



Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200-1800 (Past and Present Publications)

Jack R. Goody, Joan Thirsk, E.P. Thompson

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This pioneering book examines different aspects of the inheritance customs in rural Western Europe in the pre-industrial age: for families and whole societies, the roles of lawyers in reducing them to a common system, and the recurring debate on the merits of various inheritance customs in shaping particular kinds of society. At first sight the study of inheritance customs may appear to be a dull affair, concerned with outdated practices of hair-splitting lawyers; certainly, little academic interest has been shown in the subject. Yet inheritance customs are vital means for the reproduction of the social system, by the transmission of property and other rights through the family. Various family structures and social arrangements are linked by different means of inheritance. This book will interest a wide range of historians, students, postgraduates and teachers alike, whether they are concerned with social, economic, demographic or legal history, in the medieval, early modern or modern periods, and whether their interests are directed to England or other countries of Western Europe; it will also be valuable to social anthropologists, sociologists and historians of ideas. A comprehensive glossary of technical terms has been added for the non-specialist.

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