

Chapter 1 : The Wife's Lament - Wikipedia

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That passed away; this also may. She knew nothing good could ever come of it. That was a grim king! Many a warrior sat, full of cares and maladies of the mind, wishing constantly that his kingdom might be overthrown. If a man sits long enough, sorrowful and anxious, bereft of joy, his mind constantly darkening, soon it seems to him that his troubles are limitless. Then he must consider that the wise Lord often moves through the earth granting some men honor, glory and fame, but others only shame and hardship. This I can say for myself: My name was Deor. For many winters I held a fine office, faithfully serving a just lord. But now Heorrenda a man skilful in songs, has received the estate the protector of warriors had promised me. The poem may be considerably older than the manuscript, since many ancient poems were passed down orally for generations before they were finally written down. The poem is a lament in which someone named Deor, presumably the poet who composed the poem, compares the loss of his job and prospects to seemingly far greater tragedies of the past. Author The author is unknown but may have been an Anglo-Saxon scop poet named Deor. However it is also possible that the poem was written by someone else. We have no knowledge of a poet named "Deor" outside the poem. The poem has also been classified as an Anglo-Saxon elegy or dirge. It is even possible that Deor intended the poem to be a spell, incantation, curse or charm of sorts. What does the refrain "Thaes ofereode, thisses swa maeg" mean? Perhaps something like, "That was overcome, and so this may be overcome also. Interpretation My personal interpretation of the poem is that the poet is employing irony. All the previously-mentioned heroes and heroines are dead. I believe Deor is already dead, or knows that he is an old man soon to also be dead. King Nithuthr, hearing of this, took Weland captive, hamstringed him to keep him prisoner, and kept him enslaved on an island, forging fine things. Finally Weland fashioned wings and flew away, sounding a bit like Icarus of Greek myth. Maethild Matilda and Geat or "the Geat" are known to us from Scandianavian ballads. Magnild Maethhild was distressed because she foresaw that she would drown in a river. Gauti Geat replied that he would build a bridge over the river, but she responded that no one can flee fate. Sure enough, she drowned. Gauti then called for his harp, and, like a Germanic Orpheus, played so well that her body rose out of the waters. In one version she returned alive; in a darker version she returned dead, after which Gauti buried her properly and made harpstrings from her hair. The Theodoric who ruled the Maerings for thirty years may have to be puzzled out. A ninth-century rune notes that nine generations prior a Theodric, lord of the Maerings, landed in Geatland and was killed there. In the early sixth century there was a Frankish king called Theoderic. But the connections seem tenuous, at best. Perhaps the thirty year rule is a clue to consider the Ostrogoth Theodoric, born around He ruled Italy for around thirty years, until Toward the end of his reign Theodoric, then in his seventies, named his infant grandson heir. There were rumours that members of his court were conspiring against his chosen successor. Furthermore, the Catholic church was opposing the Arian Theodoric. As a result of these tensions, several leading senators were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy, including Boethius. It was while he was imprisoned and awaiting execution that Boethius wrote his famous Consolation of Philosophy. Eormenric was another king of the Ostrogoths who died in about ; according to Ammianus Marcellinus, he killed himself out of fear of the invading Huns. So he might qualify as a "grim king" with "wolfish ways. Heorrenda appears as Horant in a thirteenth century German epic Kudrun. It was said that Horant sang so sweetly that birds fell silent at his song, and fish and animals in the wood fell motionless. That would indeed make him a formidable opponent for the scop Deor. If you want to learn more about the origins of English poetry, please check out English Poetic Roots: A Brief History of Rhyme. The following are links to other translations by Michael R.

Chapter 2 : Deor's Lament Translation

â€¢ *Technicalities of Old English Poetry* â€¢ Consider some Old English poems. Analysis: The Moth Riddle â€¢ Old English poetry has a tight structure with.

