

* Other Poetry :- * The Pagan Poems :-

New Old English Poetry can be said to be Christian, but a few pieces are distinctly secular :-

(a) Widuth ("the far traveller") - It is ~~the~~ considered the oldest poem in the language. It expresses the wandering life of the gleeman, who goes forth into the world to abide there or there, according as he is awarded for his singing. He is praised & given gifts which makes seem that literature is a paying profession but the pay was barely sufficient to hold the body & soul together. Of all our modern poets, Goldsmith wandering over Europe, paying for his lodging with his songs, is more suggestive of this first recorded singer of our race.

(b) Waldere. - by Ekkehard of St. Gall
a Bavarian poem
discovered in Danish Royal Library
at Copenhagen.

Adventures surrounding the hero Walthar of Aquitaine. Waldere & Hildegyth fall in love & steal treasure from the court of Attila, where they were held hostage. They were sought out by 2 men, Guthhere, King of the Burgundians, & Hagena. They were behind the treasure that they possessed. The poem is about the conflict that is about to take place b/w 2 parties. The poem, like Beowulf has been given Christianized context.

Fight results in harm to everyone that had participated. In the end the 2 sides come to a peaceful resolution & eventually Waldere & Hildegyth leave & get married.

(c) The Fight at Finnsburgh - describes historical event involving a battle b/w Danish prince Hnaf & several of his warriors & Finn, the lord of the Frisians & the manerhouse (or leuh) where the battle took place. The events of the poem are also described in passing in Beowulf. Occured in 450 AD.

Result - short-lived peace treaty, followed by Danish victory.

(d) The Battle of Brunanburh - Late 937 AD

An Anglo Saxon army led by King Athelstan (the grandson of Alfred the Great) defeated & destroyed an invading army of Vikings, Scots & men from other minor kingdoms. His half-brother Edmund (16 yrs) was with him.

It resulted in death of 34,800 Viking & Scottish casualties, including Ceallach the prince of Scotland (Constantine's son) & 9 other named men.

[Alfred Lord Tennyson General's Note]

(e) The Battle of Maldon - 11 Aug. 991 AD.
near Maldon beside the River Blackwater in Essex, England, during the reign of Aethelred the Unready.
Earl Godwin Byrhtnoth & his thegns led the English against a Viking invasion.

Result - Anglo-Saxon defeat.

[Author is unknown].

(f) The

ELEGIES.

~~Other~~ Pagan Poems.

(a) ~~Seafarer~~ Seafarer's Lament - In "Seafarer" we have another picture of the Saxon Seafarer, or minstrel, not in glad wandering but in manly sorrow. The seafarer's living depended entirely upon his power to please his chief, & that anytime he might be replaced by a better poet.

(b) The Wanderer - It is an elegy since it mourns the loss of someone, something, i.e., in this case, the loss of a lord & speaker's former way of life. The wanderer conveys the meditations of a solitary exile on his past happiness as a member of his lord's band of retainers, his present hardships & the values of forgiveness & faith in the heavenly lord. He raises questions about purpose & meaning of life, relation between life & death, what death is really like & whether it truly provides a path out of life.

(c) The Seafarer - of 2 parts. Part 1. Hardships of ocean life; but stronger than hardships is the subtle call of the sea. The 2nd part is an allegory where troubles of seaman are his troubles of life & call of ocean is the call in the soul to see up & away to its true home with God.

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The Husband's Message →

- not an epic poem, although consists characteristics of epic poem [reason:- no hero].
- story of a man who was forced to leave his homeland & his wife due to a feud. It takes place after the feud has ended. The supposedly wealthy & established husband carries a message onto a plank of wood & sends it to his wife or his ~~both~~ betrothed, recounting the past years without her, reflecting on his past misfortune, professing his love for her & imploring her to reunite with him in his new home.

Here, 'message' refers to the plank of wood as well as the poem's lines.