

Old english era

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The history of England began with the arrival of humans thousands of years ago. What is now England , within the United Kingdom , was inhabited by Neanderthals 230, 000 years ago. Also known as the Anglo-Saxon Period , the time frame this period falls in is debatable , however broadly speaking it is between the mid-fifth century and mid-twelfth century.

The Anglo-Saxon period is the oldest known period of time that had a complex culture with stable government , art, and a fairly large amount of literature. Many people believe that the culture then was extremely unsophisticated, but it was actually extremely advanced for the time. The Anglo-Saxon period is a time filled with great advancement and discoveries in culture, society, government, religion, literature, and art.

The Angles were a Germanic tribe that occupied the region. With their fellow ethnic groups, they formed the people who came to be known as the English. The Saxons were a Germanic people who first appeared in the beginning of the Christian era. They attacked and raided areas in the North Sea throughout the third and fourth centuries. By the end of the sixth century, the Saxons had taken all of the roman territory. The Angles joined the Saxons in the invasion of Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Literature Old English (Anglo-Saxon) was the earliest form of English to be written. These date from roughly between 700 and 1100 CE. Much poetry composed in Old English survives, about 30, 000 lines in total. It was mostly collected and preserved in four manuscripts, handwritten books. So our perceptions of the poetry are mostly determined by the purposes, interests and taste of the compilers of these manuscripts. The metrical is the rhythmic phrase(half-line), usually of two stresses linked into pairs by alliteration.

End-rhyme is hardly ever used. Although it is theoretically very different from most later poetry, it feels in most respects natural and immediate to a modern ear when spoken aloud. Some poems recount or refer to inherited heroic legend. Much else is religious. Old English poetry certainly grew out of an inherited tradition, all the ancient Germanic languages in which poetry is recorded use more or less the same meter and the same diction and similar subject matter.

This poetic tradition must have been brought by the English invaders in the fifth and sixth centuries CE. The poems themselves report oral performance of oral poetry, “sung” to the harp at celebratory feasting and drinking, and never read aloud from books. The two poems that stand out beyond all others, and that compare well with anything in European literature of any period, are “The dream of the Rood” and “The seafarer”.