Excerpt [uncorrected, not for citation] Introduction Tom Shippey Song and Poetry About fourteen hundred years ago, mourners buried a man in what archaeologists have now labeled "Grave 32" in the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Snape, in Suffolk, England. He was laid out carefully and respectfully, in pagan fashion, with a spear by his right side and a round shield covering the left side of his torso. Technically speaking, it is a lyre, but Anglo-Saxons would have called it a hearpe. Made of maplewood, with a soundboard of thin oak, and with attachments, including a wrist-strap which would allow it to be played two-handed, it is an unusually fine instrument even compared with the similar harps recovered elsewhere, one of them from the lavishly furnished royal burial at Sutton Hoo a few miles away. The "warrior-poet" of Grave 32 was surely a scop, one of those who see *The Fortunes of Men*, ll. Performers nowadays try to reimagine it, though one may wonder whether any one person can now recreate a whole art form developed long ago by many minds and marked by delighted virtuosity. For the pagan and preliterate Anglo-Saxons of the early Anglo-Saxon period, poetry delivered as song was at once the main channel of their own traditions, their highest intellectual art form, and their most valued entertainment. This body of literature is a striking anomaly on the early medieval European scene. Anglo-Saxons were still writing poems in the traditional style, with fairly strict adherence to the old rules of meter and use of traditional "kennings" almost up to 14 October, when the last Anglo-Saxon king, Harold, died on the battlefield of Hastings: How long they had been doing this is a much harder question. But it has been pointed out by Kevin Kiernan that Bede gives only a Latin version of the Hymn, the Old English poetic versions in both Northumbrian and West Saxon being added much later, so that they could have been composed on the basis of the Latin at that later dateâ€”though it is an odd coincidence, as Fulk and Cain remark, that the Latin falls so neatly into Old English poetic form. Other contenders for "earliest surviving poem" are carved rather than written Old English used the same verb, *writan*, for both, and use the old runic alphabet rather than the Latin alphabet brought in by Christian missionaries. The poem, *The Dream of the Rood*, survives in long and probably expanded form in the *Vercelli Book*â€”an Anglo-Saxon manuscript found against all probability in the cathedral library of Vercelli in northern Italy, perhaps left there by a pilgrimâ€”but some twenty lines of a version of the same poem are carved in stone, in fragmentary form, in runic letters and in a very different far-northern dialect, on the stone obelisk now known as the *Ruthwell Cross* in Dumfriesshire in southern Scotland. Everything about the *Ruthwell Cross* is enigmatic, but it could be three hundred years older than the *Vercelli Book*. There are five lines of Old English poetry, also in runic script, on the *Franks Casket*, a whalebone box discovered in France, and an early date is suggested by the fact that the engraver not only carved his runes clockwise around the box edges, but did them in mirror-writing along the bottom, as if the left-to-right convention was unknown to him Fulk and Cain, Our written records of Old English poetry, then, last more than three hundred years, from back to at least the early s. We possess a considerable amount of Old Norse poetry, in a language related to Old English but recorded centuries later, much of it produced by professional "skalds" in language and meter comprehensible only to the initiated. Poems have also survived in Old Saxon and Old High German, again with similar meter and phrasing, all of which indicates that the various Germanic peoples at one time, before any records survive, and when their languages were much more similar to each other than they later became, had a shared tradition of poetry. Christopher Tolkien has even pointed out that some names surviving in Old Norse must have originated as Gothic, the stories attached to them going back to the wars of the Goths and Huns in far eastern Europe before the fall of the Western Roman Empire, and also remembered by Old English poets xxiii-xxv. The Advent of Christianity and the Written Word The Anglo-Saxons, after initial hesitations and some backslidings, accepted Christianity and the literacy which came with the new religion with enthusiasm. Nothing exemplifies the scale of what they then achieved more than the career of the Venerable Bede. He was born in poverty and obscurity somewhere in Northumberland, remote from the intellectual centers and libraries of the Mediterranean world.

When he was a young teen in , his first monastery at Wearmouth was all but wiped out by plague, so that the boy had to learn to sing antiphonally with his abbot Ceolfrid, there being no choir-monk left to join the service Bede. But by the end of his life he was the most learned man in Europe, author of a shelf of Bible commentaries and the Ecclesiastical History of the English People, the greatest historical work of the post-Roman period. In his History Bede tells a story to explain the new hope which the pagan Anglo-Saxons saw in Christianity. If the new religion offered knowledge of what was outside the little circle of light and life, the thane said, we should follow it. The story suggests that the main draw of Christianity was its message of hope and certainty, of a world other than the brief, lit circle surrounded by darkness that was the pagan image of life. Another element may have been relief from fear: There the mourners had laid a younger woman out carefully in a closed coffin with her jewelry and expensive grave-goods, including a bronze cauldron. But then they threw an older woman in the grave, threw a rock on top of her to hold her down, fracturing her pelvis, and buried her alive. She was still trying to push herself up on her knees and elbows as she died Fleming, , As for books, before the conversion century was over, rich Anglo-Saxon churchmen like Benedict Biscop d. The libraries of York and Jarrow, while modest by Italian standards, soon became a source of pride Lapidge , and Anglo-Saxon scholarship began to be respected far afield. Boniface, whose birth name was Wynfrith, is known as the Apostle of Germany; he was martyred in at Dokkum in the Netherlands Talbot. Anglo-Saxon and Irish missionaries were probably the more successful for not always being associated with the Frankish church, seen with some justice as an arm of Frankish imperialism. The Anglo-Saxon church nevertheless had its own special qualities, one of which was perhaps a certain lack of interest in humility. This fact may well explain the survival of Old English poetry, and the kind of poetry that survived. Until late on, the church had an effective monopoly on writing, but aristocratic churchmen did not lose interest in their own traditions, including heroic legends of the past. Some thought they took too much interest in the stories of what must have been pagan heroes. Alcuin wrote angrily to one "Speratus" an unidentified Mercian bishop; see Bullough that he had heard a harper was being allowed to sing stories of Ingeld at mealtimes a character who appears in Beowulf; see ll. An evident compromise was to put Christian story into the kind of poetic form Anglo-Saxons were used to, and that is what we often have. The long poem Andreas, which translates another apocryphal story of St. Guthlac, who like St. Juliana knew how to deal with demons. A considerable "wisdom literature" also survives in poetry, of which more is said below. As the most recent edition notes, the first poem in this sequence, which was free composition outlining a history of conquest and rebellion rather than translation of stages in an argument, "shows what the versifier was capable of when not constrained by the prose" Griffith, , One might add, "or when motivated by legends of the heroic past," for another interest of Anglo-Saxon aristocrats was their own history. It is surely no coincidence that the three most famous literary works produced by Anglo-Saxons are all in their different ways historical: Portions of two other heroic poems survived up to modern times: The Fight at Finnsburg, which duplicates part of a story told in Beowulf, and Waldere, an epic about events in the fifth century, which was evidently discarded by some hard-line librarian who however used a few scrap pages to reinforce the cover of a book now in the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Some abbots at least must have given permission for the considerable expenditure of time and vellum needed to write and copy these poems, and we are now grateful for their open-mindedness. Orality, Preliteracy, and the "Riddlic" Mode There is no doubt that much of the surviving poetry, and perhaps all of it, was composed and set down by literate poets. Many written sources, usually in Latin, have been identified and are mentioned in the headnotes to individual poems, or groups of poems like The Metrical Psalms of the Paris Psalter and The Meters of Boethius. At the same time, the poems themselves often mention oral performance and hint at oral composition, which must once have been the only method of composing poetry before the missionaries from Rome and Ireland taught the Anglo-Saxons to read and write. In Beowulf, for instance though this may be deliberate anachronism , the verb writan means "to cut": One may wonder whether the delight which Solomon and Saturn both express about booksâ€™"Books are bound with glory. Books bring a reward to the righteous" Solomon and Saturn II, ll. To these wise men, even the individual letters of the Pater Noster prayer are magically powerfulâ€™"as perhaps were once the pre-Christian runes listed and described in The Rune Poem and used non-literally by the poet Cynewulf, four times, to sign his own name. One may sum

