[Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates" \o "Template:Use dmy dates) [Template:About](/wiki/Template:About) [Template:Italic title](/wiki/Template:Italic_title) [Template:Use British English](/wiki/Template:Use_British_English) [Template:Infobox Medieval text](/wiki/Template:Infobox_Medieval_text) ***Beowulf*** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en);[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) [Template:IPA-ang](/wiki/Template:IPA-ang)) is an Old English epic poem consisting of 3182 [alliterative lines](/wiki/Alliterative_verse). It is the oldest surviving long poem in Old English and is commonly cited as one of the most important works of [Old English literature](/wiki/Old_English_literature).[[1]](#cite_note-1) It was written in England sometime between the 8th[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[2]](#cite_note-2) and the early 11th century.[[3]](#cite_note-3) The author was an anonymous [Anglo-Saxon](/wiki/Anglo-Saxons) poet, referred to by scholars as the "*Beowulf* poet".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The poem is set in [Scandinavia](/wiki/Scandza). [Beowulf](/wiki/Beowulf_(hero)), a hero of the [Geats](/wiki/Geats), comes to the aid of Hrothgar, the king of the [Danes](/wiki/Danes_(Germanic_tribe)), whose [mead hall](/wiki/Mead_hall) in Heorot has been under attack by a monster known as [Grendel](/wiki/Grendel). After Beowulf slays him, [Grendel's mother](/wiki/Grendel's_mother) attacks the hall and is then also defeated. Victorious, Beowulf goes home to Geatland ([Götaland](/wiki/Götaland) in modern Sweden) and later becomes king of the Geats. After a period of fifty years has passed, Beowulf defeats a [dragon](/wiki/Dragon), but is fatally wounded in the battle. After his death, his attendants cremate his body and erect a tower on a headland in his memory.

The full poem survives in the manuscript known as the [Nowell Codex](/wiki/Nowell_Codex), located in the [British Library](/wiki/British_Library). It has no title in the original manuscript, but has become known by the name of the story's protagonist.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1731, the manuscript was badly damaged by a fire that swept through [Ashburnham House](/wiki/Ashburnham_House) in London that had a collection of medieval manuscripts assembled by [Sir Robert Bruce Cotton](/wiki/Sir_Robert_Cotton,_1st_Baronet,_of_Connington).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

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## Historical background[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[left|thumb|Approximate central regions of tribes mentioned in *Beowulf*, with the location of the](/wiki/File:Beowulf_geography_names.png) [Angles](/wiki/Angles) in [Angeln](/wiki/Angeln). See [Scandza](/wiki/Scandza) for details of Scandinavia's political fragmentation in the 6th century. The events in the poem take place in the late fifth century after the [Anglo-Saxons](/wiki/Anglo-Saxons) had started their journey to England and before the beginning of the seventh century, a time when the Anglo-Saxons were either newly arrived or were still in close contact with their [Germanic kinsmen](/wiki/Germanic_peoples) in Northern Germany. The poem may have been brought to England by people of Geatish origins.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It has been suggested that *Beowulf* was first composed in the 7th century at [Rendlesham](/wiki/Rendlesham) in [East Anglia](/wiki/Kingdom_of_East_Anglia), as the [Sutton Hoo](/wiki/Sutton_Hoo) ship-burial also shows close connections with Scandinavia, and also that the East Anglian royal dynasty, the [Wuffingas](/wiki/Wuffingas), may have been descendants of the Geatish [Wulfings](/wiki/Wulfing).[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5) Others have associated this poem with the court of King [Alfred the Great](/wiki/Alfred_the_Great) or with the court of King [Cnut the Great](/wiki/Cnut_the_Great).[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Pages needed](/wiki/Template:Pages_needed)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Ottarshogen.jpg)[*Ohthere's*](/wiki/Ohthere) *mound* The poem deals with legends, was composed for entertainment, and does not separate between fictional elements and real historic events, such as the raid by King [Hygelac](/wiki/Hygelac) into [Frisia](/wiki/Frisia). Scholars generally agree that many of the personalities of *Beowulf* also appear in Scandinavian sources (specific works designated in the following section).[[7]](#cite_note-7) This does not only concern people (e.g., [Healfdene](/wiki/Halfdan), [Hroðgar](/wiki/Hrothgar), [Halga](/wiki/Halga), [Hroðulf](/wiki/Hrólfr_Kraki), [Eadgils](/wiki/Eadgils) and [Ohthere](/wiki/Ohthere)), but also [clans](/wiki/Norse_clans) (e.g., [Scyldings](/wiki/Scylding), [Scylfings](/wiki/Yngling) and Wulfings) and some of the events (e.g., the [Battle on the Ice of Lake Vänern](/wiki/Battle_on_the_Ice_of_Lake_Vänern)). The dating of the events in the poem has been confirmed by archaeological excavations of the [barrows](/wiki/Tumulus) indicated by [Snorri Sturluson](/wiki/Snorri_Sturluson) and by Swedish tradition as the graves of Ohthere (dated to c. 530) and his son [Eadgils](/wiki/Eadgils) (dated to c. 575) in [Uppland](/wiki/Uppland), Sweden.[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10) In Denmark, recent archaeological excavations at [Lejre](/wiki/Lejre), where Scandinavian tradition located the seat of the Scyldings, i.e., [Heorot](/wiki/Heorot), have revealed that a hall was built in the mid-6th century, exactly the time period of *Beowulf*.[[11]](#cite_note-11) Three halls, each about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long, were found during the excavation.[[11]](#cite_note-11)[thumb|left|upright=1.7|Finds from](/wiki/File:Eadgil's_barrow.PNG) [Eadgils'](/wiki/Eadgils) mound, left, excavated in 1874 at [Gamla Uppsala](/wiki/Gamla_Uppsala), Sweden, support *Beowulf* and the sagas. [Ongentheow's](/wiki/Ongentheow) [barrow](/wiki/Tumulus), right, has not been excavated.[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9)

