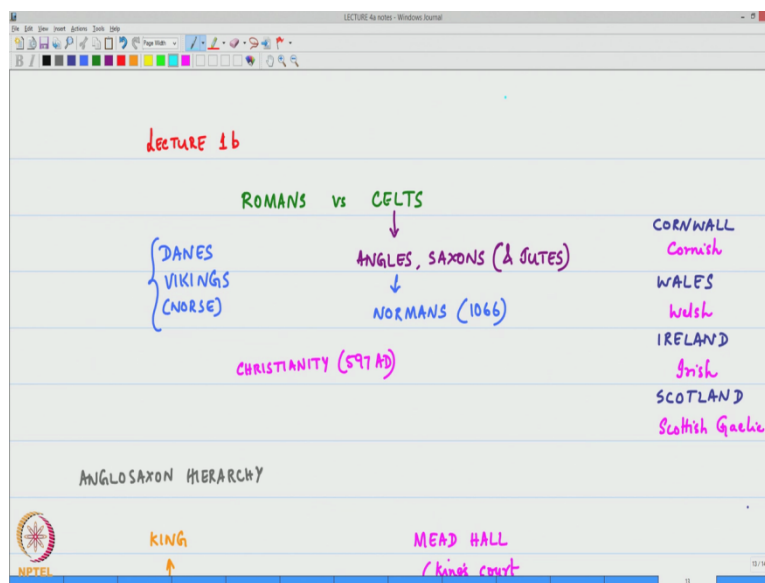


History of English Language and Literature
Professor Merin Simi Raj
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Lecture No 1B
Old English Period-Anglo Saxon Literature

Good morning and welcome to today's lecture on the course the history of English language and literature. In today's session we will be talking about the old English period and primarily the Anglo-Saxon literature. And before we proceed let us let me give you a very quick recap of the previous section.

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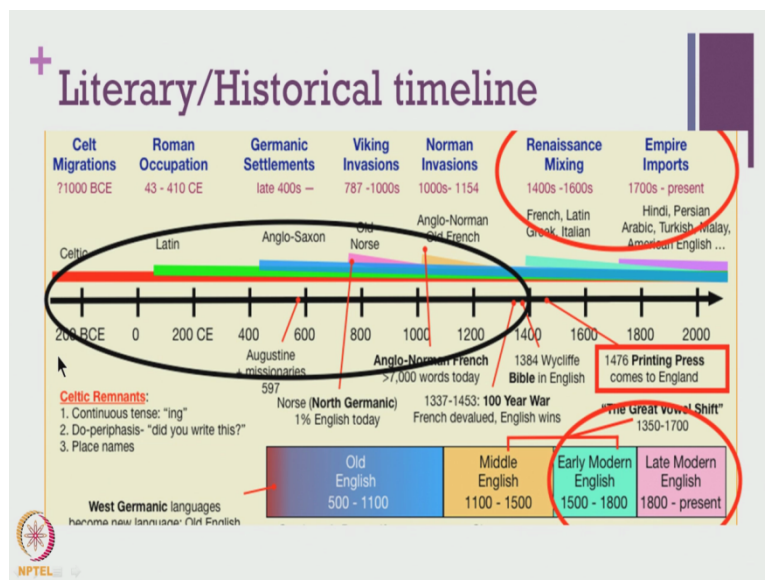
In the last lecture we noted that the story of England and the story of English literature begin even before the English began to inhabit the island of England. As we can see over here, the initial tussle was between the Romans and Celts and the Celts if you remember may be original inhabitants of England.

And now and later on as the many other invading tribes begun to trouble the Celts they asked for help from the Angles, Saxons and the Jutes. But we also begun to see that they did not just helped the Celt drive out the other invading tribes, but they just completely displaced the Celts and overtook the island of Britain and since then England is also known as the land of the Anglo-Saxons. And now in case you are wondering whatever happened to the Celts who were driven out from England, they were the ones who the Celts they begun to settle in these different places such as Cornwall, Wales, Ireland and Scotland.

And we also know that the Celtic languages which are in minority today they are Cornish, Welsh, Irish and Scottish Gaelic as spoken in this respective provinces. And as we come back to this story of story of England, we find that the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, they began to have settlements in island and later on we also find the jutes had been completely the jutes get completely displaced and the land gets known in the name of Angles and Saxons alone. But this was not a very uneventful period, during this time we find the Danes, the Vikings and all of them invading England at some point or the other.

Because of that we have the Danelaw which we saw in the previous section and also some influence of the Norsk language due to the continuous invasion of the Vikings we also saw that. The Vikings did not leave a very lasting influence because their policy was mostly that of hit and run, they did not want to have permanent settlements over them. And in between other interesting thing happens, Christianity also finds fertile soil in the land of the Anglo-Saxons by 597 A.D. we find that the then King Ethelbert converts to Christianity and there by leaving a long legacy of church and Christianity. And the Anglo-Saxon period comes to an end with the Norman Conquest which also we noted in the previous section.

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To continue situating the significance of Anglo-Saxon period and old English literature let us take a quick look at this historical time line which is been given here, we find that there is a gradual transition from the Celtic period towards the Anglo-Saxons in terms of linguistic influences we have the influence of Latin, then the influence of old Norsk and significant Norsk element, which is built into the language. And eventually we find that the transition moves on towards later centuries about which we will take a look at later on.

