

Old English Literature

Literary Genres

1. the epic

<i>Beowulf</i> (8thc)	Beowulf, king of Geats (G. Gauten; Götaland in Schweden?), helps the Danish king Hrothgar (meadhall called Heorot) against Grendel and Grendel's mother. Dies after defending his people against evil dragon.
<i>Battle of Maldon</i>	--- battle in Essex in 991 against Vikings
<i>Finnsburh fragment</i>	--- battle between Danes and Frisians
<i>Cynewulf and Cyneheard</i>	--- 755 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Cyneheard attacks Cynewulf and kills him and his followers. Osric eventually manages to revenge this deed, killing Cyneheard)

2. the elegy

"The Wanderer"
"The Seafarer"
"Deor's Lament"
"The Wife's Lament"

3. hagiography

3.1. religious epic

Guthlac (saint victorious against the devil)

3.2. saints' lives

Aelfric's *Lives of the Saints*, 10thc
individual *vitae*

3.3. sermons

Aelfric's *Homilies*

4. dream poem

"Dream of the Rood"

5. historical texts

Beda venerabilis, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* (8thc)

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (to 1154)

6. riddles, proverbs, exempla etc.

Monday 20 October

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The Dictionary of Old English (DOE), Univ. of Toronto Press. (in progress; completed until letter L)

J.R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary with a Supplement*. 4th edn. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1984.

Mitchell, Bruce (1995) *An Invitation to Old English and Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford: Blackwell. [much on Anglo-Saxon culture]

Mitchell, Bruce, and Fred C. Robinson (1994) *A Guide to Old English*. 5th edn. Oxford: Blackwell. [see further bibliographical information there]

Pilch, Herbert, and Hildegard Tristram (1979) *Altenglische Literatur*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter. [good introduction for beginners]

Greenfield, Stanley B., and Daniel G. Calder (1986) *A New Critical History of Old English Literature*. New York: New York Univ. Press. [more advanced]

Manuscripts

1. The Junius Manuscript (in the Bodleian Library, Oxford)
2. The Vercelli Book (in Vercelli, Italy)
3. The Beowulf Manuscript (Cotton Vitellius): British Library
4. The Exeter Manuscript: Exeter Cathedral
5. Cambridge MS, University Library Cambridge (Aelfric's Homilies)
6. Corpus Christi MS, Corpus Christi College, Oxford