



Lecture 1

An Introduction to Old English: Who, Where, What, When, Why

Dr Stuart D. Lee
Stuart.lee@ell.ox.ac.uk

Hwæt! We Gardena in geardagum,
þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon,
hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.

Course Aims

- ◆ Introduce basics of Old English - the language, literature, and culture
- ◆ Prepare you for Paper 3(a)
- ◆ Promote an enjoyment of Old English
- ◆ Point to the importance of Old English

Lectures

- ◆ Week 1. Introduction
- ◆ Week 2. Old English Language
- ◆ Week 3. Old English Poetry
- ◆ Week 4. Old English Prose
- ◆ Week 5. Old English Films



All on the Web!

- ◆ <https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/>
- ◆ Log in as 'yourusername' (e.g. magd0123)
password is your email password
- ◆ Humanities Division > English Faculty > Information for Undergraduates > Resources for Mods > Old English

What does the term 'Anglo-

[£3bn tax bill sends Porsche's VW bid into a spin](#)

Management Today

All of which looks a bit rum to the eyes of anyone more used to the **Anglo-Saxon** model of governance, but it seems to work OK for the Germans. ...

[See all stories on this topic](#)

[Why Not Affirmative Action For White Evangelicals?](#)

VDARE.com

The Supreme Court, far from being the last redoubt of the White **Anglo-Saxon** Protestant in America, reflects the collapse of the WASP establishment, ...

[See all stories on this topic](#)

[Struggle within Iranian elite continues](#)

Real News Network - New York,NY,USA

... language coverage is intelligible to a minority of Iranians while it reaches a mainly **anglo-saxon** world who will be interested from the geo-political ...

[See all stories on this topic](#)

[Your number's up. First mobile directory goes ex-directory](#)

TelecomTV - London,UK

A bloody nuisance and a downright liberty to which a short sharp two word **Anglo Saxon** retort is the best possible response.

Look up 118 800 this morning and ...

[See all stories on this topic](#)

[Will fixing up your apartment in Israel pay off?](#)

Ha'aretz - Tel Aviv,Israel

The knowledge that renovations, even slight ones, can hasten the sale of a home and even increase its value recently prompted **Anglo-Saxon** realtors to offer ...

[See all stories on this topic](#)

[THE ASHES: A dream run](#)

Business Spectator - Melbourne,Victoria,Australia

Flintoff then launched himself at the 170cm Phillip Hughes, initiating the 21-year-old in some old-fashioned **Anglo-Saxon** as he tested out his technique ...

[See all stories on this topic](#)

[Walter Cronkite, World's Most Overrated Reader of the News](#)

Pajamas Media - El Segundo,CA,USA

While the colonies differed on many questions, at least the people of the colonies were of the same **Anglo-Saxon** stock.

Democracy, civilization itself, is at ...

[See all stories on this topic](#)

Google Blogs Alert for: **anglo-saxon**

[The Anglo Saxon Chronicle: The complete and utter bard](#)

By Anoneumouse

The original language was **Anglo-Saxon** (Old English), but these later entries are essentially Estuary English in tone. You could say, this is an EU "Withdrawalist, Libertarian and generally reactionary blog. Regular, but amateurish"(if ...

[The Anglo Saxon Chronicle - http://saxontimes.blogspot.com/](#)

[European Journal of Archaeology » Blog Archive » EJA Review ...](#)

By Troels

The exception is mound 17 with its undisturbed weapon inhumation and a horse in a separate grave cut, featuring the first complete set of **Anglo-Saxon** harness metalwork to come to light (more have been found since). ...

[European Journal of Archaeology - http://eja.e-a-a.org/](#)

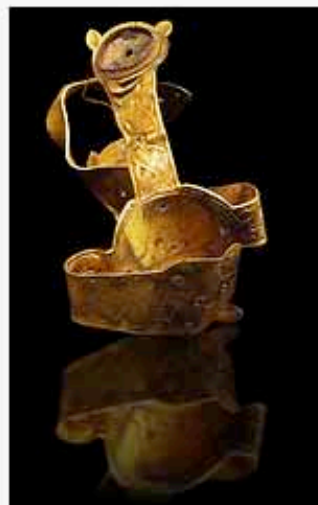
[Bones Economics: Is American Capitalism a Religious Construct?](#)

By Ringo

Unfortunately, some still backward thinking parts of America still think that successful capitalism should be ruled by precepts



The Staffordshire Hoard

[Thumbnails](#)[Detail](#)[40 comments](#)

This hoard is perhaps the most important collection of Anglo-Saxon objects found in England. It compares and perhaps exceeds those objects found at Sutton Hoo. Originally discovered by metal detectorist Terry Herbert in July 2009 and subsequently excavated by Birmingham University Archaeology Unit and Staffordshire County Council.

