The Premodern Teenager
Youth in Society, 1150–1650

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While a lot of excellent work has been done in the past four decades on premodern children and childhood, few scholars have focused on post-pubescent youth in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The seventeen essays in this volume seek to redress this imbalance by offering a sampling of the current research in this field and of the various questions and methodologies that could be useful in the study of “teenagers” in the thirteenth–seventeenth centuries.

Six key issues serve as signposts for the collection: the question of terminology and definitions; the ritual role given to youth in what was, in most cases across Europe, a gerontocracy; the question of education; the fascination young people have with the military; the irrepressible interest they have in sex; and the inevitable problem of teens in trouble, be it medical, social, or legal. There is no unifying methodology in this volume. The collection is not meant to argue in favour of a particular school; rather it is in favour of an altogether new look at a little-studied area.