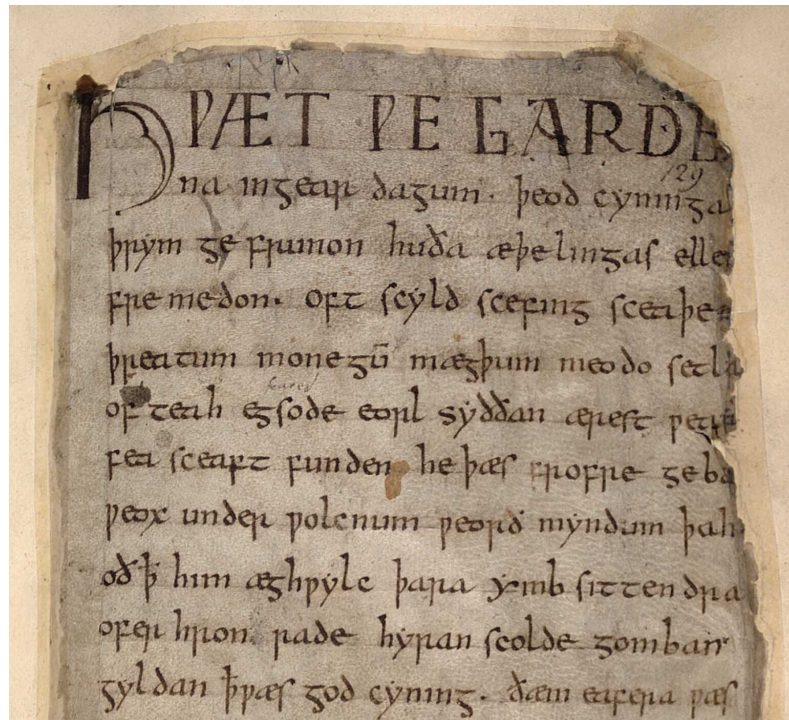


Old English (450 - 1100 AD)

The invading Germanic tribes spoke similar languages which later developed into Old English. About half of the most common words used in English today have Old English roots.

Beowulf is a poem written in Old English. It is more than 3,000 lines long and tells the tale of a hero called Beowulf. In the poem, Beowulf battles a monster called Grendel, its mother and a dragon.

The poem was first written down around 1000 A.D. - but it is believed to be much older than this and was probably passed down orally for many generations, with each version becoming slightly different. Here is an image of one of the poem's pages and also some opening lines of text.



HWÆT: WE GAR-DENA IN GEARDAGUM

þeodcýninga þrym gefrunon.

Hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon!

*Oft Scyld Scefing sceapena þreatum
monegum mægþum meodosetla ofteah,
egsode eorl, syððan ærest wearð
feasceaft funden.*