Georges Duby (1919–1996) has achieved near iconic status as the most original and influential postwar historian of medieval society. He wrote incisively, with flair and elegance, on issues critical to our understanding of the Middle Ages, notably the formation of feudal society, the nature of the aristocratic family, and the relation of “mental attitudes” to the medieval social order. Inspired by Jules Michelet, to whom he frequently alluded and with whom he shared a number of traits,¹ his books reached a large general audience, and a few became instant classics.² His public lectures at the Collège de France drew overflowing crowds, and his radio and television productions made him a media celebrity. Election to the Académie Française in 1987 confirmed his eminence. In his last years a round of festschriften commemorated his achievements, and his longtime publisher, Gallimard, reprinted his major works in two convenient paperback volumes.³

Duby’s early works, firmly rooted in the French tradition of rural economic history, provided the conceptual framework for his entire oeuvre. Yet only after taking the turn to social history in the 1960s, partly under the influence of structural anthropology, did he develop the highly personal view of medieval society now associated with his name. While his probing inquiries into the attitudes and practices of medieval people have proved stimulating to medievalists and general readers alike, they have also elicited criticism for both their methodology and substance. Before considering some of the implications of those inquiries, it would be useful to review briefly his major works.

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The work

The trajectory of Duby’s development could not have been predicted in 1946, when he began to investigate the judicial institutions and rural society of southern Burgundy. He claimed a dual descent from Charles-Edmond Perrin, his thesis adviser, whose meticulous analysis of the *censiers* in Lorraine stands as a model study of rural lordship (1935), and Marc Bloch, whom he never met but whose lively reviews and articles in the *Annales d’histoire économique et sociale* (1929–39), then *La société féodale* (1939–40; *Feudal Society*), inspired him to look beyond the economic to the social dimensions of rural institutions. Seeking to ground Bloch’s “feudal society” in a geographically and chronologically bounded study, Duby examined over ten thousand charters from the Mâconnais (primarily from Cluny) in order to trace its political, economic, and social life from the tenth through the twelfth centuries. *La société aux Xe et XIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (1953) was a milestone in the historiography of medieval France. It showed how charters—rather than chronicles or literary representations—could serve as the bedrock of a regional study, which thereafter became the framework for medieval social history as it had been for economic history. Duby demonstrated how local political events determined the organization of medieval society, and how chronology (virtually absent in Bloch’s *Feudal Society*) remained the backbone of social and economic history. It was the collapse of royal authority, he argued, rather than foreign invasion (as Bloch had assumed), that allowed the castellans to transform the countryside around 1000: by forcing lesser landlords into vassalage and imposing lordship over all peasants, the castellans, in effect, created the feudal society of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The argument was so convincing that it became the governing paradigm for a generation of medieval social historians and the foundation for all of Duby’s subsequent work.

*La société mâconnaise* would remain Duby’s only traditional monograph (and his only major work not translated into English). Two fortuitous events decisively altered his career: appointment to a university post with few obligations, and a commission to prepare a synthesis on the medieval rural economy for a general audience. *L’économie rurale et la vie des campagnes dans l’Occident médiéval* (1962; *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*) proved more than a synthesis: in appending numerous translations of the primary sources, the author invited nonspecialists to enter directly into the arcane world of the medieval countryside. Duby’s concern for readers beyond the academy became increasingly evident in the 1960s in four works...
addressed to general audiences: three short interpretations of medieval society, subsequently combined into *Le temps des cathédrales: L'art et la société* (*The Age of the Cathedrals: Art and Society, 980–1420*), and a collection of translated narrative texts in which writers of the millennial year commented on their own times (*L'An mil*). In breaking away from the constraints of the monograph, Duby adopted a new vehicle, the exploratory essay, for addressing a general audience. Relatively short pieces on limited subjects, and lightly weighted by scholarly apparatus, they were presented as works in progress in which he was free to suggest and speculate. With a new audience and a new technique, he shifted his focus from southern Burgundy to northern France, and from charters to narrative texts (especially chronicles). The 1960s and 1970s would become his defining period, when he acquired his characteristic “Dubyian” approach and style.