up by saying that Old English poems were produced by literate poets, who nevertheless were living in a largely if decreasingly preliterate world. It is vital to realize, however, that preliterate is not the same as illiterate. In the modern world, illiteracy carries a stigma. In a preliterate world the wisest of men, and of women, may well be illiterate, with no sense of inferiority attached. Indeed, a corollary of pre-literacy may well be that preliterates have skills which the modern literate world has lost, and which even early literates still possessed and valued: This shows up, one might suggest, in a complex attitude toward truth—how it is told and heard, perceived and understood, in all its complexity and ambiguity. For this Craig Williamson has invented the useful neologism "riddlic," a term with a wider meaning than "riddling" , 25 ff. Its "riddlic" quality is one of the most pervasive and distinctive features of Old English poetry in general, as discussed extensively below, though in our literate world it has often not been appreciated. One may add that another distinctive feature of Old English poetry is the prominence it gives to female speakers and female characters. Three of the long poems surviving have heroines rather than heroes, Elene, Juliana, and Judith. The unhappy or unfortunate women—Hildeburh, Wealhtheow, and Freawaru—have important, even pivotal roles in Beowulf. In the epic fragment Waldere, an important speech is assigned to the woman Hildegyth. In addition, we have two "dramatic monologues" in the Exeter Book by female speakers, their gender confirmed not only by the content of what they say but by the feminine endings on adjectives the speakers apply to themselves. These two poems also illustrate the power and potential for complexity of riddlic speech; as well as the theme of evanescence, an issue of special importance, one might think, for the preliterate world. The two poems are perhaps the most perplexing in the entire Old English corpus, and interpretations of them have varied even more wildly than usual, as the headnotes to them indicate: Nevertheless, there are some things one can say about their mode of speech and their underlying themes. This appears to be an autobiographical lament by a woman, and what she is lamenting seems to be a separation forced on her and her partner by hostile relatives. Note that "friendship" is a much stronger word in Old English freondscipe than in modern English, where it excludes romantic love. And in the poem even "our" is stronger than the word we use, for where modern English distinguishes only singular and plural, Old English had a special set of personal pronouns for the "dual" number, used only of two people, here uncer rather than ure. So freondscipe uncer means the "friendship love of just us two, the two of us together," even "together against the world. It still exists with painful clarity in the memory. But memory is purely subjective. There is no evidence for the memory in the real world at all. But which world is more real, the internal one or the external one? It is that contrast which creates special grief, special pain for the speaker as she hangs on to the love which now seems to be totally denied by the cold and unfeeling world around her. In this poem, the speaker laments that her lover, Wulf, has been taken from her and cries out at the end of the poem: If it has never been "sewn," there can be no "stitch" there to rip! If the tale is "untold," there can be no "thread" to unravel. By contrast, the second woman is saying there never was any "stitch," any "thread," and so no "[told] tale," no "song of us two together. What she is saying is that she is desperately regretful for something that never existed, that has been prevented from existing—but is terribly and paradoxically powerful in her mind, in her imagination. To feel the force of what she says—and this is how "riddlic" speech often works—you have to be aware of both the surface literal non-meaning and the underlying emotional meaning: One may reflect that in a preliterate world, where there is not even the concept of an authenticating document, subjective memories are especially important, though their fragility is also well understood. One may go on to say that the whole theme of the subjective versus the objective appears powerfully again and again in the Old English corpus. This may be the most complex but neglected dialogue in Old English poetry; it is rarely translated or discussed. Possibly it has been out of favor as being, in some views, not "Anglo-Saxon" enough. The two disputants have names from Jewish and classical tradition, and some of their often-bewildering information exchanges come from a lost world of apocryphal knowledge. Yet the genre of the poem, a wisdom contest, may well have been traditional in the Old Northern world. Yet one should note that Solomon and Saturn II is not exactly a riddle contest. Sometimes they pose existential questions to which there can be no single satisfactory answer. Sometimes they answer question with question, and increasingly they enter into a dialogue on the unstated but recurrent theme of justice: Yet there is an element of the riddle there.

