



0. HEOROT: THE MEAD-HALL - Story Preface

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Mead halls, like Heorot, were communal places where kings, like Hrothgar, met with their warriors (among other things). This image depicts a reconstructed mead hall—from the ring castle Fyrkat near Hobro, Denmark—as it appeared on September 14, 2002. Photo by Malene Thyssen; online via Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC BY SA-3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

Hrothgar, according to the *Beowulf* story, had a great hall which he called "Heorot." The king and his warriors would gather in the hall to eat, plan battles, hear entertainers and drink mead (an alcoholic beverage made from fermented honey and water). Sometimes they would also sleep there.

Danish archaeologists have uncovered such long halls in the Lejre area of Zealand, the island on which the country's capital - Copenhagen - is located.

Excavation layers at one site reveal two different long halls, built over each other, likely used between the years 660 to 890. Not far away is a third long hall - from about the time in which the *Beowulf* epic takes place.

If we were able to step back in time, and could inspect a Danish long hall, what would we see? Reconstructions, based on archaeological findings, help us to visualize them. Fyrkat (near Hobro, Denmark) is such a place.

Although its re-creation is based on a building post-dating Heorot by more than four hundred years, Fyrkat gives us a sense of what these gathering places were like. So does Yeavering and its reconstructed long hall.

Once the location of a Saxon royal palace in Northumbria, which scholars believe post-dates the events in *Beowulf* by just a century, Yeavering is one of Britain's most important archaeological sites.

Thanks to Northumberland's County Council, we can also take a virtual tour *inside* Yeavering's great hall as Anglo-Saxon thegns ("thanes") and their king relax around a fire. (Be patient with the slow-loading video link.)

Might this have been the type of scene, envisioned by the *Beowulf* storyteller, when Grendel the monster entered Heorot to attack his victims?

And ... parenthetically ... was Grendel a Scandinavian troll?

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HEOROT-THE-MEAD-HALL-Beowulf>

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

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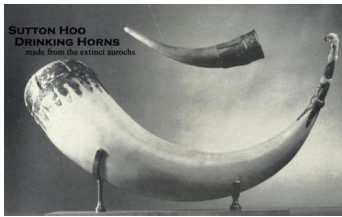
Illustration von der Halle Heorot (Helmungsdröhle). Die Abbildung zeigt die Innenseite der Halle (Ausschnitt), Nordseite (Ganzes Bild). Verlag von Carl Witten, Heidelberg.

Great Hall - Heorot

Image online, courtesy [Heorot](#).

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Great-Hall-Heorot>



SUTTON HOO DRINKING HORNS made from the extinct aurochs

Drinking Horns - Sutton Hoo

Image online, courtesy [Heorot](#).

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Fyrkat - Map Locator

Map image by Casiopeia; online, via Wikimedia Commons.

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Great Hall at Fyrkat

Image, described above, online courtesy The Pingry School.

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Long Hall - Constructed at Yeavinger

Image online, courtesy Northumberland County Council.

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King Edwin - Anglo-Saxon at Yeavinger

Image online, courtesy [Past Perfect.org](#), a UK-based website.

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Yeavinger Palace - View of Area Where it Was Located

Image online, courtesy Northumberland County Council.

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Anglo-Saxon Long Hall - Area View

Image online, courtesy Northumberland County Council.

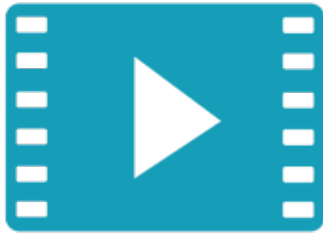
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HEOROT: THE MEAD-HALL

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Beowulf - Long Halls

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