



Acts and Texts: Performance and Ritual in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. (Ludus)

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For the Middle Ages and Renaissance, meaning and power were created and propagated through public performance. Processions, coronations, speeches, trials, and executions are all types of public performance that were both acts and texts: acts that originated in the texts that gave them their ideological grounding; texts that bring to us today a trace of their actual performance. Literature, as well, was for the pre-modern public a type of performance: throughout the medieval and early modern periods we see a constant tension and negotiation between the oral/aural delivery of the literary work and the eventual silent/read reception of its written text. The current volume of essays examines the plurality of forms and meanings given to performance in the Middle Ages and Renaissance through discussion of the essential performance/text relationship. The authors of the essays represent a variety of scholarly disciplines and subject matter: from the "performed" life of the Dominican preacher, to coronation processions, to book presentations; from satirical music speeches, to the rendering of widow portraits, to the performance of romance and pious narrative. Diverse in their objects of study, the essays in this volume all examine the links between the actual events of public performance and the textual origins and subsequent representation of those performances.

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