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We also note that significant period the significant timeline of old English period or Anglo-Saxon literature is barely a history of maybe 500 to 800 years. And also if you take a look at this the other more detailed map of literary periods we find that this entire story of 500 to 1000 years or maybe 800 years is it takes only a short span in terms of timeline. When you scale it up to the entire literary periods it occupies only a very little space in terms of literary output in terms of literary and non-literary events as well.

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+ Disproportionate timeline?

- **Very little** written/survived in the first 800 years
 - Quantity, quality, character
- **Lost** literature – not written down? Lost copies? Lacks evidence
- Age of **manuscript** vs. the age of print
- **Linguistic** difficulties – Old English is Germanic
 - Anglo-saxon / Old English were almost like a **foreign** language
 - No semblance to present English



So let us begin this discussion on old English period by taking a look at what has constituted this disproportional timeline. many historians have got different theories about this disproportional telling of history and some of the major reasons we would try to address over

here, the first one being that there was very little written in the first 800 years and even when there was things getting written, very little has survived into the posterity. And in terms of this session is made in terms of quantity, quality and character of the literature, which is survived or of the literature of which there is some evidence of.

And also there is this assumption that even when things were written on maybe a lot of them were lost because there is a also this strong conviction that maybe mostly oral literature oral tradition in place so that may be very little was written down or perhaps there were lost copies and however whatever literature lacks strong evidence, the historians have not included as part of old English literature. And the other important things was that this was much before the age of proper documentation before the age of print, so mostly the manuscripts were there in place, so it also made it all the more difficult to preserve them due to various conditions.

And the most important reason that many historians identify of late is that of linguistic difficulties because the old English tongue was not really English, it was mostly a Germanic tongue and we would also note much later when we take a look at the language that Anglo-Saxon tongue or old English literature or old English tongue was more like a distant Germanic foreign tongue. Because of that there was hardly any resemblance to modern English language and for the same reason even when the text were not from the old English period, they had to be translated into the modern English in order for the language to make sense or for it to be put under any kind of linguistic or literary scrutiny, so this perhaps is constituted to this disproportionate timeline.

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Old English Literature

- 499-1066 AD
- Oral Literature
- Prose and Poetry – only a handful
- Three major kinds of subject matter:
 - Religion (Pagan and Christian)
 - War
 - The trials of daily life

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And moving on which period falls under this old English period or the old Anglo-Saxon period, this period is from 499 to 1066 A.D. and a little bit about the term Anglo-Saxon and old English literature. In this course we would notice that we will be notice these terms almost simultaneously quite interchangeably too. But however, there are some historians who are of the opinion that the term old English literature is more politically correct than that of the old than that of the Anglo-Saxons and also there are these historians who argue that the term Anglo-Saxons could should be used in order to emphasis the cultural heritage that has been handed down to England and English literature.

Uhh so in this old English period the literature was mostly oral in nature and in terms of written prose and poetry there is only a handful of text which have survived and there is no reason to assume that a lot more was actually written because the oral traditions seems to be the more dominant one during those times. And if we try to analyze the material that has been handed down to us, we can also note that the subject matter broadly falls into three major kinds, one is that of religion this includes Pagan religion and also Christian subject matter.

And there is a discussion of war because the old English period in not just in England and also in most of the other European nations before the medieval period was mostly a story of war conquest and territorial disputes so on and so forth. And so that quite explains why the subject matter was predominantly about war and conquest, and also thirdly it was also about trials of daily life. So in that sense the old English literature whatever is available to us, it becomes very important for us to understand the social life of the old English period as well.

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+ Beowulf

- The only text to survive the ravages of time
 - Survives in a single manuscript – but damaged by fire
- **Anonymous** - Authorship not known – a monk or someone else with academic inclination
- Later “fashioned into an epic by some Northumbrian poet”
 - About the mighty feats of a hero named Beowulf
 - Glimpse into the past
- No title – modern scholars named it after the ‘hero’
 - Did Beowulf actually exist?
- The poet – living among Christian people whose ancestors are known to have been pagan

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“Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics” – the most famous essay on *Beowulf* by J R R Tolkien (delivered as a lecture in 1936)

Argues that Beowulf be seen as a poem and not merely as a historical document

Moving on, let us do a very quick survey of some of the text which are continuing to be discussed in terms of old English literature. The first one and perhaps the most important one is a text named Beowulf and incidentally the text was never named as Beowulf, but the later historians they have attributed this name to the text based on the name of the hero of the text. So this was also the only text to survive the ravages of time. In fact, this text is perhaps the only old English text which is found in a single manuscript, but that is tough to say that the manuscript was received without any damage, partly it was also damaged and fire.

So whatever translations that we have in the contemporary are based on all of these limitations put together. It was of anonymous origin, the authorship is not known at all, but there is an assumption that maybe it was a monk or someone else with an academic inclination who authored this piece which mostly in words and there is an obvious reason to assume this because church and monasteries were the center of education and they center of culture during those periods. So the clergy and the clerics were mostly the ones associated with education and literacy.

So maybe it was ordered by a monk and also the subject matter is quite religious and allegoric in nature. And there is also this assumption that this heroic epic as it has come to be known as, this was perhaps picked up by some Northumbrian poet at a later time and he had fashioned it into a proper kind of an epic. So there are these various disputes about the authorship about this piece and who wrote it or whether a group of people together contributed to it so on and so forth. And in terms of the subject matter, this is about the mighty feats of a hero named Beowulf and also this is important that it gives a glimpse into

the past in terms of the life during those times, they believe systems that the people predominantly had, the kind of relationships that they had with one another, etcetera.

