

# ***BEOWULF***

LANGUAGE FEATURES and FLAIR

# Alliteration

- The repetition of initial consonant sounds in consecutive words
- This aided in memorization
- Example: “...made heathen vows, hoping for Hell’s support...”

# Assonance

- Repetition of vowel sounds in unstressed syllables of words in close proximity
- NOT rhyme! Rhyme usually involves stressed syllables.
- Example: “...loud in that hall/and the harp’s rejoicing and the poet’s clear songs sung of the ancient beginnings of us all, recalling the Almighty...”
- This feature adds flow to the style and aided in memorization.

# Consonance

- Repetition of consonant sounds  
ANYWHERE in consecutive words  
(middle, end...)
- Weirdly enough, consonance is exemplified  
in both “consonant sounds” and “middle,  
end.”
- I didn’t plan that, I swear.
  - Perhaps it’s fate! That would be appropriate,  
because the culture we are studying believed  
very strongly in it.

# Assonance & Consonance

- Perfect example of how these ARE important: my name.
  - (goofy-yet-relevant story time ensues...)

# Caesura

- A caesura is a **pause** in the middle of a line of poetry.
- Musicians are probably familiar with this term, or at least the concept.
- Caesuras usually occur in the middle of a line of poetry where the person reciting would naturally have to take a breath.
- In later eras, caesuras were implemented to keep a standard number of syllables per line. It could stand for an unstressed syllable.

# Kenning

- A kenning is a metaphorical renaming of something.
- This feature is a nod to the Anglo Saxons' love of riddles.
- There are a few kinds of kennings:
  - 1.) (adj.) + (noun)
    - *Sometimes this variation incorporates a hyphen, sometimes not.*
  - 2.) (\_\_\_\_\_) + (preposition) + (\_\_\_\_\_)
  - 3.) (possessive) + (noun)

# Kennings to Solve

- She-wolf
- Bright sweetness
- Whale road
- Guardian of crime
- Protector of Danes
- Higlac's follower
- Breast-cage
- Shelterer of warriors
- Keeper of mead
- Wakeful sleeper
- Shepherd of evil
- Gold-shining hall
- Sea-paths
- Hoard-guard



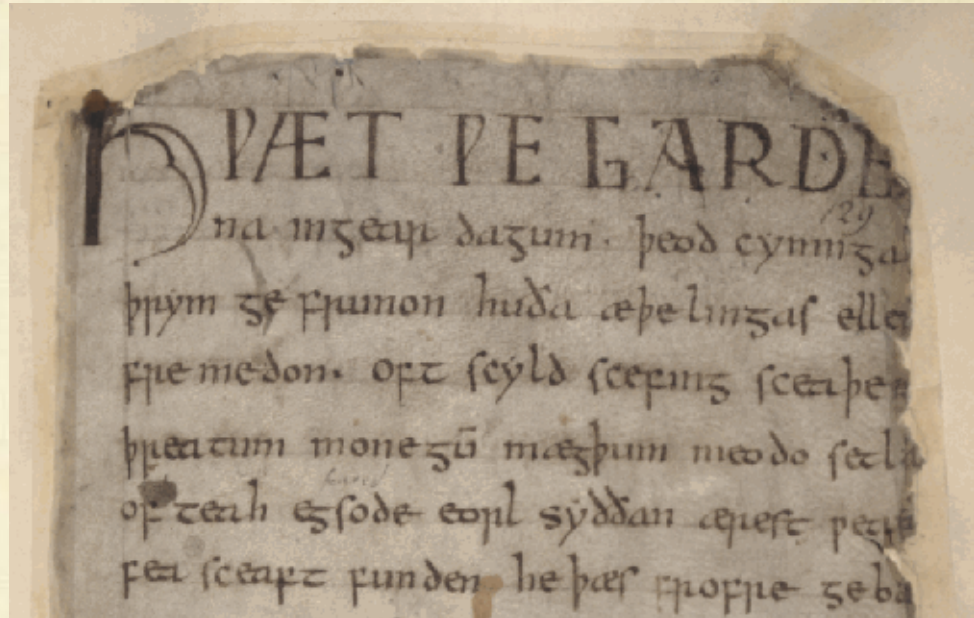
# Old English

- No, we aren't talking about Shakespeare here.
  - (He actually wrote in Modern English, just an older version of it.)
- Old English → Middle English → Modern English
- Listen to an example of OE to hear how different it is from ModE:  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/launch\\_tl\\_ages\\_english.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/launch_tl_ages_english.shtml)
- What does it sound like to you?

# Old English

- It was a distinctly Germanic language, related to the languages spoken in northern Europe and Scandinavia
  - Interesting side note: a few years ago I had an Icelandic exchange student, and she could (roughly) translate what you just heard!
- When we get to literature of the Middle Ages and listen to ME, you'll notice it's much more similar to the language we speak today
  - This is because it bears the Latin influence that OE lacks.

# The Manuscript



Note that even the writing looks different - the alphabet still included runic characters.