



0. Beowulf - Story Preface

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Grendel, the dragon in Beowulf, is sleeping when a slave cannot resist the temptation to steal a golden cup. He "gets away with it" - for a time - until Grendel awakes and realizes the cup is missing. Illustration by Henrietta Elizabeth from a 1908 book *Stories of Beowulf*. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

*Then a powerful demon, a prowler through the dark,
nursed a hard grievance. It harrowed him
to hear the din of the loud banquet
every day in the hall, the harp being struck
and the clear song of a skilled poet
telling with mastery of man's beginnings ...*

Beowulf
Anglo-Saxon Epic
Seamus Heaney Translation

Sailing the short distance from Geatland to Denmark, the sixth-century warrior was sure he could help. His name was Beowulf. He would soon meet a monster - the "powerful demon" Grendel - who had terrorized the Danes for a dozen years.

The story of Beowulf and his exploits, told by long-ago poets, comes to us through a single manuscript written in Old English. Is the story true? Where (and when) was the manuscript written?

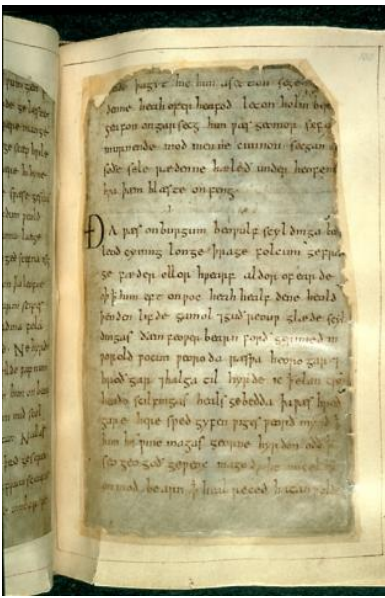
And ... how could the story of Beowulf - about Scandinavian Geats, Danes and Swedes - become Britain's national epic?

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Beowulf)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Beowulf>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Beowulf)

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Beowulf Manuscript

Image online, via Wikimedia Commons.

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Map: Location of Geats, Danes and Swedes

Map image online, courtesy University of Idaho.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Location-of-Geats-Danes-and-Swedes>

Beowulf - Performed in Old English

Clip from Benjamin Bagby's performance of *Beowulf*.

British DVD Collection provides the following information about this video:

One of Europe's greatest epics - the story of King Hrothgar, the monster Grendel and the hero Beowulf - has been passed down in written form for hundreds of generations. In this remarkable one-man tour de force, Benjamin Bagby (co-founder and director of the Sequentia ensemble for medieval music), accompanying himself on an Anglo-Saxon harp, delivers this gripping tale - in the original Old English - as it could have been experienced more than 1000 years ago.

Bagby has been performing the great epic, Beowulf, at major festivals and venues around the world since 1990. Now we have his remarkable performance on DVD, beautifully filmed by award-winning Swedish director Stellan Olsson.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beowulf-Performed-in-Old-English>

