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The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe

James Melton's lucid and accessible study examines the rise of 'the public' in eighteenth-century Europe. A work of comparative synthesis focussing on England, France and the German-speaking territories, this is the first book-length, critical reassessment of what Habermas termed the 'bourgeois public sphere'. During the Enlightenment the public assumed a new significance as governments came to recognize the power of public opinion in political life; the expansion of print culture created new reading publics and transformed how and what people read; authors and authorship acquired new status, while the growth of commercialized theatres transferred monopoly over the stage from the court to the audience; and salons, coffeehouses, taverns, and Masonic lodges fostered new practices of sociability. Spanning a variety of disciplines, this important addition to *New Approaches in European History* will be of great interest to students of social and political history, literary studies, political theory, and the history of women.

JAMES VAN HORN MELTON is Chair of the Department of History at Emory University. He is author of *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge, 1988), co-translator (with Howard Kaminsky) of Otto Brunner's *Land and Lordship: Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria* (Philadelphia, 1992), and co-editor (with Hartmut Lehmann) of *Paths of Continuity: Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s* (Cambridge, 1994).

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To Barbara, Sarah, and Peter

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