

## **LECTURE 1.**

***THE THEME: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH LITERATURE .  
IT'S PLACE IN THE WORLD LITERATURE .***

### ***PLAN:***

1. The role of the English Literature in the Development of the world Literature.
2. The Periods of the English Literature.
3. Beowulf.

### **LITERATURE.**

1. A.Sokhan, T.Antonova: Readings from English Literature.
2. T.D.Volosova, Hecker M.V: English Literature. Moscow, 1974.
3. Pfordresher John, Mc Donnel Helen: England in Literature. London, 1988.
4. Ranson House Webster's College Dictionary. New York, 1990.
5. M.Bakayeva: English Literature. Lectures. Bukhara, 2003.

English Literature is a component part of the world Literature. It played an important role in enriching and development of the world literature. English Literature consists of the poetry, prose and drama. Written by authors in England, Scotland and Wales.

English Literature is a rich Literature. It includes the novels, the short stories, epic and Lyric poetry, the essay, drama. Such names as Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens, Jonathan Swift , George Gordon Byron, Bernard Shaw are famous all over the world.

### ***THE PERIODS OF THE ENGLISH LITERATURE:***

1. Old English Literature.
2. Middle English Literature.
3. The Renaissance.
4. English Literature in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

5. The 18<sup>th</sup> Century.
6. The Romantic Age.
7. The Victorian Age.
8. English Literature at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
9. English Literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### Old English Literature. (500 - 1100).

In the 1<sup>st</sup> century before our era the powerful state of Rome conquered Britain. The Romans were practical men. They were very clever at making hard roads and building bridges and tall houses. The Romans taught Britons many things. But at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century they had to leave Britain because they were needed to defend their own country.

After Romans leave Britain was invaded by the Germanic tribes called Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. At that time Angles and Saxons had their own Letters called “runes”. But they had no written Literature yet. That’s why the stories, poems had to be memorized. The 1<sup>st</sup> major work of English Literature is the epic poem “Beowulf”.

### ***BEOWULF.***

**The poem was composed by an unknown author. Many parts were added Later. The whole poem was written down in the 10<sup>th</sup> century by an unknown poet.**

### ***THE STORY BEOWULF.***

Long, long ago there lived a king of the Danes named Hrothgar. He had won many battles, and gained great wealth. He built a large and beautiful palace and he presented costly gifts to his warriors and gave splendid banquets. But the joy of the king didn’t last long. In the dark fens near his palace lived a sea – monster Grendel. He wanted to destroy the palace Heorot, as he disliked noise. Grendel looked like a man but was much bigger, no weapon could harm him.

One night when everybody were asleep, Grendel came in, seized thirty men and devoured them. The next night the monster appeared again. The men defended themselves bravely, but their swords could not hurt the monster. From that time no one could not come to Heorot. For twelve years the palace stood deserted.

Beowulf was the nephew of the king of Jutes. Beowulf was the strongest and the bravest of all soldiers. He had the strength of the thirty men. He decided to help Hrothgar. With fourteen chosen companions he set sail for the country of the Danes.

Hrothgar gladly welcomed Beowulf and gave a banquet in his honour. Late at night all went to sleep except Beowulf. Beowulf knew that no weapon could kill Grendel, he was ready to fight bare – handed.

Suddenly the man – eater came into the hall. He seized sleeping men and then approached Beowulf. They began fighting. It was so terrible that the walls of the palace shook. Beowulf managed to tear off Grendel's arm, and the monster retreated to his den howling and roaring with pain and fury. He was wounded and soon died.

The next night Grendel's mother, a water – witch came to Heorot to avenge her son's death. While Beowulf was asleep she snatched away one of Hrothgar's favourite warriors. Beowulf decided to fight the water – witch. He plunged into the water and found the water – witch in her den beside the dead body of her son Grendel. A desperate fight began. At first Beowulf was nearly overcome, as his sword had no power against the monster. But fortunately his glance fell upon a huge magic sword hanging on the wall. Beowulf killed the monster with its help. Then he cut off their heads. Heorot was freed forever. Heorot gave treasures to Beowulf.

