

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

TEXTS AND CONTEXTS: A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART

In the chart below, dates generally refer to the year when a work was first made public, whether published in print or, in the case of dramatic works, made public through the first performance of a play. Where that date is known to differ substantially from the date of composition, the difference is generally noted. With medieval works, where there is no equivalent to the “publication” of later eras, where texts often vary greatly from one manuscript copy to another, and where knowledge of date of original composition is usually imprecise, the date that appears is an estimate of the date of the work’s origin in the written form included or referenced in the Broadview Anthology. Earlier oral or written versions are of course in some cases real possibilities.

Divisions in these chronological charts follow the divisions into six parts of the *Broadview Anthology*. For the convenience of those who may be focusing on only one period, but who may wish to look slightly beyond its boundaries as they are generally defined, there is in some cases an overlap between periods in these chronologies. The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century chart, for example, carries through to the end of the eighteenth century (thereby overlapping with the chart for The Age of Romanticism), and the chart for The Victorian Era begins several years before Victoria came to the throne.



TEXTS

c. 405 Vulgate Bible completed by St. Jerome; this Latin translation remains the standard through the medieval period

523 Boethius, *Consolatio Philosophiae*
(*Consolation of Philosophy*)

CONTEXTS

c. 407 Withdrawal of last Roman garrisons from Britain, ending the period of Roman control that had begun in 43 CE

432 St. Patrick launches mission to try to convert Ireland to Christianity

c. 450- c. 600 Germanic tribes (chiefly the Angles,

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		c. 600	Saxons, and Jutes) gradually wrest away from Britons control over most of what is now England
late 7 th cen.	<i>Caedmon's Hymn</i>		
		697	Augustine of Canterbury (d. 604) sent by Pope Gregory the Great to try to convert the English to Christianity
c. 698	Lindisfarne Gospels		
731	Bede, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i> (<i>Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i>)		
		793	Viking attacks on the monasteries of Iona and Lindisfarne; in the early ninth century, Viking raids on Britain become widespread
9 th cen.	Book of Kells		
		807	Monastery established at Kells by the abbot of Iona
		841-42	Dublin established
871-99	King Alfred commissions the preparation of various texts (probably including the <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i>)	871-99	Reign of Alfred as king of Wessex
c. 970	Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester, <i>Regularis Concordia</i> (codicification of religious liturgy that included a variant of the Quem Quaeritis trope with "stage directions")		
late 10 th cen.	Blickling Homilies		
c. 1000	Manuscripts of <i>Beowulf</i> and <i>Judith</i>		
1014	Wulfstan, <i>Sermo Lupi ad Anglos</i> (<i>Sermon of "Wolf" to the English</i>)		
		1066	Norman invasion: William I defeats King Harold at the Battle of Hastings, thus beginning the era of control of Britain by the French-speaking Normans
late 11 th cen.	Bayeux Tapestry	1070-1510	Building of Canterbury Cathedral
		1093-1123	Building of Durham Cathedral

- c. 1135 Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*)
- 1152 Prince Henry (later to become Henry II) marries Eleanor of Aquitaine, and thereby acquires extensive French territories for the English crown
- 1154 Final year of the *Peterborough Chronicle* (the longest continuing branch of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*)
- c.1155-70 Marie de France, *Lais*
- 12th cen. *Ordo Repraesentatonis* (*Service for Representing Adam*), a dramatic representation of Biblical stories
- c. 1170-91 Chretien de Troyes writes his Arthurian romances
- c. 1200 Layamon, *Brut*
- 1215 Fourth Lateran Council regularizes much of church practice and institutes the requirement that sins be confessed at least once a year
- Magna Charta guarantees some basic political and civil liberties. The document was foundational to the development of the British constitution
- c. 1220 Ancrene Riwe
- c. 1240 Matthew Paris, *Historia Major*
- 1249 Founding of University College, Oxford (the earliest of the colleges that would later form Oxford University)
- 1284 Founding of Peterhouse College, Cambridge (the earliest of the colleges that would later form Cambridge University)
- 1290 Expulsion of all Jews from England by decree of Edward I. (The ban remained in place until 1655, and even then it was not formally withdrawn; Oliver Cromwell made it clear, however, that it would no longer be enforced, and that Jews could be readmitted into England)
- c. 1304-21 Dante Aligheri writes his *Divine Comedy*

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c. 1325 *Sir Orfeo*

1337-1453 Series of wars between England and France (collectively known as the “Hundred Years’ War”)

1348 The “Black Death” reaches Britain; over the following two years, approximately one-third of the population dies

1351 Statute of Laborers attempts to control both wages and movement by laborers

c. 1360 *The Travels of John Mandeville*

1368 Geoffrey Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess*

late 14th cen. Julian of Norwich, *Revelations*

late 14th cen. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

1376 Earliest known records of Corpus Christi plays being performed at York

c. 1377-81 William Langland, *Piers Plowman*

1381 Widespread revolt against English authorities (the Uprising of 1381, also known as the “Peasants’ Revolt”)

In *On the Eucharist*, John Wycliffe denies that transubstantiation occurs during the sacrament of the Eucharist

c. 1382 First English translation of the complete Bible completed by John Wycliffe and his followers

c. 1385-87 Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*

c. 1387-89 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

c. 1390-92 John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*

1399 Duke of Hereford deposes Richard II and is crowned King Henry IV

- 1414 Lollard uprising led by Sir John Oldcastle
- 1436-38 Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*
- c. 1400-50 Plays from the Townley manuscript by the “Wakefield Master”
- c. 1450 Chester Cycle of Biblical pageants
- 1455-86 War between Yorkist and Lancastrian factions for the English crown (the “Wars of the Roses”)
- c. 1465-70 *Mankind*
- c. 1470 Landowners begin practice of enclosure, seizing fields long held by tenant farmers, converting the land to pasture for sheep and cattle, and evicting the tenant families from their homes
- 1476 William Caxton begins operating the first printing press in England
- 1483 *The Golden Legend*
- 1483 Formal establishment of the Spanish Inquisition
- 1484 William Caxton (trans.), *Aesop’s Fables*
- 1485 Thomas Malory, *Morte Darthur*
- 1485 Richard III dies at the Battle of Bosworth; Henry VII becomes king
- 1490 Aldine Press founded by Aldius Manutius in Venice
- 1492 Christopher Columbus reaches the West Indies
- 1496 Henry VII licenses Giovanni Caboto (who came to be called John Cabot) to engage in exploration at sea; Cabot’s plan was to reach Asia more quickly than was possible by other routes by sailing west across the North Atlantic. (He landed in Newfoundland on 27 June the following year)
- c. 1500 *A Gest of Robin Hood*
Everyman (English translation of the Dutch play *Elckerlijc*), first printing
- c. 1502 *Gesta Romanorum* (popular collection of 43 stories in Latin), first printing

