1 Medieval English, 500–1500

VALERIE ALLEN

What should we call this period of 'medieval literature' that straddles nearly a millennium and two languages? The 'Dark' and 'Middle Ages' (of which 'medieval' is simply the Latinate form), were terms applied retrospectively and pejoratively by writers in the seventeenth century to describe the period between classical and Renaissance learning; the 'medievals' generally perceived themselves as modern, sometimes even corruptly sophisticated in comparison to earlier, simpler days. 'Literature' is equally problematic, not existing as a word in English until the fourteenth century. For most of the period, that body of writing containing what we now call 'literature' encompassed without division texts that today we categorise as religious, historical, legal and medical.

Furthermore, how do we name a period that so lacks internal coherence? It moves from a Germanic tribal economy to late Old English feudalism, to the 'high' feudalism of the Normans, to the emergence of the state bureaucracy, centralisation of power, and urban economy that brought England to the eve of its precociously early capitalism. It starts at a moment when the essentially urbanised experience of guild-organised mystery plays is inconceivable, and ends at a time when Old English heroic poetry is largely unintelligible both culturally and linguistically. Taking this medieval period as a discrete historical epoch in its own right, we must ask what its literature distinctively meant. History and literature are divided in modern disciplinary parlance and then united in an artificial synthesis imposed on a body of medieval writing that recognised no such distinction in the first place. Literature is not some constant that progresses unchanged through the eras; its very meaning changes according to the epoch in which it occurs. We must ask what made its dominant genres – heroic poetry, romance, saint's life, mystery play – assume the form they did when they did. We must consider the possibility that literature as we understand it today simply does not map onto the medieval landscape of poetic and scribal production. To read medieval literature well is thus to read medieval literature historically.

Chronology

Key

AS   Anglo-Saxon, the collective term for the inhabitants of England after the immigration of the Germanic tribes from the fifth century. The name comes from the two most populous tribes, the Angles and the Saxons. Used more precisely, the term is distinguished from the native Britons, inhabiting the island prior to invasion, and from the Danes, who invaded from the eighth to eleventh centuries.

fl.   'Flourished'.

IF   Insular French, referring to the predominantly Norman-influenced dialect of French that developed in England after 1066. Also refers broadly to any French written in England.

L.   Latin, the language of learning and of the Church; in use continuously throughout the medieval period and across western Europe.

ME   Middle English, referring to the English language from the thirteenth to late fifteenth centuries. English from the twelfth and late eleventh centuries is transitional, and can be understood as either late OE or early ME.

OE   Old English, referring to the conglomeration of dialects used in England from the earliest written vernacular (roughly early seventh century) until the Norman invasion. Most OE writing is in the West-Saxon dialect.

OF   Old French, language of continental France, as distinct from its insular counterpart, Insular French.

Unless designated otherwise, all texts are in English (whether Old or Middle).

Note

There is often a lag between when a work was composed and the date of its earliest surviving manuscript. Anglo-Saxon poetry is particularly vulnerable to this kind of delayed date of record. *The Dream of the Rood*, for example, is known to have existed in some form by the late seventh century, but the manuscript in which it exists dates from some three hundred years later.

	HISTORY AND CULTURE	LITERATURE
449	Bede's date for arrival of Germanic mercenaries. King Arthur possibly a British resistance leader fighting the invaders	
Late C. 5th / early C. 6th		Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain* (L.), source for Bede
597	St Augustine brings Roman Christianity (and script) to Kent	
c. 602–3	Æthelbert, king of Kent, first Anglo-Saxon ruler to convert	Æthelbert establishes written law, first known OE writing (preserved only in later manuscripts)
616	Edwin (–633), king of Northumbria, converts to Christianity	
c. 625	Sutton Hoo ship burial	
c. 632	Penda (–655), pagan king of Mercia	
635	Cynegisl, first West-Saxon king baptised	
642	Oswald, king of Northumbria, killed by Penda	
643		Earliest original date for *Widsith* and *Deor* (in Exeter Book, c. 950), although a later date is more likely

