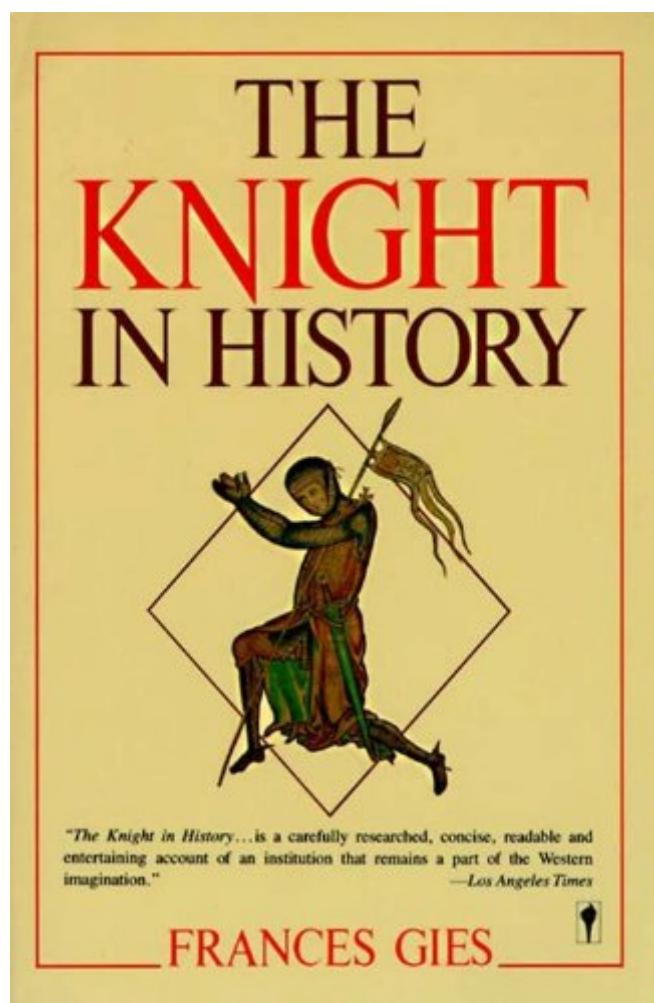


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The Knight In History (Medieval Life)



Synopsis

"A carefully researched, concise, readable, and entertaining account of an institution that remains a part of the Western imagination."--Los Angeles Times

Book Information

File Size: 2289 KB

Print Length: 272 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins e-books (July 18, 2010)

Publication Date: August 3, 2010

Sold by: HarperCollins Publishers

Language: English

ASIN: B003JBHVOA

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #130,531 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #29

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Reference > Genealogy #81 in Books > Reference >

Genealogy #144 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > World > Medieval

Customer Reviews

It would be pretty hard to find a better concise history of European knighthood than this book by Frances Gies. Her research is very thorough and she understands the Medieval world well. At the same time, she brings her subjects alive and never lets her erudition intrude to interrupt the flow of the story. In little more than 200 pages of well-written text she traces the whole arc of the knight's history, from Charlemagne to the end of the Hundred Years War -- and beyond into the long twilight of knighthood down to the Victorian era. After tracing the origins of knighthood she gives a vivid description of the First Crusade. Then she turns to the troubadours and the development of the literature of knighthood, as well as its impact on the knights themselves. Next she takes up the career of a very notable knight of the second half of the 12th century, William Marshal in an account filled with details that reveal his character and that of knighthood in his time. The story of the remaining Crusades is organized around an account of the crusading orders, particularly the Knights Templar. Next comes a vivid mini-bio of one of the most remarkable characters of history,

the mid-14th century French knight and commander Bertrand Du Guesclin. Then the story of Sir John Fastolf, a major English commander of the 15th century (only very tenuously related to Shakespeare's Falstaff) nicely illustrates the transition between the world of knightly warfare and that of armies on the modern pattern. A final chapter traces the lingering influence of knighthood in early modern Europe. There are many well-chosen black-and-white illustrations, extensive source notes, and a good bibliography. The book addresses the knight's armor and fighting techniques, but only briefly.

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