

This is a comprehensive guide to a literary period characterized by great variety and imagination, and vividly alert to the social transformations overtaking society. Spanning almost two centuries, it introduces the reader to a diverse range of authors writing for a fast-developing readership of both men and women.

Each chapter focuses on a group of genres primarily associated with a particular social class – from the Drama and Saints' Lives accessible to the illiterate, to the sophisticated Romances of Love savoured by the aristocracy and the Court. Lively historical narratives place each group of texts in their social, political and cultural contexts. Significant or typical texts are given more detailed analysis that includes critical issues and questions to guide the reader's own approach, and each section is supported by a detailed bibliography of further reading.

*Sarah Bolton* lectured in English Literature at the University of York, UK, where she specialised in Middle English. She has also worked as a tutor for Cambridge University and taught at Hills Road Sixth Form College.