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Titolo	Beowulf and the North Before the Vikings // Tom Shippey
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Collana	Past Imperfect
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Soggetti	Beowulf - Criticism and interpretation Civilization, Viking Mythology, Norse Scandinavia
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
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Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction : fantasy or history? -- Poetry and archaeology -- Old legend, new reality -- The bigger picture -- The non-national epic.
Sommario/riassunto	Ever since Tolkien's famous lecture in 1936, it has been generally accepted that the poem Beowulf is a fantasy, and of no use as a witness to real history. This book challenges that view, and argues that the poem provides a plausible, detailed, and consistent vision of pre-Viking history which is most unlikely to have been the poet's invention, and which has moreover received strong corroboration from archaeology in recent years. Using the poem as a starting point, historical, archaeological, and legendary sources are combined to form a picture of events in the North in the fifth and sixth centuries: at once a Dark and a Heroic Age, and the time of the formation of nations. Among other things, this helps answer two long-unasked questions: why did the Vikings come as such a shock? And what caused the previous 250 years of security from raiders from the sea?