

The Court and Cultural Diversity



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出版者:

出版时间:1997-9

装帧:

isbn:9780859915175

This volume contains the selected proceedings of the eighth triennial congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, held in Belfast in July 1995; they demonstrate the range and variety of approach which has characterised the study of medieval courtly literature in recent years, and celebrate the diverse ways in which cultural differences are reflected in medieval European literary practice. The essays cover a whole range of courtly topics, in particular questions of context, genre and poetic voice. Loosely grouped into five sections, they explore contexts for courtliness, especially the position of the vernacular poet at or near the court; the ways in which courtly values and political aspirations are reflected in the work of medieval chronicle and romance writers; questions of register, convention, gender, and narrative technique; and problems of literary production and reception, particularly the transmission of courtly and quasi-courtly texts among widely differing medieval audiences. The volume concludes by considering some of the outer reaches of medieval courtly literature: the clues to the courtly mentality provided by peripheral narrative details; the blurring of conventional courtly boundaries; and the perennial fascination of tales with strong folklore or fabliau elements. Dr EVELYN MULLALLY and Dr JOHN THOMPSON are Senior Lecturers at the Queen's University of Belfast
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