

Contents

<i>List of Text-boxes</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Note on Quotation from Middle English Texts</i>	xi
Introduction	1
(a) A Guide to Literature in a Period of Change	1
(b) Manuscripts and Readers	4
(i) The development of manuscripts in the period	4
(ii) Medieval habits of writing and reading	6
(iii) Modern readers	8
Sources and Further Reading	9
1 The Poor Commons: Literature and Social Change	13
(a) The Black Death, Decline of Serfdom and the Great Rising of 1381	15
Example Text: Ploughing Scenes in <i>Piers Plowman</i>	18
(b) The Drama	26
(i) Religious Drama: Mystery Play Cycles	27
Example Text: The Wakefield (Towneley) <i>Cain and Abel</i>	29
(ii) Religious Drama: Saints' Plays and Morality Plays	32
Example Text: <i>Mankind</i>	34
(iii) Secular Drama and the folk tradition	35
Texts, Sources and Further Reading	38
2 The Poor Commons: Education and Dissent	44
(a) Homiletic and Confessional Literature	45
(b) Sermons	47
Example Text: The Sermon <i>Of Servants and Lords</i>	49
(c) The Lollards and their Literature	51
Example Texts: <i>Piers the Plowman's Crede</i> and <i>The Ploughman's Tale</i>	55
Texts, Sources and Further Reading	58

3	The Urban Middle Class: Satire, Debate and Political Advice	61
	(a) Urban Communities and Political Crisis in the Reign of Richard II	62
	(b) Estates Satire	65
	Example Text: (i) Langland's <i>Prologue to Piers Plowman</i>	66
	Example Text: (ii) Chaucer's <i>General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales</i>	68
	(c) Venality Satire on the Misuse of Money	73
	Example Text: (i) <i>Wynnere and Wastoure</i>	76
	Example Text: (ii) The Vision of Lady Meed in <i>Piers Plowman</i> 2–4	79
	(d) Complaint and Political Prophecy	83
	(e) Political Advice	84
	(i) Idealised and general advice	84
	Example Text: Hoccleve's <i>Regement of Princes</i>	87
	(ii) Personal Political Advice	88
	Example Texts: <i>Richard Redeless</i> and <i>Mum and the Sothsegger</i>	90
	Texts, Sources and Further Reading	94
4	The Urban Middle Class: Tales of Women and Marriage	100
	(a) Story Collections	101
	(i) Gower's <i>Confessio Amantis</i>	102
	(ii) Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i>	104
	(b) Statements about Women and Marriage in the Frame Narrative of the <i>Canterbury Tales</i>	107
	Example Text: (i) <i>The Wife of Bath's Prologue</i>	108
	Example Text: (ii) <i>The Merchant's Prologue</i> and opening of his <i>Tale</i>	111
	Example Text: (iii) <i>The Franklyn's Tale</i> Fr.5, 761–86	114
	(c) Chaucer's <i>Fabliaux</i>	115
	Example Texts: <i>The Miller's Tale</i> and <i>Reeve's Tale</i>	117
	Texts, Sources and Further Reading	119

5	The Community of the Church: Religious Lyrics and the English Mystics	124
	(a) Affective Devotion to God	126
	(i) The devotional lyric	127
	(ii) Richard Rolle's mystical prose	130
	(b) The Negative Way	132
	(i) Walter Hilton, <i>The Scale of Perfection</i>	133
	(ii) The <i>Cloud</i> Author	134
	Example Text: <i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i> : the explanation of the <i>Cloud</i>	135
	(c) The Women Mystics	137
	(i) Julian of Norwich	137
	Example Text: Julian's Metaphor of Jesus the Mother	141
	(ii) Margery Kempe	144
	Example Text: <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i> seen from three viewpoints	145
	Texts, Sources and Further Reading	149
6	Religious and Moral Stories	154
	(a) Saints' Lives	155
	(i) The Legends	155
	(ii) Modern and medieval readers	157
	(iii) Literary hagiographers	159
	Example Texts: Chaucer's <i>Second Nun's Tale</i> and Bokenham's <i>Life of St Cecelia</i>	162
	(b) Popular Romances	165
	(i) Romances of adventure	166
	(ii) Sentimental Romances and 'Breton Lays'	167
	(iii) Homiletic Romances	169
	Example Texts: <i>Émaré</i> and Chaucer's <i>Man of Law's Tale</i>	170
	(c) Moral Examples	173
	Example Text: (i) <i>Patience</i>	176
	Example Text: (ii) Chaucer's <i>Clerk's Tale</i>	180
	(d) Religious Dream Visions	184
	Example Text: <i>Pearl</i>	188
	Texts, Sources and Further Reading	191

7	Aristocratic Love	15
	(a) The European Tradition of Writing about Love	15
	(i) Classical and post-Classical texts	21
	(ii) 12th- and 13th-century Love Allegories and Handbooks	27
	(iii) Some 14th-century European Love Visions and Romances	209
	(b) English Love Lyrics of the 14th and 15th centuries	27
	(c) English and Scottish Love Visions	211
	(i) Chaucer's Love Visions	211
	Example Text: <i>The Parliament of Fowls</i>	211
	(ii) Love Visions of English and Scottish Chaucerians	214
	(d) English and Scottish Love Romances	222
	Example Text: (i) Chaucer's <i>Troilus and Criseyde</i>	227
	Example Text: (ii) Henryson's <i>Testament of Cressid</i>	227
	Texts, Sources and Further Reading	233
8	Chivalric Romances	239
	(a) England at War	241
	(b) The Principal Sources for English Arthurian Romance	241
	(i) Geoffrey of Monmouth	241
	(ii) Chrétien de Troyes and his immediate imitators	241
	(iii) The French Vulgate Cycle and beyond	241
	(c) Fourteenth-century English Arthurian Romance	247
	(i) <i>Yvain</i>	241
	(ii) <i>The Stanzaic Morte Arthur</i>	247
	(iii) <i>The Alliterative Morte Arthure</i>	250
	Example Text: <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>	251
	(d) The Fifteenth Century: Lydgate and Malory	259
	Example Text: The closing Books of the <i>Morte Darthur</i>	265
	Texts, Sources and Further Reading	269
	<i>Index</i>	277