Among the many interests Duby pursued throughout his life, including modern art, two large subjects preoccupied him. The first is what became known as *mentalités* or, as he later preferred to call it, “mental attitudes” or the “imaginary,” that is, the perceptions, concepts, and attitudes behind human institutions and practices. Heavily influenced by French structural anthropology, especially by Claude Lévi-Strauss, Duby illustrated the possibilities of the *mentalité* approach in four studies published between 1973 and 1984. The first, *Le dimanche de Bouvines: 27 juillet 1214* (*The Legend of Bouvines*), was commissioned as a traditional narrative for the series “Thirty Days that Made France.” Unlike Achille Luchaire, who at the beginning of the century had written a succinct account of the battle and the events leading up to it, Duby found Bouvines elusive, for the main contemporary sources describing the event (which he appended in translation) diverged considerably, depending on their political and geographical distance from the victor, Philip II. Duby’s wife, Andrée, translated the main account, William the Breton’s panegyric, so as to recapture its spoken cadences, thereby recovering some sense of contemporary perceptions of the event formed from oral reception. The Battle of Bouvines, in short, was not a simple military encounter: the event and its meaning were constructed at the time, elaborated into legend, and later almost forgotten from France’s collective memory.

*Saint Bernard: L’art cistercien* (1976), commissioned as a commentary on Cistercian architecture, became his second exposition of *mentalités*, with Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian program furnishing the grid for exploring the values and attitudes of twelfth-century Europe. As in *Bouvines*, Duby sought to extract the attitudes of contemporaries from the
texts they wrote, read, or heard (again he provided translations) as well as from patterns of behavior (the monastic day) and the buildings they constructed. A decade earlier, Jean Leclercq’s *St. Bernard et l’esprit cistercien* had extolled Bernard’s creativity as wordsmith, artist, and thinker, and as the driving force of the twelfth-century monastic *mentalité*. Duby, being less interested in Bernard’s own life, took Bernard’s outlook, message, and influence as constituting a work of art itself—of which Cistercian architecture was only one manifestation—and amplified Leclercq’s Cistercian *mentalité* into a general *mentalité* of the twelfth century.

Duby’s most ambitious commentary on mental constructs and social reality, *Les trois ordres ou l’imaginaire du féodalisme* (1978; *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*), built on Jacques Le Goff’s suggestion that trifunctional schemes of the medieval social order (those who pray, those who fight, and those who work) were tied to monarchical ideologies. Jean-François Lemarignier’s analysis of the royal charters had shown how monarchical authority contracted in the early eleventh century, confirming what Duby had found on the local level in the Mâconnais, and thus it was reasonable to expect that speculations about the social order would reflect the new political conditions. Two bishops of distinguished ancestry, Adalbero of Laon and Gérard of Cambrai, had in fact used the trifunctional model in discussing the disorders of their time. Using their formulations as a prism, Duby sought to locate similar trifunctional conceptions of the social order in a broad range of texts, including chronicles, poems, treatises, charters, and memoirs; although he could find few examples of trifunctionality, he did unearth remarkably diverse and original schemes of the medieval social order.