At last the day came for Beowulf to sail home. Everybody regretted his departure. When Beowulf arrived in his own land, he gave all the treasures he had brought to Higlac and the people. Beowulf was admired and honored by everybody. After the death of Higlac, Beowulf became king of the Jutes.

For fifty years he ruled his country wisely and well until one day a great disaster befell the happy land: every night there appeared a fire – breathing dragon who came and destroyed the villages. Beowulf decided to fight and save his people, but of all his earls only Wiglaf, a brave warrior and heir to the kingdom, had the courage to help him. In a fierce battle the dragon was killed, but his flames burnt Beowulf. Beowulf ordered Wiglaf to take as much treasure as he could carry and give it to the Jutes. In his last hour he thought only of his people, for whose happiness he had sacrificed his life.

Before burning the body of the king Wiglaf put the blame for his death upon the cowardly earls. Beowulf's victory over the monsters symbolized the triumph of a man over the powers of darkness and evil.

The merit of the poem lies in the vivid description of the life of that period, in the heroic deeds of Beowulf and in the beauty of the language.

### ***QUESTIONS:***

1. When was Britain conquered by Rome and what was its result?
2. Why is the Anglo – Saxon poem “ Beowulf ” called the foundation – stone of all British poetry?
3. Name the main heroes of the poem “ Beowulf ”.
4. Characterize Beowulf.
5. Does the poem “ Beowulf ” remind you of any Russian or Uzbek epic poems?

### ***KEY - WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS.***

1. A scribe.
2. Sea – monster.
3. Water witch.
4. A magic weapon.
5. A huge sword.

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#### **PROBLEMS TO BE DISCUSSED:**

1. The role of the English Literature in the Development of the world Literature.
2. The Periods of the English Literature.
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#### **RECOMMENDED LITERATURE.**

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# OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE

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## *BEOWULF.*

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#### **QUESTIONS:**

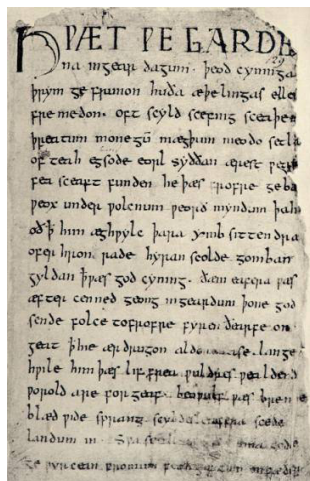
- When was Britain conquered by Rome and what was it's result?
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## **Seminar 1**

### **TOPIC : THE FIRST MAJOR WORK OF ENGLISH LITERATURE” BEOWULF”**

Problems to be discussed :

- 1.The dawn of English literature
- 2.The invasion by Germanic Tribes
- 3.First letters “runes”, ”scribe”
- 4.Comment on the development of the English language
- 5.Beowulf - What You Need to Know about the Epic Poem.The story of Beowulf



## A Kingdom in Peril

The story begins in Denmark with King Hrothgar, the descendant of the great Scyld Sheafson and a successful ruler in his own right. To display his prosperity and generosity, Hrothgar built a magnificent hall called Heorot. There his warriors, the Scyldings, gathered to drink mead, receive treasures from the king after battle, and listen to scopas sing songs of brave deeds. But lurking nearby was a hideous and brutal monster named Grendel. One night when the warriors were sleeping, sated from their feast, Grendel attacked, butchering 30 men and wreaking devastation in the hall. Hrothgar and his Scyldings were overwhelmed with sorrow and dismay, but they could do nothing; for the next night Grendel returned to kill again. The Scyldings tried to stand up to Grendel, but none of their weapons harmed him. They sought the help of their pagan gods, but no help was forthcoming. Night after night Grendel attacked Heorot and the warriors who defended it, slaying many brave men, until the Scyldings ceased fighting and simply abandoned the hall each sunset. Grendel then began attacking the lands around Heorot, terrorizing the Danes for the next 12 years.

