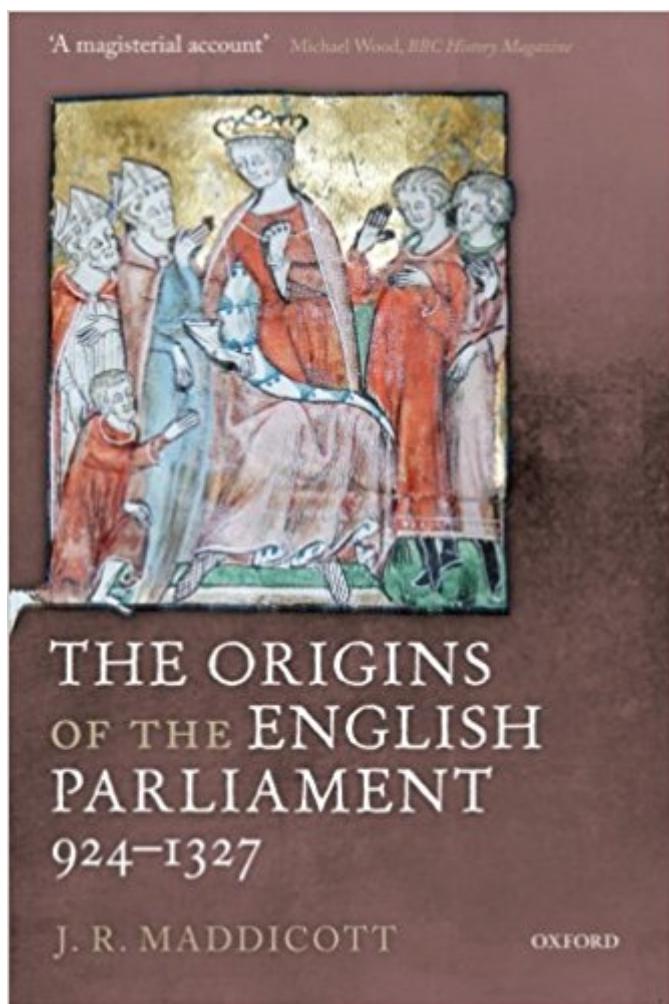


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The Origins Of The English Parliament, 924-1327



Synopsis

The Origins of the English Parliament is a magisterial account of the evolution of parliament, from its earliest beginnings in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Starting with the national assemblies which began to meet in the reign of King AEthelstan, it carries the story through to the fully fledged parliament of lords and commons of the early fourteenth century, which came to be seen as representative of the whole nation and which eventually sanctioned the deposition of the king himself in 1327. Throughout, J. R. Maddicott emphasizes parliament's evolution as a continuous process, underpinned by some important common themes. Over the four hundred years covered by the book the chief business of the assembly was always the discussion of national affairs, together with other matters central to the running of the state, such as legislation and justice. It was always a resolutely political body. But its development was also shaped by a series of unforeseen events and episodes. Chief among these were the Norman Conquest, the wars of Richard I and John, and the minority of Henry III. A major turning-point was reached in 1215, when Magna Carta established the need for general consent to taxation - a vital step towards the establishment of parliament itself in the next generation. Covering an exceptionally long time span, *The Origins of the English Parliament* takes readers to the roots of the English state's central institution, showing how the more familiar parliament of late medieval and early modern England came into being and illuminating the close relationship between particular political episodes and the course of institutional change. Above all, it shows how the origins of parliament lie not in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, as has usually been argued, but in a much more distant past.

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Customer Reviews

"One of the masterpieces of historical writing of our time." --Nigel Saul, History Today "One of the most important recent books on English history...a magisterial account" --Michael Wood, BBC History Magazine "Enormously impressive...a powerful and passionate piece of work." --Keith Richmond, Government Gazette "J.R. Maddicott brings to his task a depth of analysis which is both rare and impressive. He argues his points by reference to a far wider range of sources than any of his predecessors. And he has a better understanding of the European context of English politics than any English writer on the subject since Maurice Powicke." --Jonathan Sumption, Literary Review "Its wide and profound scholarship has much to teach us about the roots and functions of an institution now subjected to so much unhistorical criticism." --Blair Worden, The Spectator "J.R. Maddicott has long been recognised as one of the outstanding historians of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century English political history... The Origins of the English Parliament 924-1327 will stand out as a notable text for parliamentary history." --Andrew Broertjes, LIMINA

John Maddicott taught at the University of Manchester and was a Fellow and Tutor in Medieval History at Exeter College, Oxford, from 1969 until 2006. A Fellow of the British Academy, he was also joint editor of the English Historical Review from 1990 to 2000. He gave the Ford Lectures at Oxford (from which this current book has developed) in 2004. He has published extensively on the political and social history of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with books on Thomas of Lancaster and Simon de Montfort, and has also written a number of leading articles on the Anglo-Saxon economy, his second area of interest.

I was introduced to Dr. Maddicott's work by a professor in a graduate seminar on the late medieval period and I'm happy that I followed up on my professor's recommendation. Dr. Maddicott's *Origins of the English Parliament* is a fantastic read for anyone interested in the time period, English constitutional history, or English history in general. Maddicott's writing is both clear and concise and comprehensive and scholarly. The book follows a chronological route from 924 to 1327 and touches upon the key developments in the rise and evolution of the English representative polity--first the *witans* of the Anglo-Saxon period, then the proto-parliaments of the 13th century and finally a mostly developed Parliament in the 14th century. Maddicott's long tenure as a professor of English history and his intimate knowledge of modern scholarship on the subject makes this a useful tome to both lay and scholarly readers alike. If I had to make one complaint about the book, it is that Dr. Maddicott stops at 1327. I wish he would have continued his work until at least the deposition of

Richard II in 1399. I suppose the fact that I'm complaining that his nearly 500-page tome is too short is an indication of the quality of this book!

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