



A Companion to Old and Middle English Literature

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Old and Middle English literature can be obscure and challenging. So, too, can the vast body of criticism it has elicited. Yet the masters of medieval literature often drew on similar texts, since imitation was admired. For this reason, recent scholarship has often focused on the importance of genre. The genre in which a work was written can illuminate the author's intentions and the text's meaning. Read in light of a genre's parameters, a given work can be considered in relation to other works within the same category. This reference is a comprehensive overview of Old and Middle English literature.

Chapters focus on particular genres, such as Allegorical Verse, Balladry, Beast Fable, Chronicle, Debate Poetry, Epic and Heroic, Lyric, Middle English Parody/Burlesque, Religious and Allegorical Verse, and Romance. Expert contributors define the primary characteristics of each genre and discuss relevant literary works. Chapters provide extensive reviews of scholarship and close with detailed bibliographies. A more thorough bibliography of major scholarly studies closes the book.

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