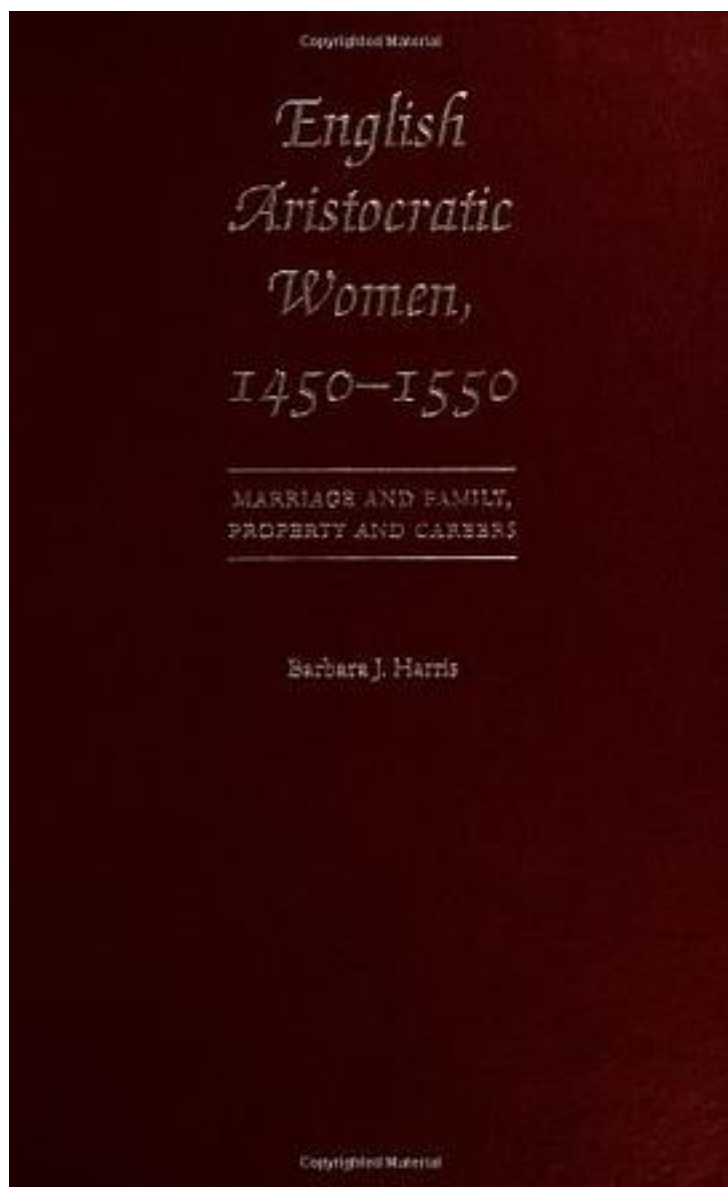


# English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550



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出版者:Oxford Univ Pr on Demand

出版时间:2002-8

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780195056204

English Aristocratic Women combines a collective portrait of aristocratic women with an analysis of the particular, class-specific form of patriarchy and gender relations that flourished among the upper classes in Yorkist and early Tudor England. The first book on the subject based on extensive archival research, it examines the apparent contradiction between the patriarchal institutions that shaped women's lives and the wide range of their activities, control of resources, and power over themselves and members of their families. It demonstrates that the roles of aristocratic wives, mothers, and widows constituted careers for women that had as much public and political significance and were as crucial for the survival and prosperity of their families and class as the careers of their husbands. They managed their families' property and households; arranged the marriages and careers of their children; created, sustained, and exploited the client-patron relationships that were an essential element in politics at the regional and national levels and in the power of individual families; and, finally, managed the transmission and distribution of property from one generation to another, since most wives outlive their husbands. For women from the inner circle of court families, careers at court expanded and supported these roles. As in all careers, aristocratic women gained prestige, authority, power, and financial rewards for their activities. Recognising the full significance of aristocratic women's careers revises our understanding of Yorkist and early Tudor politics. In addition, the centrality of their roles means that reconstructing their activities creates a vivid picture of every aspect of aristocratic domestic, familial, economic, and political life.

作者介绍:

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