



# Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism

By Larry Siedentop

Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press. Paperback. Condition: New. 448 pages. The new book from Larry Siedentop, acclaimed author of Democracy in Europe, Inventing the Individual is a highly original rethinking of how our moral beliefs were formed and their impact on western society today This ambitious and stimulating book describes how a moral revolution in the first centuries AD - the discovery of human freedom and its universal potential led to a social revolution in the west. The invention of a new, equal social role, the individual, gradually displaced the claims of family, tribe and caste as the basis of social organisation. Larry Siedentop asks us to rethink the evolution of the ideas on which modern societies and government are built, and argues that the core of what is now our system of beliefs emerged much earlier than we think. The roots of liberalism - belief in individual liberty, in the fundamental moral equality of individuals, that equality should be the basis of a legal system and that only a representative form of government is fitting for such a society - all these, Siedentop argues, were pioneered by Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages, who drew...



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