	HISTORY AND CULTURE	LITERATURE
656	Mercia converts to Christianity	
657		(–680) 'Cædmon's Hymn', and possibly *Genesis A, Exodus* and *Daniel* (in Junius manuscript, c. 950)
664	Synod of Whitby establishes supremacy of Roman Christianity	
674	Monastery of Monkwearmouth founded. Bede educated there as child within the decade	
c. 678	English Christian missions to the Continent	Earliest original date for *Beowulf*, latest ninth century; also *Battle of Finnsburgh*
682	Monastery of Jarrow founded near Monkwearmouth	
687	Death of St Cuthbert	
688		Ine (–726), king of Wessex, establishes law code
c. 698		Lindisfarne Gospels (L.); *Dream of the Rood*
730	(–750) Ruthwell Cross	
731		Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (L.)
757	Offa (–96), king of Mercia	
c. 782		Poetic elegies, including: *Wanderer, Seafarer, Wife's Lament* and *Ruin* (all in Exeter Book, c. 950)
780s	Alcuin of York teaches and writes in Charlemagne's court	
793	First Danish invasions. Monastery at Lindisfarne sacked	
796		*fl*. Nennius, *History of the Britons* (L.); early reference to historical Arthur
c. 800	Four remaining kingdoms: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Wessex	'Cynewulf' poems (from runic signature): *Juliana, Christ II* (in Exeter Book, c. 950), *Fates of the Apostles, Elene* (in Vercelli Book, c. 950). OE riddles
c. 851		*Genesis B*
869	Danes kill Edmund, king of East Anglia	Edmund venerated as saint
871	Alfred the Great, king of Wessex, then of Anglo-Saxons	Possible date of *Andreas*
875	York becomes separate Scandinavian kingdom	
878	Defeat of Danish leader Guthrum at Edington (Wilts.). Treaty of Wedmore. Guthrum baptised	
c. 880	Kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons. Boundaries of Danelaw established: Dane and Englishman given equal legal value (or wergild)	Alfredian law-code and translations. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* begun
899	Edward the Elder, son of Alfred, king of Anglo-Saxons	
924	Æthelstan, son of Edward, king of Anglo-Saxons, then of English (927)	
937	Battle of Brunanburh: Æthelstan defeats Norsemen and Scots	*Battle of Brunanburh* recorded as poem in *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*
939	Edmund, first king to succeed to all England	
946	King Eadred, brother of Edmund	
c. 950		Exeter Book (–c. 1000), Vercelli Book (containing earliest homilies), Junius manuscript. *Beowulf* manuscript probably late tenth or early eleventh century
955	King Eadwig, son of Edmund	
959	Edgar, brother of Eadwig, king of England Dunstan (–988), Archbishop of Canterbury	Monastic Benedictine Revival
961	Oswald (–992), Bishop of Worcester, Archbishop of York from 971	Oswald major figure in Benedictine Revival