And there is also this debate about whether the character Beowulf actually existed or not, one is not yet sure of it but the kind of this that he talks about also gives an assumption that perhaps this was modeled on a great warrior who lived during those times. And also the author of the Beowulf, the author of this work Beowulf has also come to be called as the Beowulf poet even leading one to assume that perhaps this was even written by someone named Beowulf who also chooses to give the hero the name of his own.

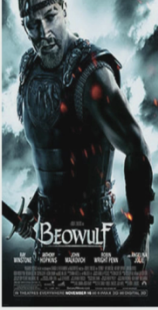
When one analyzes the subject matter, there is also this some interesting details which are highlighted like it is written by a poet who was living among Christian people whose ancestors were known to have been Pagan. So we find that Christian and the pagan elements being discussed in detail in Beowulf and some historians are also of the opinion that the Christian element was later attributed to Beowulf given the lean age of Christianity which has been left behind from the Anglo-Saxon and the later time onwards.

And an interesting thing about the discussions and the literary critics on Beowulf is that Beowulf was in fact the discussions on Beowulf was in fact revived only in the twentieth century particularly in 1936 based on a lecture delivered by J.R.R. Tolkien. The essay was called Beowulf the monsters and the critics, this is by far the most famous critical and historical work on Beowulf and in this work Tolkien argues that Beowulf should be seen more as a (())(11:46) and less as a historical document because seeing a work like Beowulf as a historical document alone takes away the literary attributes of the work.


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+ Beowulf – suspending disbelief

- The tale of 'Beowulf' who is destined to become the king of the Geats, a Swedish tribe
 - A Scandinavian warrior
- Three major trials – demonstrating Beowulf's fearlessness and strength as a leader
 - Battles with a monster named Grendel
 - Followed by an attack by Grendel's mother
 - Years later – confronted by a dragon
- Analysed for symbolism and allegory
 - Monsters and dragons did not need to represent anything else!
 - Written by and for the minds who believed they existed?



2007 movie



And what is this Beowulf about? And critics are of the opinion that this is perhaps the earliest text which allowed the audience to suspend their disbeliefs and listen to a narration. And this narration is basically about the tale of Beowulf, the dominant character and the protagonist who distilled to become the king of Geats, Geats is a Swedish prominent tribe during those times and Beowulf the assumption is that he was a Scandinavian warrior. These details are unearth from the analysis of the works from a later periods, and what forms the major topic is about the three major trails that Beowulf was force to undergo during his lifetime.

And these three major trials also incidentally demonstrate Beowulf fearlessness and strength as a leader. These are the things which lead historians into assuming that perhaps Beowulf himself was a the Beowulf poet himself was a leader who wanted to add on to some leadership qualities to his own life through this kinds of narration. So these are three major trials, the storyline begins with this battle with a monster named Grendel and later on and it is followed by an attack by this monster Grendel's mother and years later the hero Beowulf is again confronted by a Dragon.

So all of these different trials demonstrate the various ways in which his skills as a warrior and his skills as a leader get displayed. And this work has also been extensively analyzed for its symbolism and allegory and but also some of the critics are also of the opinion that the figure of the monster or the figure of the dragon need not be analyzed in a more figurative or metaphorical sense because given the old English period and their believed system the pagan believe system on dragons, monsters and many supernatural beings.

Or maybe they did not really allegorically represent anything and also given the fact that this was written for a set of people who believed in their minds that all of these supernatural things existed there was no need for any other allegorical kind of representation. And also it in an interesting feature to remember that Beowulf was made into a 2007 movie and this also talks a lot about the contemporary interest in the story of a Beowulf and also how this could have been adapted into a very modern visual representation.

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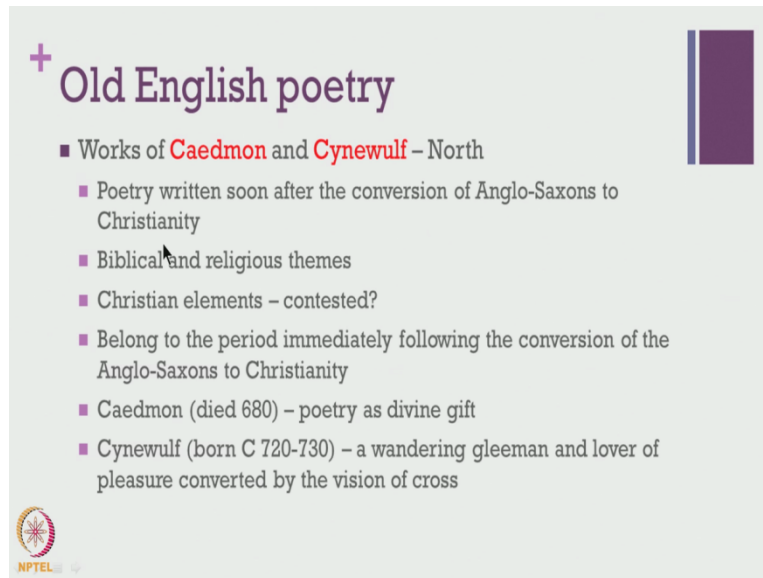
+ The opening lines of Beowulf

