

The Medieval period starts with the fall of the Roman Empire and the emergence of Christianity as a dominant force in Europe. Heroic tales contrasted with apocalyptic fears to create an era of religious fervor.

“Caedmon’s Hymn,” 7th century (oldest surviving poem in Old English)

The Gododdin, Aneirin, 7th century (Old Welsh)

Beowulf, late 9th century (Old English)

“The Dream of the Rood,” 10th century (Old English)

The Tain, edited early 12th century (Old Irish)

The History of the Kings of Britain, Geoffrey of Monmouth (about 1138) (Latin)

Lanval, Marie de France, second half of the 12th century (Anglo-Norman)

“The Cuckoo Song,” 13th century (Middle English)

Sir Orfeo, c. 1330 (Middle English)

Pearl, 14th century (Middle English)

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, 14th century (Middle English)

“Tale of a Wayside Inn,” Dafydd ap Gwilym 14th century (Middle Welsh)

Cornish Ordinalia, mid 14th century (Middle Cornish)

The Canterbury Tales, Geoffrey Chaucer (Middle English)

Piers Plowman, William Langland 14th century (Middle English)

A Book of Showings, Julian of Norwich late 14th/early 15th century (Middle English)

The Second Play of the Shepherds, 15th century (Middle English)

The Book of Margery Kempe

Sir Orfeo