The majority view appears to be that people such as King Hroðgar and the Scyldings in *Beowulf* are based on real historical people from 6th-century Scandinavia.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Like the [*Finnesburg Fragment*](/wiki/Finnesburg_Fragment) and several shorter surviving poems, *Beowulf* has consequently been used as a source of information about Scandinavian personalities such as Eadgils and Hygelac, and about continental Germanic personalities such as [Offa](/wiki/Offa_of_Angel), king of the continental [Angles](/wiki/Angles).

19th-century archeological evidence may confirm elements of the *Beowulf* story. [Eadgils](/wiki/Eadgils) was buried at [Uppsala](/wiki/Gamla_Uppsala) according to [Snorri Sturluson](/wiki/Snorri_Sturluson). When Eadgils' mound (to the left in the photo) was excavated in 1874, the finds supported *Beowulf* and the sagas. They showed that a powerful man was buried in a large barrow, c 575, on a bear skin with two dogs and rich grave offerings. These remains include a [Frankish](/wiki/Franks) sword adorned with gold and garnets and a [tafl game](/wiki/Tafl_games) with Roman pawns of ivory. He was dressed in a costly suit made of Frankish cloth with golden threads, and he wore a belt with a costly buckle. There were four cameos from the Middle East which were probably part of a casket. This would have been a burial fitting a king who was famous for his wealth in Old Norse sources. [Ongentheow's](/wiki/Ongentheow) barrow has not been excavated.[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9)

## Summary[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

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

Later in his life, Beowulf becomes king of the Geats, and finds his realm terrorized by a [dragon](/wiki/The_Dragon_(Beowulf)), some of whose treasure had been stolen from his hoard in a burial mound. He attacks the [dragon](/wiki/Dragon) with the help of his [*thegns*](/wiki/Thegn) or servants, but they do not succeed. Beowulf decides to follow the dragon to its lair at [Earnanæs](/wiki/Earnaness), but only his young Swedish relative [Wiglaf](/wiki/Wiglaf), whose name means "remnant of valor",[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) dares to join him. Beowulf finally slays the dragon, but is mortally wounded in the struggle. He is cremated and a burial mound by the sea is erected in his honor.

*Beowulf* is considered an epic poem in that the main character is a hero who travels great distances to prove his strength at impossible odds against supernatural demons and beasts. The poem also begins [*in medias res*](/wiki/In_medias_res) or simply, "in the middle of things", which is a characteristic of the epics of antiquity. Although the poem begins with Beowulf's arrival, Grendel's attacks have been an ongoing event. An elaborate history of characters and their lineages is spoken of, as well as their interactions with each other, debts owed and repaid, and deeds of valor. The warriors form a kind of brotherhood linked by loyalty to their lord.

### First battle: Grendel[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

*Beowulf* begins with the story of Hrothgar, who constructed the great hall [Heorot](/wiki/Heorot) for himself and his warriors. In it he, his wife [Wealhtheow](/wiki/Wealhþeow), and his warriors spend their time singing and celebrating. Grendel, a troll-like monster said to be descended from the biblical Cain, is pained by the sounds of a joy he cannot share, attacks the hall, and kills and devours many of Hrothgar's warriors while they sleep. Hrothgar and his people, helpless against Grendel, abandon Heorot.

Beowulf, a young warrior from Geatland, hears of Hrothgar's troubles and with his king's permission leaves his homeland to assist Hrothgar.

Beowulf and his men spend the night in Heorot. Beowulf refuses to use any weapon because he holds himself to be the equal of Grendel.[[13]](#cite_note-13) When Grendel enters the hall, Beowulf, who has been feigning sleep, leaps up to clench Grendel's hand.[[14]](#cite_note-14) Grendel and Beowulf battle each other violently.[[15]](#cite_note-15) Beowulf's retainers draw their swords and rush to his aid, but their blades cannot pierce Grendel's skin.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Finally, Beowulf tears Grendel's arm from his body at the shoulder and Grendel runs to his home in the marshes where he dies.[[17]](#cite_note-17)

### Second battle: Grendel's Mother[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

The next night, after celebrating Grendel's defeat, Hrothgar and his men sleep in Heorot. Grendel's mother, angry that her son has been killed, sets out to get revenge. She violently kills [Æschere](/wiki/Æschere), who is Hrothgar's most loyal fighter.

Hrothgar, Beowulf and their men track Grendel's mother to her lair under a lake. [Unferth](/wiki/Unferð), a warrior who had doubted him and wishes to make amends, presents Beowulf with his sword [Hrunting](/wiki/Hrunting). After stipulating a number of conditions to Hrothgar in case of his death (including the taking in of his kinsmen and the inheritance by Unferth of Beowulf's estate), Beowulf jumps into the lake at the bottom of which he finds a cavern containing Grendel's body and the remains of men that the two have killed, Grendel's mother and Beowulf engage in fierce combat.