Leslie Webster, former Keeper of Prehistory and Europe at the British Museum



Professional Terminology

- ◆ Old English - language and literature
NOT historical period or 'people'
- ◆ Medieval - language, literature, and
historical period NOT 'people'
- ◆ Anglo-Saxon - everything
- ◆ 'Dark Ages' - !!!!

Define: Old English

Define: Old English

‘Old English is a term used to refer to the language and literature spoken and written in ‘England’ during the rule of the Anglo-Saxons (i.e. c. 450AD up until the mid-eleventh century)’

Key Questions

- ◆ When? i.e. what period of history are we really talking about?
- ◆ Who? i.e. who were the Anglo-Saxons?
- ◆ Where? i.e. where did they come from and where did they go?
- ◆ What? i.e. what is 'Old English'?
- ◆ Why? i.e. why is this all so important?

Key Questions

- ◆ hwæenne? i.e. what period of history are we really talking about?
- ◆ hwa? i.e. who were the Anglo-Saxons?
- ◆ hwær? i.e. where did they come from and where did they go?
- ◆ hwæt? i.e. what is 'Old English'?
- ◆ hwi? i.e. why is this all so important?

When?

What is wrong with this clip of film?
What is right with it?

SOURCE: *The Vikings* (Dir. R.
Fliescher, 1958, United Artists)



When?

- ◆ Mid-5th century (Bede - publishes in early eighth century - states 449) to October 14th 1066 (and beyond)



A word of warning

A word of warning

- ◆ Thor, Odin, Frig, Loki, Sagas, Vikings, Boats, Horned Helmets, etc

A word of warning

- ◆ Thor, Odin, Frig, Loki, Sagas, Vikings, Boats, Horned Helmets, etc
- ◆ THIS IS OLD NORSE

A word of warning

- ◆ Thor, Odin, Frig, Loki, Sagas, Vikings, Boats, Horned Helmets, etc
- ◆ THIS IS OLD NORSE
- ◆ THIS IS NOT OLD ENGLISH

