

The old english literature history essay



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Today English is the most important language and it is the most spoken language

than any other. Nowadays it is a universal language of trade, communication etc. and it is the only language where people more knowledge about that have excluding their mother tongue, and where people of the whole world would understand even if you own not much knowledge about English language. But today it is more important to use it, than to know the origins. And that is a good reason to investigate about how the English language has originated.

Old English then were called as Anglo-Saxon it was spoken between the mid 5th until to the mid 12th century.

Old English didn't sound and the writings didn't look like English now. Even native speakers would have great difficult to understand the old English language but much words of English today have old English roots.

Old English origins are based mainly on Germanic tribes, but also from influences like

from:

Latin influence, Norse (Scandinavian) influence and the Celtic influence.

Old English also has a great origination history. So I mention below the periods

to become more knowledge how the English language has originated.

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The Old English periods between 600 (BC) till 1066 (AD):

The Old England (Britain) history:

The first inhabitants of Britain were the Celts who came from Central Europe about 600 (BC). After the Celts the Romans occupied Britain. The Romans occupied Britain in the beginning of the first century 43 (AD) till the beginning of the fifth century. In (450 - 1066) The Anglo-Saxons conquest England it is said that three Germanic tribes occupied Great Britain at first the Angles located in a district today called as Schleswig-Holstein in Germany on second the Saxons called as Niedersachsen (also Germany) and at last the Jutes from Jutland (Denmark). Old English was divided into four main dialects : West Saxon, Mercian, Northumbrian and Kentish. In the sixth century the most important kingdom was Kent where Aethelbert was the first English King who was converted to Christianity. In the seventh century was it Northumberia. In the eighth century was it Mercia and at last in the ninth century was it the Wessex Kingdom.

During the years 790 - 1066 we have the Danish invasions of Vikings in Britain. They were Germanic tribes and they came from Denmark, Norway and Sweden and they were pagans (Pagan means: A person who believes in many gods) so not like a Christian. And here plays Alfred the great (871 - 899) a big role he was king of the Anglo - Saxons. He is the first king to whom a higher name (status (King Alfred the great)) has been given. King Alfred fought them in great battles but he couldn't defeat them so really, so he had to let them be a part of the country.

It is said the reason why the Vikings attacked England and monasteries in England is because the monasteries had treasures such as gold treasures, jewel treasure etc. and they looked for better land for their farms and thus England was a fortune country for them.

The Old English literature:

There are about 400 manuscripts that have survived, 189 of them are major

But there are four of the most important manuscripts that have been discovered these

four are:

-The Junius manuscript, also known as the Caedmon manuscript it contains works such as: Genesis, Exodus, Daniel, and Christ and Satan. Franciscus Junius in the year of 1655 published for the first time the contents in this manuscript.

- The Exeter Book, located in the Exeter Cathedral in England since it was donated there in the 11th century, it was donated by Leofric the first bishop of Exeter (Exeter is a church in England in the province of Canterbury).

- The Vercelli Book, a mix of poetry and prose it is located in Vercelli in Italy, it has 135 pages, contains 23 prose homilies, 6 poetic texts one of these poems is " The Dream of the Rood" written by Cynewulf. The German Friedrich Bloom has found the manuscripts: " The Fates of the Apostle" and " Elene" while he was searching legally for old manuscripts. It is thought that

the Vercelli Book in the 10th century is new written, because who the manuscript were found some pages weren't in the originally form.

- The Nowell Codex, this manuscript is famous because it contains the most interesting manuscript Beowulf. This manuscript is located in London in the British Library also it contains fragments like (The Life of Saint Christopher) and also it contains complete texts like (Letters of Alexander to Aristotle, Wonders of the East and Judith). But we mention once again Beowulf, Beowulf on it time was the most important work of the Anglo-Saxons. It is a heroic epic poem which is noted with 3182 lines for its length.

The Old English poetry:

Old English poetry is of two types: the one is the heroic Germanic pre-Christian and the second is the Christian. These types of poetry have survived in the most parts of these four manuscripts that are mention above (Junius, Exeter, Vercelli and Nowell manuscript).

Main representatives (Poets) of the old English period:

Just twelve poets are known by name today and four of this twelve are known

for they vernacular works these four are (Caedmon, Bede, Alfred and Cynewulf), but only Caedmon, Bede and Alfred have known biographies of themselves.

Caedmon is considered as the best poet in Old English poetry he lived in Northumberia in the 7th century he created a poem called Hymn which is the oldest surviving text in English.

Comparison with Middle English:

After that William (the Normans) conquest England in 1066 the Middle English

period started. English language in the middle age was more used in the Chancery standard which was developed by King Henry the fifth thus more than Anglo-Norman or Latin. It had become broadly standardized by the 1430s. In that time the dialects were more based on London and East midland dialects. In the Middle English period spelling has not yet been formalized in a systematic way, and many Latinate terms such as `substance' (Latin substantia) and `temptation' (Latin temptation) have entered English through intermediary French influences under the Norman conquerors in 1066. Up then slowly and slowly Middle English comes up to modern English.

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Prepared by : Ardian Meholli

The Elizabethan Age

Elizabethan age was a very long period, and It is imposible to give detail description, but I have tryed to describe something from this period.

The Elizabethan ear was period when Queen Elizabeth I of England lived.

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Queen Elizabeth I came in the throne in 1558 and ruled until 1603. She was one of the most remarkable political figure and very successful queen.

She never married but the most important thing for her was her country. The time when Elizabeth I managed England for many people was called the "golden age" in English history, because it was the age of exploration and expansion abroad. During that time was the flowering of English poetry, music and drama. It was the age when torture was rare and the role of women in the society was important.

With Elizabeth I England definitely turned back to Protestantism and during her reign of forty-five years England became Protestant country without a civil war.

In Elizabeth literature dominated patriotic enthusiasm, but besides patriotic enthusiasm at the time writers wrote about theme of love, youthful etc.

Three factors that influenced them to write was:

1." First factor was rediscovery of the classics of Greece and Rome, beautiful old poem.

The second factor was interest in nature and the physical sciences.

The third factor which stimulated the Elizabethan mind was discovery of the world beyond the Atlantic" 1.

Main representatives

The most remarkable poet in Elizabethan age was William Shakespeare.

He wrote approximately 38 plays and 154 sonnets. At the time no one guessed that he was going to be such important figure in English poetry and drama, and that his plays would still be acted out for hundred years later, not only in England but all over the world. Other important figure that time was: Edmund Spenser, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson etc.

Comparison

The Victorian age is younger period than Elizabethan age in English history.

Although in Victorian age had happened many things nevertheless Elizabethan age was period of changes.

In Victorian age people wanted to invention something knew in English history because they went to school and they knew how to read and write. That was the best thing because they could read what writers wrote at the time.

Writers in Victorian age had great audience and writers were by the audience to continue their writting.

In the Elizabethan age that was different because many people didn't know how to read and write, and for writers was difficult to be famous.

In the Victorian age Great Britain had many colony and although this period was considered a period of peace at the time had happened many wars.