

The Game and Playe of the Chesse

by William Caxton, edited by Jenny Adams

DESCRIPTION:

Despite its title, Caxton's *Game and Playe of the Chesse* does not, in fact, have much to say about a game or about playing it ... Instead, the work uses the chessboard and its pieces to allegorize a political community whose citizens contribute to the common good. Readers first meet the king, queen, bishops (imagined as judges), knights, and rooks, here depicted as the king's emissaries. They are then introduced to the eight different pawns, who represent trades that range from farmers to messengers ... Paired with each profession is a list of moral codes ... These pairings reinforce the idea of a kingdom organized around professional ties and associations, ties that are in turn regulated by moral law. - from the Introduction

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