



A History of Young People in the West, Volume I, Ancient and Medieval Rites of Passage

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However swiftly it passes, youth is always with us, a perpetual passing phase, an apprenticeship to the myriad ways of the world, subject of panegyrics and diatribes, romances and cautionary tales from antiquity to our day. This two-volume history is the first to present a comprehensive account of what youth has been in the West and what it has meant through the ages. Brought together by Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, a company of gifted historians and social scientists traces the changing character and status of young people from the gymnasia of ancient Greece to the lycées of modern France, from the sweatshops of the industrial revolution to the crucibles of Nazi youth.

Monumental in its scope, minute in its attention to detail, *A History of Young People* takes us into the sensational rituals surrounding youth in Roman antiquity (such as the Lupercalia, with its nudity and whipping) and into the chivalric trials awaiting the privileged young of the Middle Ages. Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan and Michel Pastoureau explore the elusive question of what defines youth, a concept that over time has reached from infancy to the age of forty. Elliott Horowitz and Renata Ago consider the young in the context of the family--within the different worlds of European Judaism and Catholicism through the Renaissance. Sabina Loriga takes us through three centuries of military experience to temper and complicate our assumptions about the youthful face of war. Michelle Perrot focuses on working-class youth, and Jean-Claude Caron on the young at school. The obedient and the rebellious are here, the cherished and the sacrificed, the children catapulted into adult responsibility, the adults who have yet to forsake the protections of childhood. What emerges in this history as never before is a vast, richly textured picture of youth as a changing constant of culture, society, economics, politics, and art, and as a uniquely complex experience of acculturation in every life.

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