At first, Grendel's mother appears to prevail. Beowulf, finding that Hrunting cannot harm his foe, puts it aside in fury. Beowulf is again saved from his opponent's attack by his armor. Beowulf takes another sword from Grendel's mother and slices her head off with it. Traveling further into Grendel's mother's lair, Beowulf discovers Grendel and severs his head. The blade of Beowulf's sword touches Grendel's toxic blood, and instantly dissolves so that only the hilt remains. Beowulf swims back up to the rim of the pond where his men wait in growing despair. Carrying the hilt of the sword and Grendel's head, he presents them to Hrothgar upon his return to Heorot. Hrothgar gives Beowulf many gifts, including the sword [Nægling](/wiki/Nægling), his family's heirloom. The events prompt a long reflection by the king, sometimes referred to as "Hrothgar's sermon", in which he urges Beowulf to be wary of pride and to reward his [thegns](/wiki/Thegn).[[18]](#cite_note-18)

### Third battle: The Dragon[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) 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 Earnanæs. 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. Beowulf descends to do battle with the dragon but finds himself outmatched. His men, upon seeing this and fearing for their lives, creep back into the woods. One of his men, however, Wiglaf, who finds great distress in seeing Beowulf's plight, comes to Beowulf's aid. The two slay the dragon, but Beowulf is mortally wounded. After Beowulf's death, he is ritually burned on a great pyre in Geatland while his people wail and mourn him. Afterwards, a barrow, visible from the sea, is built in his memory. (*Beowulf* lines 2712–3182).[[19]](#cite_note-19)

## Authorship and date[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

*Beowulf* was written in England, but is set in Scandinavia; its dating has attracted considerable scholarly attention. The poem has been dated to between the 8th and the early 11th centuries, with some recent scholarship offering what has been called "a cohesive and compelling case for Beowulf’s early composition."[[20]](#cite_note-20)[[21]](#cite_note-21) However, opinion differs as to whether the composition of the poem is nearly contemporary with its transcription, whether it was first written in the 8th century, or if a proto-version of the poem was perhaps composed at an even earlier time (possibly as one of the [Bear's Son Tales](/wiki/Bear's_Son_Tale)) and orally transmitted for many years, then transcribed in its present form at a later date. [Albert Lord](/wiki/Albert_Lord) felt strongly that the manuscript represents the transcription of a performance, though likely taken at more than one sitting.<ref name=Lord|1960>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> [J. R. R. Tolkien](/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien) believed that the poem retains too genuine a memory of [Anglo-Saxon paganism](/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_paganism) to have been composed more than a few generations after the completion of the [Christianisation of England](/wiki/History_of_the_Church_of_England) around AD 700,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and Tolkien's conviction that the poem dates to the 8th century has been defended by [Tom Shippey](/wiki/Tom_Shippey), among others.[[22]](#cite_note-22) The claim to an early 11th-century date depends in part on scholars who argue that, rather than the transcription of a tale from the oral tradition by an earlier literate monk, *Beowulf* reflects an original interpretation of an earlier version of the story by the manuscript's two scribes. On the other hand, some scholars argue that linguistic, paleographical, metrical, and onomastic considerations align to support a date of composition in the first half of the eighth century;[[21]](#cite_note-21)[[23]](#cite_note-23)[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25) in particular, the poem's regular observation of etymological length distinctions (Kaluza's law) has been thought to demonstrate a date of composition in the first half of the eighth century.[[26]](#cite_note-26)[[27]](#cite_note-27) However, scholars disagree about whether the metrical phenomena described by Kaluza's Law prove an early date of composition or are evidence of a longer prehistory of the Beowulf meter;[[28]](#cite_note-28) B.R. Hutcheson, for instance, does not believe Kaluza's Law can be used to date the poem, while claiming that "the weight of all the evidence Fulk presents in his book[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) tells strongly in favor of an eighth-century date."[[29]](#cite_note-29)

## Manuscript[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|left|Remounted page,](/wiki/File:BLBeowulf.jpg) [British Library](/wiki/British_Library) Cotton Vitellius A.XV *Beowulf* survives in a single manuscript dated on [paleographical](/wiki/Palaeography) grounds to the late 10th or early 11th century. The manuscript measures 245 × 185 mm.[[30]](#cite_note-30)

### Provenance[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

The poem is known only from a single manuscript, which is estimated to date from close to AD 1000, in which it appears with other works. The *Beowulf* manuscript is known as the Nowell Codex, gaining its name from 16th-century scholar [Laurence Nowell](/wiki/Laurence_Nowell). The official designation is "[British Library](/wiki/British_Library), Cotton Vitellius A.XV" because it was one of [Sir Robert Bruce Cotton's](/wiki/Sir_Robert_Cotton,_1st_Baronet,_of_Connington) holdings in the [Cotton library](/wiki/Cotton_library) in the middle of the 17th century. Many private antiquarians and book collectors, such as Sir Robert Cotton, used their own [library classification](/wiki/Library_classification) systems. "Cotton Vitellius A.XV" translates as: the 15th book from the left on shelf A (the top shelf) of the bookcase with the bust of Roman Emperor [Vitellius](/wiki/Vitellius) standing on top of it, in Cotton's collection. Kevin Kiernan argues that Nowell most likely acquired it through [William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley](/wiki/William_Cecil,_1st_Baron_Burghley), in 1563, when Nowell entered Cecil's household as a [tutor](/wiki/Tutor) to his ward, [Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford](/wiki/Edward_de_Vere,_17th_Earl_of_Oxford).[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp)

The earliest extant reference to the first foliation of the Nowell Codex was made sometime between 1628 and 1650 by [Franciscus Junius (the younger)](/wiki/Franciscus_Junius_(the_younger)).[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) The ownership of the codex before Nowell remains a mystery.[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp)

