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The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France, 900-1300

By David Crouch



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The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France, 900-1300 By David Crouch

For 300 years separate and mutually uncomprehending English and French historiographies have confused the history of medieval aristocracy. Unpicking the basic assumptions behind both national traditions, this book explains them, reconciles them and offers entirely new ways to take the study of aristocracy forward in both England and France.

The Birth of Nobility analyses the enormous international field of publications on the subject of medieval aristocracy, breaking it down into four key debates: noble conduct, noble lineage, noble class and noble power. Each issue is subjected to a thorough review by comparing current scholarship with what a vast range of historical source material actually says. It identifies the points of divergence in the national traditions of each of these debates and highlights where they have been mutually incomprehensible.

For students studying medieval Europe.



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- Sales Rank: #2092457 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Routledge
- Published on: 2005-06-04
- Released on: 2005-06-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.79" h x .81" w x 6.71" l, 1.27 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 384 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

" Under the broad headings of conduct, descent, class and lordship, shows how scholarship over the past centuries has resulted in the perceptions today."

British and Irish Bibliography

From the Back Cover

The history of medieval aristocracy is in crisis, collapsing under the weight of three centuries of work and confused by separate and mutually uncomprehending Anglophone and Francophone historiographies. David Crouch lucidly summarises and analyses this enormous international field of publications, unpicking the basic assumptions behind both national traditions in order to explain and reconcile them. He offers new ways to take the study of aristocracy forward in both England and France.

The Birth of Nobility breaks down the study of medieval aristocracy into four debates on noble conduct, noble lineage, noble class and noble power. Each is subjected to a thorough review by comparing current scholarship with a vast range of historical source material.

This is the first attempt to reconcile British and French ideas about aristocracy and shape them into a new debate. Supported by illustrations, this book:

- Redirects the historiography concerning aristocracy
- offers an original analysis of the nature of aristocracy and how it might be defined
- discovers and explains for the first time the origins of chivalry
- disposes of the myths around concepts like ¿feudalism¿ and ¿primogeniture¿

David Crouch is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Hull. He is an authority on twelfth- and thirteenth-century English, Welsh and Norman history and his numerous books on aristocracy and Anglo-Norman History include *The Beaumont Twins* (1986); *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000-1300* (1992); *William Marshal* (2002); *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154* (2000) and *The Normans: the History of a Dynasty* (2002).

About the Author

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