Manuscript Letters	Modern Letters
<p>hwæt! þe Gardena in geardagum, þeodcýnunga, þrym gefrunon, hu ða æbelingas ellen fremedon. Oft Scýld Scefing sceaþena þreatum,</p> <p>monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah, egsode eorlas. Syððan ærest wearð feaþceaf funden, he þæs frofre gebad, weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah, oðþæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra</p> <p>ofer hronrade hyran scolde, gomban gýldan.</p>	<p>Hwæt! We Gardena in geardagum, þeodcýninga, þrym gefrunon, hu ða æbelingas ellen fremedon. Oft Scýld Scefing sceaþena þreatum,</p> <p>monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah, egsode eorlas. Syððan ærest wearð feaþceaf funden, he þæs frofre gebad, weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah, oðþæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra</p> <p>ofer hronrade hyran scolde, gomban gýldan.</p>




And drawing your attention to the script the old Germanic the old English script which is mostly Germanic in nature, here are the original manuscript letters and this is a transliteration based on the modern letters. But whichever one we take a look at, we find that this quite distinct from modern English and there is hardly any resemblance to the way English is written or the vocabulary or the sentence structure is fashioned in the contemporary. So these are also some of the difficulties in accessing the text Beowulf unless it is translated into modern English.

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+ Old English poetry

- Works of **Caedmon** and **Cynewulf** – North
 - Poetry written soon after the conversion of Anglo-Saxons to Christianity
 - Biblical and religious themes
 - Christian elements – contested?
 - Belong to the period immediately following the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity
 - Caedmon (died 680) – poetry as divine gift
 - Cynewulf (born c. 720-730) – a wandering gleeman and lover of pleasure converted by the vision of cross

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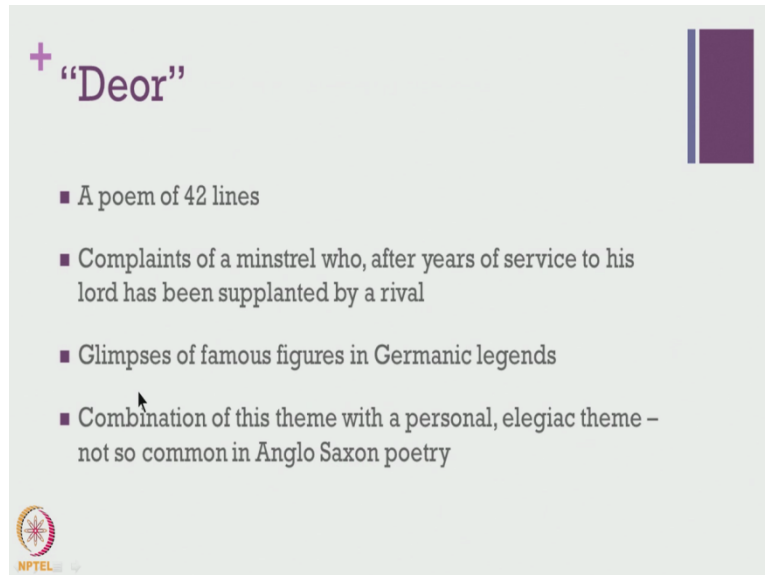
And if you talk about old English poetry in general, these two names of Caedmon and Cynewulf they were mostly from the northern part these two names dominate the discussion and there is every reason to assume that the poetry was written soon after the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon into Christianity because there are a lot of Christian elements built into the discussion into the subject matter, into the treatments so on and so forth. So mostly the themes were of biblical and religious nature and however at the same time some of the allegories are quite contested because one is not sure whether the Christian themes were attributed to the later on or whether the authors themselves were the authors themselves had a strong belief in the Christian system.

And it is also considered that Caedmon who dies in 680 and Cynewulf who was born around 720-730 actual date of death was not yet known. It is also considered that both of them saw poetry as a divine gift and these were the things which were hidden to the unknown to the Anglo-Saxon life time. These were the things hidden to unknown to the Anglo-Saxon period, so this predominance of these two characters also gives us a lot of evidence into believing that there may be other works and other poets also who were living and writing during that time, but there is very little evidence to prove in terms of manuscripts or in terms of oral traditions that have survived into the posterity.

And one of the works of Cynewulf is of most importance where he talks about a wandering person and a lover of pleasure who is converted by a vision of the cross. In this sense, the dominance of Christian's symbols in dominance of Christianity interfering with the day to

day life about changing the life styles, changing the perspective, changing the value system of a society and individual all of these things become quite predominant in the analysis of some of the works.

