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This book introduces students to the literature of Anglo-Saxon England, the period from 600-1066, in a collection of fifteen specially commissioned essays. The Companion is aimed at students encountering Old English literature for the first time, who require clear guidance and orientation in an unfamiliar field. The first chapters describe briefly the political, social and ecclesiastical history of the period and how poetry and prose developed and flourished. A succinct account of Old English language provides beginners with a guide to grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Subsequent chapters explore such topics as Germanic legend and heroic ideals, paganism and fatalism, the cult of saints and responses to the Bible. Important prose texts, such as those by Bede, Alfred, Aelfric and Wulfstan, are covered under these thematic headings. Poems such as The Battle of Maldon, The Wanderer, The Seafarer and The Dream of the Rood, are discussed in detail, but in association with related texts, in prose as well as poetry. A separate chapter is devoted to Beowulf, but aspects of the poem are also discussed in other chapters. Finally a bibliography lists essential editions, reference works and critical studies.