The Reverend [Thomas Smith](/wiki/Thomas_Smith_(scholar)) (1638–1710) and [Humfrey Wanley](/wiki/Humfrey_Wanley) (1672–1726) both catalogued the Cotton library (in which the Nowell Codex was held). Smith's catalogue appeared in 1696, and Wanley's in 1705.<ref name=Joy>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref> The *Beowulf* manuscript itself is identified by name for the first time in an exchange of letters in 1700 between George Hickes, Wanley's assistant, and Wanley. In the letter to Wanley, Hickes responds to an apparent charge against Smith, made by Wanley, that Smith had failed to mention the *Beowulf* script when cataloguing Cotton MS. Vitellius A. XV. Hickes replies to Wanley "I can find nothing yet of Beowulph."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Kiernan theorised that Smith failed to mention the *Beowulf* manuscript because of his reliance on previous catalogues or because either he had no idea how to describe it or because it was temporarily out of the codex.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

It suffered damage in the Cotton Library fire at [Ashburnham House](/wiki/Ashburnham_House) in 1731. Since then, parts of the manuscript have crumbled along with many of the letters. Rebinding efforts, though saving the manuscript from much degeneration, have nonetheless covered up other letters of the poem, causing further loss. Kevin Kiernan, in preparing his electronic edition of the manuscript, used fibre-optic backlighting and ultraviolet lighting to reveal letters in the manuscript lost from binding, erasure, or ink blotting.[[31]](#cite_note-31)

### Writing[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

The *Beowulf* manuscript was transcribed from an original by two scribes, one of whom wrote the first 1939 lines and a second who wrote the remainder, with a difference in handwriting noticeable after line 1939.[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) The script of the second scribe is archaic.[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) While both scribes appear to proofread their work, there are nevertheless many errors.[[32]](#cite_note-32) The second scribe toiled over the poem for many years "with great reverence and care to restoration".[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) The work of the second scribe bears a striking resemblance to the work of the first scribe of the [Blickling homilies](/wiki/Blickling_homilies), and so much so that it is believed they derive from the same [scriptorium](/wiki/Scriptorium).[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) From knowledge of books held in the library at [Malmesbury Abbey](/wiki/Malmesbury_Abbey) and available as source works, and from the identification of certain words particular to the local dialect found in the text, the transcription may have been made there.[[33]](#cite_note-33)

### Transcriptions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

Icelandic scholar [Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin](/wiki/Grímur_Jónsson_Thorkelin) made the first transcriptions of the manuscript in 1786 and published the results in 1815, working as part of a Danish government historical research commission. He made one himself, and had another done by a professional copyist who knew no Anglo-Saxon. Since that time, however, the manuscript has crumbled further, making these transcripts a prized witness to the text. While the recovery of at least 2000 letters can be attributed to them, their accuracy has been called into question,[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) and the extent to which the manuscript was actually more readable in Thorkelin's time is uncertain.

### Translations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

In 1805, the historian [Sharon Turner](/wiki/Sharon_Turner) translated selected verses into [modern English](/wiki/Modern_English).<ref name=translationhistory>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> This was followed in 1814 by [John Josias Conybeare](/wiki/John_Josias_Conybeare) who published an edition "in English paraphrase and Latin verse translation."[[34]](#cite_note-34) In 1815, [Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin](/wiki/Grímur_Jónsson_Thorkelin) published the first complete edition in Latin.[[34]](#cite_note-34) [N. F. S. Grundtvig](/wiki/N._F._S._Grundtvig) reviewed this edition in 1815 and created the first complete verse translation in Danish in 1820.[[34]](#cite_note-34) In 1837, [John Mitchell Kemble](/wiki/John_Mitchell_Kemble) created an important literal translation in English.[[34]](#cite_note-34) In 1895, [William Morris](/wiki/William_Morris) & A. J. Wyatt published the ninth English translation.[[34]](#cite_note-34) In 1909, [Francis Barton Gummere's](/wiki/Francis_Barton_Gummere) full translation in "English imitative meter" was published,[[34]](#cite_note-34) and was used as the text of Gareth Hinds's graphic novel based on *Beowulf* in 2007.

During the early 20th century, [Frederick Klaeber's](/wiki/Frederick_Klaeber) *Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg*[[35]](#cite_note-35) (which included the poem in [Old English](/wiki/Old_English), an extensive glossary of Old English terms, and general background information) became the "central source used by graduate students for the study of the poem and by scholars and teachers as the basis of their translations."[[36]](#cite_note-36) A great number of translations are available, in poetry and prose. Andy Orchard, in *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, lists 33 "representative" translations in his bibliography,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and it has been translated into at least 23 other languages.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[Seamus Heaney's](/wiki/Seamus_Heaney) 1999 translation of the poem (referred to by Howell Chickering and many others as "Heaneywulf"[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)) was widely publicized. Translating *Beowulf* is one of the subjects of the 2012 publication *Beowulf at Kalamazoo*, containing a section with 10 essays on translation, and a section with 22 reviews of Heaney's translation (some of which compare Heaney's work with that of Anglo-Saxon scholar [Roy Liuzza](/wiki/Roy_Liuzza)).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) R. D. Fulk, of [Indiana University](/wiki/Indiana_University), published the first facing-page edition and translation of the [entire manuscript](/wiki/Nowell_Codex) in the [Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library](/wiki/Dumbarton_Oaks_Medieval_Library) series in 2010.[[37]](#cite_note-37) [J. R. R. Tolkien's](/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien) long-awaited translation (edited by his son, [Christopher](/wiki/Christopher_Tolkien)) was published in 2014 ([*Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary*](/wiki/Beowulf:_A_Translation_and_Commentary)).[[38]](#cite_note-38)[[39]](#cite_note-39) This also includes Tolkien's own retelling of the story of Beowulf in his tale, *Sellic Spell*.