Chapter 3 : How to Analyze Poetry (with Pictures) - wikiHow

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One such treatment considers the poem to be allegory, in which interpretation the lamenting speaker represents the Church as Bride of Christ or as an otherwise feminine allegorical figure. Both the interpretations, as with most alternatives, face difficulties, particularly in the latter case, for which no analogous texts exist in the Old English corpus. The status of the poem as a lament spoken by a female protagonist is therefore fairly well established in criticism. Interpretations that attempt a treatment diverging from this, though diverse in their approach, bear a fairly heavy burden of proof. A final point of divergence, however, between the conventional interpretation and variants proceeds from the similarity of the poem in some respects to elegiac poems in the Old English corpus that feature male protagonists. This interpretation, however, faces the almost insurmountable problem that adjectives and personal nouns occurring within the poem *geomorre*, *minre*, *sylfre* are feminine in grammatical gender. This interpretation is at the very least dependent therefore on a contention that perhaps a later Anglo-Saxon copyist has wrongly imposed feminine gender on the protagonist where this was not the original authorial intent, and such contentions almost wholly relegate discussion to the realm of the hypothetical. A riddle poem contains a lesson told in cultural context which would be understandable or relates to the reader, and was a very popular genre of poetry of the time period. Also, it cannot be ignored that contained within the Exeter Book are 92 other riddle poems. He suggests that lines use an optative voice as a curse against the husband, not a second lover. The impersonal expressions with which the poem concludes, according to Greenfield, do not represent gnomic wisdom or even a curse upon young men in general; rather this impersonal voice is used to convey the complex emotions of the wife toward her husband. The obscurity of the narrative background of the story has led some critics to suggest that the narrative may have been one familiar to its original listeners, at some point when this particular rendition was conceived, such that much of the matter of the story was omitted in favour of a focus on the emotional drive of the lament. Constructing a coherent narrative from the text requires a good deal of inferential conjecture, but a commentary on various elements of the text is provided here nonetheless. This, however, does not last, seemingly as a consequence of prior difficulties concerning her marriage. The remainder of the narrative concerns her lamentable state in the present of the poem. More recent interpretations have disputed this gnomic exhortation. Austin and John Searle, which regards speech as an action. In a world in which women have little control, Straus emphasizes how speech could be an act of power; thus in the first section, the narrator deliberately establishes an intent to tell her story. She then persuasively presents her story as one of being wronged by her husband, avenging herself in the telling. While arguing that the poem presents certain philological evidence to support an optative reading, the bulk of his support comes from contextual analysis of the act of cursing within the Anglo-Saxon culture. He also examines the act of cursing in charters and wills, quoting examples such as the following: The Exeter Book itself is inscribed with such a curse. The Anglo-Saxon culture that took all acts of *wearg-cwedol* evil speaking very seriously and even warily watched for potential witches, Niles argues, would have little trouble accepting the poem as a curse. Whether intended as a formal malediction or an emotional vituperation is less important. Influence[edit] Various efforts have been made to link this poem to later works featuring innocent, persecuted heroines, but its lyrical nature and brevity of information make establishing such links difficult. For instance, the Crescentia cycle, a series of chivalric romances such as *Le Bone Florence of Rome* featuring a woman persecuted by her brother-in-law and would-be seducer, has been said to traced to it; however, the woman herself complains only of malevolent relatives, not the specific brother-in-law that is the distinctive trait of the Crescentia cycle.

Chapter 4 : Poems / Famous Poetry Classics : All Poetry

Old English Poetry. The Works of Edgar Allan Poe (Lit2Go poet of the "Ancient Mariner" to infuse the Poetic Sentiment through channels suggested by analysis. The.

