Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript

Beowulf

The poem Beowulf is an Old English heroic epic that was written some time between the 7th and 11th centuries and is the only survival of such a work in Old English. It is the story of a hero named Beowulf, who defends his people against a dragon and a monstrous man in his youth, and a dragon at the end of his life. The poem was written in the early 10th century and is the only surviving example of Old English literature.

The Beowulf Manuscript

The text of Beowulf was preserved in a manuscript known as the Beowulf Manuscript, or the Nowell Codex. It was written in the late 10th or early 11th century and is housed in the British Library. The manuscript contains a collection of works, including Beowulf, and is written in Old English.

The Poem's Structure

Beowulf is divided into four parts: a prologue, a parable, a hero's tale, and an afterlife. The poem begins with a prologue that sets the stage for the rest of the story. It describes the land of the Geats and introduces the hero Beowulf. The parable that follows features the story of the giant Grendel, who is defeated by Beowulf. The hero's tale that follows is the main part of the poem, in which Beowulf is introduced to the king Hrothgar and challenged to defeat the beast Grendel. After Beowulf wins the battle, he is given a feast and is asked to come to the battle against the monster Grendel's mother. Beowulf defeats Grendel's mother and is then given a feast again.

The Afterlife

The afterlife is described in the final part of the poem, in which Beowulf is given a hero's burial and is then transported to the Otherworld. The poem ends with a description of the afterlife, in which Beowulf is given a place of honor among the gods.

The Poem's Influence

Beowulf is one of the most important works of Old English literature and is still read today. It has been translated into many languages, and its characters and themes have been used in literature, film, and television. The poem has been the subject of much scholarly study, and its influence can be seen in the works of many modern authors.

References

- Caedmon 1941-01-22 The Junius Manuscript
- Asa Simon Mittman 2013
- Leonard Neidorf 2017-05-16 Beowulf, like The Iliad and The Odyssey, is a foundational work of Western literature that originated in tenth-century England. It was written in Old English and is commonly cited as one of the most important works of Old English literature. It is the story of a hero named Beowulf, who defends his people against a dragon and a monstrous man in his youth, and a dragon at the end of his life. The poem was written in the early 10th century and is the only surviving example of Old English literature.