

Week Three

The Beowulf Manuscript

From c. 400 = Germanic peoples invade/settle in Britain
597 = Augustine arrives in Kent to convert the 'English'
c. 625 = date of ship burial in Sutton Hoo
664 = Synod of Whitby
674 = Monastery of Monkwearmouth founded
682 = Monastery of Jarrow founded
c. 700 = Lindisfarne Gospels written and decorated
731 = Bede completes his Ecclesiastical History
757-96 = Offa king of Mercia
793 = Vikings attack Lindisfarne
869 = Vikings defeat and kill Edmund, king of East Anglia
871-99 = Alfred the Great king of Wessex
878 = Alfred defeats Viking army at Battle of Edington
978-1016 = Aethelraed Unraed king of England
c. 1000 = Beowulf Manuscript produced
1016-35 = Cnut king of England
1042-66 = Edward the Confessor
1066 = Battle of Hastings

Monsters and their Mothers

Monsters: Central or Marginal?

Grendel and Grendel's mother: Family ties, human shape, cannibalism, decapitation; Beowulf's wrestling match with Grendel takes place in a hall; Grendel's mother fights Beowulf in an underwater hall.

Grendel's mother and the dragon: The monster is initially aggrieved, suffers loss; both inhabit a waterside home. Beowulf needs two swords. Hero is accompanied by a group of retainers, only some of whom prove faithful.