Finally, in *Guillaume le Maréchal ou le meilleur chevalier du monde* (1984; *William Marshal: The Flower of Chivalry*), Duby attempted to recapture the chivalric ethos of an English baron from the epic biography his son commissioned in the 1220s. Using that vernacular poem’s vivid scenes of the Marshal’s deeds, especially his tournament experiences and his death, Duby cast the Marshal as a chivalric exemplar. But unlike Sidney Painter’s biography fifty years earlier, Duby’s essay was not so much interested in the Marshal per se as in what he illustrated, or rather how the author of the verse *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* presented him. As with Bernard of Clairvaux, so with William the Marshal: embodiments of certain ideals and values, they stood for the attitudes of large numbers of individuals whose lives and thoughts are irretrievably lost. Conceived as experiments in the study of *mentalités*, *William Marshal* and *Saint Bernard* remain Duby’s closest encounters with biography.
In 1961, three years after broaching the mentalité of feudalism, Duby announced the second large question that would absorb him—the aristocratic family. Reviewing Léopold Genicot’s study on thirteenth-century Namur, which had revealed aristocratic families considerably different from the ones Duby had reconstructed in the Mâconnais, he remarked that it was time to seek more informative sources than the ecclesiastical charters. Coincidentally, Fernand Vercauteren alerted him to a source of great potential: the twelfth-century chronicles from northern France. The “History of the Counts of Guines” by Lambert of Ardres became Duby’s favorite text, a treasure trove he would mine to his last years for evidence on marriage customs, family organization, and attitudes toward the family and society. At the same time, Duby took note of recent work on medieval family structure by German historians, notably Karl Schmid, who argued that the aristocratic family experienced a profound transformation around 1000, as the large kinship grouping (Sippe) gave way to the family organized by lineage (Geschlecht), apparently confirming what Duby had already detected in the Mâconnais. Seeking evidence for the aristocratic patrilineage in the northern chronicles, Duby wrote in quick succession a series of articles on kinship, knighthood, and nobility, of which the best known remains “Youth in Aristocratic Society” (1964). When in 1972 he revisited the Mâconnais, he found that his original conclusions of 1953 had not gone far enough: the “feudal revolution” of around 1000, he concluded, not only had transformed the contours of society, it even had restructured the aristocratic family into the patrilineage, the characteristic familial form of the feudal centuries.

Although kinship, marriage, and lineage remained a background thread of all Duby’s later work, he never enlarged his brief inquiries into a systematic study. But his 1977 Baltimore lectures, published as Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-Century France (1978), added a vital new dimension to his inquiry on familial practices: the development of ecclesiastical norms regarding legitimate marriage. That missing piece, in fact, restored a necessary dynamic to the twelfth-century aristocratic family: Duby showed, for example, how the French kings neglected the new norms at their peril, and how aristocratic families, such as the lords of Guines, began to accommodate the new rules by the late twelfth century. An expanded and recast version of Medieval Marriage followed shortly in a series of essays called Le chevalier, la femme et le prêtre (1981; The Knight, The Lady, and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France). Under that captivating but misleading title (The King, the Bishop, and the Chronicler would be more accurate), Duby reviewed the marital problems of
the Capetian kings (Philip II and Louis VII), the church's development of a theory of marriage (especially the ideas of Ivo of Chartres), and the evolution of two baronial families (the lords of Amboise and the counts of Guînes) seen through the eyes of chroniclers. Although he often returned to the same material in other venues, *The Knight* capped his inquiry into the aristocratic family.

With *The Knight* (1981) and *William Marshal* (1984), Duby completed his tour d'horizon of medieval society in its many guises. Having explored the theoretical models of marriage and of the social order, the nature of the aristocratic patrilineage, and the mentalités of Bernard of Clairvaux and William Marshal, Duby remarked on the notable absence of women in his sources. Medieval women, he concluded, had been so marginalized that twentieth-century historians could not recover their lives or their voices. The Middle Ages were, in sum, "resolutely male." And yet, in his last years he felt compelled to come to terms with that conspicuous lacuna in his sizable oeuvre on medieval society. He first considered the roles of women as they were refracted through the feudal revolution, theories of love, and the exercise of (or exclusion from) power. Then, as his final publication, he offered three volumes of essays addressed to the general reader, *Dames du XIIe siècle*, containing quasi-biographical chapters on Heloise, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Isoue, a review of women's roles within their families (in which he revisited the chronicle of Lambert of Ardres), and an impressionistic picture of "women" drawn from a familiar list of medieval commentators. Stripped of all scholarly apparatus, and perhaps written under failing health, they represent the musings of a historian whose Middle Ages did not easily accommodate women.

