



ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

449-1066

EARLY BRITISH HISTORY

- 800 -
600 BC** Celts settled on Britain
- 55 BC -
407 AD** Romans conquered - brought sophisticated roads, military, laws
- 407** Anglo-Saxons invaded from Germany
- 1066** Norman conquest



ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

Oral tradition

Scops - professional storytellers

Poetry

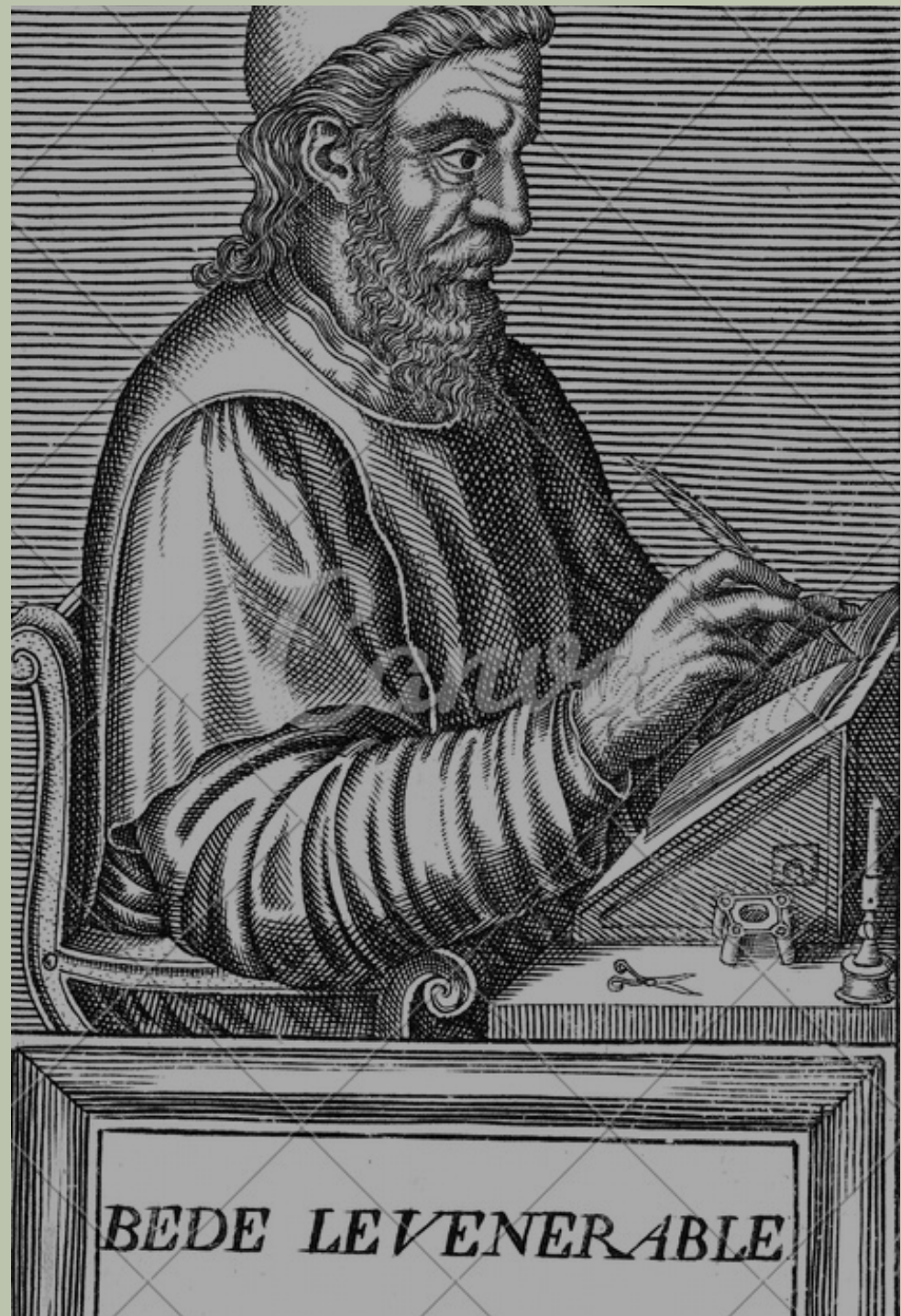
- first English poet was Caedmon
- heroic - Beowulf
- elegaic - "The Wanderer"

Prose

- Latin
- Bede - History of the English Church

BEDE'S HISTORY

- In Anglo-Saxon England, literacy belonged to the clerics
- Bede's History of the English Church and People provides a national history
- Bede describes the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain and focuses primarily on the spread of Christianity



