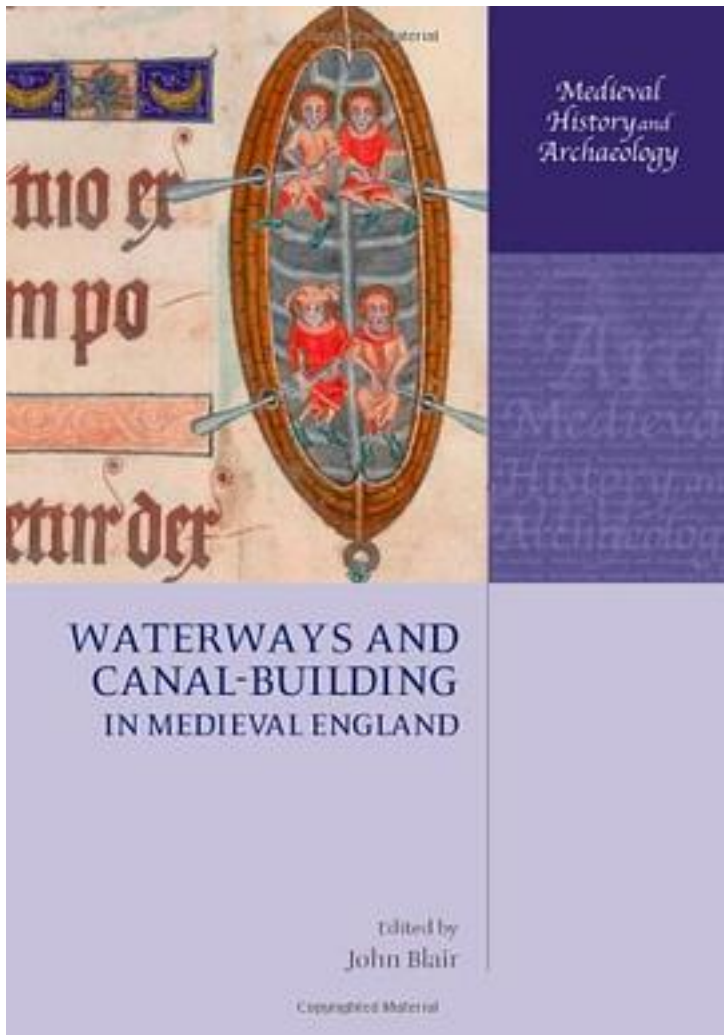


Waterways and Canal-Building in Medieval England



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著者:Blair, John 编

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The first study of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman canals and waterways, this book is based on new evidence surrounding the nature of water transport in the period. England is naturally well-endowed with a network of navigable rivers, especially the easterly systems draining into the Thames, Wash and Humber. The central middle ages saw innovative and extensive development of this network, including the digging of canals bypassing difficult stretches of rivers, or linking rivers to important production centres. The eleventh and twelfth centuries seem to have been the high point for this dynamic approach to water-transport: after 1200, the improvement of roads and bridges increasingly diverted resources away from the canals, many of which stagnated with the reassertion of natural drainage patterns. The new perspective presented in this study has an important bearing on the economy, landscape, settlement patterns and inter-regional contacts of medieval England. Essays from economic historians, geographers, geomorphologists, archaeologists, and place-name scholars unearth this neglected but important aspect of medieval engineering and economic growth.

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