

Literary History

PROGRAMME

- Attendance & programme
- Medieval Jeopardy (Homework check)
- Introduction to *Beowulf*
- Beowulf fragment (work time)
- Time for questions

Medieval Jeopardy (homework check)

- Form 2 teams
- Did you do your exploring in the Historical Background section of the quest?
- Let's check... by playing Jeopardy!



Introduction to Beowulf

- Recap of introduction to the Anglo-Saxons last week
- Some literary terms
- The story of Beowulf

Recap of introduction to the A-S last week

• Look at the statements below. Are they true or false?

- ✓ 1. From the 6th to the 9th centuries, Anglo-Saxon England consisted of seven separate kingdoms.
- ✗ 2. We call the language the Anglo-Saxons spoke Middle English.
- ✗ 3. *Beowulf* was written by a famous Anglo-Saxon writer.



Some literary terms (1)

- **Oral tradition**
- Definition: “the information, memories and knowledge held in common by a group of people, over many generations”
 - = the passing down of stories through vocal utterance
 - Mostly found in pre-literate or illiterate societies



Some literary terms (2)

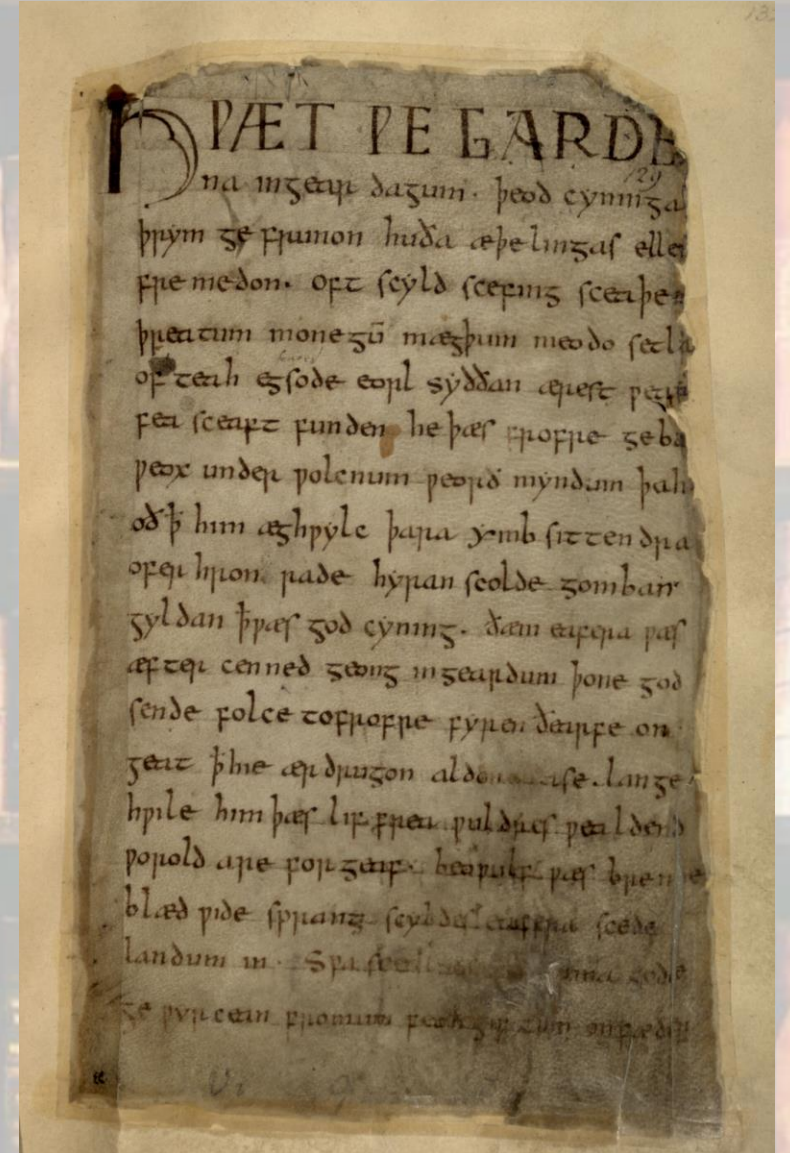
- **Scop**
- Definition: “a poet and performer of Old English literature”
 - = somebody who specialises in memorising stories and telling them (or rather, performing them) to an audience
 - Very little is known about scops, but let’s assume they existed 😊
- In the quest: a link to a performance of *Beowulf* by modern-day scop Benjamin Bagby