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+ "Deor"

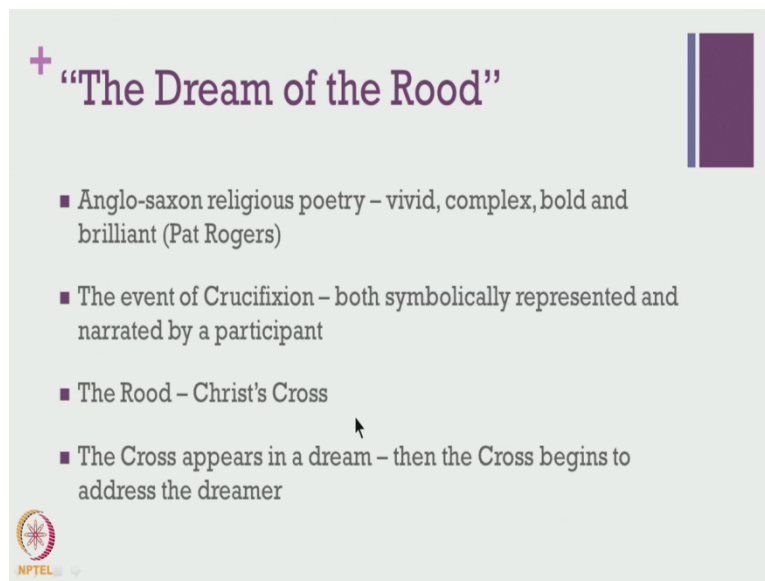
- A poem of 42 lines
- Complaints of a minstrel who, after years of service to his lord has been supplanted by a rival
- Glimpses of famous figures in Germanic legends
- Combination of this theme with a personal, elegiac theme – not so common in Anglo Saxon poetry

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And Deor is another important poem of the manuscript of which who survived into posterity. This is a poem of just 42 lines and the subject matter is quite interesting, it is about the complaints of a minstrel who after years of service to his lord was replaced by a rival. So this also throws a lot of light into the daily life style of old English times and we also get a glimpse to many famous legends of the old Germanic times also leading us to believe that maybe they were a set of people who loved to listen to folklores, to legends and also to these great mighty feats of warriors, etcetera.

And Deor as a poem is significantly important because it brings together a lot of elements which were uncommon during the Anglo-Saxon times. So in this we find a combination of a subject matter along with a very personal and elegiac theme and this was not very common during those times to bring in a personal touch to the literature or to the worst form which was available then.


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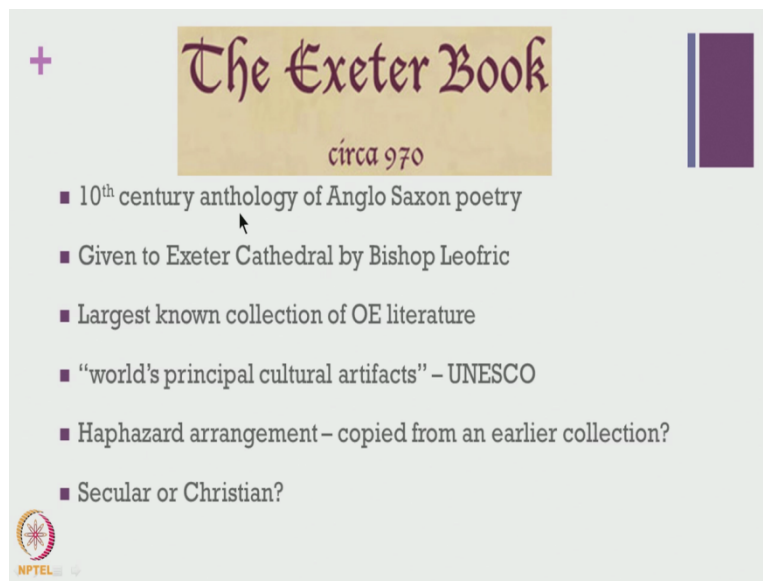
“The Dream of the Rood”

- Anglo-saxon religious poetry – vivid, complex, bold and brilliant (Pat Rogers)
- The event of Crucifixion – both symbolically represented and narrated by a participant
- The Rood – Christ’s Cross
- The Cross appears in a dream – then the Cross begins to address the dreamer



The other significant writing was “The dream of the Rood” again a short poem and this is a very predominant example of religious poetry that existed during those times and particularly about the dream of the rood Pat Rogers describes it as a vivid complex bold and brilliant piece. And this sort of complexity was not available to any of the other writings of those times and here also it is important to note that it is of anonymous origin the authorship is not known. And this work “The dream of the Rude” primarily talks about the event of Crucifixion in a very symbolic way and the entire story is also narrated by a participant who witness the act of Crucifixion. The roods symbolizes Christ’s cross and in this story we find that in this poem we find that a cross appears in a dream and in the cross as a figurative symbolic element it begins to address the dreamer himself.

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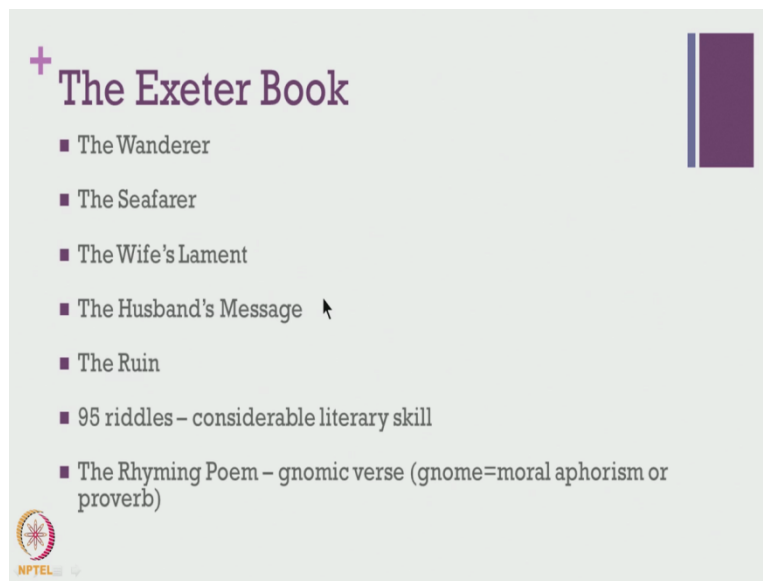
The slide features a title 'The Exeter Book' in a decorative font, with 'circa 970' written below it. To the left of the title is a purple plus sign, and to the right is a vertical purple bar. Below the title is a list of six bullet points. At the bottom left of the slide is the NPTEL logo.

