

A pioneer of early-modern literary historicism reads Medieval and early Tudor drama and poetry historically

How far should we try to read medieval and early modern texts historically? Does the attempt to uncover how such texts might have been received by their original readers and audiences uncover new, hitherto unexpected contemporary resonances in them? Or does it flatten works of art into mere 'secondary sources' for historical analysis? This book makes the case for the study of literature in context. It demonstrates the value of historical and cultural analysis alongside traditional literary scholarship for enriching our understanding of plays and poems from the medieval and early Tudor past and of the cultures which produced and received them. It equally accepts the risks involved in that kind of study.