



Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe

Claire Richter Sherman

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This text focuses on the hand as a meeting place for matter, mind, and spirit. More than 80 images, dating primarily from the 15th to the 17th centuries, concern the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge from such diverse realms as anatomy, psychology, mathematics, music rhetoric, religions, palmistry, and alchemy. The book also addresses the relationship between the hand and the brain, sensory perception, the rhetoric of gesture, early forms of finger-spelling for the deaf, morality, and spirituality. It reintroduces early modern conceptual frameworks for learning, remembering, and recalling practical and abstract concepts by means of the hand. Throughout the text, images of the hand play a vital role in interpreting the search for achieving knowledge of the self and interpreting universal human experience.

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