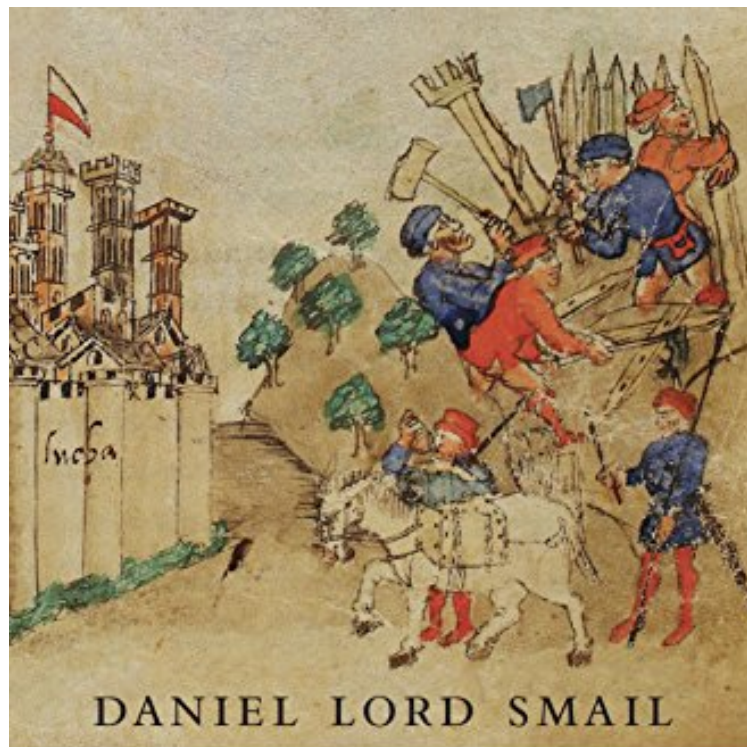


## Legal Plunder

*Daniel Lord Smail*

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# Legal Plunder

Households and Debt Collection  
in Late Medieval Europe

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As a Europe grew rich in the Middle Ages, the well-made clothes, linens, and wares of households often substituted for hard currency. Pawnbrokers kept goods in circulation, and sergeants of the law marched into debtors's homes to seize belongings equal in value to debts owed. David Smail describes a material world on the cusp of modern

capitalism.

A terrific book, rich with well-told anecdotes as well as smart analytical interventions. Smail makes ordinary people more than mere onlookers or victims of the long so-called commercial revolution of Europe. (Martha Howell, Columbia University) Full of unexpected insights, this exciting and innovative social history brings the late Middle Ages to life through everyday objects that served as the basis of an emotional package of vanity, optimism, humiliation, and violence surrounding debt seizures. (Paul Freedman, Yale University) Fascinating and highly original. Smail writes with great fluency, a distinctive voice, and disarming charm. He has a gift for using understudied sources to analyze fresh and important questions. (Carol Lansing, University of California, Santa Barbara) A magisterial examination of the transformation of the medieval economy. While the entire book is remarkably insightful and erudite, the chapters on the excessive acts of the state against its citizens and the concomitant violent resistance are particularly brilliant. (Teofilo F. Ruiz, University of California, Los Angeles) Legal Plunder is only partly about the exploration of grand interpretive ideas using a medieval case study. The book will also stimulate readers interested primarily in debates about the economy, society and culture of late medieval Europe. Its main conclusions will surely excite discussion and further exploration. (Christopher Briggs History Today 2016-12-01) A massive historical undertaking that sheds considerable light on wealth and credit in medieval Europe. (S. Pressman Choice 2016-10-01) Daniel Lord Smail's fascinating Legal Plunder: Household and Debt Collection in Late Medieval Europe shows that 'offshoring' or private money creation (i.e. credit) played a significant part even in the Middle Ages. (Rebecca L. Spang Times Literary Supplement 2017-04-21) About the Author Daniel Lord Smail is Professor of History at Harvard University.