### Debate over oral tradition[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

The question of whether *Beowulf* was passed down through [oral tradition](/wiki/Oral_tradition) prior to its present [manuscript](/wiki/Manuscript) form has been the subject of much debate, and involves more than simply the issue of its composition. Rather, given the implications of the theory of [oral-formulaic composition](/wiki/Oral-formulaic_composition) and oral tradition, the question concerns how the poem is to be understood, and what sorts of interpretations are legitimate.

Scholarly discussion about *Beowulf* in the context of the oral tradition was extremely active throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The debate might be framed starkly as follows: on the one hand, we can hypothesise a poem put together from various tales concerning the hero (the Grendel episode, the Grendel's mother story, and the fire drake narrative). These fragments would have been told for many years in tradition, and learned by apprenticeship from one generation of illiterate poets to the next. The poem is composed orally and extemporaneously, and the archive of tradition on which it draws is oral, pagan, Germanic, heroic, and tribal. On the other hand, one might posit a poem which is composed by a literate scribe, who acquired literacy by way of learning Latin (and absorbing Latinate culture and ways of thinking), probably a monk and therefore profoundly Christian in outlook. On this view, the pagan references would be a sort of decorative archaising.[[40]](#cite_note-40) There is a third view that sees merit in both arguments above and attempts to bridge them, and so cannot be articulated as starkly as they can; it sees more than one [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) and more than one attitude towards paganism at work in the poem; it sees the poem as initially the product of a literate Christian author with one foot in the pagan world and one in the Christian, himself perhaps a convert (or one whose forbears had been pagan), a poet who was conversant in both oral and literary composition and was capable of a masterful "repurposing" of poetry from the oral tradition.

However, scholars such as D.K. Crowne have proposed the idea that the poem was passed down from reciter to reciter under the theory of [oral-formulaic composition](/wiki/Oral-formulaic_composition), which hypothesises that epic poems were (at least to some extent) improvised by whoever was reciting them, and only much later written down. In his landmark work, [*The Singer of Tales*](/wiki/The_Singer_of_Tales), [Albert Lord](/wiki/Albert_Lord) refers to the work of [Francis Peabody Magoun](/wiki/Francis_Peabody_Magoun) and others, saying "the documentation is complete, thorough, and accurate. This exhaustive analysis is in itself sufficient to prove that Beowulf was composed orally."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Examination of *Beowulf* and other [Old English literature](/wiki/Old_English_literature) for evidence of oral-formulaic composition has met with mixed response. While "themes" (inherited narrative subunits for representing familiar classes of event, such as the "arming the hero",[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) or the particularly well-studied "hero on the beach" theme[[41]](#cite_note-41)) do exist across Anglo-Saxon and other Germanic works, some scholars conclude that Anglo-Saxon poetry is a mix of oral-formulaic and literate patterns, arguing that the poems both were composed on a word-by-word basis and followed larger formulae and patterns.[[42]](#cite_note-42) Larry Benson argued that the interpretation of *Beowulf* as an entirely formulaic work diminishes the ability of the reader to analyze the poem in a unified manner, and with due attention to the poet's creativity. Instead, he proposed that other pieces of Germanic literature contain "kernels of tradition" from which *Beowulf* borrows and expands upon.[[43]](#cite_note-43)<ref name=Foley>Foley, John M. *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland, 1985. p. 126</ref> A few years later, Ann Watts argued against the imperfect application of one theory to two different traditions: traditional, Homeric, oral-formulaic poetry and Anglo-Saxon poetry.[[44]](#cite_note-44)[[45]](#cite_note-45) Thomas Gardner agreed with Watts, arguing that the *Beowulf* text is of too varied a nature to be completely constructed from set formulae and themes.[[44]](#cite_note-44)[[46]](#cite_note-46) [John Miles Foley](/wiki/John_Miles_Foley) wrote, referring to the *Beowulf* debate,[[47]](#cite_note-47) that while comparative work was both necessary and valid, it must be conducted with a view to the particularities of a given tradition; Foley argued with a view to developments of oral traditional theory that do not assume, or depend upon, ultimately unverifiable assumptions about composition, and instead delineate a more fluid continuum of traditionality and textuality.[[48]](#cite_note-48)[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Finally, in the view of Ursula Schaefer, the question of whether the poem was "oral" or "literate" becomes something of a [red herring](/wiki/Red_herring).[[51]](#cite_note-51) In this model, the poem is created, and is interpretable, within both noetic horizons. Schaefer's concept of "vocality" offers neither a compromise nor a synthesis of the views which see the poem as on the one hand Germanic, pagan, and oral and on the other Latin-derived, Christian, and literate, but, as stated by Monika Otter: "... a 'tertium quid', a modality that participates in both oral and literate culture yet also has a logic and aesthetic of its own."[[52]](#cite_note-52)

