

## Ancients and Moderns in Europe

comparative perspectives

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The *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, or *Battle of the Books* as it was known in England, famously pitted the Ancients on the one side and the Moderns on the other. This book presents a new intellectual history of the dispute, in which authors explore its manifestations across Europe in the arts and sciences, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

By paying close attention to local institutional contexts for the *Querelle*, contributors yield a complex picture of the larger debate. In intellectual life, authors uncover how the debate affected the publication of antiquarian scholarship, and how it became part of discussions in London coffee houses and the periodical press. Authors also position the Low Countries as the true pivot for a modernistic realignment of intellectual method, with concomitant rather than centralised developments in England and France. The volume is particularly concerned with the realisation of the *Querelle* in the realm of artistic and technical practice. Marrying modern approaches with ancient sympathies was fraught with difficulties, as contributors attest in analyses on musical writing, painting and the 'querelle du coloris', architectural practice and medical rhetorics. Tracing the deeper cultural resonances of the dispute, authors conclude by revealing how it fostered a new tendency to cultural self-reflection throughout Europe. Together, these contributions demonstrate how the *Querelle* acted as a leading principle for the configuration of knowledge across the arts and sciences throughout the early modern period, and also emphasise the links between historical debates and our contemporary understanding of what it means to be 'modern'.

Paddy Bullard and Alexis Tadié, Introduction

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Intellectual history review

'this volume makes a valuable contribution to scholarship on the Ancients and Moderns debate. In shifting attention away from the more polemical episodes of the dispute and moving beyond national perspectives, it sheds light on the long-term impacts of comparisons between antiquity and modernity on European intellectual life, particularly its impact on the development of disciplinary practices in various fields.'

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