



# Childhood in the Middle Ages

*Shulamith Shahar*

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## **Childhood in the Middle Ages** Shulamith Shahar

Was there really no concept of childhood in mediaeval Europe? Did parents erect defence mechanisms against attachment to their children because of the high mortality rate? In this wide-ranging study Shulamith Shahar considers these questions, as well as images of childhood, attitudes towards children, and the concept of the stages of childhood in mediaeval culture, from the nobility to the peasantry. In doing so, she confronts and criticizes the theories developed by Philippe Aries. Based on a wide variety of sources throughout Western Europe, "Childhood in the Middle Ages" describes and analyzes the material and emotional investment by parents in their children and the ways in which they were raised and educated throughout mediaeval society. It deals with attitudes to procreation, childbirth and nursing, family life, and relations between parents and children, ranging from great devotion to abandonment and infanticide. This book should be of interest to undergraduates, postgraduates and academics in the fields of social and cultural history.

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