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Note generali

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Nota di contenuto

1. The literary character of Anglo-Saxon formulaic poetry -- 2. The pagan coloring of Beowulf -- 3. The originality of Beowulf -- 4. Chaucer's spelling reconsidered -- 5. The order of The Canterbury tales -- 6. The authorship of St. Erkenwald -- 7. The date of the Alliterative Morte Arthure -- 8. The occasion of The parliament of fowls -- 9. The "love-tydynges" in Chaucer's House of fame -- 10. The "queynte" punnings of Chaucer's critics -- 11. The beginnings of Chaucer's English style -- 12. The tournament in the romances of Chretien de Troyes and L'Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal -- 13. Courtly love and chivalry in the Later Middle Ages.

Sommario/riassunto

This volume brings together a series of key essays by Larry D Benson, well-known for his work in editing the *Riverside Chaucer*. Of the studies selected, the opening three deal with Old English, recasting the possibilities for the critical study of Beowulf, above all the relation between oral and written literary production. The following ten essays turn to Middle English literature, with the focus first on Chaucer, and the evolution of his works and his language, then on the social and cultural context of medieval chivalric texts. Throughout, Professor Benson approaches his subjects with a skeptical intent, even a seeming contrariness in seeking to contradict received views, but in fact with the purpose of questioning in order to understand more deeply. Scattered in their original publications, and with one hitherto unpublished, together these studies present a powerful argument for this questioning approach to fundamental issues and constitute a major contribution to the study of the literary and cultural history of the medieval world. Larry D Benson is Francis Lee Higginson Professor of English, Harvard University.