## **A Hero Comes to Heorot**

Many tales were told and songs sung of the horror that had overtaken Hrothgar's kingdom, and word spread as far as the kingdom of the Geats (southwest Sweden). There one of King Hygelac's retainers, Beowulf, heard the story of Hrothgar's dilemma. Hrothgar had once done a favor for Beowulf's father, Ecgtheow, and so, perhaps feeling indebted, and certainly inspired by the challenge of overcoming Grendel, Beowulf determined to travel to Denmark and fight the monster. Beowulf was dear to Hygelac and the elder Geats and they were loath to see him go, yet they did not hinder him in his endeavor. The young man assembled a band of 14 worthy warriors to accompany him to Denmark, and they set sail. Arriving at Heorot, they petitioned to see Hrothgar, and once inside the hall, Beowulf made an earnest speech requesting the honor of facing Grendel, and promising to fight the fiend without weapons or shield. Hrothgar welcomed Beowulf and his comrades and honored him with a feast. Amidst the drinking and camaraderie, a jealous Scylding named Unferth taunted Beowulf, accusing him of losing a swimming race to his childhood friend Breca, and sneering that he had no chance against Grendel. Beowulf boldly responded with the gripping tale of how he not only won the race, but slew many horrible sea-beasts in the process. The Geat's confident response reassured the Scyldings. Then Hrothgar's queen, Wealhtheow, made an appearance, and Beowulf vowed to her that he'd slay Grendel or die trying. For the first time in years, Hrothgar and his retainers had cause to hope, and a festive atmosphere settled over Heorot. Then, after an evening of feasting and drinking, the king and his fellow Danes bid Beowulf and his companions good luck and departed. The heroic Geat and his brave comrades settled down for the night in the beleaguered mead-hall. Though every last Geat followed Beowulf willingly into this adventure, none of them truly believed they would see home again.



## **Grendel**

When all but one of the warriors had fallen asleep, Grendel approached Heorot. The door to the hall swung open at his touch, but rage boiled up within him, and he tore it apart and bounded inside. Before anyone could move he grabbed one of the sleeping Geats, rent him into pieces and devoured him, slurping his blood. Next he turned to Beowulf, raising a claw to attack. But Beowulf was ready. He sprang up from his bench and caught Grendel in a fearsome grip, the like of which the monster had never known. Try as he might, Grendel could not loosen Beowulf's hold; he backed away, growing afraid. In the meantime, the other warriors in the hall attacked the fiend with their swords; but this had no effect. They couldn't have known that Grendel was invulnerable to any weapon forged by man. It was Beowulf's strength that overcame the creature; and though he struggled with everything he had to escape, causing the very timbers of Heorot to shudder, Grendel could not break free from the grip of Beowulf. As the monster weakened and the hero stood firm, the fight at last came to a horrific end when Beowulf ripped Grendel's entire arm and shoulder from his body. The fiend fled, bleeding, to die in his lair in the swamp, and the victorious Geats hailed Beowulf's greatness.

## **Celebrations**

With the sunrise came joyous Scyldings and clan chiefs from near and far. Hrothgar's minstrel arrived and wove Beowulf's name and deeds into songs old and new. He told a tale of a dragon slayer, and compared Beowulf to other great heroes of ages past. Some time was spent considering the wisdom of a leader placing himself in danger instead of sending younger warriors to do his bidding. The king arrived in all his majesty, and made a speech thanking God and praising Beowulf. He announced his adoption of the hero as his son, and Wealhtheow added her approval, while Beowulf sat between her boys as if he were their brother. In the face of Beowulf's grisly trophy, Unferth had nothing to say. Hrothgar ordered that Heorot be refurbished, and everyone threw themselves into repairing and brightening the great hall. A magnificent feast followed, with more stories and poems, more drinking and good fellowship. The king and queen bestowed great gifts on all the Geats, but especially on the man who had saved them from Grendel, who received among his prizes a magnificent golden torque. As the day drew to a close, Beowulf was led off to separate quarters in honor of his heroic status. Scyldings bedded down in the great hall, as they had in the days before Grendel, now with their Geat comrades among them. But although the beast that had terrorized them for more than a decade was dead, another danger lurked in the darkness.