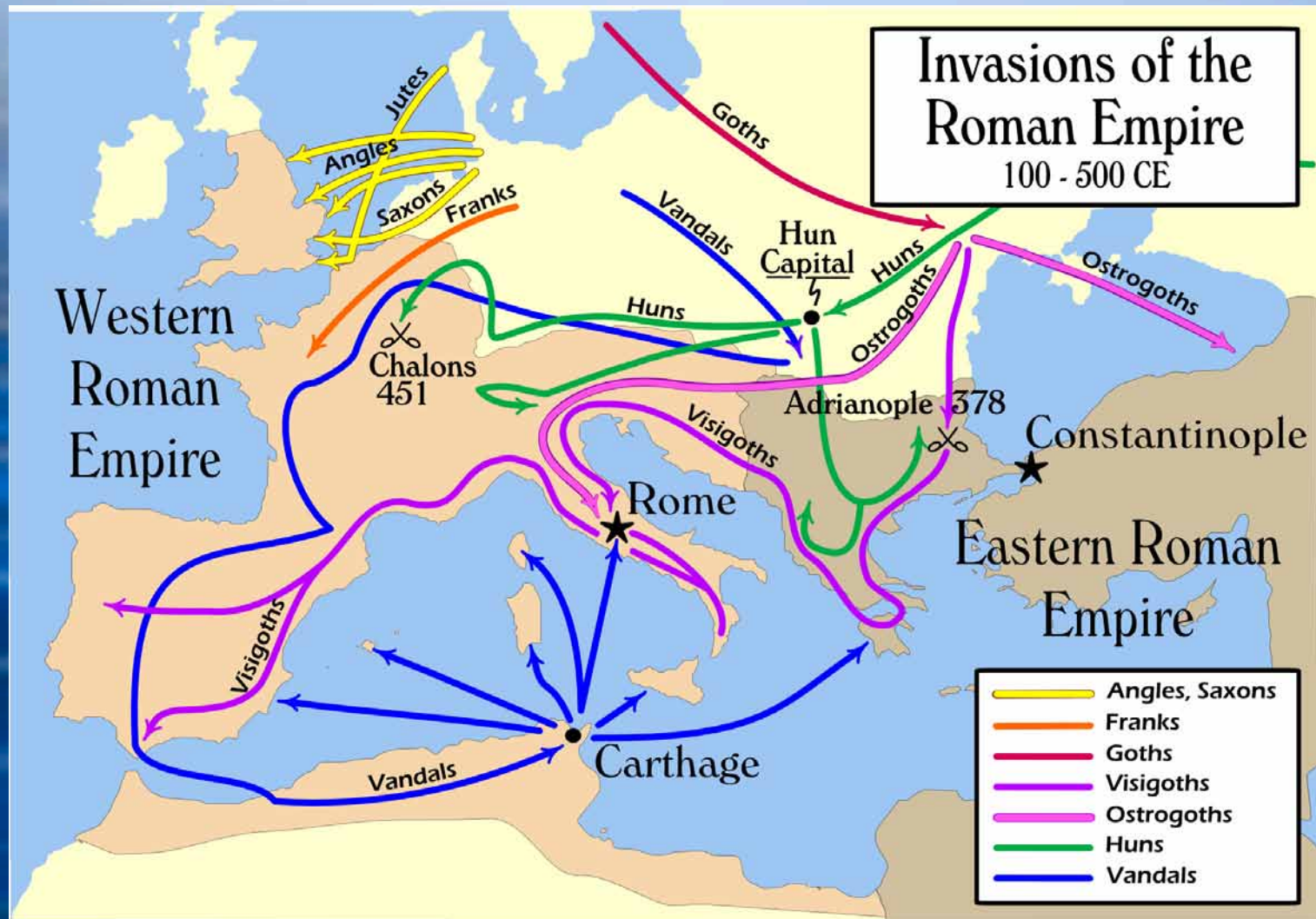
A word of warning

- ◆ Thor, Odin, Frig, Loki, Sagas, Vikings, Boats, Horned Helmets, etc
- ◆ THIS IS OLD NORSE
- ◆ THIS IS NOT OLD ENGLISH
- ◆ Poetic Edda (13th Century) Prose Edda (by Snorri Sturluson, c. 1220)

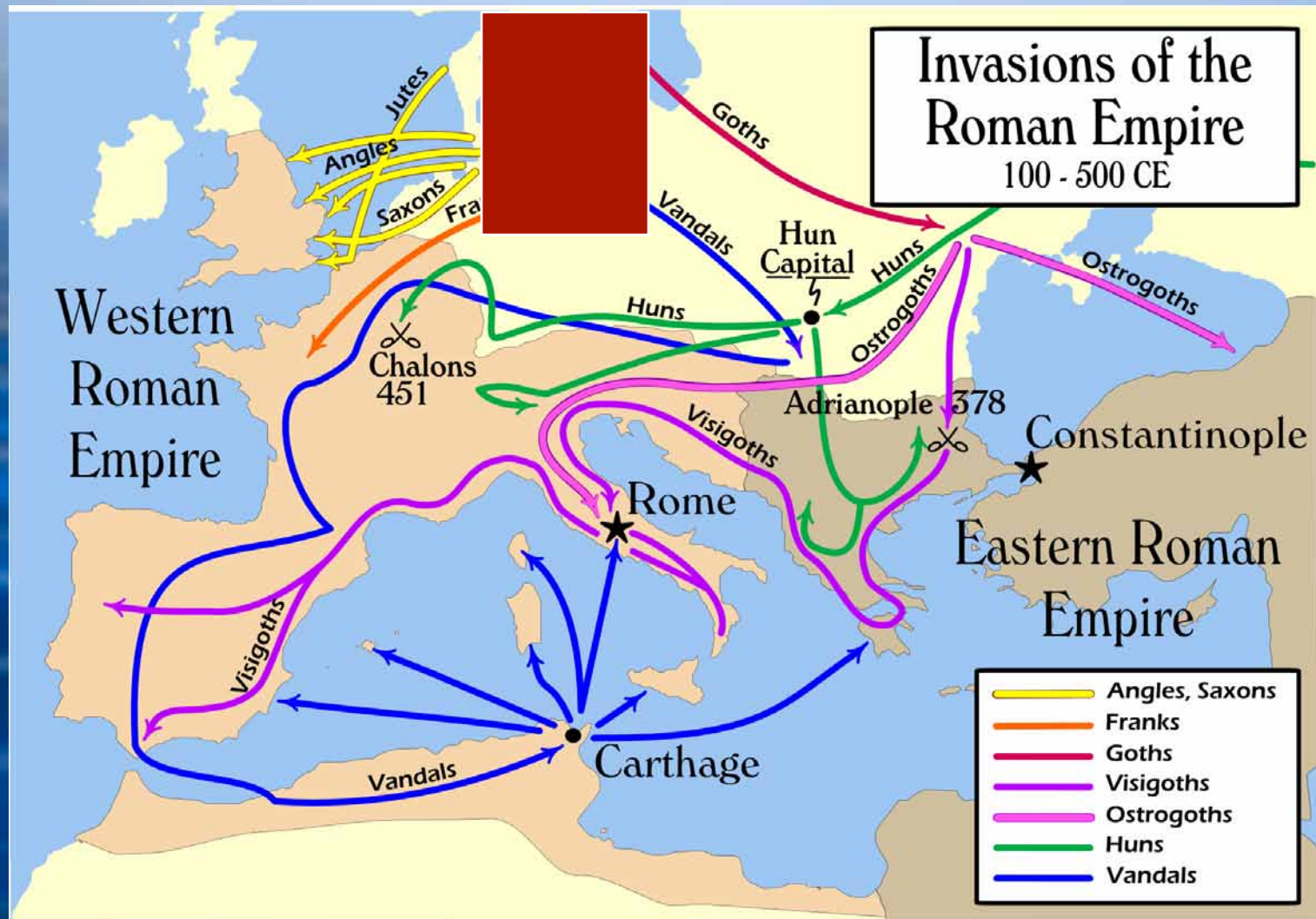
Who?

