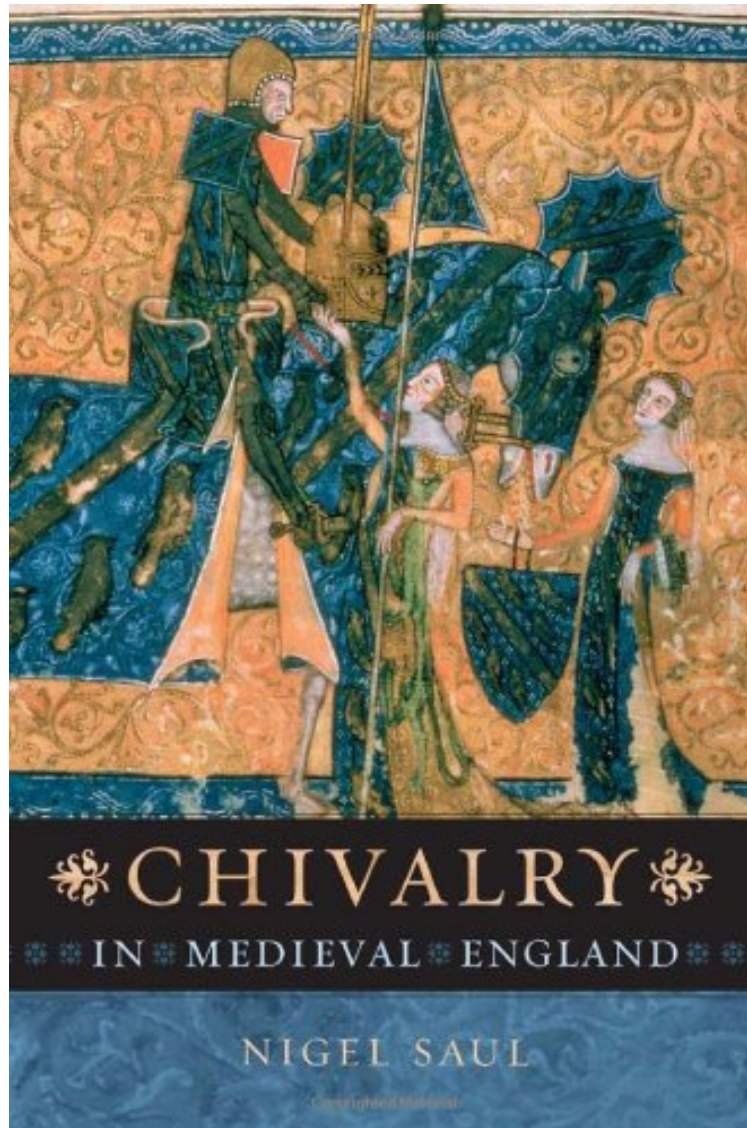


(Free) Chivalry in Medieval England

Chivalry in Medieval England

Nigel Saul

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Nigel Saul : Chivalry in Medieval England before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chivalry in Medieval England:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An Excellent Nigel Saul History! By Barry E. VinyardSaul, the author of "Richard II" and "The Three Richards," among other works, has written a masterful work in "Chivalry in Medieval England.". Covering multiple aspects of his subject ("every aspect" might be a better descriptive phrase), including courtly love and sexuality, an in-depth exploration of knighthood, the use of tournaments as a training ground for military service and chivalry as it touched religion and literature, among others. "Chivalry in Medieval

England" is a work which will be of merit both to the casual reader as well as to a serious student of medieval history. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The book has various topics regarding chivalry. It truly ...By HatoonThe book has various topics regarding chivalry. It truly helped me in my graduate course of Chaucer. It is worth buying.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Bring back chivalry!By JeriSaul argues successfully that chivalry was real, thus neatly overturning modern theories that chivalry was merely a fig leaf covering the usual human preoccupations of murder, plunder etc.The idea of chivalry began in the early twelfth century during an intellectual awakening that swept across most of Europe. In England, it began when Geoffrey of Monmouth, an obscure clerk, wrote a strongly fictionalized biography of King Arthur. The romantic story of King Arthur seized the imagination, not only of the English, but became a favorite across Europe. A few decades later, Chretien "perhaps the ablest and the most significant of the French romance writers of the Middle Ages " (p 44) rewrote the Arthurian story.These romances were best sellers among the upper classes, the nobility and the knights. They would alter society for the better until the decline in the late fourteenth century.Chaucer, in the Wife of Bath tale, shows a knight exhibiting virtue, and thence gaining his reward. "Chaucer's view is that the essence of gentility resided in virtue" (p 175). His noble lineage might prove a knight's nobility; but his gentility depended on courtly conduct and unswerving virtue.Perhaps the most significant "advice book on noble behavior ...'Liber Urbani' ...emphasized the importance of restraint" (p 191)and compassion instead of aggression. The chivalric ethic stressed courtesy, tact, and good behavior at all times. Chaucer, in the late fourteenth century when chivalry had declined, criticized those knights who had left the ideal of chivalry and were more concerned with profit.From the early twelfth century to the time of Chaucer, chivalry became a vision of Christian knighthood. "Chivalry was akin to a religious order, a discipline ordered towards man's highest goal, salvation..The perfect knight should be humble and pious...The religious conception of chivalry...fed through into romance and poetry" (p 201).To give an idea of how closely tied religion was to the chivalric ideal, when Sir Galahad passes a chapel ' he turns towards it, for he was troubled if a day passed when he did not hear Mass'" (p 201).Love was also a new theme in the romances, very different from the culture that produced Beowulf. Women were idealized, and frequently unattainable, in the literature of chivalry. The love nevertheless provides "a spur to a spiritually ennobling passion" (p 269).A very different time from our own. The average twenty year old man today is either at a college, getting drunk at keggers, or at home in the basement smoking dope and playing video games. Not a whiff of heroism, not to mention courtly behavior, anywhere.

