

English Poetry

English poetry started back in the fifth century. It is believed that the earliest poems in English were written between 450 A.D. and 1066 A.D., the time known as the Anglo-Saxon period.

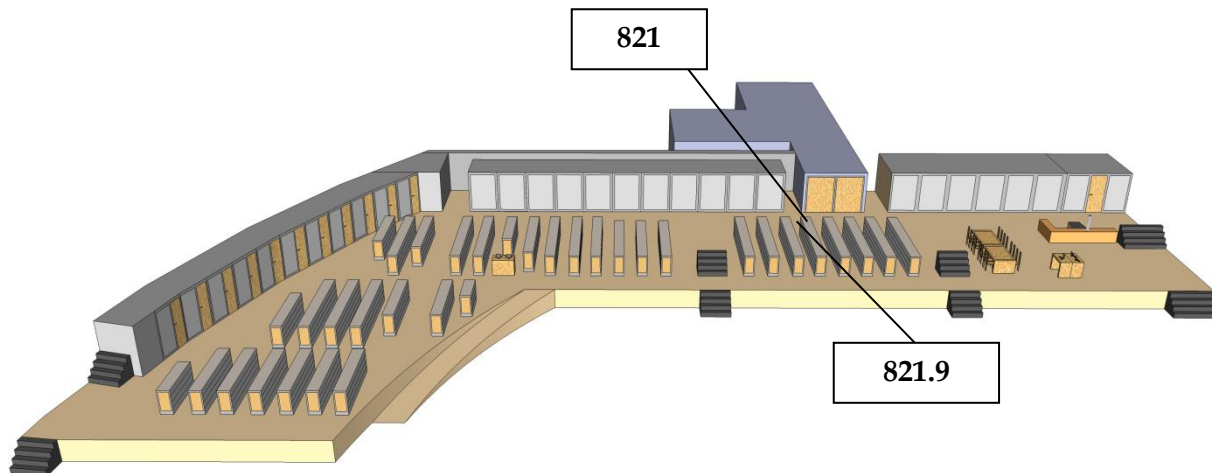
Among those poems the best known is "*Beowulf*", which is considered as the first epic in English. The common subjects of these poems are either religious faith or heroic deeds.

After the Norman Conquest in 1066, English poetry took a significant turn. Between 1066 and 1500, the period which is known as the Middle Ages, English language developed to a certain standard. They introduced meters and rhyme in the verse lines. The subjects chosen for poetry were liberal religious faith, morality, chivalry and love. Geoffrey Chaucer, known as the father of English poetry, was the famous poet of this age. He looked for idealism in religious faith, love and society.

The 16th century showed the rise of the Elizabethan period which was famous for its poetry; even plays were written in verse. It was also the beginning of breaking away from the Greek and Roman literary tradition. Then came the Metaphysical Period followed by the Romantic Period which was known by the *Lyrical Ballads* of Coleridge and Wordsworth. Poetry continued to evolve during the Victorian Age. Disbelief, hypocrisy, affluence, prudery and complacency were the main themes of the Poetry of this age.

After the World Wars during the Modern Period, the poets ignored everything that was mechanical and conventional. As much as possible, they tried to go near to real life. They neglected all set rules of meters, stanza forms or genres. As a result, modern poetry is almost formless just like modern paintings.¹

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina provides books on this subject to its visitors, inside the main library of the BA, at the ground level (E). You can find them by searching for the Call Numbers on the shelves from: 821 to 821.9



¹ "The Brief History of English Poetry", **Literaturemini**,
www.literaturemini.com/2018/08/the-brief-history-of-english-poetry.html

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