4   Medieval English, 500–1500

	HISTORY AND CULTURE	LITERATURE
963		Æthelwold (–984), Bishop of Winchester, teacher of Wulfstan and Ælfric, translates *Rule* of St Benedict (L.) into OE; writes *Regularis Concordia* (L.), standardising monastic, liturgical observance
c. 971		Blickling Homilies, anonymous
975	King Edward 'the Martyr', son of Edgar	His murder in 978 lamented by *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Byrhtferth of Ramsey and Wulfstan (1014); venerated as a saint
978	Æthelræd II, 'the Unready', half-brother of Edward the Martyr	
c. 980	Second wave of Viking invasion (–1066)	
985–7		Abbo of Fleury at Ramsey; commemorates death of Edmund (d. 869)
c. 991		*Apollonius of Tyre*, only OE romance, in manuscript with Wulfstan's homilies
990–2		Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies*
991	Battle of Maldon. Danegeld first paid	*Battle of Maldon* composed within twenty years
c. 996		Ælfric, *Lives of the Saints*
997		Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Life of St Oswald* (L.) (Archbishop of York, d. 992)
c. 998		Ælfric, Latin *Grammar* in OE, *Colloquy* (L.), and Old Testament translations and paraphrases
1011		Byrhtferth of Ramsey's *Enchiridion*, scientific treatise
1013–14	Swein Forkbeard, king of Denmark, deposes Æthelræd	
1014	Æthelræd reinstated	Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, '"Wolf's" Sermon to the English' *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*
1016	King Edmund Ironside, son of Æthelræd and Ælfgifu; defeated by (Danish) Cnut; murdered same year King Cnut; king of Denmark from 1018	
1035–7	Kingdom divided between Harold Harefoot and Harthacnut, sons of Cnut by different mothers	
1037	King Harold Harefoot	
1040	King Harthacnut	
1042	King Edward the Confessor, son of Æthelræd II and Emma of Normandy	
1066	Harold II	
1066	Battle of Hastings: William of Normandy defeats Harold	*Song of Roland* (OF) allegedly sung to the Normans before battle. Earliest record of poem dates from twelfth-century IF version
1066	William I	
1070–1	Hereward the Wake, rebellion in East Anglia	
1086	Domesday land survey completed. Oath of Salisbury: main landowners swear fealty to William	
1087	William II, son of William I	
1096–9	First Crusade. William II attends. Jerusalem stormed 1099	
1100	Henry I, son of William I	(–1125) *Gesta Herewardi*, L. translation of (lost) English account of outlaw Hereward the Wake
1125		William of Malmesbury, L. writings, including *History of the Kings of the English* and *Life of St Dunstan*
1128	First Cistercian abbey in England (order founded 1098 in reaction to Benedictine opulence)	
c. 1133		Henry of Huntingdon, *History of the English* (L.)

	HISTORY AND CULTURE	LITERATURE
1135	Stephen, Henry I's nephew, claims throne from Matilda, Henry's daughter Intermittent civil war	
c. 1137		Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain* (L.); first sustained account of King Arthur
c. 1140		Geoffrey Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis* (IF), includes account of Havelok the Dane
1147–9	Second Crusade	
1147		Ælred (–1167), Abbot of Rievaulx, later canonised. L. spiritual and historical works, including life of Edward the Confessor
c. 1150		Play *Mystère d'Adam* (IF) probably composed in England
1153	Treaty of Winchester (or Wallingford): Stephen retains throne, Matilda's son Henry heir	
1154	Henry II, grandson of Henry I	OE Peterborough Chronicle ends
1155	Pope allegedly grants Henry lordship of Ireland	Wace, *Roman de Brut* (IF), based on Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Roman de Rou* (c. 1160)
1159		*fl.* John of Salisbury; L. treatises on political theory (*Policraticus*) and logical arts (*Metalogicon*)
1164	Constitutions of Clarendon: Henry seeks control over Church	
1166	Assize of Clarendon: Henry lays foundation of trial by jury of English common law	
c. 1167	(–1170) Oxford halls of residence for English scholars founded; scholars previously had studied at University of Paris	*Cnut's Song, Poema morale, Proverbs of Alfred*, verses of St Godric, *Paternoster* poem (first use of extended rhyming couplets in English)
1169–71	Invasion of Ireland led by Richard of Clare ('Strongbow')	
1170	Thomas Becket murdered after years of conflict with Henry over jurisdiction of Church and state (canonised 1173)	Approximate date for *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* (IF) by the Nun of Barking
1174	Treaty of Falaise; William I of Scotland pays homage to Henry	
1176	Assize of Northampton further increases administration of centralised royal justice	
c. 1177		Richard FitzNigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario* (L.), on methods of government. Nigel Wireker, *Mirror of Fools* (L.), satire on manners and clerical vices
c. 1180		William Fitzstephen (L.). *Life of Thomas Becket* (includes account of London). Marie de France at English court; writes *Fables* and *Lais* (IF). Drama, *La Seinte Resureccion* (IF)
1180–6		John of Forde, *Life of St Wulfric of Haselbury* (L.) (d. 1154)
1181–92		Walter Map, *Trifles of Courtiers* (L.), satire of court life
1187	Jerusalem retaken by Saladin	
1189–92	Third Crusade	
1189	Richard I, son of Henry II; leads Crusade to Holy Land (1190)	Approximate date for *Owl and the Nightingale*
c. 1190		(–1225) Katherine Group (alliterative prose): *Seinte Marherete, Seinte Iuliene, Seinte Katerine, Sawles Warde* and *Hali Meiðhad* (MS. Bodley 34) Laȝamon's *Brut*, derived from Bede and Wace