## Sources and analogues[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

Neither identified sources nor [analogues](/wiki/Analogue_(literature)) for *Beowulf* can be definitively proven, but many conjectures have been made. These are important in helping historians understand the *Beowulf* manuscript, as possible source-texts or influences would suggest time-frames of composition, geographic boundaries within which it could be composed, or range (both spatial and temporal) of influence (i.e. when it was "popular" and where its "popularity" took it). There are five main categories in which potential sources and/or analogues are included: Scandinavian parallels, [early Irish literature](/wiki/Early_Irish_literature) sources and analogues, classical sources, [ecclesiastical](/wiki/Ecclesiology) sources, and echoes in other Old English texts.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Early studies into Scandinavian sources and analogues proposed that *Beowulf* was a translation of an original Scandinavian work, but this idea has been discarded. In 1878, [Guðbrandur Vigfússon](/wiki/Guðbrandur_Vigfússon) made the connection between *Beowulf* and the [*Grettis saga*](/wiki/Grettis_saga). This is currently one of the few Scandinavian [analogues](/wiki/Analogue_(literature)) to receive a general consensus of potential connection.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Tales concerning the [Skjöldungs](/wiki/Scylding), possibly originating as early as the 6th century were later used as a narrative basis in such texts as [*Gesta Danorum*](/wiki/Gesta_Danorum) by [Saxo Grammaticus](/wiki/Saxo_Grammaticus) and [*Hrólfs saga kraka*](/wiki/Hrólfs_saga_kraka). Some scholars see *Beowulf* as a product of these early tales along with [*Gesta Danorum*](/wiki/Gesta_Danorum) and [*Hrólfs saga kraka*](/wiki/Hrólfs_saga_kraka), and some early scholars of the poem proposed that the latter saga and *Beowulf* share a common legendary ancestry, *Beowulf*[Template:'s](/wiki/Template:') Hrothulf being identified with [Hrólf Kraki](/wiki/Hrólfr_Kraki#Beowulf). Paul Beekman Taylor argued that the [*Ynglinga saga*](/wiki/Ynglinga_saga) was proof that the *Beowulf* poet was likewise working from Germanic tradition.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Friedrich Panze attempted to contextualise *Beowulf* and other Scandinavian works, including *Grettis saga*, under the international [folktale](/wiki/Folklore) type 301B, or ["The Bear's Son" tale](/wiki/Bear's_Son_Tale). However, although this [folkloristic](/wiki/Folkloristics) approach was seen as a step in the right direction, "The Bear's Son" tale was seen as too universal. Later, [Peter Jørgensen](/wiki/Peter_Jørgensen_(entomologist)), looking for a more concise frame of reference, coined a "two-troll tradition" that covers both *Beowulf* and *Grettis saga*: "a [Norse](/wiki/Viking_art) ['ecotype'](/wiki/Ecotype) in which a hero enters a cave and kills two giants, usually of different sexes".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Scholars who favored Irish parallels directly spoke out against [pro-Scandinavian](/wiki/Scandinavia) theories, citing them as unjustified. [Wilhelm Grimm](/wiki/Wilhelm_Grimm) is noted to be the first person to link *Beowulf* with Irish folklore; however, Max Deutschbein is the first person to present the argument in academic form. He suggested the Irish [*Feast of Bricriu*](/wiki/Bricriu) as a source for *Beowulf*—a theory that was soon denied by Oscar Olson. Swedish folklorist Carl Wilhelm Von Sydow argued against both Scandinavian translation and source material due to his theory that *Beowulf* is fundamentally [Christian](/wiki/Christianity) and written at a time when any Norse tale would have most likely been [pagan](/wiki/Paganism).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In the late 1920s, Heinzer Dehmer suggested *Beowulf* as contextually based in the [folktale](/wiki/Folklore) type "The Hand and the Child," due to the [motif](/wiki/Motif_(narrative)) of the "monstrous arm"—a motif that distances *Grettis saga* and *Beowulf* and further aligns *Beowulf* with Irish parallelism. [James Carney](/wiki/James_Carney_(scholar)) and Martin Puhvel also agree with this "Hand and the Child" contextualisation. Carney also ties *Beowulf* to Irish literature through the [*Táin Bó*](/wiki/Táin_Bó) [*Fráech*](/wiki/Fráech) story. Puhvel supported the "Hand and the Child" theory through such motifs as (in Andersson's words) "the more powerful giant mother, the mysterious light in the cave, the melting of the sword in blood, the phenomenon of battle rage, swimming prowess, combat with water monsters, underwater adventures, and the bear-hug style of wrestling."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Attempts to find [classical](/wiki/Classics) or [Late Latin](/wiki/Late_Latin) influence or analogue in *Beowulf* are almost exclusively linked with [Homer's](/wiki/Homer) [*Odyssey*](/wiki/Odyssey) or [Virgil's](/wiki/Virgil) [*Aeneid*](/wiki/Aeneid). In 1926, [Albert Stanburrough Cook](/wiki/Albert_Stanburrough_Cook) suggested a Homeric connection due to equivalent formulas, [metonymies](/wiki/Metonymy), and analogous voyages.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In 1930, James A. Work also supported the Homeric influence, stating that encounter between Beowulf and [Unferth](/wiki/Unferð) was parallel to the encounter between Odysseus and [Euryalus](/wiki/Nisus_and_Euryalus) in Books 7–8 of the *Odyssey,* even to the point of both characters giving the hero the same gift of a sword upon being proven wrong in their initial assessment of the hero's prowess. This theory of Homer's influence on *Beowulf* remained very prevalent in the 1920s, but started to die out in the following decade when a handful of critics stated that the two works were merely "comparative literature",[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) although Greek was known in late 7th century England: [Bede](/wiki/Bede) states that [Theodore of Tarsus](/wiki/Theodore_of_Tarsus), a Greek, was appointed [Archbishop of Canterbury](/wiki/Archbishop_of_Canterbury) in 668, and he taught Greek. Several English scholars and churchmen are described by Bede as being fluent in Greek due to being taught by him; Bede claims to be fluent in Greek himself.[[53]](#cite_note-53) [Frederick Klaeber](/wiki/Frederick_Klaeber), among others, argued for a connection between *Beowulf* and [Virgil](/wiki/Virgil) near the start of the 20th century, claiming that the very act of writing a secular epic in a Germanic world represents Virgilian influence. Virgil was seen as the pinnacle of Latin literature, and Latin was the dominant literary language of England at the time, therefore making Virgilian influence highly likely.[[54]](#cite_note-54) Similarly, in 1971, [Alistair Campbell](/wiki/Alistair_Campbell_(academic)) stated that the [apologue](/wiki/Apologue) technique used in *Beowulf* is so rare in epic poetry aside from Virgil that the poet who composed *Beowulf* could not have written the poem in such a manner without first coming across [Virgil's](/wiki/Virgil) writings.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

