Twelfth-century Middle English texts.

1. Last addition to the *Peterborough Chronicle*, from 1132 to 1154.
   - Date: 1154 or very shortly after.
   - Place: Peterborough, at the extreme northeastern end of Northamptonshire.
   - Dialect: East Midlands.
   - Manuscript: contemporary, virtually autograph.
   - Content: account of events in King Stephen’s reign; highly critical, thus probably written after his death; apparently shortly after, and all at one time.
   - Important historical source, well written.

2. *Poema Morale*.
   - Date: second half of the 12th c.
   - Place: Hampshire.
   - Dialect: Southern, very early (OE ā retained).
   - Manuscript: late 12th c., written by a southern Midlands scribe; there are also four later manuscripts.
   - Content: a sermon in rhymed verse (some 270 lines in the oldest manuscript).

3. *Ancrene Riwle* (‘Guide for Female Hermits’).
   - Date: last third of the 12th c.
   - Place: Herefordshire.
   - Dialect: Southwest Midlands, early (OE ā retained).
   - Manuscript: first third of the 13th c.; there are also several later manuscripts.
   - Content: a Rule of life for female contemplatives, written in a remarkably accomplished and beautiful prose style.

4. The “Katherine Group”: *Lives* of Sts. Katherine, Margaret, and Juliana; *Hali Meiðhad* (‘Holy Virginity’); and *Sawles Warde* (‘Guardian of the Soul’).
   - Date, place, dialect: as for (3).
   - Manuscript: early to mid-13th c.
   - Content: religious reading for the communities living according to (3).

[Note: several other short works—four prayers and *Pe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* (‘The Wooing of Our Lord’)—clearly belong to the same body of literature and date from the 12th c.; but they do not exhibit the extraordinary linguistic consistency of (3) and (4), which in spite of having been written by two different scribes, possibly several decades apart, are linguistically identical.]
5. *The Owl and the Nightingale.*
   Date: probably 1190’s, but possibly early 13th c.
   Place: probably somewhere in the southeast (but see below).
   Dialect: mixed; it looks as if a Southeastern original had been copied in the Southwest Midlands. (Note that OE ā is rounded.)
   Manuscripts: two from the second half of the 13th c.; neither is the SWM copy of the original.
   Content: a witty and sophisticated literary debate in rhymed verse.

6. Laȝamon’s *Brut.*
   Date: late 12th or early 13th c.
   Place: northern Worcestershire.
   Dialect: West Midlands. (Note that OE ā is rounded.)
   Manuscripts: two from the second half of the 13th c.
   Content: a vast chronicle of the history of Britain in alliterative verse (16,000 lines). Laȝamon is a good storyteller and gives us the earliest English version of the legends about King Arthur.

7. The *Orrmulum.*
   Date: ca. 1200.
   Place: northern Lincolnshire.
   Dialect: Northeast Midlands.
   Manuscript: autograph.
   Content: an unimaginably vast allegorical life of Christ with commentary, written in blank verse. (Orrm left us about 20,000 lines; if he finished the work it must have been about eight times that long.) Even for those who like medieval religious literature, Orrm is unbearably tedious; but his compulsive attempt to devise a completely unambiguous orthography and write perfectly regular verse makes the *Orrmulum* a goldmine for historical phonologists.