## **A New Threat in the face of Grendel's mother**

Grendel's mother, enraged and seeking revenge, struck while the warriors slept. Her attack was barely any less terrible than those of her son had been. She grabbed Aeschere, Hrothgar's most valued advisor, and, crushing his body in a deadly grip, she raced away into the night, snatching the trophy of her son's arm before she escaped. The attack had happened so quickly and unexpectedly that both the Scyldings and the Geats were at a loss. It soon became clear that this monster had to be stopped, and that Beowulf was the man to stop her. Hrothgar himself led a party of men in pursuit of the fiend, whose trail was clearly marked by her own movements and Aeschere's blood. Soon the trackers came to the ghastly swamp, where dangerous creatures swam in filthy viscous fluid, and where Aeschere's head lay on the banks to further shock and appall all who beheld it. Beowulf armed himself for an underwater battle, donning finely-woven mail armor and a princely golden helm that had never failed to thwart any blade. Unferth, no longer jealous, lent him a battle-tested sword of great antiquity called Hrunting. After requesting that Hrothgar take care of his companions should he fail to defeat the monster, and naming Unferth as his heir, Beowulf plunged into the revolting lake.

Grendel's Mother. It took hours for Beowulf to reach the lair of the fiends. He survived many attacks from awful swamp creatures, thanks to his armor and his swift swimming skill. At last, as he neared the monster's hiding place, she sensed Beowulf's presence and dragged him inside. In the firelight the hero beheld the hellish creature, and wasting no time, he drew Hrunting and dealt her a thunderous blow to her head. But the worthy blade, never before bested in battle, failed to harm Grendel's mother. Beowulf tossed the weapon aside and attacked her with his bare hands, throwing her to the ground. But Grendel's mother was swift and resilient; she rose to her feet and gripped him in a horrible embrace. The hero was shaken; he stumbled and fell, and the fiend pounced upon him, drew a knife and stabbed down. But Beowulf's armor deflected the blade. He struggled to his feet to face the monster again. And then something caught his eye in the murky cave: a gigantic sword that few men could wield. Beowulf seized the weapon in a rage, swung it fiercely in a wide arc, and hacked deep into the monster's neck, severing her head and toppling her to the ground. With the death of the creature, an uncanny light brightened the cave, and Beowulf could take stock of his surroundings. He saw Grendel's corpse and, still raging from his battle, he hacked off its head. Then, as the toxic blood of the monsters melted the blade of the awesome sword, he noticed piles of treasure; but Beowulf took none of it, bringing back only the hilt of the great weapon and Grendel's head as he began his swim back.

## A Triumphant Return

So long had it taken for Beowulf to swim to the monster's lair and defeat her that the Scyldings had given up hope and gone back to Heorot -- but the Geats stayed on. Beowulf hauled his gory prize through water that was clearer and no longer infested with horrible creatures. When he finally swam to shore, his cohorts greeted him with unrestrained joy. They escorted him back to Heorot; it took four men to carry Grendel's severed head. As might be expected, Beowulf was hailed once more as a great hero upon his return to the splendid mead-hall. The young Geat presented the ancient sword-hilt to Hrothgar, who was moved to make a serious speech exhorting Beowulf to be mindful of how fragile life could be, as the king himself knew all too well. More festivities followed before the great Geat could take to his bed. Now the danger was truly gone, and Beowulf could sleep easy.

## Geatland

The next day the Geats made ready to return home. More gifts were bestowed upon them by their grateful hosts, and speeches were made full of praise and warm feelings. Beowulf pledged to serve Hrothgar in any way he might need him in the future, and Hrothgar proclaimed that Beowulf was fit to be king of the Geats. The warriors sailed off, their ship filled with treasure, their hearts full of admiration for the Scylding king. Back in Geatland, King Hygelac greeted Beowulf with relief and bid him to tell him and his court everything of his adventures. This the hero did, in detail. He then presented Hygelac with all the treasures Hrothgar and the Danes had bestowed upon him. Hygelac made a speech recognizing how much greater a man Beowulf had proven himself to be than any of the elders had realized, though they had always loved him well. The King of the Geats bestowed a precious sword on the hero, and gave him tracts of land to govern. The golden torque Beowulf had presented him would be around Hygelac's neck the day he died.

