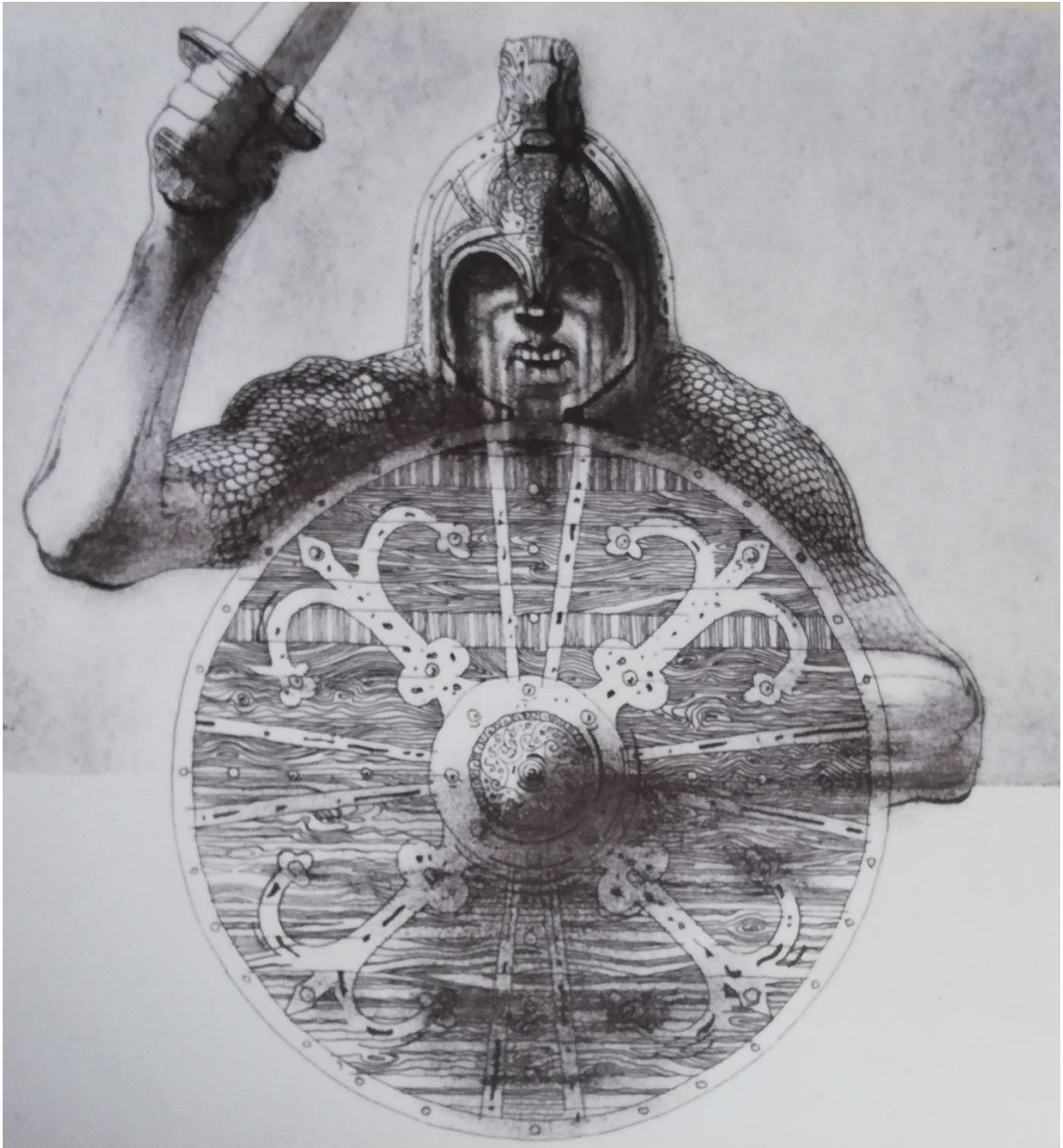




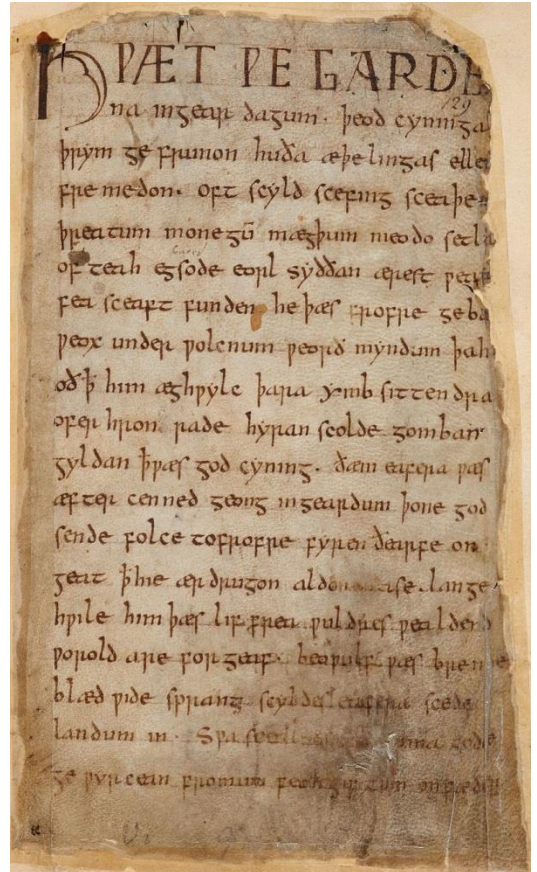
Beowulf

*Text by Kevin Crossley-Holland
Illustrated by Charles Keeping*

Introduction

Beowulf is an old story. It is one of the oldest stories in English. In fact, it is so old that it wasn't even written in modern English. It was written in a language that you would barely recognise as English. It was written in Old English – a language that some people call Anglo-Saxon.

You can see the first page of a handwritten copy in the image on the right. Historians aren't sure when the story was first told however, as the copies that were found may have been written many years after the story was first made up.



This version of *Beowulf* was translated and written by a man called Kevin Crossley-Holland, who studied Old English (Anglo-Saxon) for many years.

The story itself tells of a young warrior called Beowulf who belongs to a tribe of people called Geats. The Geats lived in the south of what we now call Sweden. Beowulf hears of the woes of Hrothgar, king of the Danes, whose people are being tormented by a vicious monster called Grendel. Beowulf vows to kill the beast. Watch this [video](#) to understand the background of the story.

Guide to pronunciation

While the story here is retold in modern English, there are a few Anglo-Saxon names for characters, places and even a sword.

Anglo-Saxon (or Old English) personal and place names are at first unfamiliar, but are not difficult to pronounce.

Beowulf: Bay-oh-wolf

Hygelac: Hidger-lark

Gangleri: Gang-leery

Ecgtheow: Edge-thay-ow

Hrothgar: Hroath-gar

Scyld Scefing: Shild Shay-fing

Beow: Bay-oh

Healfdene: Hay-alph-dayner

Grendel: Gren-del

Geat: Gay-at

Heorot: Hay-or-ot

Unferth: Oon-ferth

Breca: Bray-car

Wealhtheow: Way-al-thee-ow

Leofric: Lay-oh-fritch

Sigemund: Seeg-err-moond

Æschere: Ash-err-er

Hrunting: Hroont-ing

Wiglaf: Weeg-laugh

Nægling: Nag-ling