

The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England

By Barbara A. Hanawalt

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Barbara A. Hanawalt's richly detailed account offers an intimate view of everyday life in Medieval England that seems at once surprisingly familiar and yet at odds with what many experts have told us. She argues that the biological needs served by the family do not change and that the ways fourteenth- and fifteenth-century peasants coped with such problems as providing for the newborn and the aged, controlling premarital sex, and alleviating the harshness of their material environment in many ways correspond with our twentieth-century solutions.

Using a remarkable array of sources, including over 3,000 coroners' inquests into accidental deaths, Hanawalt emphasizes the continuity of the nuclear family from the middle ages into the modern period by exploring the reasons that families served as the basic unit of society and the economy. Providing such fascinating details as a citation of an incantation against rats, evidence of the hierarchy of bread consumption, and descriptions of the games people played, her study illustrates the flexibility of the family and its capacity to adapt to radical changes in society. She notes that even the terrible population reduction that resulted from the Black Death did not substantially alter the basic nature of the family.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal
In the near-glut of historical family studies, this is the first clearly focused on evidence about families medieval, English, and peasant. Hanawalt uses 3118 coroners' inquests into accidental deaths (mostly 14th century) and manorial court records (13th to early 16th century) to explore families' material environments, wealth, economic activities, life cycles, and surrogates. Nuclear groups created without good evidence of the so-called "Western European" or "Malthusian" marriage pattern lived in conjugal households where spouses were partners. Despite sociocultural changes, human biological needs made the family a tough and flexible institution. Hanawalt's sharp empirical corrective to much theoretical scholarship is informed with a humane understanding of medieval peasant life and belongs in college and public libraries. Richard C. Hoffmann, History Dept., York Univ., Downsview, Ontario
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Review

"I've always wanted to step back into medieval society, to time-travel through England. Thanks to Hanawalt, I have!"--William Van Vugt, *Calvin College*

"Well-written and flows smoothly. Hanawalt uses her sources skillfully to build an intriguing portrait of the daily lives of women and their families in medieval England."--Sylvia McGrath, *Stephen F. Austin State University*

"[An] excellent presentation of medieval life, especially valuable for a course focussing on social history. Clear and vivid, easily comprehended yet subtly argued. Students find it rewarding and interesting."--James Rosenheim, *Texas A & M University*

"As stimulating for the questions it asks as for the answers it provides....[It] will serve as a corrective to those accounts that only see differences and not similarities between past and present."--*The New York Times Book Review*

"A vivid re-creation of the family and community life of English peasants during the later Middle Ages, as well as lively criticism of other historians who have generalized about the subject."--*American Historical Review*

"Meticulous, scholarly, and highly readable....Founded on voluminous and reliable evidence that is interpreted with grace, humanity, and common sense."--David Nicholas, *Speculum*

"An important new and timely venture....Hanawalt must be congratulated for taking up the task in such an energetic and lively fashion."--J.A. Raftis, *Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies*

"A wonderful book....[Hanawalt] brings to her reconstruction of domestic life a wealth of colorful detail....Informed, level-headed, fast-paced, fun to read, and deeply humane."--David Herlihy, *Harvard University*

"The first comprehensive account of peasant families in late medieval England."--*Journal of Social History*

"Diligent research...has enabled Hanawalt to speak authoritatively and engagingly about her subject....A significant contribution on its subject."--*Choice*

"This approach and its detail of everyday mediaeval life make the book of interest to a wide variety of reader. Those who are interested in the mediaeval period (or the family) should not miss it."--*Open History*

From the Back Cover
This richly detailed account offers an intimate view of everyday life in medieval England that seems at once surprisingly familiar and yet at odds with what many experts have told us.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Molly Edwards:

The book The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England make you feel enjoy for your spare time. You can use to make your capable far more increase. Book can to become your best friend when you getting anxiety or having big problem using your subject. If you can make studying a book The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England being your habit, you can get more advantages, like add your current capable, increase your knowledge about a number of or all subjects. You could know everything if you like open and read a e-book The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science guide or encyclopedia or other individuals. So , how do you think about this guide?

Diana Elliott:

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Mary Peterson:

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