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Animals and Early Modern Identity

Actualité. Annonce de parution


Animals were everywhere in the early modern period and they impacted, at least in some way, the lives of every kind of early modern person, from the humblest peasant to the greatest prince. Artists made careers based on depicting them. English gentry impoverished themselves spending money on them. Humanists exercised their scholarship writing about them. Pastors saved souls delivering sermons on them. Nobles forged alliances competing with them. Foreigners and indigenes negotiated with one another through trading them.

The nexus between animal-human relationships and early modern identity is illuminated in this volume by the latest research of international scholars working on the history of art, literature, and of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Germany, France, England, Spain, and South Africa. Collectively, these essays investigate how animals - horses, dogs, pigs, hogs, fish, cattle, sheep, birds, rhinoceroses, even sea-monsters and other creatures - served people in Europe, England, the Americas, and Africa to defend, contest or transcend the boundaries of early modern identities.

Developments in the methodologies employed by scholars to interrogate the past have opened up an intellectual and discursive space for - and a concomitant recognition of - the study of animals as a topic that significantly elucidates past and present histories. Relevant to a considerable array of disciplines, the study of animals also provides a means to surmount traditional disciplinary boundaries through processes of dynamic interchange and cross-fertilization.

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