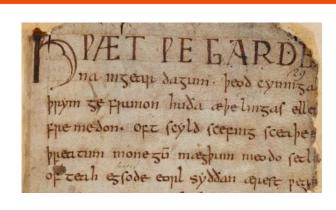
## SOURCE of the STORY



- 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 <u>vellum</u> 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 <u>Elizabeth I</u> was Queen of Britain, <u>Lawrence Nowell</u> (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 <u>Sir Robert Cotton</u> (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 <u>fire</u> on the 23rd of October, 1731. It was <u>singed by flames</u> 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 <u>through the years</u>. 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



<u>Lawrence Nowell - Owner of Beowulf Manuscript</u>

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:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/SOURCE-of-the-STORY-Illustration-



### 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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