- 10th century anthology of Anglo Saxon poetry
- Given to Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric
- Largest known collection of OE literature
- “world’s principal cultural artifacts” – UNESCO
- Haphazard arrangement – copied from an earlier collection?
- Secular or Christian?

So in that sense the religious theme is very dominant throughout in most of the literature of the Anglo-Saxon period. How have we begun to access most of these works, so at this point it is important to draw your attention to what is now known as the Exeter book. This was a kind of an anthology of Anglo-Saxon poetry which came into being around 970 A.D. roughly about sometime during the 10th century and the term Exeter is from is because the set of anthology was given to a person of anonymous origin to Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric.


So one does not know who has actually put this together and who had compile this together, but historical evidence is only talk about a certain Bishop Leofric handing over this anthology to Exeter Cathedral for preservation and we do find the church here act as a center which preserves cultural and literary artifacts for the future because there was no other institution available of this stature and of this kind, which could intervene the daily life and cultural life of a people then. And the Exeter book is also known to be the largest collection of old English literature and UNESCO has identified it as one of the world’s principle cultural artifacts. we do find that the arrangements is not very systematic they are the works quite have has early arranged and also there is an assumption that maybe the Exeter book was originally copied from another collection that existed but there is very little evidence again to prove that.

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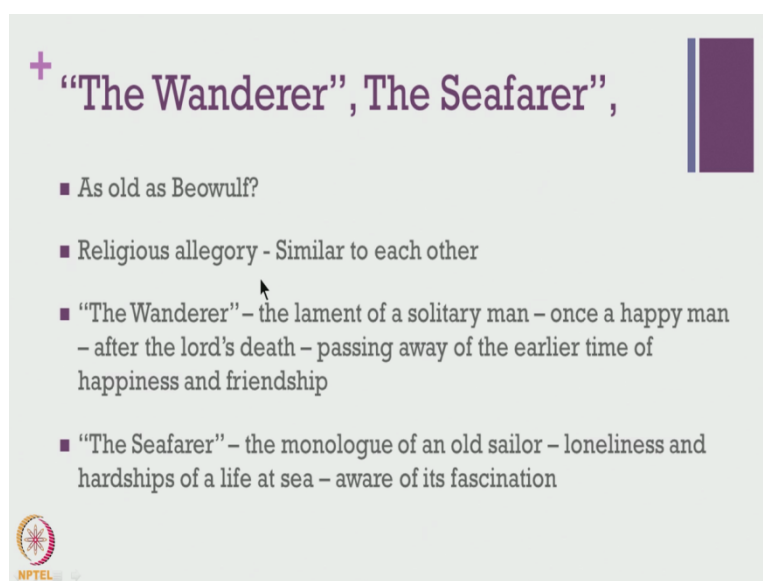
+ The Exeter Book

- The Wanderer
- The Seafarer
- The Wife's Lament
- The Husband's Message
- The Ruin
- 95 riddles – considerable literary skill
- The Rhyming Poem – gnomic verse (gnome=moral aphorism or proverb)

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And there are also lots of disputes about whether the contents are largely secular or Christian, but there is evidence to prove that perhaps there is also a mix of both secular and Christian elements. So what were the contents of the Exeter book? It had a few major poems such as the Wanderer, The Seafarer, The Wife's Lament, The Husband's Message and The Ruin and there are also 95 riddles and some say almost 100 riddles which are even now considered to be a position of considerable literary skill. And there is also this thing known as The Rhyming Poem which consists a set of gnomic verses. Gnome in Greek means moral aphorism or a proverb.

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+ "The Wanderer", "The Seafarer",

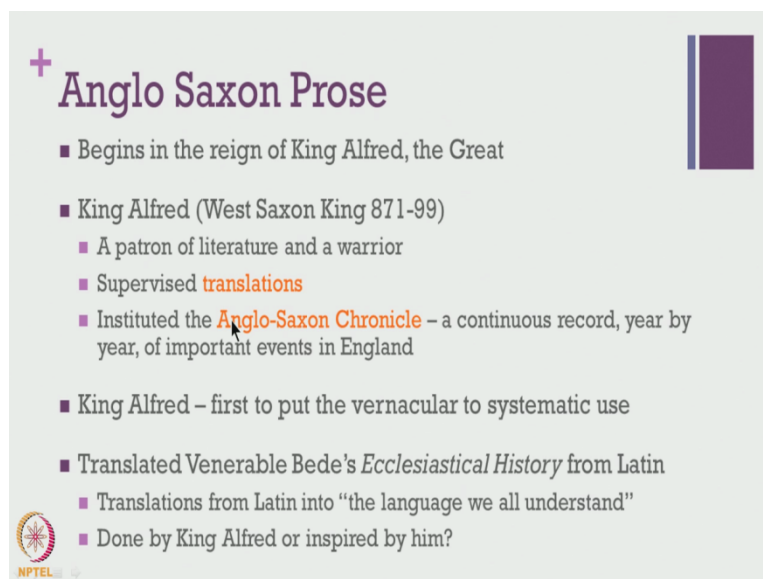
- As old as Beowulf?
- Religious allegory - Similar to each other
- "The Wanderer" – the lament of a solitary man – once a happy man – after the lord's death – passing away of the earlier time of happiness and friendship
- "The Seafarer" – the monologue of an old sailor – loneliness and hardships of a life at sea – aware of its fascination

