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## Medieval Chivalry

Emerging in the medieval period, chivalry embodied ideals that elite warriors cherished and practices that formed their profession. In this major new overview, Richard Kaeuper examines how chivalry made sense of violence and war, making it tolerable for elite fighters rather than nonknightly or subknightly populations. He discusses how chivalry buttressed status and profession, shaped active piety, and fostered intense warrior attachments and heterosexual relationships. Though showing regional and chronological variations, chivalry at its core enshrined the practice of prowess in securing honor, with this process significantly blessed by religion. Both kingship and church authority sought to direct the great force of chivalry and, despite tensions, finally came to terms with rising knightly status and a burgeoning military role. Kaeuper engages with a wide range of evidence in his analysis, drawing on the chivalric literature, manuscript illumination, and sermon exempla and moral tales.

RICHARD W. KAEUPER is Professor of History at the University of Rochester, NY. His previous publications include *Holy Warriors* (2009), *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (1999), *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Chamy* (with Elspeth Kennedy, 1996), and *War, Justice and Public Order* (1988).

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Advance praise for *Medieval Chivalry*

“Professor Kaeuper is one of the foremost experts on medieval chivalry, equally at home with the evidence provided by literature and the sources normally used by historians. This new textbook draws together the important insights that he has offered on violence and religion within medieval chivalric culture, to provide a clear and exciting vision of this complex field.”

Craig Taylor, University of York

“Richard Kaeuper’s new book is a *tour de force*. It presents chivalry as one of the great defining forces of medieval culture. Anyone wishing to grasp medieval chivalry, and indeed the Middle Ages as a whole, will have to read this book or run the risk of seriously misunderstanding the topic.”

Christoph T. Maier, University of Zurich

“*Medieval Chivalry* is a deeply erudite and multilayered analysis of a complicated and much misunderstood subject. Professor Kaeuper, the leading scholar in the field, examines chivalry in its political, social, economic, and literary contexts. It is a *tour de force* that will set the terms for future discussion.”

William Caferro, Vanderbilt University

“In what is destined to become the standard work on the subject, Richard Kaeuper’s *Medieval Chivalry* explores the historical evolution of this aristocratic military ethos from the ninth through the fifteenth century. Guided by his unrivaled mastery of chivalric literature, Kaeuper strips away the varnish of nineteenth-century romanticism to reveal a contested ideology that, at its heart, valorized the practice of violence by a social elite.”

Richard Abels, United States Naval Academy

“In this masterly new study of the nature and development of European chivalry from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. Kaeuper takes us into the thought world of the medieval warrior aristocracy with verve and rare perception. He probes the essence of chivalric values and their expression in war and peace, elucidating with freshness and clarity chivalry’s complex and subtly evolving interaction with religion, nobility, courtliness, and the state. Impressive in its range and skillful synthesis, this valuable and thought-provoking study will be essential reading for specialists and students alike.”

Matthew Strickland, University of Glasgow

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RICHARD W. KAEUPER  
*University of Rochester*



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To the memory of Joseph R. Strayer  
and Edmund B. Fryde

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