Retrieved November 09, , from <http://Next> The embedded audio player requires a modern internet browser. You should visit [Browse Happy](http://BrowseHappy.com) and update your internet browser today! It should not be doubted that at least oneâ€”third of the affection with which we regard the elder poets of Great Britain should beâ€”attributed to what is, in itself, a thing apart from poetryâ€”we mean to the simple love of the antiqueâ€”and that, again, a third of even the proper poetic sentiment inspired by their writings should be ascribed to a fact which, while it has strict connection with poetry in the abstract, and with the old British poems themselves, should not be looked upon as a merit appertaining to the authors of the poems. Almost every devout admirer of the old bards, if demanded his opinion of their productions, would mention vaguely, yet with perfect sincerity, a sense of dreamy, wild, indefinite, and he would perhaps say, indefinable delight; on being required to point out the source of this so shadowy pleasure, he would be apt to speak of the quaint in phraseology and in general handling. Words and their rhythm have varied. Verses which affect us toâ€”day with a vivid delight, and which delight, in many instances, may be traced to the one source, quaintness, must have worn in the days of their construction, a very commonplace air. This is, of course, no argument against the poems nowâ€”we mean it only as against the poets then. There is a growing desire to overrate them. The old English muse was frank, guileless, sincere, and although very learned, still learned without art. No general error evinces a more thorough confusion of ideas than the error of supposing Donne and Cowley metaphysical in the sense wherein Wordsworth and Coleridge are so. With the two former ethics were the endâ€”with the two latter the means. The poet of the "Creation" wished, by highly artificial verse, to inculcate what he supposed to be moral truthâ€”the poet of the "Ancient Mariner" to infuse the Poetic Sentiment through channels suggested by analysis. The one finished by complete failure what he commenced in the grossest misconception; the other, by a path which could not possibly lead him astray, arrived at a triumph which is not the less glorious because hidden from the profane eyes of the multitude. But in this view even the "metaphysical verse" of Cowley is but evidence of the simplicity and singleâ€”heartedness of the man. And he was in this but a type of his schoolâ€”for we may as well designate in this way the entire class of writers whose poems are bound up in the volume before us, and throughout all of whom there runs a very perceptible general character. They used little art in composition. Nor is it difficult to perceive the tendency of this abandonâ€”to elevate immeasurably all the energies of mindâ€”but, again, so to mingle the greatest possible fire, force, delicacy, and all good things, with the lowest possible bathos, baldness, and imbecility, as to render it not a matter of doubt that the average results of mind in such a school will be found inferior to those results in one ceteris paribus more artificial. There are long passages now before us of the most despicable trash, with no merit whatever beyond that of their antiquity.. The criticisms of the editor do not particularly please us. His enthusiasm is too general and too vivid not to be false. In such lines we can perceive not one of those higher attributes of Poesy which belong to her in all circumstances and throughout all time. Here every thing is art, nakedly, or but awkwardly concealed. No prepossession for the mere antique and in this case we can imagine no other prepossession should induce us to dignify with the sacred name of poetry, a series, such as this, of elaborate and threadbare compliments, stitched, apparently, together, without fancy, without plausibility, and without even an attempt at adaptation. By her help I also now Make this churlish place allow Something that may sweeten gladness In the very gall of sadnessâ€” The dull loneness, the black shade, That these hanging vaults have made The strange music of the waves Beating on these hollow caves, This black den which rocks emboss, Overgrown with eldest moss, The rude portals that give light More to terror than delight, This my chamber of neglect Walled about with disrespect; From all these and this dull air A fit object for despair, She hath taught me by her might To draw comfort and delight. I have a garden of my own, But so with roses overgrown, And lilies, that you would it guess To be a little wilderness; And all the springâ€”time of the year It only loved to be there. Among the beds of lilies I Have sought it oft where it should lie, Yet could not, till itself would rise, Find it, although before

mine eyes. Had it lived long, it would have been Lilies without, roses within. It comes over the sweet melody of the wordsâ€”over the gentleness and grace which we fancy in the little maiden herselfâ€”even over the halfâ€”playful, halfâ€”petulant air with which she lingers on the beauties and good qualities of her favoriteâ€”like the cool shadow of a summer cloud over a bed of lilies and violets, "and all sweet flowers. Every line is an idea conveying either the beauty and playfulness of the fawn, or the artlessness of the maiden, or her love, or her admiration, or her grief, or the fragrance and warmth and appropriateness of the little nestâ€”like bed of lilies and roses which the fawn devoured as it lay upon them, and could scarcely be distinguished from them by the once happy little damsel who went to seek her pet with an arch and rosy smile on her face. Consider the great variety of truthful and delicate thought in the few lines we have quoted the wonder of the little maiden at the fleetness of her favoriteâ€”the "little silver feet"â€”the fawn challenging his mistress to a race with "a pretty skipping grace," running on before, and then, with head turned back, awaiting her approach only to fly from it againâ€”can we not distinctly perceive all these things? How exceedingly vigorous, too, is the line, "And trod as if on the four winds! Then consider the garden of "my own," so overgrown, entangled with roses and lilies, as to be "a little wilderness"â€”the fawn loving to be there, and there "only"â€”the maiden seeking it "where it should lie"â€”and not being able to distinguish it from the flowers until "itself would rise"â€”the lying among the lilies "like a bank of lilies"â€”the loving to "fill itself with roses," "And its pure virgin limbs to fold In whitest sheets of lilies cold," and these things being its "chief" delightsâ€”and then the preâ€”eminent beauty and naturalness of the concluding lines, whose very hyperbole only renders them more true to nature when we consider the innocence, the artlessness, the enthusiasm, the passionate girl, and more passionate admiration of the bereaved childâ€” "Had it lived long, it would have been Lilies without, roses within.

Chapter 5 : Old English Poems | Examples of Old English Poetry

The Old English feoh and Old Norse fœr have two ranges of meaning: (1) cattle, livestock and (2) property, wealth. In his Dictionary of English Etymology, Hensleigh Wedgwood writes, "The importance of cattle in a simple state of society early caused an intimate connection between the notion of cattle and of money or wealth."