Duby claimed that he wrote with difficulty, yet his output was enormous. In addition to his own books, articles, and commentaries, he edited or sponsored a number of multivolume collections on the history of France (cultural, rural, and urban history) and the history of western Europe (private life and women). If there was any criticism of his work in France, it was circumspect and muted. Outside France, his representations of the medieval evidence have drawn more pointed criticism, and his major theories have been called into question. Most controversial are his hypotheses regarding a "feudal revolution," the nature of aristocratic family, and the role of the medieval imaginary.
The feudal revolution of the early eleventh century

*La société mâconnaise* focused a generation of regional research on what Duby would call the “feudal revolution” of the early eleventh century. It was a political event, he argued, the collapse of royal authority in the late tenth century, that transformed Carolingian society in the Mâconnais into a “feudal society.” As the castellans withdrew from the public court of Otto-Guillaume, count of Mâcon (982–1026), they began to reshape rural society: they forced local “middle-class” proprietors into vassalage and imposed on all peasants a new kind of lordship based on taxation rather than tenure, what Duby called a banal lordship (*seigneurie banale*). Although fiefs were few and small in this period, they established ties of dependency between the castellans and lesser proprietors, who would become a new class of knights. After these fundamental shifts, Duby found, the ensuing “age of independent castellans” (ca. 980–1160) experienced few institutional changes. Only in the late twelfth century was there a “turn” comparable to that of the late tenth century: intrusive kings (Louis VII and Philip II) “feudalized” the independent castles of the Mâconnais (that is, made them accountable), and financial crises forced noble families to sell off huge landed resources to the church and townspeople. As the nobles lost the run of the countryside they had enjoyed during the “feudal” centuries, the social order became jumbled, reflecting the new political and economic realities. Just as the withering of the monarchical state had spawned the age of feudalism (*féodalité*), so the revival of the monarchy ended it, ironically, at the very time that fiefs became pervasive in the countryside.

Although Duby’s model of the castellan revolution has been confirmed in a number of regions in France—primarily south of the Loire—and recent syntheses have claimed it as a fundamental turning point for the medieval West, the very conception of a feudal revolution, or mutation, has recently come under severe scrutiny. Dominique Barthélemy has questioned Duby’s basic methodological assumption that changes in vocabulary (*caballarius* to *miles*, *beneficium* to *feudum*, *fidelis* to *nobilis*) reflected social change. That is, vernacular terms read into Latin might well have represented only stylistic change, a kind of linguistic “code shifting,” rather than actual societal changes. It was not so much the society that changed in the early eleventh century, Barthélemy argues in his massive study of the Vendômois, but rather the nature of the documentation: it *revealed* a society already “feudal.” In fact, Duby in the 1940s had worked against a now discarded image of a well-organized Carolingian state, in which public insti-
tions functioned independently of private lordship: studies on conflict resolution suggest that such a stark contrast between public life before 1000 and private spheres after 1000 is not tenable.57 Nor did the knights and peasants constitute new classes in the tenth century, as Duby postulated; they can be found in the ninth century.38 “The crisis model,” concludes Janet L. Nelson, “and the methods and assumptions bound up in it seem ripe for collapse.”39

Duby accepted Bloch’s characterization of “feudal” society as being marked principally by the unrestrained domination of the countryside by castellans in the absence of royal government. And since for Duby, as for Bloch, the state could be only royal,40 their feudal centuries are devoid of the smaller polities, the episcopal lordships that studded northern France and the territorial states such as Flanders, Normandy, Anjou, and Champagne, whose rulers perfected state-building techniques long before the Capetians themselves.41 For, as Robert Fossier demonstrated, not all castellanies were “independent,” even in the eleventh century. In Picardy most castellanies were held by delegation rather than usurpation, and the same can be said for Champagne.42 A form of collegial governance was the norm in most of the realm, as in Flanders and Normandy, where there existed a “remarkable cooperation” between powerful dukes and the regional aristocracy.43 The collapse of comital authority in the Mâconnais was exceptional, even within Burgundy.44 In fact, the formation of territorial states must be ranked among the prime achievements of eleventh- and twelfth-century France, one that facilitated the monarchy’s revival.45 Moreover, it was within the territorial states that regional customs solidified in the twelfth century, making France a nation of diverse provinces long before the return of direct royal government. Duby’s insistence on the absolute dichotomy between independent castellanies and the monarchical state seems strange, given his detailed familiarity with southern Burgundy, as it effectively denies medieval France its regional identities.