6   Medieval English, 500–1500

	HISTORY AND CULTURE	LITERATURE
c. 1196–8		William of Newburgh, *History of English Matters* (L.)
1199	John I, brother of Richard	
c. 1200		Marian lyrics. Ælfric's *Grammar* transcribed Religious elegies: *The Grave* and *Soul's Address to the Body*. Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria Nova* (L.)
1202–4	Fourth Crusade	
1204–6	Philip Augustus of France retakes Normandy, Anjou and other territories	
c. 1205		*Ormulum*, metrical paraphrase of gospels; develops unique phonetic spelling system
1209	Cambridge halls of residence established	
1210		*Roman de Waldef* (IF), apparently based on an English source
1215	Pope Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council: requires annual confession for Christians, and distinctive garb for Jews; clarifies doctrine of transubstantiation; establishes marriage as sacrament; increases penalties against heretics John signs Magna Carta, grants concessions to barons, liberties to towns Civil war; Prince Louis of France besieges Rochester	
1216	Henry III, son of John, nine years old	
1217	Jews to wear yellow badges marking alien status	
c. 1220		*Ancrene Riwle* (or *Ancrene Wisse*)
1221	Dominican (Blackfriars) order established in England; founded 1216 to combat heresy	
1224	Franciscan friars (Greyfriars) in England	
c. 1225		'Wooing Group', prose prayers to Christ: *Wohung of Ure Lauerd, On Lofsong of ure Louerde, On Ureisun of ure Louerde*
1227	Order of St Clare founded – female mendicants Henry III achieves majority	
1228–9	Fifth Crusade	
1230–1		*Genesis and Exodus* (metrical paraphrase of Old Testament books). *Vices and Virtues* (prose dialogue)
1235		*fl.* Matthew Paris, monk of St Albans, illustrated *Chronicles* (L.)
1237	Treaty of York, Anglo-Scottish borders fixed	
c. 1240	*Curia Regis* (King's Grand Council of barons and prelates) as embryonic *Parlement*	Walter Bibbesworth, *Tretiz* (IF). *Roman de Gui de Warewic* (IF)
c. 1242		*fl.* Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (L.) (encyclopaedic treatise)
1248–54	Sixth Crusade	
c. 1250		First English (metrical) romances: *King Horn, Floris and Blauncheflur*. *Physiologus* (L.), allegorical interpretation of animal natures 'Sumer is icomen in', musical round for six voices

	HISTORY AND CULTURE	LITERATURE
1258	Provisions of Oxford, Simon de Montfort attempts regulation of King's finances	
1259	Treaty of Paris. Henry III acknowledges French claim to territories in France	
c. 1260		(–1300) Robert of Gloucester, metrical chronicle of England
1264	Feast of Corpus Christi instituted	
1265	Battle of Evesham, Simon de Montfort killed	
c. 1265		Duns Scotus (–1308), Scots philosopher of logic
1270	Seventh Crusade. Prince Edward attends	
1272	Edward I, son of Henry III	
1275	First formal meeting of Parliament	Approximate date for English fabliaux, *Dame Sirith, Fox and the Wolf*
c. 1280		*South English Legendary*, versified saints' lives and miracles
1282–3	Edward invades Wales, establishes himself as ruler, proclaims son Edward Prince of Wales (1301)	
c. 1285		Hereford *Mappa Mundi*
1290	Jews expelled from England Statute (*Quia Emptores*) bars granting of new feudal rights (sub-infeudation), except by the Crown, and makes land held in 'fee simple' (fully 'owned') freely transferable	
c. 1290s?		*Of Arthour and of Merlin* (in Auchinleck manuscript), non-alliterative romance *Harrowing of Hell*, semi-dramatic verse dialogue Metrical romances: *Havelok the Dane, Arthour and Merlin, Kyng Alisaunder, Sir Tristrem, Amis and Amiloun*
1297	Battle of Stirling Bridge, William Wallace defeats Edward; Wallace defeated at Falkirk (1298), executed 1305	
c. 1300		*Cursor Mundi*, biblical poem *Lay Folks' Catechism* *Land of Cockaigne* Richard Rolle (–1349), devotional writing (L. and vernacular)
1303		Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne* (verse translation of IF penitential treatise)
1307	Edward II, son of Edward I	
c. 1310?		*William of Palerne*, early romance of Alliterative Revival. *Lay le Freine*
1314	Battle of Bannockburn, Robert Bruce defeats English; ends English control in Scotland	
1315–17	Great famine	
1320s		*The Simonie*, protest poem on the evil times of Edward II's reign
1320	Declaration of Arbroath: letter to pope from Scottish barons, declaring right to self-rule	
1326–7	Edward II deposed and murdered	Approximate date of *Bevis of Hampton*

