



Medieval Warfare: A History

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The medieval period was a singular epoch in military history--an age profoundly influenced by martial ideals, whose very structure of society was organized for war, and whose leaders were by necessity warriors. Now, the richly illustrated *Medieval Warfare* illuminates this era, examining over seven hundred years of European conflict, from the time of Charlemagne to the end of the middle ages (1500). Twelve scholars examine medieval warfare in two sections. The first section explores the experience of war chronologically, with essays on the Viking age, on the wars and expansion of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, on the Crusades, and on the great Hundred Years War between England and France. The second section traces developments in the art of warfare: fortification and siege craft, the role of armored cavalrymen, the use of mercenary forces, the birth of gunpowder artillery, and the new skills in navigation and shipbuilding.

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Medieval Warfare: A History From Oxford University Press Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #616043 in Books
- Published on: 1999-11-18
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.10" h x 1.10" w x 9.30" l, 1.63 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 352 pages

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Editorial Review

From Kirkus Reviews

A comprehensive anthology of essays by highly placed British academics (joined by one from West Point) that survey military development in the Middle Ages. Arguing in his introduction that war is central to the narrative political story of the middle ages, Keen (History/Oxford; Chivalry, 1984) has assembled a series of 12 crisply topical essays that consider how warfare became increasingly organized, mechanized, and militarized between 900 and 1500. Keen and his fellow authors make clear that this acceleration of war-making was primarily defensive, as the fledgling European societies were regularly besieged by invaders like the Magyars and Vikings. In an attention-getting early chapter, H.B. Clark observes that the Vikings derived much of their power from their simultaneously elusive and brutal nature (they combined sophisticated tactics of organized raiding with a knack of attracting poetic tributes to their violence). John Gillingham's *An Age of Expansion* shows how this defensive pattern underlies the warfare over Saxony and the later colonial wars in Spain, Scotland, and Ireland. And Peter Edburys *Warfare in the Latin East* examines the defensive motivations of the European campaigns against Muslims ranging from Eastern Europe to Jerusalem, campaigns we remember as the Crusades. Later chapters deal with more tactical matters, exploring how proprietary medieval notions, particularly chivalry, fared in the context of warfares increasing standardization, and covering the developing range of fortifications, siege tactics, and arms and armor. Following Christopher Allmand's unusual survey of War and the Non-Combatant, Keen closes with his own review of the emergence of cannon, gunpowder, and permanent armies as the ultimate developments of medieval militarism. A scrupulously prepared survey that will be invaluable to students and accessible to committed lay readers. (100 b&w illus.) (History Book Club Split Main selection) -- Copyright ©2000, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

"Scholarly, well constructed"--*The Washington Times*

About the Author

Maurice Keen is Tutor in Medieval History, and Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford University. He lives in the United Kingdom.

Users Review

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