It cannot be denied that Biblical parallels occur in the text, whether seen as a pagan work with "Christian colouring" added by scribes or as a "Christian historical novel, with selected bits of paganism deliberately laid on as 'local colour'," as Margaret E. Goldsmith did in "The Christian Theme of *Beowulf,*".[[55]](#cite_note-55) *Beowulf* channels the books of [*Genesis*](/wiki/Book_of_Genesis), [*Exodus*](/wiki/Book_of_Exodus), and [*Daniel*](/wiki/Book_of_Daniel)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) in its inclusion of references to the [Genesis creation narrative](/wiki/Genesis_creation_narrative), the story of [Cain and Abel](/wiki/Cain_and_Abel), [Noah](/wiki/Noah) and the [flood myth](/wiki/Flood_myth), the [Devil](/wiki/Devil_in_Christianity), [Hell](/wiki/Hell), and the [Last Judgment](/wiki/Last_Judgment).[[55]](#cite_note-55)

## Dialect[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Old English topics](/wiki/Template:Old_English_topics) The poem mixes the [West Saxon](/wiki/West_Saxon_dialect) and [Anglian dialects](/wiki/Old_English#Dialects) of Old English, though it predominantly uses West Saxon, as do other Old English poems copied at the time.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

There is a wide array of linguistic forms in the *Beowulf* manuscript. It is this fact that leads some scholars to believe that *Beowulf* has endured a long and complicated transmission through all the main dialect areas.[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) The poem retains a complicated mix of the following dialectical forms: [Mercian](/wiki/Mercian_dialect), [Northumbrian](/wiki/Northumbrian_dialect), Early West Saxon, Kentish and Late West Saxon.[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) There are in *Beowulf* more than thirty-one hundred distinct words, and almost thirteen hundred occur exclusively, or almost exclusively, in this poem and in the other poetical texts. Considerably more than one-third of the total vocabulary is alien from ordinary prose use. There are, in round numbers, three hundred and sixty uncompounded verbs in *Beowulf*, and forty of them are poetical words in the sense that they are unrecorded or rare in the existing prose writings. One hundred and fifty more occur with the prefix *ge*- (reckoning a few found only in the past-participle), but of these one hundred occur also as simple verbs, and the prefix is employed to render a shade of meaning which was perfectly known and thoroughly familiar except in the latest Anglo-Saxon period. The nouns number sixteen hundred. Seven hundred of them, including those formed with prefixes, of which fifty (or considerably more than half) have *ge*-, are simple nouns, at the highest reckoning not more than one-fourth is absent in prose. That this is due in some degree to accident is clear from the character of the words, and from the fact that several reappear and are common after the Norman Conquest.[[56]](#cite_note-56)

## Form and metre[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

An Old English poem such as *Beowulf* is very different from modern poetry. Anglo-Saxon poets typically used [alliterative verse](/wiki/Alliterative_verse), a form of [verse](/wiki/Poetry) in which the first half of the line (the a-verse) is linked to the second half (the b-verse) through [similarity in initial sound](/wiki/Alliteration). In addition, the two halves are divided by a [caesura](/wiki/Caesura): "Oft **Sc**yld **Sc**efing \\ **sc**eaþena þreatum" (l. 4). This verse form maps stressed and unstressed syllables onto abstract entities known as metrical positions. There is no fixed number of beats per line: the first one cited has three (Oft SCYLD SCEFING, with ictus on the suffix -ING) whereas the second has two (SCEAþena ÞREATum).

The poet has a choice of [epithets](/wiki/Epithets) or formulae to use in order to fulfill the alliteration. When speaking or reading Old English poetry, it is important to remember for alliterative purposes that many of the letters are not pronounced in the same way as in [modern English](/wiki/Modern_English). The letter [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), for example, is always pronounced (*Hroðgar*: [Template:IPA-ang](/wiki/Template:IPA-ang)), and the digraph [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) is pronounced [Template:IPA-ang](/wiki/Template:IPA-ang), as in the word *edge*. Both [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) vary in pronunciation depending on their phonetic environment. Between vowels or [voiced](/wiki/Voice_(phonetics)) consonants, they are voiced, sounding like modern [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), respectively. Otherwise they are unvoiced, like modern [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) in *fat* and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) in *sat*. Some letters which are no longer found in modern English, such as thorn, [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), and eth, [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) – representing both pronunciations of modern English [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr), as [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) in *thing* and [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) *this* – are used extensively both in the original manuscript and in modern English editions. The voicing of these characters echoes that of [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr) and [Template:Angbr](/wiki/Template:Angbr). Both are voiced (as in *this*) between other voiced sounds: *oðer*, *laþleas*, *suþern*. Otherwise they are unvoiced (as in *thing*): *þunor*, *suð*, *soþfæst*.

