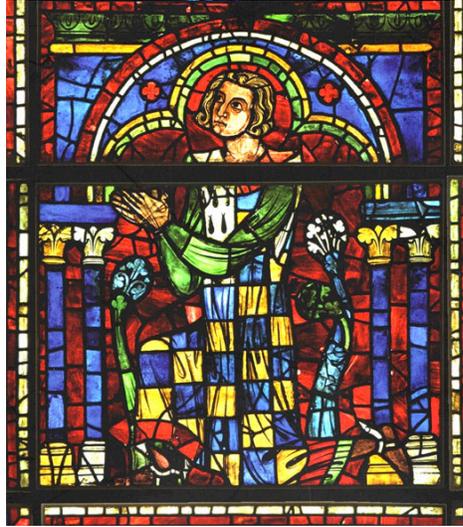


## CALL FOR PAPERS

### *Noblesse oblige?*: Barons and the Public Good in the Middle Ages

University of East Anglia, Norwich, 3-4 April 2019



The traditional—and still popular—image of the ‘feudal’ political order of the Middle Ages is one of anarchic knights and overmighty barons pursuing selfish ends to the detriment of peace and justice. Our teleological narrative thus explains the emergence of the modern state by the rise of centralised monarchies which abolished private conflict and introduced ‘commonweal’. The medieval aristocracy, in this telling, is a negative force, a symptom of the collapse of the Roman *imperium* and an impediment to human flourishing.

However, recent work has questioned this characterisation of the baron’s role in government and the conception of public good, as well as the benevolence of centralised governments themselves. Is the vilification of medieval lords not another case of history written by the victors? ‘*Noblesse oblige?*’ intends to host a discussion and reevaluation of baronial government and aristocratic commitment to the common good in the Middle Ages.

The two-day conference will be held on the University of East Anglia campus in Norwich on the 3rd and 4th of April 2019, and will begin with a keynote address by Prof. Martin Aurell, director of the Centre d’Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, Université de Poitiers, and author of many books on aristocratic culture.

Papers of twenty minutes in length are welcome from both emerging and established scholars of baronial political culture, with special reference to questions surrounding their ‘public’ role. Examples within this theme might include the moral nature of a *baro*, connexions between the aristocracy and religious reform, images of good governance in vernacular texts, noble opposition to tyranny, or aristocratic women as channels for justice and mercy. We aim to incorporate a broad chronological range of papers, and especially invite explorations of change over time. We also welcome points of comparison with aristocratic political culture from outside Europe or Christendom.

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words to the conference organisers at [noblesse.oblige.conference@gmail.com](mailto:noblesse.oblige.conference@gmail.com), along with the applicant’s name, affiliation (including independent scholar), and a 150-word biography. We hope to have bursaries available to assist postgraduate, unwaged, and international participants. The organisers eagerly look forward to receiving and reading all submissions.

The deadline for submissions is 31 October 2018.