The aristocratic family

The aristocratic patrilineage, Duby argued, emerged in the eleventh century precisely when families erected castles, adopted toponyms, and restricted marriage and succession to the eldest son in order to preserve those castle lordships intact. Daughters were married off (mostly downward to vassals) or placed in convents, while younger sons, expelled from the paternal residence and forced to seek their fortunes elsewhere, joined the bands of
violence-prone "youth." That model of the aristocratic family, he claimed, persisted to the late twelfth century, when younger sons were allowed to marry and inherit, a concession that resulted in the widespread fragmentation of patrimonies in the thirteenth century.

Duby's model of the primogenital patrilineage has achieved wide currency, despite its highly problematic methodology and evidentiary basis. Serious doubts have been raised about whether the aristocratic family did, in fact, undergo reorganization in the early eleventh century, coincident with the castellan revolution. The adoption of toponyms, for example, is more plausibly related to a new sense of identity than to a new familial structure. And the second purported mutation lignagère of the late twelfth century has yet to be confirmed by any regional study. There is, in sum, little convincing evidence for any fundamental change in the organization of the aristocratic family between the ninth and thirteenth centuries.

Much of the difficulty in Duby's model arises from his idiosyncratic conceptions that depict lineage as the line of successors to castles, patrimony as indivisible paternal property, and primogeniture as inheritance by the eldest son alone. Jack Goody first noted how the confusion of lineage with succession to castle lordship obfuscated inheritance practices and misrepresented the nature of the aristocratic family shorn of its wives, daughters, and younger sons. Duby argued that such a schematic view of the family was justified by the Flemish chronicle genealogies, which he claimed were "more accurate" than modern genealogical reconstructions because they captured the contemporary mentalité of lineage. Thus he ignored entirely E. Warlop's monumental study of Flemish aristocratic families based on a meticulous analysis of both chronicle and charter evidence. The two anthropologists who most closely examined the medieval evidence, Goody and Anita Guerreau-Jalabert, concluded that the aristocratic family is best classified in anthropological terms as a bilateral kindred rather than a patrilineage.

While eldest sons ordinarily inherited the paternal castle or office, actual successions were far less certain than Duby's patrilineal model would have. The county of Mâcon, for example, which passed to twelve heirs between 1026 and 1236, went to an eldest son only six times. Moreover, "patrimony" was neither fixed nor indivisible. Dowries, collateral inheritances, purchases, and new grants could increase or decrease familial resources from one generation to the next, and most families in fact practiced a form of partible inheritance, distributing shares of both feudal and alodial properties to all siblings. Even in Normandy, a region particularly favorable to
eldest sons, younger sons both married and inherited in the eleventh century. In a society where the conjugal unit remained primary, most sons established new households; some adopted the toponyms of the familial lands they settled, while others assumed the properties and names of their wives. Finally, in disparaging the spiritual motives of sons who chose the monastic life, the patrilineal model fails to account for the likes of Bernard of Clairvaux, who convinced all five of his brothers, including the married eldest, to take the monastic habit; indeed, entire families disappeared because of religious zeal.

The most serious deficiency in Duby's model of the patrilineage is its depiction of women, who are excluded from playing any "public" roles, despite numerous, well-documented examples to the contrary. In the early twelfth century, for example, Countess Adela of Blois was known as a forceful presence both as a wife and during two decades as a widow, even after her son attained his majority. She attended the serious business of placing her children and arranging their marriages, she enjoyed a solid working relationship with Bishop Ivo of Chartres, and the literati curried her favor. At the end of the century, Countess Marie of Champagne ruled the county for sixteen years both in the absence of her husband and as regent for her sons, and her granddaughters Jeanne and Margaret, heiresses of Flanders, ruled that county for most of the thirteenth century. Even less prominent women shared the fruits of the feudal revolution from the eleventh century, receiving fiefs both as dowries from their natal families and as dowers assigned by their husbands. Although the ramifications of dotal property (a daughter's share of her inheritance) have only begun to be examined, the role of the widow's dower is well known from dower letters and customals which describe widows' survivor benefits. In Champagne, as in much of northern France, widows retained their conjugal residence, half of the husband's lands and half of their joint acquisitions during marriage, as well as their own inheritance or dowry. Far from being a device to facilitate the eldest son's succession, as Duby claimed, the dower affirmed a widow's rights, even against her own children. Finally, in consigning unmarried daughters to convents as a way of protecting the familial patrimony, Duby's model ignores the entire realm of female spirituality, for which a large literature now exists. Even within the comital family of Mâcon, women were actively involved as sponsors and patrons of local monastic institutions. In sum, a simplistic anthropologizing of the aristocratic family has produced a caricature: the model of the primogenital patrilineage misrepresents the nature of the medieval family and its inheritance practices.
The imaginary

