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The medieval period was one of extraordinary literary achievement sustained over centuries of great change, anchored by the Norman invasion and its aftermath, the re-emergence of English as the nation's leading literary language in the fourteenth century and the advent of print in the fifteenth. This Companion spans four full centuries to survey this most formative and turbulent era in the history of literature in English. Exploring the period's key authors - Chaucer, Langland, the Gawain-Poet, Margery Kempe, among many - and genres - plays, romances, poems and epics - the book offers an overview of the riches of medieval writing. The essays map out the flourishing field of medieval literary studies and point towards new directions and approaches. Designed to be accessible to students, the book also features a chronology and guide to further reading.