

# Lecture №1

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Literature period of decomposition of the tribal system and the emergence of feudalism. Celtic and German epos

# Middle ages and their place in human history

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- The general development of peoples and nations in the Middle Ages was uneven. Historians point out that the peoples of Western Europe were the most developed and advanced nations, and feudalism flourished in the East.
- Over time, ancient cities began to revive and new, more beautiful and functional ones were created. Thanks to this, culture and economy developed and transformed significantly.
- The culture of the early Middle Ages and spiritual development are becoming widely available and popular, this is due to the opening of universities, libraries, schools of various profiles, the creation of a printing press, through which newspapers and magazines began to be published en masse.

# The role of folklore in the development of literature

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- The relationship of literature and folklore is an important part of the general development of world literature, the so-called literary process. Literatures of all nations of the world were formed on the basis of oral folklore, which originated and developed much earlier than writing - the first form of existence of literary creativity. This process took place at different historical times.
- In the Middle Ages many European literatures were formed in the basis of folklore: French, German, English, and also Slavic literature - Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Czech, Polish. The transition from folklore to literature has always been accompanied by the use of folklore genres in the literature (fairy tales, legends, songs) and artistic means.

# Construction features of epic works

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- Epos (epos) in Greek means a word. This is a narrative form of literature. Plato believed that the epic combines lyrical elements (sayings of the author) and dramatic (imitation). According to Aristotle, the author of the epic tells the story "about events as something alien, as Homer does, or from himself, not replacing himself with others and bringing all the depicted persons into action. According to Hegel, the epic reproduces objectivity in objectivizing V. Kozhinov relates the epos, as well as drama, to the visual art.
- In epic works, life is depicted as something external to the author and characters. It seems that the author is standing on the side and tells about what he already knows for certain.
- Events in the epic are depicted as already taken place, so they are described in the past tense. Present and future tense is used to provide dynamic and vibrant stories. Epic creators write mostly prose. They all have a narrative character.

# Beowulf

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- Beowulf is an Old English epic poem consisting of 3,182 alliterative lines. It is arguably one of the most important works of Old English literature. The date of composition is a matter of contention among scholars; the only certain dating pertains to the manuscript, which was produced between 975 and 1025. The author was an anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet, referred to by scholars as the "Beowulf poet".

The story is set in Scandinavia. Beowulf, a hero of the Geats, comes to the aid of Hrothgar, the king of the Danes, whose mead hall in Heorot has been under attack by a monster known as Grendel. After Beowulf slays him, Grendel's mother attacks the hall and is then also defeated. Victorious, Beowulf goes home to Geatland and later becomes king of the Geats. After a period of fifty years has passed, Beowulf defeats a dragon, but is mortally wounded in the battle. After his death, his attendants cremate his body and erect a tower on a headland in his memory.

The full story survives in the manuscript known as the Nowell Codex. It has no title in the original manuscript, but has become known by the name of the story's protagonist