The imaginary (l’imaginaire) has suffused all of Duby’s work since 1973. That year saw the publication of Bouvines (which remains his most successful foray into the “new history”) and Guerriers et paysans (The Early Growth of the European Economy), in which he recast the material and perspective of his earlier synthesis, Rural Economy (1962), to account for the “mental attitudes” that undergird economic activities.\(^68\) Inverting materialist assumptions, Duby affirmed the centrality of beliefs, attitudes, and memories in determining human actions, and thereafter became preoccupied with recovering the realm of “the medieval imaginary.”\(^69\) That quest was most readily conducted with narrative texts such as the chronicle accounts of the Battle of Bouvines and the biographical poem on William Marshal, where a close reading might uncover the authors’ attitudes. But Duby’s most ambitious book on the imaginary, The Three Orders, remains the most problematic. While he discovered a widespread use of triads in medieval sociological writing, he could find little resonance of coherent trifunctional schemes in the feudal centuries, and he was not able to relate the tripartite formula to the new social and political structures he postulated for the early eleventh century.\(^70\) The Three Orders, in short, revealed not the ubiquity of the trifunctional model but rather a cornucopia of sociological imaginaries.\(^71\)

Duby’s venture into the imaginary was least successful for the individuals who did not record their own thoughts or memories. It is never clear in his reading of the chronicle accounts of the Guines and Ardres families, and the biographical poem celebrating William Marshal, whether he had recovered the imaginary of the authors or of the subjects, or whether he had created one for them. His William Marshal, for instance, has been severely criticized for projecting an incorrect understanding of twelfth-century warfare and chivalrous conduct, as well as the Marshal’s own career, talents, and character; in essence, Duby deduced an incorrect imaginary.\(^72\) David Crouch’s William Marshal (1990), the most thorough biography of the Marshal since Painter’s (1933), exposes the naiveté of viewing the Marshal’s life and ethos through a simple reading of a biographical poem.\(^73\) It is unfortunate that Duby renounced both biography and family history (the counts of Guines and lords of Ardres would have made an ideal study), seeking to recover the abstract “rules and mental representations” that determined conduct, rather than to understand individual lives. Neither his William Marshal nor his essays on aristocratic families approach Jacques Le Goff’s Saint Louis (1996) in engaging the issues of medieval lives, representations, and
the role of the biographer-historian. The biographical deficit is most visible in his depiction of women, especially in *Les Dames*, where women of the stature of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Heloise, about whom there exists ample literature, appear as cardboard figures.

In practicing an *Annales*-style "problem history" rather than the more traditional "event history," Duby employed two highly effective rhetorical devices: the model and the "stage narrative." His models, usually framed as competing dichotomies, are not easily forgotten: Carolingian public versus feudal private institutions, the aristocratic versus the ecclesiastical model of marriage, and the patrilineage versus the kindred. Once formulated, they never changed, and reified through frequent repetition they served to discount discrepancies (such as the abundant evidence for younger sons marrying and inheriting) as exceptions to the norm (the model). Equally compelling are his narratives of stages, in which complex processes are reduced to sequences of well-defined stages or periods. Political stages (Carolingians, independent castellans, and Capetians) formed his basic template. To these he grafted comparable stages of economic development, familial organization, and mental attitudes in an attempt to create a coherent unified model of prefeudal, feudal, and postfeudal society. In Duby's hand, models and stage narratives became powerful conceptual vehicles and an effective response to the challenge of structural anthropology, which touted its superior (more fundamental) level of generalization.