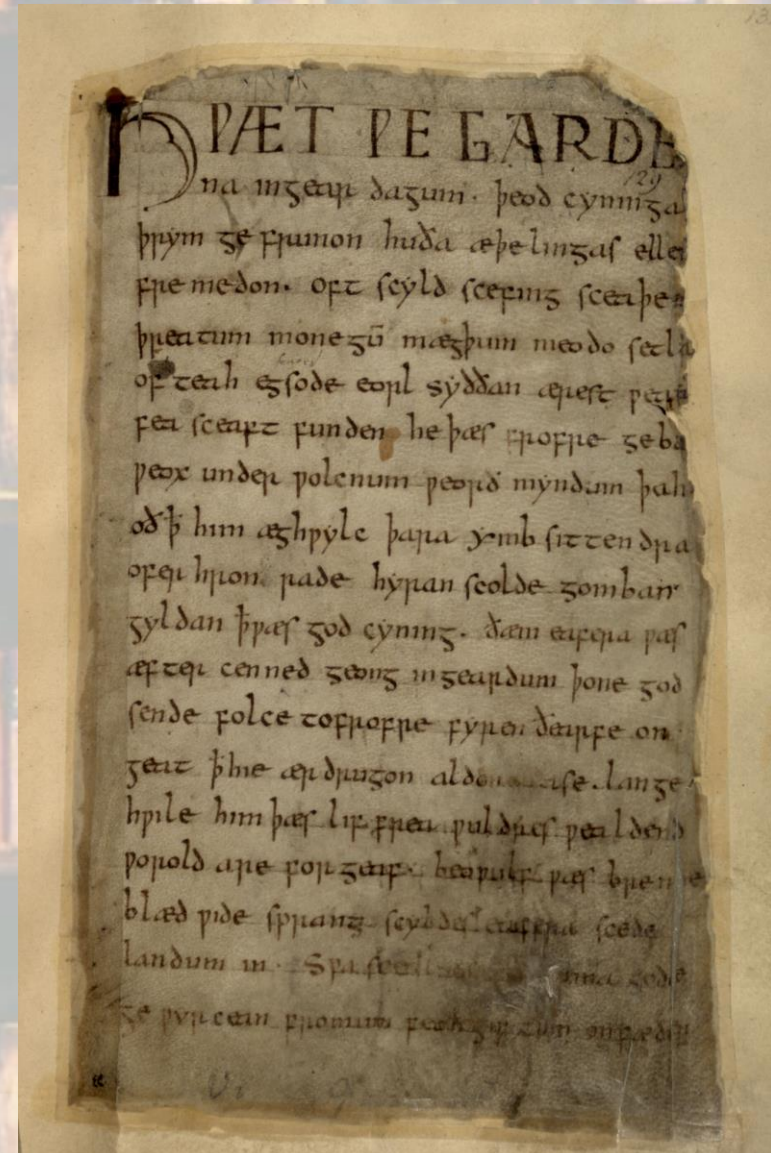
Some literary terms (3)

- **Alliteration**
- Definition: “the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.”
 - An example: Peter picked a pack of pickled peppers
- Very common in Old English poetry
 - Helpful when memorising long lines of verse (remember *oral tradition*)
 - Used to intensify the story



Some literary terms (3)

Hwæt. We Gardena in geardagum,
beodcyninga, brym gefrunon,
hu ða æbelingas ellen fremedon.
Oft Scyld Scefing sceapena þreatum,
monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah,
egsode eorlas. Syððan ærest wearð
feasceaft funden, he þæs frofre gebad,
weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah,
oðþæt him æghwylc þara ymsittendra
ofer hronrade hýran scolde,
gomban gyldan. þæt wæs god cyning.

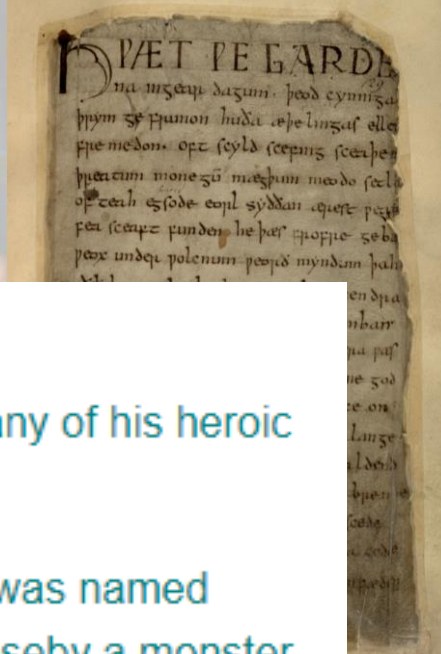
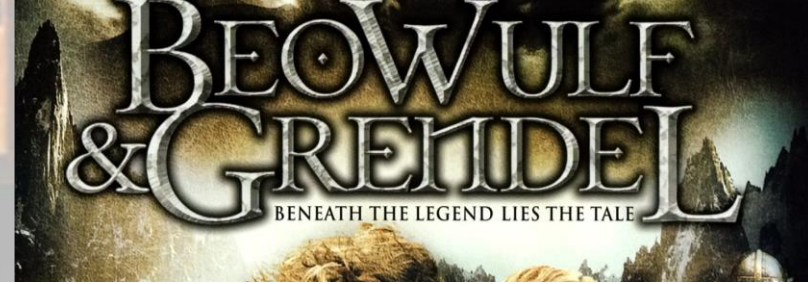


