

WESTERN LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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Abstract. Medieval Literature is defined broadly as any work written in Latin or the vernacular between c. 476-1500, including philosophy, religious treatises, legal texts, as well as works of the imagination. Besides, the development of vernacular literature was another vital event in Western civilization during this period. The masterpieces like *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, *Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio, *Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer are considered primary examples of vernacular literature.

Key words: period, Western literature, poem, history, Medieval

Introduction. In this article you can introduce what is literature and poets, writers in the middle ages. Western literature originated during the Classical Age. Important periods in Western writing include the Medieval Period, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, the Victorian Era, Modernism, and Postmodernism. The Medieval Period brought Christian influences to the pagan traditions of the Graeco-Roman period[1]. The term Western civilization is a catchall to refer to the many cultures of European heritage that share common cultural ideas, philosophical foundations, and ancestral beliefs. Basically, the idea is that these cultures all have a common heritage, which has been important in the development of each.

As we know Homer was famous writer in this period. The epic poems attributed to Homer are usually considered the first extant work of literature, and they remain giants in the literary canon for their skillful and vivid depictions of war and peace, honor and disgrace, love and hatred and medicine. In addition, Herodotus was called the Father of History because he wrote the first narrative history in the Western World. Homer, the earliest Western author whose work survives, shows this very clearly. His epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, are literary tales steeped in historical realities, revealing much about life and times in early Greece[2]. His work, *The Histories*, is a history of the Greco-Persian Wars. Elmer Kelton: Named by the Western Writers of America as the 'Greatest Western Writer of All Time', Kelton's works are respected for their realistic depiction of ranch life. Three important characteristics of Western literature include: it is written in Indo-European languages; its origins lie in the Graeco-Roman tradition and it was later shaped by the spread of Christianity; it reflects the values and beliefs of the Western, or European, world as opposed to those of the Middle East.

All of the chief kinds of literature—epic, tragedy, comedy, lyric, satire, history, biography, and prose narrative—were established by the Greeks and Romans, and later developments have for the most part been secondary extensions.

Theological works were the dominant form of literature typically found in libraries during the Middle Ages. Catholic clerics were the intellectual center of society in the Middle Ages, and it is their literature that was produced in the greatest quantity.

In *The Western Canon* Bloom lists "the major Western writers" as Dante Alighieri, Geoffrey Chaucer, Miguel de Cervantes, Michel de Montaigne, William Shakespeare, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens, Leo Tolstoy, James Joyce and Marcel Proust. Western literature originated during the Classical Age. Important periods in Western writing include the Medieval Period, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, the Victorian Era, Modernism, and Postmodernism[3]. The Medieval Period brought Christian influences to the pagan traditions of the Graeco-Roman period. New types of literature were introduced during this time, such as ballads, allegories, and plays that focused on Christian values. Ironically, one of the major surviving works of this period comes from a pagan, or non-Christian culture. The anonymous epic *Beowulf* was the first great work of English literature, and its depiction of epic heroes is still influential today.

One of the greatest writers of this period was also English. Geoffrey Chaucer's unfinished work *The Canterbury Tales*, is a collection of stories written within the framework of a group of pilgrims traveling together. Its true-to-life character descriptions of ordinary people were both revolutionary for the time and a blueprint for later writers[4]. In addition, the Catholic Church played a significant role in education during this period. Most schools were "ecclesiastical," meaning they were related to the Catholic Church. Monastic and cathedral schools were established by the Church to train future clergy and monks. At that time people learned literature from clergymen. Because most Middle Ages schools were organized by the Church, most teachers in these schools were clergymen sent specifically to teach in a school. The result is regarded as a masterpiece of medieval literature, and *The Canterbury Tales* holds a central place in the English literary canon. What is distinctive about *The Canterbury Tales*? *The Canterbury Tales* is a collection of stories held together by a framing device (the story of the pilgrimage). Geoffrey Chaucer was one of the best English poets of all time, considered a father of English language and literature. Before the likes of Shakespeare, Chaucer dominated the literary scene, most famous for his work 'The Canterbury Tales'[5].

There are three main categories of Middle English literature, religious, courtly love, and Arthurian, though much of Geoffrey Chaucer's work stands outside these. Among the many religious works are those in the Katherine Group and the writings of Julian of Norwich and Richard Rolle[6]. Much of the early literature of this period

consists of sermons, prayers, lives of saints, and homilies. In secular medieval literature, the figure of King Arthur, an ancient British hero, attracted the attention and imagination of these early writers. Religious. Theological works were the dominant form of literature typically found in libraries during the Middle Ages. Catholic clerics were the intellectual center of society in the Middle Ages, and it is their literature that was produced in the greatest quantity. The majority of medieval literature was made up of theological writings and devotional literature intended to extend the religious horizon of the reading public and deepen their knowledge of doctrine. There were also specialist texts as well as poetry and romances[7].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I say that about my article, you can find what is literature and poets, writers in the middle ages. Above I said that Homer was famous writer in that period. I try to give more information about the Western literature, also known as European literature, is the literature written in the context of Western culture in the language of Europe, and is shaped by the periods in which they were conceived with each period containing prominent Western authors, poets, and pieces of literature. The Song of Roland exalts a great warrior according to the Germanic traditions of military heroism, but also affirms the necessity of subordinating individual accomplishments to the needs of a unified Christian community. The author of Beowulf believed in Christianity but demonstrated an admiration for the pagan past.

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