While attentive to the composition of his own books—his first chapters invariably set powerful scenes—Duby was less interested in the methodological issues relating to the composition of his sources. He saw no need to scrutinize the composition of the charters that structured *La société méconnaise*, and thus left to a new generation of historians the task of revealing how the charters themselves incorporate subtle imaginaries. Nor did he delve into the construction of the Flemish chronicles that supplied his core ideas about the aristocratic patrilineage, a surprising omission given his view of the chronicles as repositories of attitudes and values beyond "facts" and "events." His surface reading of the verse biography of William Marshal led him to miss critical literary influences, compromising his depiction of the Marshal. And although he often remarked that the ecclesiastical sources effectively filtered what could be known about the Middle Ages, he failed to engage the secular documents, especially the royal and princely administrative registers; here he would have discovered another imaginary, that of the territorial prince whose clerks displayed little interest in the three orders, patrilineage, and the chivalric code. It is indeed surprising, given Duby's
deep interest in representations and mental attitudes, that he did not pursue the attendant methodological inquiries. No doubt it was his predilection for narrative, in which he appropriated the language of the medieval texts, that left him cold to source analysis.

Georges Duby constructed a highly original view of the Middle Ages, particularly of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which he saw as the formative period of French culture. He freely labeled it "feudal" in the manner of Marc Bloch, and even entitled the reprint of his most popular works Féodalité, defiantly rejecting any tyranny in that construct. In addressing some of the most important issues in medieval history, he created bold hypotheses about those feudal centuries and challenged historians to confirm or revise his models of the castellan revolution, the aristocratic lineage, and the medieval imaginations. His most important legacy may well be that he has forced historians to push the boundaries of understanding beyond his own models.

Notes

I am grateful to R. C. Famiglietti and Kimberly LoPrete for their insightful comments on an earlier version of this article.

1 Parisians by birth, professors at the Collège de France, and profoundly affected by art, they were both writers in the grand style whose Middle Ages were quite personal. For Michelet the medievalist, see Jacques Le Goff, "Les Moyen Age de Michelet," in Pour un autre Moyen Age. Temps, travail et culture en Occident (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 19-45; trans. Arthur Goldhammer, "The Several Middle Ages of Jules Michelet," in Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3-28.

2 According to Philippe Carrard, Poetics of the New History: French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 1-6, the popular "new history" authors like Duby have enjoyed a far smaller nonacademic readership in France than academics have assumed. But if the number of Duby's translated works is any indication, his readership outside France is enormous; see his complete bibliography (to 1993) in Georges Duby: L'écriture de l'Histoire, ed. Claudie Duhamel-Amado and Gyu Lobrichon, Bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, vol. 6 (Brussels: DeBoeck Université, 1996), 467-87.

3 The first volume appeared as Féodalité (Paris: Gallimard, 1996); the second will contain his works related to art.


14 Duby recalls this period in *L’histoire continue* (History Continues), chaps. 8–9.


22 Sidney Painter, *William Marshal: Knight-Errant, Baron, and Regent of England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933). Duby acknowledged but did not use Painter's material, except for recasting Painter's last chapter ("The Death of a Baron") as his own dramatic opening chapter.
26 Among the most important are: "Les 'jeunes' dans la société aristocratique dans la France du Nord-Ouest au XIIe siècle" ("Youth in Aristocratic Society: Northwestern France in the Twelfth Century"; 1964); "Structures de parenté et noblesse dans la France du Nord aux Xle et XIIe siècles" ("The Structure of Kinship and Nobility: Northern France in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries"; 1967); "Remarques sur la littérature généalogique en France aux Xle et XIIe siècles" ("French Genealogical Literature: The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries"; 1967); "Les origines de la chevalerie" ("The Origins of Knighthood"; 1968); and "The Diffusion of Cultural Patterns in Feudal Society" (1968; original version in English). They are repr. in his *Hommes et structures* and translated in *The Chivalrous Society*.