- ◆ Angles, Saxons, Jutes (plus Franks, Huns, etc.)
- ◆ Angles (North & Midlands), Saxons (South-West to Essex), Jutes (Kent and Isle of Wight)

The Age of Migrations



The Age of Migrations







Brittonic or Celts

Brittonic or Celts Romano-British



What else did they bring?

What else did they bring?

- ◆ Their society - kings, thanes, ceorls, slaves

What else did they bring?

- ◆ Their society - kings, thanes, ceorls, slaves
- ◆ Their religion/legends/stories - days of the week, cræft, wiccecræft, elves, dwarves, dragons, trolls, giants, orcs ...

What else did they bring?

- ◆ Their society - kings, thanes, ceorls, slaves
- ◆ Their religion/legends/stories - days of the week, cræft, wiccecræft, elves, dwarves, dragons, trolls, giants, orcs ...
- ◆ Their outlook on life - loyalty, feuds, exile, transience ...

What else did they bring?

- ◆ Their society - kings, thanes, ceorls, slaves
- ◆ Their religion/legends/stories - days of the week, cræft, wiccecræft, elves, dwarves, dragons, trolls, giants, orcs ...
- ◆ Their outlook on life - loyalty, feuds, exile, transience ...
- ◆ Their language

Key Questions

- ♦ hwæenne? i.e. what period of history are we really talking about?
- ♦ hwa? i.e. who were the Anglo-Saxons?
- ♦ hwær? i.e. where did they come from and where did they go?
- ♦ hwæt? i.e. what is 'Old English'?
- ♦ hwi? i.e. why is this all so important?

Aside: Why 'English'?

Aside: Why 'English'?

- ◆ Englisc (pron. English)

Aside: Why 'English'?

- ◆ Englisc (pron. English)
- ◆ Celts, etc. up to 8c used 'Saxon' > Sassenach/Seisnig

Aside: Why 'English'?

- ◆ Englisc (pron. English)
- ◆ Celts, etc. up to 8c used 'Saxon' > Sassenach/Seisnig
- ◆ Pope Gregory (540-604) the Great had Angeli or Angli and gens Anglorum

Aside: Why 'English'?

- ◆ Englisc (pron. English)
- ◆ Celts, etc. up to 8c used 'Saxon' > Sassenach/Seisnig
- ◆ Pope Gregory (540-604) the Great had Angeli or Angli and gens Anglorum
- ◆ Bede (673-735) used gens Anglorum (united through/by Christianity) but recognised Angles, Saxons, Jutes

Aside: Why 'English'?

