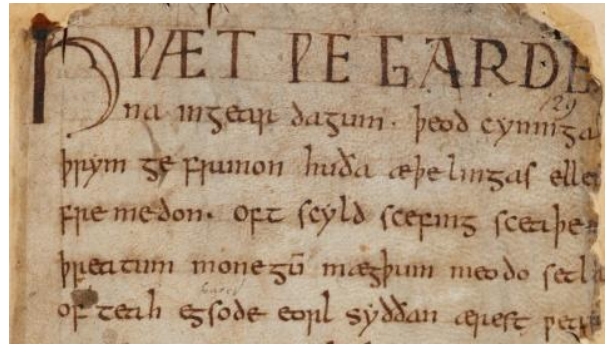




0. SOURCE of the STORY - Story Preface

1. ROME LEAVES A POWER VACUUM

2. WOLVES ENTER THE FOLD

3. INVADING ANGLO-SAXONS

4. DEFENDERS BECOME INVADERS

5. A CHANGING CULTURE

6. WHO WERE THE GEATS?

7. SOURCE of the STORY

8. THE STORY SETTING

9. HEOROT: THE MEAD-HALL

10. TROLLS

11. GRENDEL

12. BEOWULF

13. GRENDEL'S MOTHER

14. BATTLES and RUNE STONES

In this image, we see the opening words of the *Beowulf* manuscript. The first word is "*Hwæt*." That means: "Listen!" The source of the *Beowulf* story is located at the British Library, in London, MS Cotton Vitellius A XV, f. 132r. Click on the image for a better view.

People love stories about heroes and monsters. Maybe that is why the tale of Beowulf and Grendel has survived for at least a thousand years.

Although the epic itself is shrouded in mystery, let's examine what we know:

- Sometime in the late-tenth (or early-eleventh) century, two scribes wrote a story about a warrior named Beowulf and a monster named Grendel. They used pen and vellum to record their work. Scholars believe the story did not originate with these two scribes.
- They did not sign their manuscript, which measures about five-by-eight inches.
- Unlike many contemporary illuminated manuscripts, this story was not illustrated.
- The scribes wrote in West Saxon, a dialect oft-used for literary works written in England at that time.
- They told the tale as an unrhymed poem, using a four-beat alliterative style which distinguishes Old-English poetry.
- No one knows what happened to the manuscript for at least five hundred years after it was written.
- In 1563, when Elizabeth I was Queen of Britain, Lawrence Nowell (then Dean of Litchfield Cathedral) owned the manuscript and wrote his name (and date) on its first page.
- We do not know how the manuscript came into Nowell's possession. Scholars speculate he may have saved it when Henry VIII dissolved all of Britain's monasteries and broke-apart their libraries.

- Somehow, Beowulf ended up in the famous library of Sir Robert Cotton (1571-1631) who had privately assembled the most important collection of manuscripts in Britain's history.
- Cotton's collection was recognized as a British national treasure, and it ultimately came under the Crown's protection.
- While housed at *Ashburnham Place*, the *Beowulf* manuscript was nearly lost in a terrible fire on the 23rd of October, 1731. It was singed by flames and, since then, has had a tendency to crumble.
- Today it is cared for by the British Library. It remains the only known manuscript of the Beowulf poem.

English sounds differently today than it did through the years. Translating Beowulf into modern English, let's investigate the story.

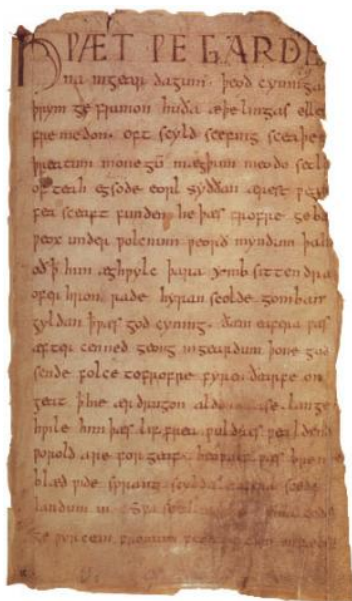
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SOURCE-of-the-STORY-Beowulf>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SOURCE-of-the-STORY-Beowulf>

Media Stream



Beowulf Manuscript

Image online, courtesy the British Library website.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beowulf-Manuscript0>



Lawrence Nowell - Owner of Beowulf Manuscript

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lawrence-Nowell-Owner-of-Beowulf-Manuscript>



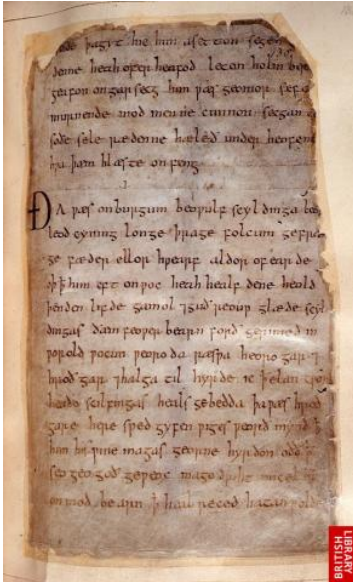
Sir Robert Cotton - Protector of Beowulf Manuscript

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Sir-Robert-Cotton-Protector-of-Beowulf-Manuscript>

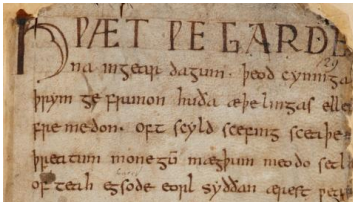


Beowulf Manuscript - Singed by Flames

Image online, courtesy The British Library Online Gallery.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beowulf-Manuscript-Singed-by-Flames>



SOURCE of the STORY

View this asset at:

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Anglo-Saxons - Who Were They

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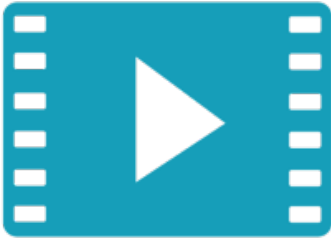


Anglo-Saxons and the Beowulf Epic

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Anglo-Saxons - A Virtual Visit to Their Villages

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