BEOWULF

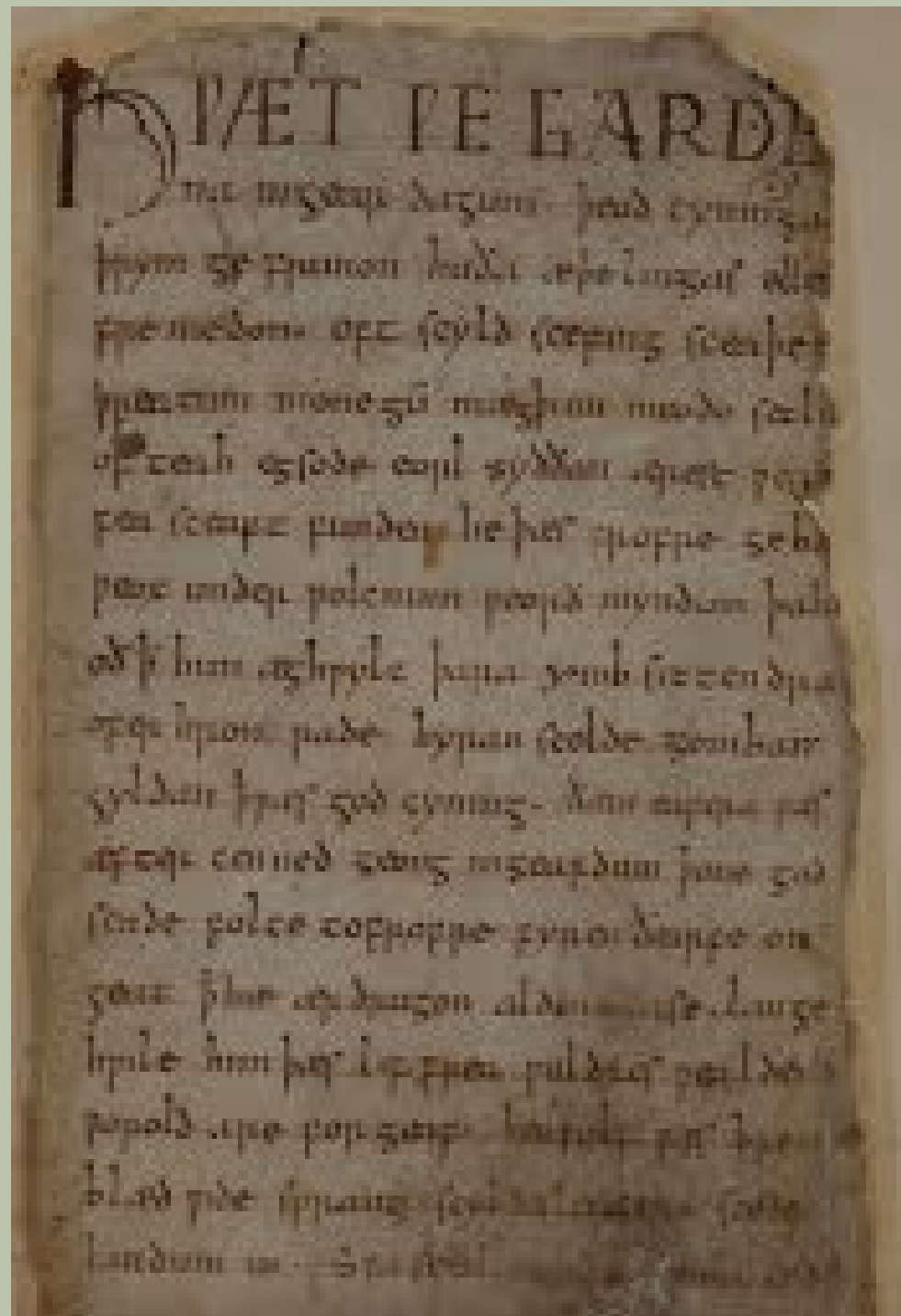
National epic of England

Originally in Old English

Unknown author

Christian influences

Values of warrior society - dignity, bravery, and prowess in battle





AS YOU READ...

What is the nature of an epic hero?

What Anglo-Saxon values are present in Beowulf?

How do poetic elements reflect an oral tradition?

What was the Anglo-Saxon definition of a hero?

How did this tale influence literature that followed?



FOLLOW ALONG WITH

NEARPOD

AS WE BEGIN THIS UNIT WITH BEOWULF