Why is the oldest surviving fragment of Hungarian literature only 800 years old? After all, scholars have discovered that the Hungarian language became independent about three thousand years ago, and it was clear that myths, legends, tales, and songs existed in the language. However, the road to written literature was long. We have only traces of ancient poetry – to which written allusions were made later – but no original texts have survived. And even when we consider the 800 years of written literature in Hungary, we must admit that the written period was only later – with the advent of the Enlightenment and even more so, the Romantic period – that the extremely rich material, the surviving ancient poetry, which had presumably changed a great deal compared with the original, was collected, recorded, and published.
In the 14th century the English language came into its own again. In 1362 it was decided that all the pleadings in law courts should be in English, and Parliament was first opened with an English speech. By the end of the century the poet Chaucer had fixed English as the literary language of the century by writing his 'Canterbury Tales' in his own tongue. Whereas Langland expressed the thoughts of the peasants, Chaucer was the writer of the new class, the bourgeoisie. He was not however the preacher of bourgeois ideology. Much in his work shows his taste for medieval literature. He delighted in allegory, and in the sentiments of the courtly lover. Three works set him apart as a great poet in the history of poetry in general. "Reinhart and Rogoff have compiled an impressive database, which covers eight centuries of government debt defaults from around the world. They have also collected statistics on inflation rates from every country where information is available and on banking crises and international capital flows over the past couple of centuries. This Time Is Different doesn't simply explain what went wrong in our most recent crisis. This book also provides a roadmap of how things are likely to pan out in the years to come. . . . This Time Is Different is an important addition to the literature of financial history."—Edward Chancellor, Wall Street Journal.