- ◆ Englisc (pron. English)
- ◆ Celts, etc. up to 8c used 'Saxon' > Sassenach/Seisnig
- ◆ Pope Gregory (540-604) the Great had Angeli or Angli and gens Anglorum
- ◆ Bede (673-735) used gens Anglorum (united through/by Christianity) but recognised Angles, Saxons, Jutes
- ◆ Alfred the Great (late 9c) used Angelcynn (trnsl. gens Anglorum)

Aside: Why 'English'?

- ◆ Englisc (pron. English)
- ◆ Celts, etc. up to 8c used 'Saxon' > Sassenach/Seisnig
- ◆ Pope Gregory (540-604) the Great had Angeli or Angli and gens Anglorum
- ◆ Bede (673-735) used gens Anglorum (united through/by Christianity) but recognised Angles, Saxons, Jutes
- ◆ Alfred the Great (late 9c) used Angelcynn (trns. gens Anglorum)
- ◆ Through mutation becomes Engla(cynn) hence Engla lond by time of Cnut (1016)

Old English

- ◆ The language of the Anglo-Saxons
- ◆ Old English (up to the 12th century)
- ◆ Middle English (12th - 15th century)
- ◆ Early Modern English (mid-15th century to 18th century)
- ◆ Modern English (18th century onwards)
- ◆ So Old English is related to Modern English

1611

Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name...

1611

Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name...

1380

1611

Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name...

1380

Oure fadir þat art in heuenys. Halewid be þi name...

1611

Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name...

1380

Oure fadir þat art in heuenys. Halewid be þi name...

990

1611

Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name...

1380

Oure fadir þat art in heuenys. Halewid be þi name...

990

þu ure fæder. þe eart on heofonum. Sy ðin nama
gehalgod

1611

Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name...

1380

Oure fadir þat art in heuenys. Halewid be þi name...

990

þu ure fæder. þe eart on heofonum. Sy ðin nama
gehalgod

PRONOUNCE þ and ð as 'th'

Old English - A Foreign Language?

‘We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and the streets; we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender’

‘One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind’

R. Lacey and D. Danziger, *The Year 1000* (1999), p.30

M. Bragg *The Adventure of English* (Hodder, 2003)

The 100 most popular words in English are from Anglo-Saxon

England, Scotland, Ireland,
Wales, USA, Australia,
New Zealand...

English is the *lingua franca*
of the world

English is the language of the Internet and the
'world wide web'

Eala min God, ic cann ne hit
belyfan!

Ic wæs næfre þis feor aweg fram
ham

Ic wylle þine hand healdan,
Ic wylle þine hand healdan

Ond æfter eallum, þu eart min
wundorweal



The SAXON Characters or Letters,
that bee most strange, bee here
knowne by other common Characters
set over them.

d. e. th. th. f. g. h. r. f. t. w. y. and. that.
o. e. s. þ. f. 3. h. p. r. u. p. y. j. 7.

Æ. Æ. Th. Th. E. M. S. W. And.
ſc. ſc. Ð. þ. G. W. S. p. 7.

The *Saxon* useth our note of Full-point com-
monly for all other distinctions.

Anglo-Saxon Writing/Literacy
































Oral culture

- ◆ Ideas/facts/stories passed down from word to mouth as opposed to a literate culture
- ◆ Elevates - sounds, names, memory
- ◆ Knowledge does not accumulate as much as in literate culture
- ◆ Allows for people to change a text more readily for the present
- ◆ Authorship / Performance / Audience

