

## Beowulf



### The Anglo-Saxon Period-- Poetry

- Riddle—a form of poetry in which the object or person is described in a vague manner. The A/S's were fascinated with manipulating words.

### The Anglo-Saxon Period— A/S Poetry

- English literature has its beginning before the A/S's ever landed in Britain. When they conquered the island, they brought with them a rich heritage of oral story telling, particularly the stories of their heroes and warriors.

### A/S Poetry

- In both lyric poetry and riddles, the A/S's expressed their terror of the northern winter, their awareness of the transitory nature of life, and their reverence and fear of the sea.

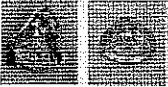
### A/S Poetry

- Lyric poetry—more personal type of poetry, more emotional

### The Anglo-Saxon Period-- Prose

- Unlike the poetry of the time period, the prose was very utilitarian.
- It had its origins in the Church with the priests and monks and was written in Latin, the language of educated men.

	<b>A/S Prose</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The earliest recognized prose writer was Venerable Bede, a 7<sup>th</sup> century monk who wrote <i>The Ecclesiastical History of the English Church and People</i>.</li> </ul>

	<b>Beowulf</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A Germanic king gathered around him a group of loyal thanes, who shared his house and fought in his battles.</li> <li>■ A king earned his thanes' loyalty through generosity.</li> </ul>

	<b>Beowulf</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Only surviving A/S epic</li> <li>■ Told orally by scop, probably dates from about 700 A.D.</li> <li>■ Was probably written down by a monk</li> </ul>

	<b>Beowulf</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A great warrior showed courage in the face of doom; upheld his honor by avenging his family, friends, and king; and achieved fame through feats of strength and skill in battle.</li> </ul>

	<b>Beowulf</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tells of a much older story—the characters are not A/S, but are Geats and Danes from Scandinavia</li> <li>■ The epic teaches a modern audience about the A/S ideals of heroism and kingship.</li> </ul>

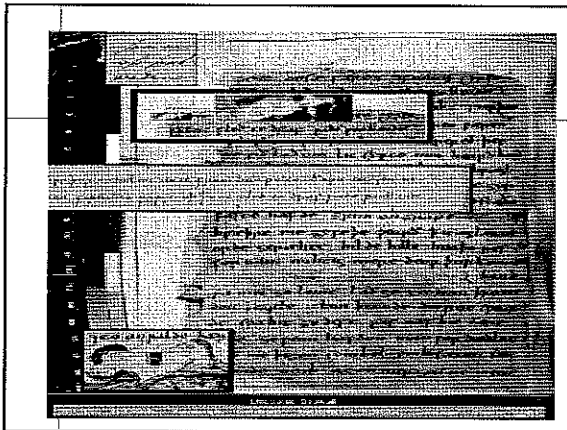
	<b>Beowulf</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Divided into three parts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Battle with Grendel</li> <li>– Battle with Grendel's mother</li> <li>– Battle with the fire dragon</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Language

- *Beowulf* was written in Old English.
- Old English=*Beowulf*
- Middle English=*The Canterbury Tales*
- Early Modern English=Shakespeare
- Modern English=anything modern

## Translation

- Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Amen



## Heroic Epic

- Epic—a long story, often told in verse, involving heroes and gods. Grand in length and scope, an epic provides a portrait of an entire culture.
- Heroic Epic—an epic that has a main purpose of telling the life story of a great hero.

## Example of Old English

- Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum;
- Si þin nama gehalgod
- to becume þin rice
- gewurþe ðin willa
- on eorðan swa swa on heofonum.
- urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us todæg
- and forgyf us ure gyltas
- swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum
- and ne gelaed þu us on costnunge
- ac alys us of yfele soþlice

## Devices used in *Beowulf*

- Kenning—metaphorical compound word used to replace a noun
  - Ex. Whale's home = ocean

Apposition—a grammatical form in which a thing is renamed in a different word, phrase, or clause

Ex. "Till the monster stirred, that demon, that fiend, Grendel."