8   Medieval English, 500–1500

	HISTORY AND CULTURE	LITERATURE
1327	Edward III, son of Edward II	
c. 1330		Auchinleck manuscript (London): large miscellany of religious and didactic poetry, including the *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin* and *A Pennyworth of Wit*; romances, including: *Sir Orfeo, Kyng Alisaunder, Floris and Blaunchefleur, Sir Degaré, Of Arthour and of Merlin, Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* Harley lyrics, large collection of lyrics, religious, amatory, satiric, political
1333		*fl.* Laurence Minot, political (particularly anti-Scots) verse
1337	Hundred Years' War begins	
1338		Robert Mannyng, *Chronicle* (translation of Peter of Langtoft's IF *Chronicle*)
1340		Dan Michel of Northgate, *Ayenbite of Inwit* (*Remorse of Conscience*), Kentish prose translation of French confessional treatise
1340		(–1370) *fl.* Dafydd ap Gwilym, Welsh poet
1344		Richard of Bury, *Philobiblon*: L. treatise in praise of books
1346	Battle of Crécy	
1348	Order of the Garter established	
1348–50	Black Death, estimated population loss at one-third to one-half	
c. 1350	First paper-mill built in England	*Pride of Life*, morality play Romances: *Tale of Gamelyn, Athelston, William of Palerne, Stanzaic Morte Arthur, Sir Isumbras, Sir Eglamour of Artois, Octavian, Sir Amadace; Lybeaus Desconus; Joseph of Arimathie*
		Richard Ledred, L. account of witch trial of Alice Kyteler, Kilkenny, Ireland
1350–1400		Romances, including *Sege of Melayne, Emaré, Sir Gowther, Sir Firumbras, Sir Degrevant, Gest Historyale of the Destruction of Troy; Erle of Tolous*
1351	Statute of Labourers fixes wages	
c. 1352		*Winner and Waster*, alliterative poem
1356	Battle of Poitiers	
1360	Treaty of Brétigny, nine-year peace between England and France	*Pricke of Conscience*, long devotional poem in rhyming couplets
c. 1360		*The Book of John Mandeville* translated from IF
1361	Black Death Jean Froissart in England (–1367)	
1362	English declared official language of law courts	Approximate date, *Piers Plowman*, A-text
c. 1370		(–1387) Geoffrey Chaucer, early writings: dream visions, translations, *Troilus and Criseyde*
c. 1373		(–1393) Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (short and long versions)
c. 1374–9		John Gower, *Miroir de l'Omme* (IF)
c. 1375		*Northern Homily Cycle* being expanded from early fourteenth-century version