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So there is set of proverbs or norms which were brought together in the form of alliterative verse. So these were the major contents of the Exeter book and let us take a quick look at couple of these poems which are considered to be quite noteworthy, and The Wanderer and The Seafarer both these poems are considered almost as old as Beowulf and they had significant religious allegory in place, they were considered quite similar to one another. In terms of content also they were quite similar in terms of treatment also there was a dominant religious element built into it.


The Wanderer is in fact about the lament about a solitary man who was once a happy person living a very joyful life, we find his life undergoing a transition after the lord's death, the lord means a master during those times and he laments about the passing away of the earlier time of happiness, friendship and companionship that he had with his master. The Seafarer is the structurally it is like a monologue of an old sailor, he talks about loneliness and hardships of a life at sea, but at the same time he continues to be in awe of fascination that the life the adventurous life in sea offers.

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+ Anglo Saxon Prose

- Begins in the reign of King Alfred, the Great
- King Alfred (West Saxon King 871-99)
 - A patron of literature and a warrior
 - Supervised translations
 - Instituted the **Anglo-Saxon Chronicle** – a continuous record, year by year, of important events in England
- King Alfred – first to put the vernacular to systematic use
- Translated Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* from Latin
 - Translations from Latin into “the language we all understand”
 - Done by King Alfred or inspired by him?

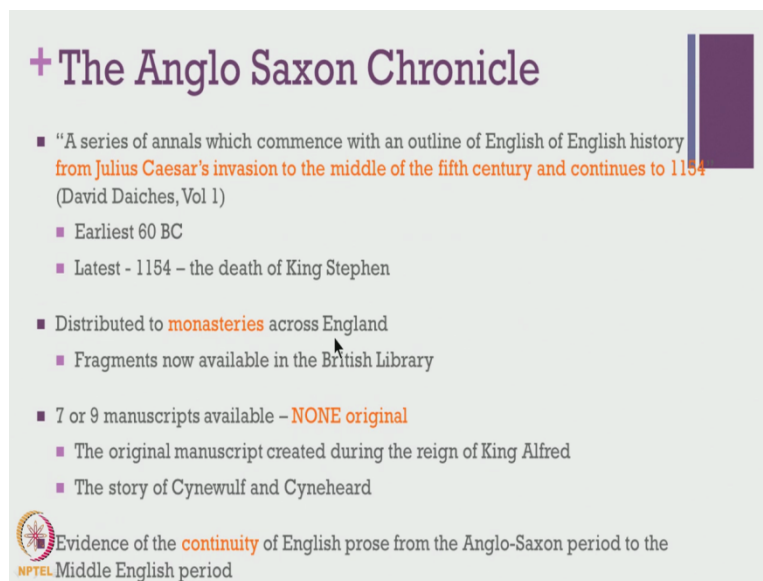
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So this scene is quite allegorical and quite religious comparing the daily struggles and the life adventures with that of the Christian life or the struggles during Christian life. And moving on let us also take a look at what constituted Anglo-Saxon prose. The discussion on the presence of Anglo-Saxon prose begins only from the reign of King Alfred the great about whom we heard quite in detail in the previous section. King Alfred was a West Saxon king who ruled from 871 to 99 he was not just a warrior, but he was also a patron of art and literature.

We find that he had supervised many translations during those times; he had instituted the Anglo-Saxon chronicle about which we will hear shortly. And there is also enough reason to assume that he is quite a learner person with a passion for art and literature, we also find him learning the Latin at a later point of time in order to facilitate the translations from Latin to the vernacular. And he is considered to be the first one to put the vernacular to systematic use. And we find his contribution being the most significant in terms of prose, he not only encourage this works to be written but he also contributed to them himself.


And he is credited to have been translated Venerable Bede's Ecclesiastical history from Latin to vernacular tongue to old English tongue. And in his own words it is recorded that he wanted to translate from Latin into the language we all understand, but again there are disputes about whether king Alfred himself translated the work Bede's work from Latin to English or whether he just inspired and encouraged a group of people to undertake this mission.

