Contents

Permissions Acknowledgments vii

Preface to the Eighth Edition xv
Acknowledgments xxv

The Middle Ages (to ca. 1485) 1
Introduction 1
Anglo-Saxon Literature 3
Anglo-Norman Literature 7
Middle English Literature in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries 10
Medieval English 15
Old and Middle English Prosody 19
Timeline 22

Anglo-Saxon Literature 24

Bede (ca. 673–735) and Cædmon's Hymn 24
An Ecclesiastical History of the English People 25
[The Story of Cædmon] 25

The Dream of the Rood 27

Beowulf translated by Seamus Heaney 29

Judith 100

King Alfred (849–899) 107
Preface to the Pastoral Care 109

The Wanderer 110

The Wife's Lament 113

Anglo-Norman Literature 115

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 115
[Obituary for William the Conqueror] 115
# Contents

**Legendary Histories of Britain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey of Monmouth: <em>The History of the Kings of Britain</em></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[The Story of Brutus and Diana’s Prophecy]</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wace: <em>Le Roman de Brut</em></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[The Roman Challenge]</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layamon: <em>Brut</em></td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Arthur’s Dream]</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Myth of Arthur’s Return</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey of Monmouth: <em>From</em> The History of the Kings of Britain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wace: <em>From</em> Le Roman de Brut</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layamon: <em>From</em> Brut</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Celtic Contexts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exile of the Sons of Uisliu</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas of England: <em>Le Roman de Tristran</em></td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[The Deaths of Tristran and Ysolt]</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie de France</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanval</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevrefoil</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ancrene Riwle (Rule for Anchoresses)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[The Parable of the Christ-Knight]</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Middle English Literature in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sir Gawain and The Green Knight (ca. 1375–1400)</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1343–1400)</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Canterbury Tales</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The General Prologue</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary: The Knight’s Tale</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Miller’s Prologue and Tale</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prologue</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tale</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Man of Law’s Epilogue</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prologue</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Introduction</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Tale 288
    The Epilogue 297
The Nun’s Priest’s Tale 298
    [Close of *Canterbury Tales]* 312
The Parson’s Tale 313
    The Introduction 313
Chaucer’s Retraction 315

**LYRICS AND OCCASIONAL VERSE** 316
Troilus’s Song 316
    Truth 317
To His Scribe Adam 318
    Complaint to His Purse 318

**JOHN GOWER (ca. 1330–1408)** 319
    The Lover’s Confession 320
    The Tale of Philomena and Tereus 320

**WILLIAM LANGLAND (ca. 1330–1387)** 331
    The Vision of Piers Plowman 333
    The Prologue 333
        [The Field of Folk] 333
    Passus 1 336
        [The Treasure of Truth] 336
    Passus 5 340
        [Piers Plowman Shows the Way to Saint Truth] 340
    Passus 6 343
        [The Plowing of Piers’s Half-Acre] 343
    Passus 7 350
        [Piers Tears Truth’s Pardon] 350
    The C-Text 352
        [The Dreamer Meets Conscience and Reason] 352

**CHRIST’S HUMANITY** 355

**WILLIAM LANGLAND**

    The Vision of Piers Plowman 357
    Passus 18 357
        [The Crucifixion and Harrowing of Hell] 357

**MIDDLE ENGLISH INCARNATION AND CRUCIFIXION LYRICS** 367
    What is he, this lordling, that cometh from the fight 368
    Ye That Pasen by the Weye 369
    Sunset on Calvary 369
    I sing of a Maiden 369
    The Corpus Christi Carol 370

**JULIAN OF NORWICH (1342–ca. 1416)** 370
    A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich 372
    Chapter 3 [Julian’s Bodily Sickness and the Wounds of Christ] 372
    Chapter 4 [Christ’s Passion and Incarnation] 373
    Chapter 5 [All Creation as a Hazelnut] 374
Chapter 7 [Christ as Homely and Courteous] 375
Chapter 27 [Sin Is Fitting] 376
Chapters 58, 59, 60, 61 [Jesus as Mother] 377
Chapter 86 [Christ’s Meaning] 381

MARGERY KEMPE (ca. 1373–1438) 382
The Book of Margery Kempe 383
Book 1.1 [The Birth of Her First Child and Her First Vision] 383
Book 1.11 [Margery and Her Husband Reach a Settlement] 385
Book 1.20 [Margery Sees the Host Flutter at Mass] 386
Book 1.28 [Pilgrimage to Jerusalem] 387
Book 1.35–36 [Margery’s Marriage to and Intimacy with Christ] 389
Book 1.60 [Margery’s Reaction to a Pietà] 392
Book 1.76 [Margery Nurses Her Husband in His Old Age] 393
Book 1.79 [Margery’s Vision of the Passion Sequence] 395

THE YORK PLAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION (ca. 1425) 397

MYSTERY PLAYS
The Wakefield Second Shepherds’ Play 407

MIDDLE ENGLISH LYRICS 434
The Cuckoo Song 435
Alison 436
My Lief Is Faren in Londe 437
Western Wind 437
I Am of Ireland 437
Adam Lay Bound 437

SIR THOMAS MALORY (ca. 1405–1471) 438
Morte Darthur 439
[The Conspiracy against Lancelot and Guinevere] 439
[War Breaks Out between Arthur and Lancelot] 444
[The Death of Arthur] 448
[The Deaths of Lancelot and Guinevere] 453

ROBERT HENRYSON (ca. 1425–ca. 1500) 456
The Cock and the Fox 457

EVERYMAN (after 1485) 463

POEMS IN PROCESS A1
John Milton A3
From Lycidas A3
Alexander Pope A5
From The Rape of the Lock A5
From An Essay on Man A6
Samuel Johnson A7
From The Vanity of Human Wishes A8
Thomas Gray A9
From Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard A9
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHIES    A13
  Suggested General Readings   A13
  The Middle Ages            A16

APPENDIXES
  Literary Terminology       A23
  Geographic Nomenclature    A45
  British Money              A47
  The British Baronage       A52
    The Royal Lines of England and Great Britain A54
  Religions in England       A57
    *Illustration: The Universe According to Ptolemy* A61

Index                                  A63