Runes

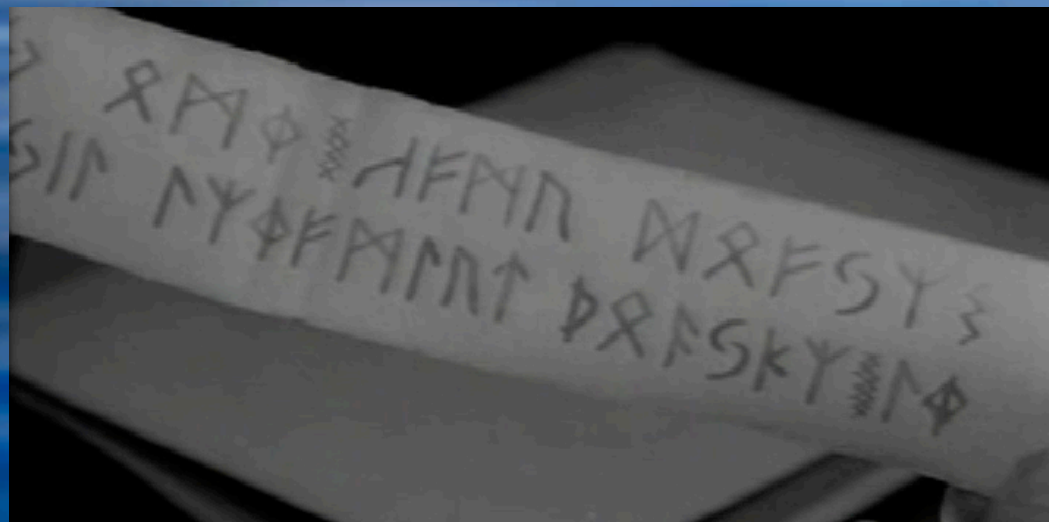
- First writing that appears are 'Runes'
- Runic alphabet is called 'Fu(th)orc' - first six letters
- ♦ OE run = 'secret', so runstafa = rune-stave
- ♦ Stones, coins, jewellery, weapons, poems (70 inscriptions) - magic (?) as in casting the runes



	f		w		s		d
	u/v		h		t		a
	th		n		b		ae
	o		i		e		y
	r		j		m		ea
	c		o		l		gh
	g		p		ng		k
			x/z		e		kh

* Note the Roman Characters

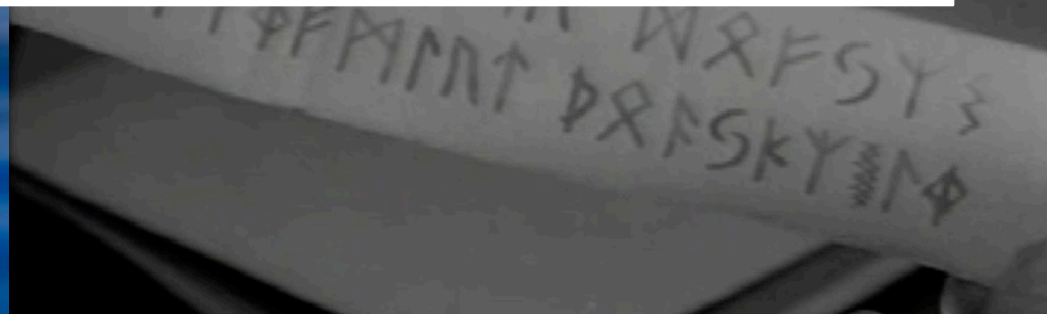
ƒ	f	ƿ	w	h·ƿ	s	ð	d
u/v	u/v	h	h	↑	t	æ	a
th	th	n	n	Ɔ	b	æ	ae
o	o	i	i	M	e	ƿ	y
r	r	j	j	ð	m	ƿ	ea
c	c	o	o	l	l	gh	gh
g	g	p	p	ng	ng	k	k
		x/z	x/z	e	e	kh	kh



ƿ	f	ƿ	w	h·ƿ	s	h	d
ʌ	u/v	h	h	↑	t	ƿ	a
þ	th	†	n	ƿ	b	ƿ	ae
ƿ	o	l	i	M	e	ʌ	y
ƿ	r	†	j	h	m	ƿ	ea
ʌ	c	ʌ	o	Γ	l	×	gh
×	g	ƿ	p	×	ng	ʌ	k
		ƿ	x/z	×	e	×	kh



EM??UFMU MEFSX?
UX?FMLUT THEAESKX?L?