See Article History Beowulf, heroic poem, the highest achievement of Old English literature and the earliest European vernacular epic. It deals with events of the early 6th century and is believed to have been composed between 550 and 700. Although originally untitled, it was later named after the Scandinavian hero Beowulf, whose exploits and character provide its connecting theme. There is no evidence of a historical Beowulf, but some characters, sites, and events in the poem can be historically verified. The poem did not appear in print until 1815. Unexpectedly, young Beowulf, a prince of the Geats of southern Sweden, arrives with a small band of retainers and offers to cleanse Heorot of its monster. During the night Grendel comes from the moors, tears open the heavy doors, and devours one of the sleeping Geats. He then grapples with Beowulf, whose powerful grip he cannot escape. He wrenches himself free, tearing off his arm, and leaves, mortally wounded. The next day is one of rejoicing in Heorot. In the morning Beowulf seeks her out in her cave at the bottom of a mere and kills her. The Danes rejoice once more. Hrothgar makes a farewell speech about the character of the true hero, as Beowulf, enriched with honours and princely gifts, returns home to King Hygelac of the Geats. But now a fire-breathing dragon ravages his land and the doughty but aging Beowulf engages it. The fight is long and terrible and a painful contrast to the battles of his youth. Painful, too, is the desertion of his retainers except for his young kinsman Wiglaf. Beowulf kills the dragon but is mortally wounded. The poem ends with his funeral rites and a lament. Beowulf belongs metrically, stylistically, and thematically to a heroic tradition grounded in Germanic religion and mythology. It is also part of the broader tradition of heroic poetry. The ethical values are manifestly the Germanic code of loyalty to chief and tribe and vengeance to enemies. Yet the poem is so infused with a Christian spirit that it lacks the grim fatality of many of the Eddaic lays or the sagas of Icelandic literature. Beowulf himself seems more altruistic than other Germanic heroes or the ancient Greek heroes of the Iliad. It is significant that his three battles are not against men, which would entail the retaliation of the blood feud, but against evil monsters, enemies of the whole community and of civilization itself. Many critics have seen the poem as a Christian allegory, with Beowulf the champion of goodness and light against the forces of evil and darkness. That is not to say that Beowulf is an optimistic poem. The English critic J. Tolkien suggests that its total effect is more like a long, lyrical elegy than an epic. Even the earlier, happier section in Denmark is filled with ominous allusions that were well understood by contemporary audiences. In the second part the movement is slow and funereal: Beowulf has often been translated into modern English; renderings by Seamus Heaney and Tolkien completed; published became best sellers. Learn More in these related Britannica articles:

Chapter 6 : Characteristics of Old English Poetry | The Classroom

Some Old Norse poems, however, are written in the meter they called fornyrǫislag, "old-word-meter," and this is effectively identical to Old English, in meter and often in turns of phrase. Poems have also survived in Old Saxon and Old High German, again with similar meter and phrasing, all of which indicates that the various Germanic peoples.

Origins[edit] The date of the poem is impossible to determine, but it must have been composed and written before the Exeter Book. The poem has only been found in the Exeter Book , which was a manuscript made at around , although the poem is considered to have been written earlier. Each caesura is indicated in the manuscript by a subtle increase in character spacing and with full stops , but modern print editions render them in a more obvious fashion. Like most Old English poetry, it is written in alliterative metre. It is considered an example of an Anglo-Saxon elegy. He remembers the days when, as a young man, he served his lord, feasted together with comrades, and received precious gifts from the lord. Yet fate *wyrd* turned against him when he lost his lord, kinsmen and comrades in battle—“they were defending their homeland against an attack”and he was driven into exile. Some readings of the poem see the wanderer as progressing through three phases; first as the *anhoga* solitary man who dwells on the deaths of other warriors and the funeral of his lord, then as the *modcearig* man man troubled in mind who meditates on past hardships and on the fact that mass killings have been innumerable in history, and finally as the *snottor on mode* man wise in mind who has come to understand that life is full of hardships, impermanence, and suffering, and that stability only resides with God. Other readings accept the general statement that the exile does come to understand human history, his own included, in philosophical terms, but would point out that the poem has elements in common with "The Battle of Maldon ", a poem about a battle in which an Anglo-Saxon troop was defeated by Viking invaders. In this respect, the poem is a "wisdom poem". The wanderer vividly describes his loneliness and yearning for the bright days past, and concludes with an admonition to put faith in God, "in whom all stability dwells". It has been argued by some scholars[by whom? Opponents of this interpretation such as I. Gordon have argued that because many of the words in the poem have both secular and spiritual or religious meanings, the foundation of this argument is not on firm ground. Thorpe considered it to bear "considerable evidence of originality", but regretted an absence of information on its historical and mythological context. Tolkien , who adopted elements of the poem into *The Lord of the Rings* , is typical of such dissatisfaction. The "beasts of battle" motif, often found in Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry, is here modified to include not only the standard eagle, raven, and wolf, but also a "sad-faced man". The use of this emphasises the sense of loss that pervades the poem. Not only do we find physical journeying within *The Wanderer* and those later texts, but a sense in which the journey is responsible for a visible transformation in the mind of the character making the journey.

Speech boundaries[edit] A plurality of scholarly opinion holds that the main body of the poem is spoken as monologue, bound between a prologue and epilogue voiced by the poet. For example, lines , or , and can be considered the words of the poet as they refer to the wanderer in the third person, and lines as those of a singular individual [18] in the first-person. Alternatively, the entire piece can be seen as a soliloquy spoken by a single speaker. An alternative approach grounded in post-structuralist literary theory identifies a polyphonic series of different speaking positions determined by the subject that the speaker will address.

Chapter 7 : Poetry :: Translations from Old English

Click here for companion features, "Twenty-One More Poems for AP English," and "Fiction and Non-Fiction for AP English Literature and Composition." The selections within this listing represent frequently taught poets and poems in AP English Literature and Composition.

