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Everyday Objects

Tara Hamling, Catherine Richardson

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This book is about the objects people owned and how they used them. Twenty-three specially written essays investigate the type of things that might have been considered 'everyday objects' in the medieval and early modern periods, and how they help us to understand the daily lives of those individuals for whom few other types of evidence survive - for instance people of lower status and women of all status groups. "Everyday Objects" presents new research by specialists from a range of disciplines to assess what the study of material culture can contribute to our understanding of medieval and early modern societies. Extending and developing key debates in the study of the everyday, the chapters provide analysis of such things as ceramics, illustrated manuscripts, pins, handbells, carved chimneypieces, clothing, drinking vessels, bagpipes, paintings, shoes, religious icons and the built fabric of domestic houses and guild halls. These things are examined in relation to central themes of pre-modern history; for instance gender, identity, space, morality, skill, value, ritual, use, belief, public and private behaviour, continental influence, materiality, emotion, technical innovation, status, competition and social mobility. This book offers both a collection of new research by a diverse range of specialists and a source book of current methodological approaches for the study of pre-modern material culture. The multi-disciplinary analysis of these 'everyday objects' by archaeologists, art historians, literary scholars, historians, conservators and museum practitioners provides a snapshot of current methodological approaches within the humanities. Although analysis of material culture has become an increasingly important aspect of the study of the past, previous research in this area has often remained confined to subject-specific boundaries. The book will therefore be an invaluable resource for researchers and students interested in learning about important new work which demonstrates the potential of material culture study to cut across traditional historiographies and disciplinary boundaries and access the lived experience of individuals in the past.

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