FISC FLOD U



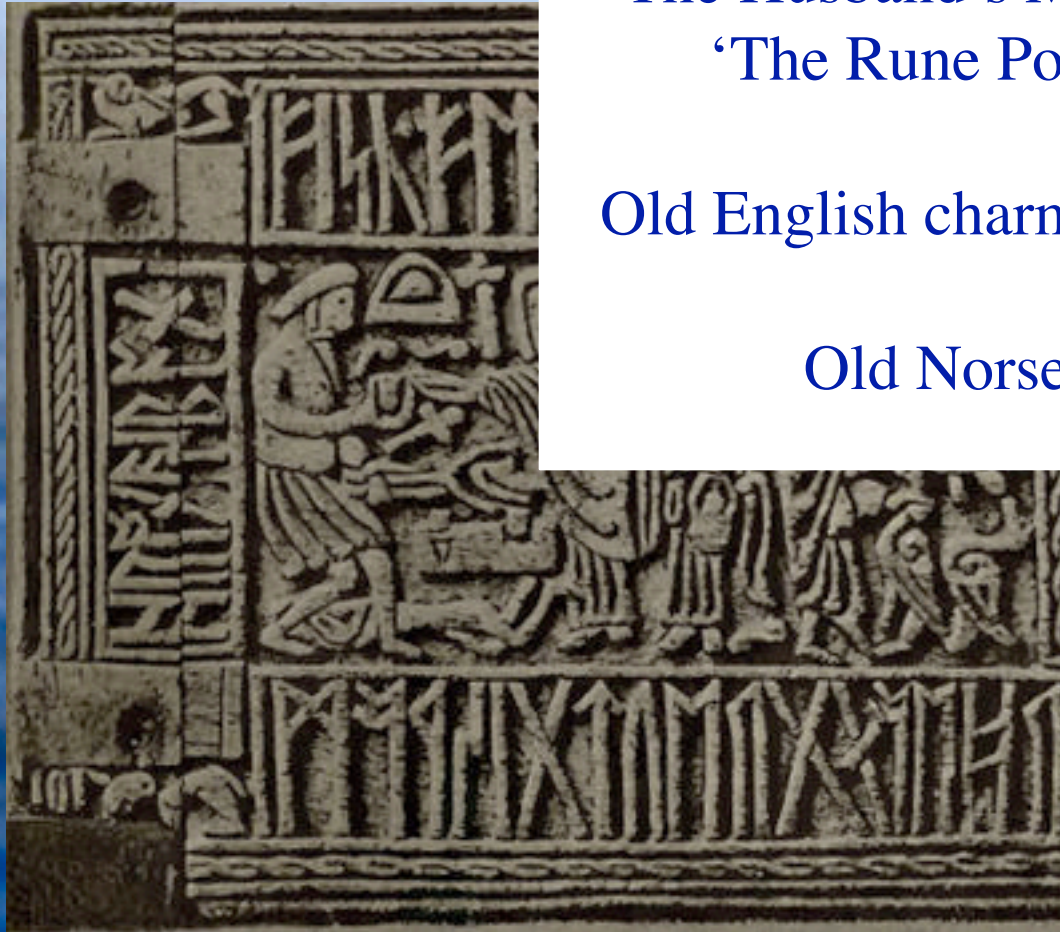
The Franks Casket, 8th century

F I S C F L

‘The Husband’s Message’
‘The Rune Poem’

Old English charms/spells

Old Norse



The Franks Casket, 8th century

F I S C F L

‘The Husband’s Message’

‘The Burg Room’



The Franks Casket, 8th century

- ◆ Runes are not sufficient
- ◆ With the resurgence of Christianity (597 AD) move to a literate culture
- ◆ The monks and priests needed to communicate with the rest of Europe and a means to do so

The Alphabet (Old English Style)

A a, Æ æ, B b, C c, D d, E e, F f, G g, H h, I i, K k, L l, M m, N n, O o, P p, R r, S s, T t, Þ þ, Ð ð, U u, W w, X x, Y y

* Q V Z appear in Latin, Roman numerals, and proper names

Problem Characters

- * æ called *asc*, pronounced ‘a’ as in ‘cat’
- * þ called *thorn*, pronounced ‘th’ (was originally a rune)
- * ð Ð called *eth* pronounced ‘th’
- * ‘w’ was written ƿ by the Anglo-Saxons but in modern editions appears as ‘w’ (because it’s too confusing)



Bodleian, MS
Junius 11, p. 46

arthurian. wra him metod bebbad. Adamth. thuan.
afonan pænon. theblicu tra thum bthun cthned.
cain. thabel. ur cydad bec. thu tha dæd thuman. duse

W = wyn (w) eth (th)

thorn (th) æ = ash (a)

Key Questions

- ◆ hwæenne? i.e. what period of history are we really talking about?
- ◆ hwa? i.e. who were the Anglo-Saxons?
- ◆ hwær? i.e. where did they come from and where did they go?
- ◆ hwæt? i.e. what is 'Old English'?
- ◆ hwi? i.e. why is this all so important?