Why does your sword so drip with blood? And why so sad are ye, O? O I have killed my hawk so good: And I had no more but he, O. O, I have killed my red-roan steed, That once was so fair and free, O. Your steed was old, and we have got more, Some other evil ye fear, O. O, I have killed my father dear, Alas! And what penance will ye suffer for that? My dear son, now tell me, O. And what will ye do with your towers and your halls, That were sae fair to see, O? And what will ye leave to your children and your wife When ye go over the sea, O? The world is large, let them beg throw life, For them never more will I see, O. And what will ye leave to your own mother dear? The curse of hell from me shall you bear, Such counsels you gave to me, O. And quhy sae sad gang zee, O? O I hae killed my hauke sae guid: And I had nae mair bot hee, O. Zour haukis bluid was never sae reid, My deir son I tell thee, O. O, I hae killed my reid-roan steid, That erst was sae fair and free, O. Zour steid was auld, and ze hae gat mair, Sum other dule ze drie, O. O, I hae killed my fadir deir, Alas! And quhatten penance will ze drie for that? My deir son, now tell me, O. Ile set my feit in zonder boat, And Ile fare ovir the sea, O. And quhat wul ze leive to zour bairns and zour wife Quhan ze gang ovir the sea, O? The warldis room, let them beg throw life, For thame nevir mair wul I see, O. And quhat wul ze leive to zour ain mither deir? The curse of hell frae me sall ze beir, Sic counsels ze gave to me, O.

Chapter 8 : Short Old English Poems - Examples

The Wanderer is an Old English poem preserved only in an anthology known as the Exeter Book, a manuscript dating from the late 10th century. The science.com counts lines of alliterative verse.

The poem provides a striking first-person lament spoken by an Anglo-Saxon warrior who wanders the world alone after losing his lord and companions. Instead, we read of the workings of fate *wyrð* and the relationships of reciprocal gifting in pre-Christian warrior society. Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson have remarked that the central figure is of "the heroic age" and "shows no awareness of Christian enlightenment. Discussing Anglo-Saxon verse, Graham Holderness writes: I would argue that *The Wanderer* has elements of both heroic and elegiac poetry. As such, it contains holdovers from a past pagan age presented in a post-conversion package. My translation of the poem is presented in the text boxes below. Between each section of the translation, my annotation addresses aspects of the poem including: Following translators of Old English such as R. Tolkien, I have rendered all poetry as prose. All passages quoted from Old English, Old Norse, and German texts in the annotation are my own translations. Fate is fully inexorable! So said the wanderer, mindful of hardships, of wrathful slaughters, with the fall of beloved kinsmen: The sea seems longsome to men, if they have to dare in an unsteady ship, and the sea-waves greatly frighten them, and the sea-steed does not heed the bridle. Both poems reflect the difficulty and struggle of the long times at sea necessary for northern travel during this time period. *Lagu* rune is the third symbol on the inside of this Anglo-Saxon rune ring 8thC I am not arguing for a direct genetic relationship between the two poems, but rather suggesting that the similarity of vocabulary and imagery shows that they are both part of what Maureen Halsall calls "the shared word-hoard of alliterative formulas The idea is common enough throughout Indo-European literature. Often I had to alone lament my care each day before dawn. No one is now alive that I would dare to tell him my heart openly. Nor can a weary spirit withstand fate, nor the troubled mind provide help. The Wanderer speaks of the "nobleman" using the word *eorl* here in the dative as *eorle* , which is related to the Old Norse *jarl* and the Modern English *earl*. A character named *Eorl* is mentioned several times in *The Lord of the Rings* as the first king of Rohan and ancestor of the Rohirrim. Therefore, the *Eorlingas* are the "people of *Eorl*. The Modern English spelling is *thew*. Depending on context, it could mean arrogance, courage, disposition, heart, mind, pride, soul, spirit, or temper. Ancestral land is exceedingly dear to each man, if he may there in the hall enjoy what is right and fitting in prosperity most often. Like *The Wanderer*, the *Rune Poem* makes a connection between "ancestral land" and the pleasures and rewards of life in the hall. *Wynn* "joy," here as dative plural *wynnum* is the subject of a verse in the Old English *Rune Poem*: Joy he enjoys who knows little of woes, pain and sorrow, and for himself has prosperity and bliss and also the abundance of strongholds. This expresses a concept of "joy" that is quite close to that of the *Wanderer*, centered as it is on contrasting mental states and the prosperity and shared experiences of the hall. All joy has perished! The young fir-tree withers, that which stands in an unsheltered place; neither bark nor needle shelters it. Such is the man whom no man loves " how should he live long? Although the imagery is different, the two poems share an underlying concept of community. The leader was responsible for providing food, shelter, and treasure for his retainers in exchange for their loyal service. To his friend a man must be a friend and repay gift with gift. The *Wanderer* makes a direct connection between loss of friends and the loss of gifting. Those who exchange and those who give again are friends to each other the longest " if that continues to go well! In several important particulars " the kneeling which is implied , the kiss, the placing of the hand " this ceremony resembles the one described in *Court Law*. Perhaps a bit more prosaic than the other verses quoted above, but there it is. Then wounds of the heart are the heavier, sorely longing for the beloved. Whenever remembrance of kinsmen pervades his mind, he joyfully greets, eagerly examines companions of men; they often swim away. Spirit of floating ones does not bring there many familiar sayings. Care is renewed for him who must very often send weary heart over binding of waves. Therefore I am not able to think throughout this world why my spirit does not grow dark, when I fully ponder life of noblemen, how they quickly abandoned hall, brave young retainers. An unwise man thinks he knows all, if he has for himself a corner to stay in. That is to say, the fool who never