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+ The Anglo Saxon Chronicle

- "A series of annals which commence with an outline of English of English history from Julius Caesar's invasion to the middle of the fifth century and continues to 1154 (David Daiches, Vol 1)"
 - Earliest 60 BC
 - Latest - 1154 - the death of King Stephen
- Distributed to monasteries across England
 - Fragments now available in the British Library
- 7 or 9 manuscripts available - NONE original
 - The original manuscript created during the reign of King Alfred
 - The story of Cynewulf and Cyneheard

 Evidence of the continuity of English prose from the Anglo-Saxon period to the Middle English period

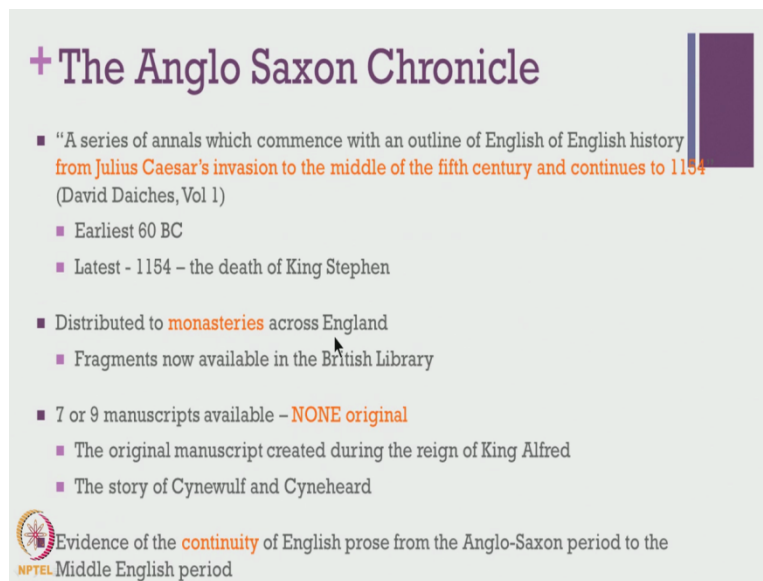
Having said that, what exactly is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle? This is perhaps the most important document of the Anglo-Saxon times that we have today and as David Daiches describes this work, it is a series of annals which commence with outline of English of English history from Julius Caesar's invasion to the middle of the fifth century and continues to 1154 A.D. And the earliest records of the Anglo-Saxon chronicle is from 60 B.C. onwards even before the times of king Alfred, but king Alfred is said to have put all of this together and compile this into a proper chronicle.

The latest entry is from 1154 the chronicle ends with the death of King Stephen. This chronicle as soon as it was compiled and the periodic addition to it, it is said that it was distributed to the monasteries across England, as we mention before monasteries has to had a very important role to play in the Anglo-Saxon times in the cultural and the religious life of England. And the fragments of these original manuscript, the fragments of these manuscripts in, the copies of these manuscripts are now available in the British library for it is also a kind of a an interest for many historians and linguists.

And it is said that about 7 or 9 manuscripts from those times are available now but none of them are original, the original is was perhaps lost in fire or due to some other natural calamity and it is generally said that the original manuscript which compile all of these events it was created by king Alfred during his time. This also shows his passion for not just art and literature, but also a passion for a sense of history to be compiled and the need for documentation which would make things easier for the posterity. So in that sense King Alfred was a very important intervening figure in the history of Anglo-Saxon period.


And it is in this work that we also find about the story of Cynewulf and Cyneheard perhaps another poet, so there is also a lot of historical evidence for the existence of poets such as Cynewulf. And this document becomes important in enduring a kind of continuity into the middle English period because we find that when certain ways the Anglo-Saxon chronicle it pans over a vast amount of time from B.C. 60 till about 1154 in that sense there is a way in which we have a document which enables us to seamlessly enter the middle English period and also identify certain continuities which are present not just in pros, but also in the cultural and religious life of England.

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+ The Anglo Saxon Chronicle

- "A series of annals which commence with an outline of English history from Julius Caesar's invasion to the middle of the fifth century and continues to 1154 (David Daiches, Vol 1)"
 - Earliest 60 BC
 - Latest - 1154 - the death of King Stephen
- Distributed to monasteries across England
 - Fragments now available in the British Library
- 7 or 9 manuscripts available - NONE original
 - The original manuscript created during the reign of King Alfred
 - The story of Cynewulf and Cyneheard

 Evidence of the continuity of English prose from the Anglo-Saxon period to the Middle English period

As we begin to wind up this lecture it is very important to highlight the role of church and Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England. You may have noted right from the beginning of the discussion that church and religion is at the center of almost all the discussions. So it is very difficult to even begin to talk about the story of England without talking about a history of church, the history of monasteries and the religious life from the Anglo-Saxon or even from the Celtic period onwards. David Daiches has got this thing to say about the role of Christianity. With the triumph of Christianity, all cultures were ecclesiastical culture and ecclesiastical culture was based on Latin.

This is perhaps the best way in which one can summarize the old English period and the story as we know begins with the conversion of England to Christianity in 597 A.D. and we also note that soon after that there is a significant development of ecclesiastical institutions particularly monasteries which continue to serve as a center of learning a center of culture center of dissemination of knowledge so on and so forth. Also, later on we will begin to note that the church even serves as a center of performance and in that sense the earliest drama also get enacted in churches. And also the role of the Clerics caring on cultural tradition of the periods is also quite noteworthy and so much so that David Daiches sums up like this.

The man of culture belongs first of all to church and the impressive claims of secular literature had not yet begun to be asserted. In the following sections we will also begin to see how in the middle English period there is a gradual transition from the religious literature towards a secular literature, and also as Daiches points out in one of his introductions about

the man of culture belonging to church we find that the same church becomes a stifling element in terms of art and literature at a later point of time.

So all of this transition the cultural transition the religious transition and the literary transition are quite important when we begin to map the journey of literature across ages. So with this we begin to wind up today's lecture thank you for listening and look forward to see you in next class.