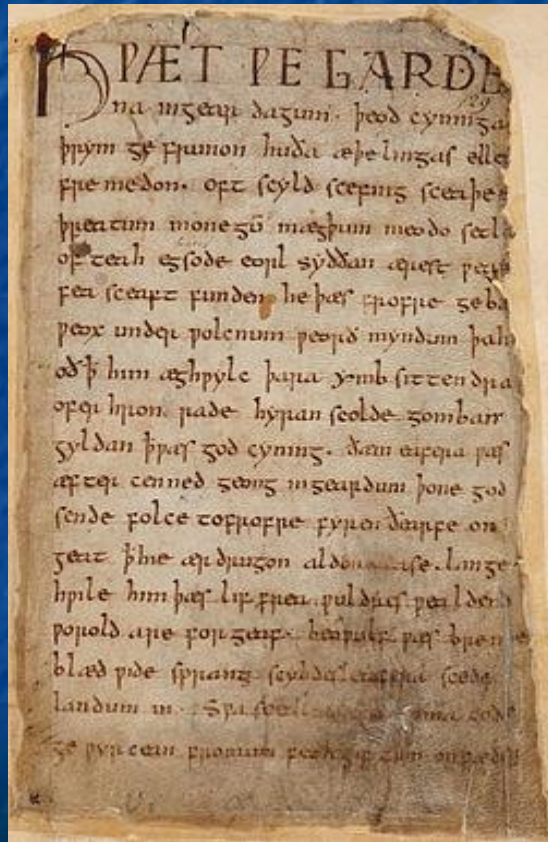


# The Beowulf



Beowulf is the conventional title of an Old English epic poem consisting of 3182 alliterative long lines, set in Scandinavia, the oldest surviving epic poem of Old English and thus commonly cited as one of the most important works of Anglo-Saxon literature, and also arguably the earliest vernacular English literature.



# Content

- The main protagonist, Beowulf, a hero of the Geats, comes to the aid of Hrothgar, the king of the Danes, whose great hall, Heorot, is plagued by the monster Grendel. Beowulf kills Grendel with his bare hands and Grendel's mother with a sword of a giant that he found in her lair.





- The full poem survives in the manuscript known as the Nowell Codex, located in the British Library. Written in England, its composition by an anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet is dated between the 8th and the early 11th century. In 1731, the manuscript was badly damaged by a fire that swept through Ashburnham House in London that had a collection of medieval manuscripts assembled by Sir Robert Bruce Cotton. The poem's existence for its first seven centuries or so made no impression on writers and scholars, and besides a brief mention in a 1705 catalogue by Humfrey Wanley it was not studied until the end of the 18th century, and not published in its entirety until Johan Bülow funded the 1815 Latin translation, prepared by the Icelandic-Danish scholar Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin. After a heated debate with Thorkelin, Bülow offered to support a new translation by N.F.S. Grundtvig — this time into Danish. The result, *Bjovulfs Drape* (1820), was the first modern language translation of Beowulf.

The events described in the poem take place in the late 5th century, after the Angles and Saxons had begun their migration to England, and before the beginning of the 7th century, a time when the Anglo-Saxon people were either newly arrived or still in close contact with their Germanic kinsmen in Northern Germany and Scandinavia and possibly England. The poem may have been brought to England by people of Geatish origins. It has been suggested that Beowulf was first composed in the 7th century at Rendlesham in East Anglia, as the Sutton Hoo ship-burial also shows close connections with Scandinavia, and also that the East Anglian royal dynasty, the Wuffings, were descendants of the Geatish Wulfings. Others have associated this poem with the court of King Alfred, or with the court of King Cnut.



# Beowulf had three battles:



# First battle: Grendel

- Beowulf begins with the story of King Hrothgar, who constructed the great hall Heorot for his people. In it he, his wife Wealhtheow, and his warriors spend their time singing and celebrating, until Grendel, a troll-like monster who is pained by the noise, attacks the hall and kills and devours many of Hrothgar's warriors while they sleep. But Grendel does not touch the throne for it is described as being protected by the power of God. Hrothgar and his people, helpless against Grendel's attacks, abandon Heorot.



# Second battle: Grendel's Mother

- The next night, after celebrating Grendel's defeat, Hrothgar and his men sleep in Heorot. Grendel's mother, angered by the punishment of her son, appears and attacks the hall. She kills Hrothgar's most trusted warrior, Æschere, in revenge for Grendel's defeat .





# Third battle: The Dragon

- Beowulf returns home and eventually becomes king of his own people. One day, fifty years after Beowulf's battle with Grendel's mother, a slave steals a golden cup from the lair of an unnamed dragon at Earnaness. When the dragon sees that the cup has been stolen, it leaves its cave in a rage, burning everything in sight. Beowulf and his warriors come to fight the dragon, but Beowulf tells his men that he will fight the dragon alone and that they should wait on the barrow.



# There are some adaptations :

- -1981: Grendel Grendel Grendel
- 1993: Mighty Max: In the episode "The Maxnificent Seven", Max, along with Virgil and Norman recruit Beowulf, as well as three other great warriors in order to assist them in a battle against Skullmaster.
- 1995: Star Trek: Voyager: In the episode "Heroes and Demons", Ensign Harry Kim runs a holographic version of the Beowulf poem in which he plays the central character. Most of the episode takes place inside this Beowulf holonovel.
- 1998: Animated Epics: Beowulf
- 1999: Beowulf, a science-fiction/fantasy film starring Christopher Lambert.
- 1999: The 13th Warrior, action movie directed by John McTiernan mixing Beowulf with the travels of Ibn Fadlan; this is a film based on Crichton's Eaters of the Dead (see below).
- 2005: Beowulf & Grendel, starring Gerard Butler and directed by the Icelandic-Canadian Sturla Gunnarsson.
- 2007: Grendel, a made-for television movie on the Sci Fi Channel (United States).
- 2007: Beowulf, a DVD release of a performance of Beowulf by Benjamin Bagby in the original Old English
- 2007: Beowulf, a computer animated film directed by Robert Zemeckis and created through motion capture, a technique similar to that used by Zemeckis in The Polar Express. The manuscript was written by Roger Avary and Neil Gaiman. It deviates significantly from the original poem, most notably by making the dragon fought in the finale the offspring of Beowulf and Grendel's mother, whom he did not slay.
- 2008: Beowulf: Prince of the Geats
- 2008: Outlander, a science fiction film starring James Caviezel.

# The End.

