking shield, or one carried in the left paw also looks good. The paint job? Well, dark brown, or black for the bear overall, with lighter underparts and paws. A remarkable, and simple, not to mention invincible, addition to your Dark Age warband. Standard pack prices. From royalistmymins@yahoo.co.uk

See Mick Yarrow Miniatures at:
<http://www.spanglefish.com/mickyarrowminiatures/>