Popular views of medieval chivalryknights in shining armor, fair ladies, banners fluttering from battlements were inherited from the nineteenth-century Romantics. This is the first book to explore chivalry's place within a wider history of medieval England, from the Norman Conquest to the aftermath of Henry VII's triumph at Bosworth in the Wars of the Roses. Saul invites us to view the world of castles and cathedrals, tournaments and round tables, with fresh eyes. Chivalry in Medieval England charts the introduction of chivalry by the Normans, the rise of the knightly class as a social elite, the fusion of chivalry with kingship in the fourteenth century, and the influence of chivalry on literature, religion, and architecture. Richard the Lionheart and the Crusades, the Black Death and the Battle of Crecy, the Magna Carta and the cult of King Arthur all emerge from the mists of time and legend in this vivid, authoritative account.

Nigel Saul takes a relatively benign view of medieval noblemen. He rejects the once-fashionable notion that war was all about money and land, and that chivalry was just tinsel. And, although he sees a steep decline in standards in the last medieval century, he thinks that chivalric values did have a real influence in civilizing the conduct of war. Whether one agrees with this or not, his is a view that commands respect. He is a historian with a rare gift for seeing the human lives behind the rather formulaic and impersonal sources of medieval history, and he has written widely about aristocratic culture...Saul can make the most unpromising material speak to us with a directness that can surprise even those who are already familiar with it. This is a rich book that does ample justice to its complex theme. (Jonathan Sumption Sunday Times 2011-06-19)The author of this sparkling book that "puts chivalry centre-stage" explains its substantial contribution to the development of Western civilization through links to the practice of treating prisoners of war with compassion, to the growth of individualism and even to the modern cult of celebrity. (Christopher Silvester Daily Express 2011-06-10)Splendid...Saul has drawn heavily on what he calls this "rich repertory of contemporary witness" to illuminate the relationship between chivalry and the political, military, social and artistic currents of the time. The result is a wide-ranging examination of how the ethos of chivalry defined and shaped knightly culture...As this book so ably demonstrates, [chivalry] influenced every aspect of knightly life: without it, the Middle Ages would have been not only duller and darker, but even more brutal. (Juliet Barker Mail on Sunday 2011-06-26)An entirely original project, and in [Saul's] hands it proves illuminating...[A] brilliant book. The skill and scholarship with which he has done so fully justify his claim at its opening that chivalry was a major factor throughout the narrative history of medieval England from before the time of Richard I to the aftermath of that of Edward III. Chivalry has often been neglected by historians in that story; Nigel Saul's vivid and exciting study should make sure that it can never again be left out of the account. (Maurice Keen Literary 2011-07-11)The era of chivalry was the idealized fantasy that grew out

of the military superiority of the armed horseman, and which lasted roughly between the invention of the stirrup and the invention of gunpowder. Nigel Saul is just the right person to tell the story as experienced in England...One of the strengths of his new book is its attention to the visual and the material. The knights of England had property and wealth, and they flaunted them. Chivalry was not only a code of behavior but a style honed both on the battlefield and in impressive residences...Interest in chivalry was revived in the Victorian cult of things medieval, aesthetic as well as moral in scope. It inspired such initiatives as the Marquess of Queensberry's rules and the codification of laws of war, which Saul links to the later formulation of the Geneva convention. Yet lampoons of chivalry are equally powerful, as epitomized by John Tenniel's drawings of ungainly knights on horseback that illustrated *Through the Looking Glass*. That unyielding parody has given us the chivalry of Monty Python and Spamelot, and recently a new Camelot too. Nigel Saul's clear-sighted history makes these survivals all the more apparent, and all the more puzzling. (Miri Rubin *The Guardian* 2011-07-22)Saul is especially good at examining the physical detritus of chivalry, the daily context for memory and fame across the parish churches, chapels and halls of England. The material texture of chivalric society can rarely have been chronicled so comprehensively and succinctly...He has produced a welcome introduction and guide to the English dimension of a pervasive social phenomenon of medieval Europe. (C. J. Tyerman *Times Literary Supplement* 2011-12-02)Narrative chapters flavored with thematic discourses about the evolving nature of medieval chivalry do an admirable job of fusing an essentially literary and cultural history of chivalry with traditional military historySaul makes significant contributions in his richly textured explorations of chivalry's impact on late medieval English literature, religion, and architecture. (J. P. Huffman *Choice* 2012-04-01)[A] thoroughly researched and elegantly written volume. (Charlotte Allen *Weekly Standard* 2013-09-23)About the AuthorNigel Saul is Professor of Medieval History, University of London.