32 The basic argument was already laid out in “Recherches sur l’évolution des institutions judiciaires” (1946–47) (“The Evolution of Judicial Institutions”).

33 The seigneurie banale extends the concept of the ban seigneurial developed by Perrin, Recherches sur la seigneurie rurale, 665–71.


36 Dominique Barthélémy. La société dans le comté de Vendôme de l’an mil au XIVe siècle (Paris: Fayard, 1993). Part 2 is entitled “La révélation féodale (970–1150).”


40 Duby rejected the very concept of a nonroyal state: for him there were only castle lordships, some—like the county of Champagne—certainly larger than others, but lordships nonetheless; see his response to the pointed question in Georges Duby and Guy Lardreau, Dialogues (Paris: Flammarion, 1980), 164–68.

41 The eleventh- and twelfth-century principalities are reviewed in Jean Dunbabin, France in the Making, 843–1180 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), chaps. 8 and 12. The northern episcopal lordships are compared in Olivier Guyotrejannin, Épis-


52 Warlop, *The Flemish Nobility before 1300* (first published in 1968 as *De Vlaamse adel voor 1300*).

53 Guerreau-Jalabert, “Prohibitions canoniques,” offers the most systematic and sophisticated review of the medieval evidence. See also Goody, *The Development of the Family*, 222–39 ("Appendix 1, Kin Groups: Clans, Lineages, and Lignages").

54 Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980–1198* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 261–79. Of twelve successions between 1026 and 1236, the county of Mâcon passed six times to the eldest son, twice to a daughter, twice to a cousin, once to a younger son, and once to a grandson. See also the examples in Evergates, “Nobles and Knights,” 17–28.

55 Duby adduced the patrilineage, from scant charter evidence in the Mâconnais, as a deliberate strategy to preserve the patrimony (*La société mâconnaise*, 215–17; “Le resserrement des liens familiaux: le lignage chevaleresque”), but he could not demonstrate the existence of exclusionary policies.

56 It should be noted that David Herlihy, who devoted much of his career to the medieval family, found it impossible to reconcile Duby’s formulation of the patrilineage with the obviously discordant evidence, especially the existence of partible inheritance practices in the twelfth century and the late (ca. 1300) development of entail; he concluded that two models of the family coexisted. See his *Medieval Households* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 82–98.


58 Preliminary reports on naming customs are in *Genèse médiévale de l’anthroponymie moderne*, ed. Monique Bourin (Tours: Université de Tours, 1989), esp. 113–14 (example of a cadet adopting a new name).


64 Dominique Barthélémy, “Note sur le maritagium dans le grand Anjou des XIe et XIIe

65 Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest*, chap. 5. The earliest extant dower letter from Champagne (1176) provides the wife with the life use of the familial residence in addition to half of her husband’s own properties and their joint acquisitions; text in Michel Bur, *Vestiges d’habitat seigneurial fortifié en Champagne centrale* (Reims: ARERS, 1987), 99; other examples of dowers in Theodore Evergates, *Feudal Society in Medieval France: Documents from the County of Champagne* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 58–62.


69 I have retained the noun form, *imaginaire*, from Duby’s *l’imaginaire du féodalisme* as the best way to signal its peculiar meaning for Duby (rather than translate it as “image” or “imagination,” as his translator does). In fact, Duby was not consistent in his quest: he investigated the *practices* that indicated attitudes, the *opinions and values* that explained practices, and *analytical frameworks* of the social order (like the three orders). Jacques Le Goff, who likewise appropriated *l’imaginaire*, offers a useful examination of its meaning in the introduction to his essays entitled *L’imaginaire médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), trans. Arthur Goldhammer, *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).


75 Carrard, *Poetics of the New History*, 48: “the stage narrative is one of the favorite forms
in history of *mentality*, where it is used to study a succession of systems or changes within the same system."

76 *L'histoire continue*, 207 (History Continues, 125).


