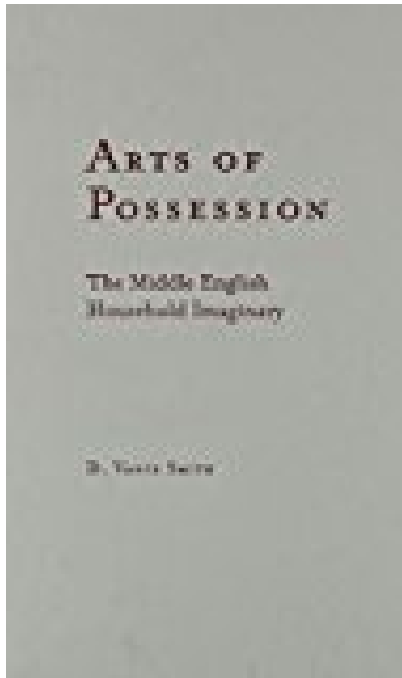


Arts Of Possession The Middle English Household Imaginary Medieval Cultures



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : D. Vance Smith
- Pages : 340 Pages
- Publisher : Univ Of Minnesota Press
- Language : English
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BOOK SYNOPSIS

An innovative work of both economic anthropology and literary history, *Arts of Possession* draws on philosophical, theoretical, literary, historical, and archival sources and insights to situate the household at the center of the social and cultural imagination of fourteenth-century England. D. Vance Smith argues that in a period commonly represented as precapitalist there actually existed a sophisticated economic discourse -- and that discourse underlies common forms of representation and the writing of literary texts. His work provides a new historiography of capital and of the development of the relation between economic sophistication and cultural practices. Smith reads well-known and less-appreciated works -- such as *Winner and Waster*, *Sir Launfal*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *Piers Plowman* -- for what they can tell us about the surpluses and economies that drew the medieval imagination, and about the complex ethics of possession at the heart of the fourteenth-century household. In bringing this to light, Smith's book itself becomes an eloquent meditation on the poetics and ethics of possession.

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