Some literary terms (4)

- **Epic poem**
- Definition: “An epic poem, or simply an epic, is a lengthy narrative poem typically about the extraordinary deeds of heroes dealing with gods or other superhuman forces.”



The story of Beowulf



Introduction

The epic poem *Beowulf* tells the life story of the Geatish (=a Scandinavian tribe) warrior Beowulf and many of his heroic deeds.

It takes place in Denmark, where the famous king Hrothgar had built a grand hall made of gold. The hall was named *Heorot* and there king Hrothgar held many feasts and invited all his noblemen and warriors. However, closeby a monster called Grendel lived in the swamps, and he was jealous of Hrothgar and his merry feasts and set out to destroy Hrothgar's happiness. At night, Grendel would invade the hall and kill many men, until nobody dared come to Hrothgar's hall anymore.

Hrothgar asked many warriors to rid him of the monster Grendel, but none succeeded and so Heorot was haunted for years by Grendel.

One day, the young hero Beowulf arrives, and pledges to get rid of Grendel. He and his warriors are received gladly and a great feast ensues. They go to sleep in Heorot that night, but Beowulf keeps guard and waits for Grendel to arrive...



Beowulf: fragment

ðā com of more under misthleopum

Grendel gongan, godes yrre bær;

mynte se manscaða manna cynnes

sumne besyrwan in sele þam hean.

Wod under wolcnum to þæs þe he winreced,

goldsele gumena, gearwost wisse,

fættum fahne. Ne wæs þæt forma sið

þæt he Hroþgares ham gesohte;

næfre he on aldordagum ær ne siþðan

heardran hæle, healðegnas fand.

In off the moors, down through the mist-bands

God-cursed Grendel came greedily loping.

The bane of the race of men roamed forth,

Hunting for a prey in the high hall.

Under the cloud-murk he moved towards it

Until it shone above him, a sheer keep

Of fortified gold. Nor was that the first time

He had scouted the grounds of Hrothgar's dwelling---

Although never in his life, before or since,

Did he find harder fortune or hall-defenders.

Beowulf: fragment (work time)

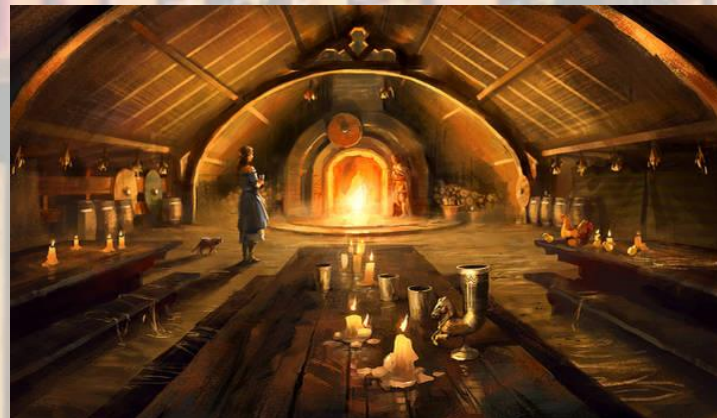
- Go to the Literary History quest
- 4a. Literary Fragment(s)
 - Read the translated fragments
 - Do the two exercises at the bottom of the page (or on paper, if you prefer)

4a. Beowulf

4a. Introduction

4a. Literary Fragment(s)

4a. Study Questions



4V – finish for next week

❖ 4V Middle Ages Quest: 4. Beowulf

- Literary Fragments (if you hadn't finished in class)
- Study Questions

4a. Beowulf



4a. Introduction

4a. Literary Fragment(s)

4a. Study Questions

4a. Beowulf



4a. Introduction

4a. Literary Fragment(s)

4a. Study Questions