	HISTORY AND CULTURE	LITERATURE
1376	'Good' Parliament attempts reform of court corruption John Wyclif preaches disendowment of clergy Black Prince dies	John Barbour's (Scots) poem, *The Bruce*
1377	'Bad' Parliament, flat-rate poll tax Richard II, grandson of Edward III	Earliest record of York mystery plays Approximate date of *Piers Plowman*, B-text
1378	Great Schism (–1417), rival popes in Rome and Avignon	
1379	Income-differentiated poll tax	John Wyclif, *De Eucharistia* (L.) (on transubstantiation)
1380	Flat-rate poll tax	
c. 1380		*Cloud of Unknowing* Romances: *Apollonius of Tyre*; Thomas Chestre, *Sir Launfal; Athelston*
1381	Peasants' Revolt, now renamed Great Revolt University of Oxford condemns Wyclif's teachings	
1382		Complete translation of Bible into Middle English
1384		ME *Speculum Vitae* investigated for heresy
c. 1385		Thomas Usk (d. 1388), *Testament of Love* John Gower, *Vox Clamantis* (L.) Sir John Clanvowe, *Boke of Cupide*
c. 1386–90		John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* (ME)
1387		*fl.* John Trevisa, translates *Polychronicon* and *On the Properties of Things*
c. 1387		Geoffrey Chaucer (–1400), *Canterbury Tales*
1388	'Merciless' Parliament impeaches Richard's advisers	
c. 1390		*Piers Plowman*, C-text Alliterative *Parlement of the Thre Ages* and *St Erkenwald* Alliterative *Morte Arthure; The Awntyrs off Arthure*
1390s		*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Patience, Cleanness* Vernon manuscript, compilation of earlier vernacular religious works: *Ancrene Riwle, Speculum Vitae*, Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection, Piers Plowman* A-text, *Northern Homily Cycle, South English Legendary* *Siege of Jerusalem*
c. 1392		Earliest mention of Coventry plays
c. 1395		*Pierce the Ploughman's Crede*
1399	Richard deposed and murdered. Henry IV, cousin of Richard II	(–1406) *Richard the Redeless* and *Mum and the Soþsegger*
c. 1400		*fl.* John Mirk, *Festial* (sermons); verse treatise, *Instructions for Parish Priests*
Early 1400s		*A Tretis of Miraclis Pleyinge*, a Wycliffite tract criticising drama *Castle of Perseverance*
1400–9	Welsh rebellion led by Owain Glyndŵr	
1401	Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, establishes Lollard heresy inquisitions	
1402		Thomas Hoccleve (–1421): *Letter of Cupid, Regiment of Princes*, 'Lament for Chaucer'

10   Medieval English, 500–1500

	HISTORY AND CULTURE	LITERATURE
c. 1404–5		Christine de Pisan, OF works, including *Cite des Dames*
c. 1405–10		*Dives and Pauper*, long prose dialogue on Ten Commandments
1409–15		*The Lanterne of Light*, anticlerical, Lollard treatise
c. 1408		*fl.* John Lydgate (–c. 1438): *Troy Book, Life of Our Lady, Siege of Thebes, Fall of Princes, Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, Mumming plays*
c. 1410		Edward, Duke of York, *The Master of Game*, hunting treatise Nicholas Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*
1413	Henry V, son of Henry IV	
c. 1413		Margery Kempe (–c. 1439), religious experiences and writings
1414	Sir John Oldcastle, Lollard revolt; executed 1417	
1415	Battle of Agincourt	
1418		(–c. 1509) Paston letters
1420	Treaty of Troyes. Henry acknowledged Duke of Normandy and heir to French throne	
c. 1422		Earliest record of Chester plays
1422	Henry VI, son of Henry V (nine months old)	
c. 1424		James I of Scotland, *Kingis Quair*
1428–9	Joan of Arc lifts siege of Orléans; turning point of Hundred Years' War	
1431	English burn Joan of Arc as witch in Rouen	
1445		Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*
1449–51	English lose Normandy and Gascony	
1450	Jack Cade's rebellion	
c. 1450		*Weddynge of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell*, prose *Merlin*, prose *Siege of Thebes, Ipomedon, Squyr of Lowe Degree, Turnement of Totenham* *Jacob's Well*, sermon collection
1450–70		*The Prologue and Tale of Beryn*
1453	Fall of Constantinople to Turks; Eastern Roman empire ends Hundred Years' War ends; English retain only Calais	
1455	First book printed in Europe using movable lead type – the 42-line Bible, printed in Mainz, Germany, by Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1400–68)	
1455–85	Wars of the Roses	
c. 1456		William Dunbar (–c. 1513), Scots poet
c. 1460		John Skelton (–1529)
c. 1460–80		*Floure and the Leaf; Assembly of Ladies*
1461	Edward IV, House of York	
c. 1461		(–1500) Croxton, *Play of the Sacrament*
1461–82		*The Freiris of Berwik*, written in Scotland
c. 1463		Sir John Fortescue, *De Monarchia: The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*
1464		John Capgrave, *Chronicle of England*