leaves home considers himself wise – an observation that still holds true in this age of internet trolls. We still use the Old English word *winter* here as genitive plural *wintra*. The wise man must be patient, must not be too hot-hearted nor too hasty with words, nor too weak a warrior nor too reckless, nor too afraid nor too obsequious, nor too wealth-greedy nor never of boasting too eager, before he clearly has knowledge. In his Dictionary of English Etymology, Hensleigh Wedgwood writes, "The importance of cattle in a simple state of society early caused an intimate connection between the notion of cattle and of money or wealth. *Feoh* is the subject of the first verse of the Old English Rune Poem: Wealth is a consolation to all people; though each man must deal it freely, if he wishes to obtain glory before the lord. As in *The Wanderer*, the importance of reciprocal gifting is underscored. *Beorn* here translated as "warrior" is a word that only appears in Old English poetry. Mitchell and Robinson write that "the speaker is warning against rash vows *Edoras* translated here as "buildings" is the plural form of the noun *edor* "place enclosed by a fence," "dwelling," "house". The wine-halls decay, rulers lie deprived of joy, troop of seasoned retainers has all perished, proud by the wall. The imagery of animals preying on the battle-dead should be familiar to readers of the Norse myths and sagas, which feature ravens and wolves as the battlefield-haunting creatures of Odin. So the creator of men laid waste this dwelling place until, devoid of the revelry of the population, the ancient works of giants stood idle. Then he saw among the war-gear a victory-fortunate blade, an ancient sword made by giants *ealdsweord eotenisc* strong in edges. In Old English, *ent* here in genitive plural *enta* and *eoten* here in the adjective form *eotenisc* both mean "giant. The sense of the enemies of the gods having enormous appetites is also present in the Sanskrit texts of India, in which the *rakshasas* are defined by their monstrous hunger. Tolkien und die germanische Mythologie "Middle-earth: Tolkien and Germanic Mythology" , Rudolf Simek explains why the Old English poems credit "giants" with the construction of ancient structures: Anderson writes of a "theme of an awed regard for Roman ruins" in Old English poetry: Auden letter that his giant figures of the forest "are composed of philology, literature, and life. Where has the horse gone? Where has the young man gone? Where has the treasure-giver gone? Where have the seats of the feasts gone? Alas, glory of the prince! How that time departed, grew dark under helm of night, as if it never was. A wall wondrously high, decorated with serpent shapes, stands now in the track of the beloved troop of seasoned retainers. Author of the Century, Tom Shippey points out that Frodo is "the one name out of all the prominent hobbit characters in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* which Tolkien does not mention or discuss. Of course, *gyfa* "giver" is related to *gyfan* "to give" and *gyfu* "gift" , the latter of which is the subject of a verse in the Rune Poem: The gift of men is honor and praise, support and respect; and help and substance for each wanderer who is without other. This reminds us that the *Wanderer* is not bemoaning the simple loss of material things, but of the relationships and cementing of status that the giving and receiving of gifts represents. The Old English symbol "feast," here in the genitive plural *symbla* is parallel to the Old Norse *sumbl*. In *The Well and the Tree*: Bauschatz presents a detailed analysis of usage of both terms in the literature of the two languages, arguing that *Beowulf* and several poems from the Poetic Edda provide evidence for a Germanic ritual based on drinking of an alcoholic beverage, making of speeches, and giving of gifts. So far, every book that I have found published by a Heathen author that discusses the contemporary version of the *symbl* or *sumbl* ritual cites his work. *Our Troth*, a two-volume religious guide by the *Troth* an American Heathen organization , states that nearly all practitioners "who have written or spoken on the meaning of the *sumbel* in latter years have drawn their understanding of the rite from this text. Where now the horse and the rider? Where is the horn that was blowing? Where is the helm and the hauberk, and the bright hair flowing? Where is the hand on the harpstring, and the red fire glowing? Where is the spring and the harvest and the tall corn growing? They have passed like rain on the mountain, like a wind in the meadow; The days have gone down in the West behind the hills into shadow. Who shall gather the smoke of the dead wood burning, Or behold the flowing years from the Sea returning? Although the language quickly diverges, the spirit, mood, and imagery remain very similar. All is fraught with hardship in the kingdom of earth, the creation of the fates changes the world under the heavens. Here wealth is temporary, here a friend is temporary, here oneself is temporary, here a kinsman is temporary; all this foundation of the earth will become worthless! As discussed above, both words can mean either "wealth" or "cattle. Cattle die, kinsmen die, the self dies the same, but the glory of reputation never dies for the

one who gets himself a good one. Two pairs of the Old English and Old Norse words are related: The parallel nature of the two verses is obvious. However, the worldview expressed by the two endings are quite different. The Old Norse poem replies to the same situation with an insistence that deeds in the world are what matter, that the only immortality is in the reputation we leave behind.

Chapter 9 : Beowulf | Summary, Characters, & Analysis | calendrierdelascience.com

Note on the translations These translations from Old English aim to capture my understanding of the texts at the time, all the while remembering that these texts are poems. Sometimes the resulting language is a bit "rough" and sometimes naive - not always to everyone's taste, perhaps, but often to mine.