Why is Old English so
important?

Why is Old English so important?

- ◆ Because it is....

Why is Old English so
important?

Why is Old English so important?

- ◆ Because it is....

Why is Old English so important?

- ◆ Because it is....
- ◆ Because it shows us where English comes from and how it relates to other languages - more next week

Why is Old English so
important?

Why is Old English so important?

- ◆ Because it is....

Why is Old English so important?

- ◆ Because it is....
- ◆ Because it shows us where English comes from and how it relates to other languages

Why is Old English so important?

- ◆ Because it is....
- ◆ Because it shows us where English comes from and how it relates to other languages
- ◆ Because of what it tells us about the history, society, and geography of England

Culturally we live in Medieval-land



Cultural Importance

Cultural Importance



Cultural Importance

- ◆ The Staffordhsire Hoard



Cultural Importance

- ◆ The Staffordhsire Hoard
- ◆ Hopkins, Pound, Auden, Heaney, Jones, Hill, etc.



Cultural Importance

- ◆ The Staffordhsire Hoard
- ◆ Hopkins, Pound, Auden, Heaney, Jones, Hill, etc.
- ◆ More in week 5



Cultural Importance

- ◆ The Staffordhsire Hoard
- ◆ Hopkins, Pound, Auden, Heaney, Jones, Hill, etc.
- ◆ More in week 5



Summary

Summary

- ◆ Old English is the language and literature of the Anglo-Saxons

Summary

- ◆ Old English is the language and literature of the Anglo-Saxons
- ◆ Anglo-Saxons ruled England from c.450AD to the Norman Conquest (1066)

Summary

- ◆ Old English is the language and literature of the Anglo-Saxons
- ◆ Anglo-Saxons ruled England from c.450AD to the Norman Conquest (1066)
- ◆ Old English is directly related to Modern English (many of our words come from Old English)

Summary

- ◆ Old English is the language and literature of the Anglo-Saxons
- ◆ Anglo-Saxons ruled England from c.450AD to the Norman Conquest (1066)
- ◆ Old English is directly related to Modern English (many of our words come from Old English)
- ◆ Old English was first oral (with runic inscriptions) then used alphabet (with some special characters) writing on manuscripts

Summary

- ◆ Old English is the language and literature of the Anglo-Saxons
- ◆ Anglo-Saxons ruled England from c.450AD to the Norman Conquest (1066)
- ◆ Old English is directly related to Modern English (many of our words come from Old English)
- ◆ Old English was first oral (with runic inscriptions) then used alphabet (with some special characters) writing on manuscripts
- ◆ Old English literature is culturally important

Conversational Old English: The Bar

- ◆ Twa beoras!
- ◆ Hwæt! þin gangpytt is brocen.
- ◆ Cymest þu hier oft?
- ◆ Hwæt is þin ferende-rim?
- ◆ Ut, nu!

Next week

Next week

- ◆ Translation workshop next wednesday 4.00!!!!

Next week

- ◆ Translation workshop next wednesday 4.00!!!!
- ◆ Look at the handouts, and ask any questions

Next week

- ◆ Translation workshop next wednesday 4.00!!!!
- ◆ Look at the handouts, and ask any questions
- ◆ Find a poem called 'The Ruin' in translation

Next week

- ◆ Translation workshop next wednesday 4.00!!!!
- ◆ Look at the handouts, and ask any questions
- ◆ Find a poem called 'The Ruin' in translation
- ◆ Why do we say 'hound', the Germans 'hund', but the French 'chien'?

Next week

- ◆ Translation workshop next wednesday 4.00!!!!
- ◆ Look at the handouts, and ask any questions
- ◆ Find a poem called 'The Ruin' in translation
- ◆ Why do we say 'hound', the Germans 'hund', but the French 'chien'?
- ◆ Why do we use apostrophes in a phrase like the girl's car?

Next week

- ◆ Translation workshop next wednesday 4.00!!!!
- ◆ Look at the handouts, and ask any questions
- ◆ Find a poem called 'The Ruin' in translation
- ◆ Why do we say 'hound', the Germans 'hund', but the French 'chien'?
- ◆ Why do we use apostrophes in a phrase like the girl's car?
- ◆ Why do people from the North say 'nowt' and 'owt'?