## A Dragon Awakes

Fifty years went by. The deaths of Hygelac and his only son and heir meant that the crown of Geatland passed to Beowulf. The hero ruled wisely and well over a prosperous land. Then a great peril awoke. A fleeing slave, seeking refuge from a hard master, stumbled upon a hidden passageway that led to the lair of a dragon. Sneaking quietly through the sleeping beast's treasure hoard, the slave snatched a single jewel-encrusted cup before escaping in terror. He returned to his lord and proffered his find, hoping to be reinstated. The master agreed, little knowing what price the kingdom would pay for his slave's transgression. When the dragon woke up, it knew instantly it had been robbed, and it vented its fury on the land. Scorching crops and livestock, devastating homes, the dragon raged across Geatland. Even the king's mighty stronghold was burnt to a cinder.



## **The King Prepares to Fight**

Beowulf wanted revenge, but he also knew he had to stop the beast to ensure the safety of his kingdom. He refused to raise an army, but prepared for battle himself. He ordered a special iron shield to be made, tall and able to withstand the flames, and took up his ancient sword, Naegling. Then he gathered eleven warriors to accompany him to the lair of the dragon. Upon discovering the identity of the thief who'd snatched the cup, Beowulf pressed him into service as guide to the hidden passageway. Once there, he charged his companions to wait and watch. This was to be his battle, and his alone. The old hero-king had a foreboding of his own death, but he pressed onward, courageous as always, to the dragon's lair. Over the years, Beowulf had won many a battle through strength, through skill, and through perseverance. He was still possessed of all these qualities, and yet, victory was to elude him. The iron shield gave way too soon, and Naegling failed to pierce the dragon's scales, though the power of the blow he dealt the creature caused it to spew flame in rage and pain. But the unkindest cut of all was the desertion of all but one of his thanes.

## **The Last Loyal Warrior**

Seeing that Beowulf had failed to overcome the dragon, ten of the warriors who had pledged their loyalty, who had received gifts of weapons and armor, treasure and land from their king, broke ranks and ran to safety. Only Wiglaf, Beowulf's young kinsman, stood his ground. After chastising his cowardly companions, he ran to his lord, armed with shield and sword, and joined in the desperate battle that would be Beowulf's last. Wiglaf spoke words of honor and encouragement to the king just before the dragon attacked fiercely again, flaming the warriors and charring the younger man's shield until it was useless. Inspired by his kinsman and by thoughts of glory, Beowulf put all his considerable strength behind his next blow; Naegling met the dragon's skull -- and the blade snapped. The hero had never had much use for edged weapons, his strength so overpowering that he could easily damage them; and this happened now, at the worst possible time. The dragon attacked once more, this time sinking its teeth into Beowulf's neck. The hero's body was soaked red with his blood. Now Wiglaf came to his aid, running his sword into the dragon's belly, weakening the creature. With one last, great effort, the king drew a knife and drove it deep into the dragon's side, dealing it a death blow.

## **The Death of Beowulf**

Beowulf knew he was dying. He told Wiglaf to go into the dead beast's lair and bring back some of the treasure. The young man returned with heaps of gold and jewels and a brilliant gold banner. The king looked at the riches and told the young man that it was a good thing to have this treasure for the kingdom. He then made Wiglaf his heir, giving him his golden torque, his armor and helm. The great hero

died by the gruesome corpse of the dragon. A huge barrow was built on the headland of the coast, and when the ashes from Beowulf's pyre had cooled, the remains were housed inside it. Mourners bewailed the loss of the great king, whose virtues and deeds were extolled that none might ever forget him.

**Questions:**

1. What can you tell about Britons and their language/
2. What are the first tribes ?
3. Why is the Anglo-Saxon poem "Beowulf" called the foundation stone of all British poetry?
4. Name the main heroes of the poem "Beowulf"
5. What is the merit of the poem ?
6. Does the poem "Beowulf" remind you of any Russian or Uzbek epic poem?