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Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Table of Contents -- Introduction. Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: A Significant Domain Ignored For Too Long by Modern Research? / Classen, Albrecht -- Chapter 1. Reforming the Monastic Landscape: Peter Damian's Design for Personal and Communal Devotion / Jasper, Kathryn L. -- Chapter 2. Women's Place and Women's Space in the Medieval Village / Olson, Sherri -- Chapter 3. "Gebrochen bluomen unde gras": Medieval Ecological Consciousness in Selected Poems by Walther von der Vogelweide / Clason, Christopher R. -- Chapter 4. Utopian Space in the Countryside: Love and Marriage between a Knight and a Peasant Girl in Medieval German Literature. Hartmann von Aue's Der arme Heinrich, Anonymous, "Dis ist von dem Heselin," Walther von der Vogelweide, Oswald von Wolkenstein, and LateMedieval Popular Poetry / Classen, Albrecht -- Chapter 5. Rural Space and Agricultural Space in the Old French Fabliaux and the Roman de Renart / Gordon, Sarah -- Chapter

6. Moor, Court, and River in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi / Breeze, Andrew -- Chapter 7. Rural Space and Transgressive Space in *Bérenger au lonc cul* / Simons, Penny -- Chapter 8. Life on the Manor and in Rural Space: Answering the Challenges of Social Decay in William Langland's *Piers Plowman* / Pigg, Daniel F. -- Chapter 9. Landscape of Luxuries: Mahaut d'Artois's (1302-1329) Management and Use of the Park at Hesdin / Dowling, Abigail P. -- Chapter 10. Hunting or Gardening: Parks and Royal Rural Space / Sandidge, Marilyn L. -- Chapter 11. The Significance of Rural Space in *Guillaume de Palerne* / Simons, Penny -- Chapter 12. The Forest as Locus of Transition and Transformation in the Epic Romance *Berte as grans piés* / Perez, Rosa A. -- Chapter 13. Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza* (1325?) / Ruiz, Maria Cecilia -- Chapter 14. Hunting as Salvation in Gaston Phébus's *Livre de la chasse* (1387-1389) / Stuhmiller, Jacqueline -- Chapter 15. Rural Space in Late Medieval Books of Hours: Book Illustrations as a Looking Glass Into Medieval Mentality and Mirrors of Ecocriticism / Classen, Albrecht -- Chapter 16. The Tame Wilderness of Princes: Images of Nature in Exemplars of Books of Hours and in the *Livre du Coeur d'amour épris* of King René of Anjou / Ross, Lia B. -- Chapter 17. Marshy Spaces in the Middle English *Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terme Wathelyne*: Physical and Spiritual Territory / Jost, Jean E. -- Chapter 18. Peasant Authors and Peasant Haters: *Matazone da Caligano* and the Ambiguity of the *Satira del villano* in High and Late Medieval Italy / Applauso, Nicolino -- Chapter 19. "Lazarus and Abraham, our Jews of Eggenburg": Jews in the Austrian Countryside in the Fourteenth Century / Wiedl, Birgit -- Chapter 20. Small Town, Big Business: A Wealthy Jewish Moneylender in the Austrian Countryside / Brugger, Eveline -- Chapter 21. *Usos rerum rusticarum*: *Malae consuetudines*, *male usos lege* and Peasant Rebellion as Resistance or Adaptation to Legal Change / Taylor, Scott L. -- Chapter 22. Village People: The Presence of the Rural in Late Medieval French Comedies / King, Sharon D. -- Chapter 23. Uprooted Trees and Slaughtered Peasants: The Savaging of Rural Space in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532) / Chesney Zegura, Elizabeth -- Chapter 24. Representations of the Plowman and the Prostitute in Puritan and Anti-Puritan Satire: Or the Rhetoric of Plainness and the Reformation of the Popular in the *Harvey Nashe Quarrel* / DiRoberto, Kyle -- Chapter 25. The Poet in Exile: Robert Herrick and the "loathed Countrylife" / Tvordi, Jessica -- Chapter 26. Women at the Hunt: Developing a Gendered Logic of Rural Space in the Netherlandish Visual Tradition / Moffitt Peacock, Martha -- Chapter 27. "The free Enjoyment of the Earth": Gerrard Winstanley on Land Reform / Willard, Thomas -- List of Illustrations -- Contributors -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

Older research on the premodern world limited its focus on the Church, the court, and, more recently, on urban space. The present volume invites readers to consider the meaning of rural space, both in light of ecocritical readings and social-historical approaches. While previous scholars examined the figure of the peasant in the premodern world, the current volume combines a large number of specialized studies that investigate how the natural environment and the appearance of members of the rural population interacted with the world of the court and of the city. The experience in rural space was important already for writers and artists in the premodern era, as the large variety of scholarly approaches indicates. The present volume signals how much the surprisingly close interaction between members of the aristocratic and of the peasant class determined many literary and art-historical works. In a surprisingly large number of cases we can even discover elements of utopia hidden in rural space. We also observe how much

the rural world was a significant element already in early-medieval mentality. Moreover, as many authors point out, the impact of natural forces on premodern society was tremendous, if not catastrophic.