[Kennings](/wiki/Kenning) are also a significant technique in *Beowulf*. They are evocative poetic descriptions of everyday things, often created to fill the alliterative requirements of the metre. For example, a poet might call the sea the "swan-road" or the "whale-road"; a king might be called a "ring-giver." There are many kennings in *Beowulf*, and the device is typical of much of classic poetry in Old English, which is heavily formulaic. The poem also makes extensive use of [elided](/wiki/Elision) [metaphors](/wiki/Metaphor).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[J. R. R. Tolkien](/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien) argued that the poem is an [elegy](/wiki/Elegy).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## Interpretation and criticism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

The history of modern *Beowulf* criticism is often said to begin with [J. R. R. Tolkien](/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) author and Merton professor of Anglo-Saxon at [University of Oxford](/wiki/University_of_Oxford), who in his 1936 lecture to the [British Academy](/wiki/British_Academy) criticised his contemporaries' excessive interest in its historical implications.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) He noted in [*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*](/wiki/Beowulf:_The_Monsters_and_the_Critics) that as a result the poem's literary value had been largely overlooked and argued that the poem "is in fact so interesting as poetry, in places poetry so powerful, that this quite overshadows the historical content..."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In historical terms, the poem's characters would have been [Norse pagans](/wiki/Norse_religion) (the historical events of the poem took place before the [Christianisation of Scandinavia](/wiki/Christianization_of_Scandinavia)), yet the poem was recorded by Christian Anglo-Saxons who had largely converted from their native [Anglo-Saxon paganism](/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_paganism) around the 7th century – both Anglo-Saxon paganism and Norse paganism share a common origin as both are forms of [Germanic paganism](/wiki/Germanic_paganism). *Beowulf* thus depicts a [Germanic warrior society](/wiki/Germanic_peoples), in which the relationship between the lord of the region and those who served under him was of paramount importance.[[57]](#cite_note-57) Stanley B. Greenfield has suggested that references to the human body throughout *Beowulf* emphasise the relative position of thanes to their lord. He argues that the term "shoulder-companion" could refer to both a physical arm as well as a thane (Aeschere) who was very valuable to his lord (Hrothgar). With Aeschere's death, Hrothgar turns to Beowulf as his new "arm."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In addition, Greenfield argues the foot is used for the opposite effect, only appearing four times in the poem. It is used in conjunction with [Unferð](/wiki/Unferð) (a man described by Beowulf as weak, traitorous, and cowardly). Greenfield notes that Unferð is described as "at the king's feet" (line 499). Unferð is also a member of the foot troops, who, throughout the story, do nothing and "generally serve as backdrops for more heroic action."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

At the same time, Richard North argues that the *Beowulf* poet interpreted "Danish myths in Christian form" (as the poem would have served as a form of entertainment for a Christian audience), and states: "As yet we are no closer to finding out why the first audience of *Beowulf* liked to hear stories about people routinely classified as damned. This question is pressing, given... that Anglo-Saxons saw the [Danes](/wiki/Danes_(Germanic_tribe)) as '[Template:Linktexts'](/wiki/Template:Linktext) rather than as foreigners."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Grendel's mother](/wiki/Grendel's_mother) and [Grendel](/wiki/Grendel) are described as descendants of Cain, a fact which some scholars link to the Cain tradition.[[58]](#cite_note-58) Other scholars disagree, however, as to the meaning and nature of the poem: is it a Christian work set in a Germanic pagan context? The question suggests that the conversion from the Germanic pagan beliefs to Christian ones was a very slow and gradual process over several centuries, and it remains unclear the ultimate nature of the poem's message in respect to religious belief at the time it was written. Robert F. Yeager notes the facts that form the basis for these questions: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote) E. Talbot Donaldson claimed that it was probably composed more than twelve hundred years ago during the first half of the eighth century. Donaldson also believes that the writer was a native of what was then West Mercia, located in the Western Midlands of England. However, the late tenth-century manuscript "which alone preserves the poem" originated in the kingdom of the [West Saxons](/wiki/Wessex) – as it is more commonly known.[[59]](#cite_note-59)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) Donaldson wrote that "the poet who put the materials into their present form was a Christian and ... poem reflects a Christian tradition".[[59]](#cite_note-59)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:David_Woodard_Exploding_Beowulf.jpg)[David Woodard](/wiki/David_Woodard) appears as both Beowulf and Grendel in the stage production *Exploding Beowulf* (Berlin, 2010)

## Artistic adaptations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

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## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [List of *Beowulf* characters](/wiki/List_of_Beowulf_characters)
* [On Translating *Beowulf*](/wiki/On_Translating_Beowulf)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

### Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

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* [Full digital facsimile of the manuscript on the British Library's Digitised Manuscripts website](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?index=0&ref=Cotton_MS_vitellius_a_xv)
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* [online text](http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/ascp/a04_01.htm) (digitised from Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (ed.), *Beowulf and Judith*, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 4 (New York, 1953))
* [*Beowulf* introduction](http://www.exodusbooks.com/category.aspx?id=8211) Article introducing various translations and adaptations of *Beowulf*
* [Template:Librivox book](/wiki/Template:Librivox_book)

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