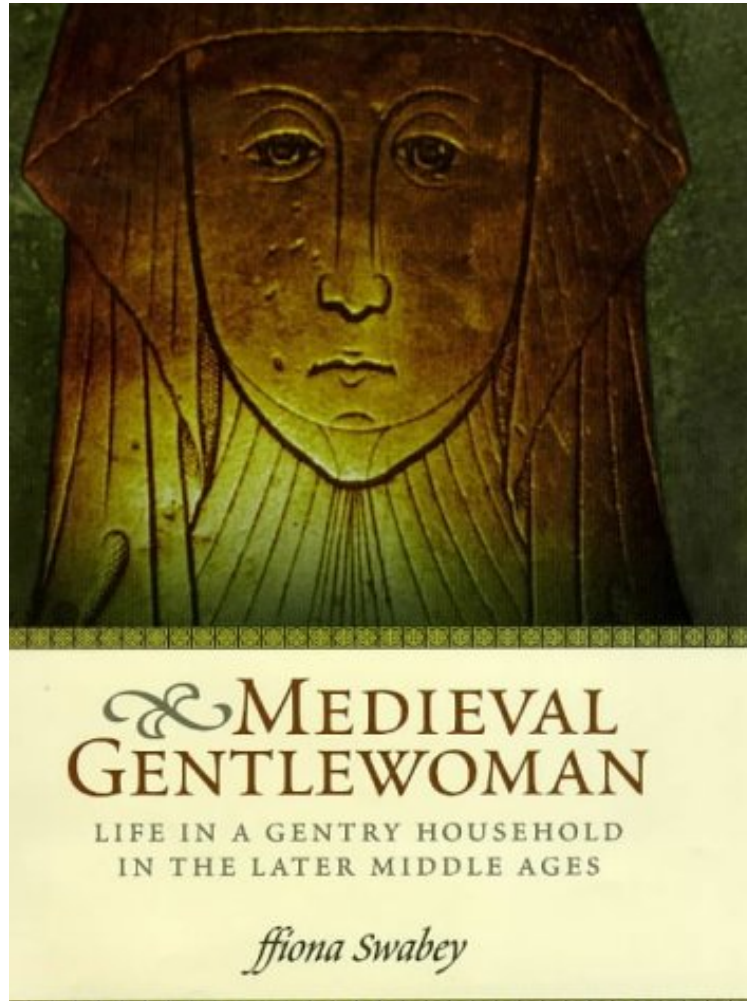


## Medieval Gentlewoman: Life in a Gentry Household in the Later Middle Ages

*fiona Swabey*

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**fiona Swabey : Medieval Gentlewoman: Life in a Gentry Household in the Later Middle Ages** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Medieval Gentlewoman: Life in a Gentry Household in the Later Middle Ages:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Daily life of a medieval gentlewomanBy Kilian85710I bought this book to assist me in creating my character when I was playing in the Society for Creative Anachronism. I wanted the freedom to be a single woman, wealthy enough to live on my own without the responsibilities that great status would bring. Rich enough to be comfortable, but not so rich as to be a target for marriage to a man looking for a rich marriage portion, and well connected to men who would protect me without interfering with my life.Alice de Brynne

fit the bill nicely. As a householder and landowner of several large estates, she had more freedom than most women of her time, and she spent it in tending to her estates. Her day-to-day life was closely attuned to her tenants and their needs. According to her account books, her daily meals with her tenants were simple, with occasional meals more lavish than usual when entertaining visiting prelates or aristocracy. She knew the names and families of her workers. Hers was a familiar face in the fields and workhouses on the main estate of Acton. In addition to being full of the detail of daily life, this book is beautifully produced, with many black-and-white pictures as well as color pictures. It is a detailed portrait of an ordinary medieval gentlewoman.<sup>4</sup> of 4 people found the following review helpful. A good look at a gentry woman's life

By a medieval researcher This is a great starter book for those who are interested in a medieval gentrywoman's life. Fiona Swabey is an interesting writer who gives us a general idea of Alice de Bryne's life, and consequently any gentry woman's life in general. It was interesting to see that although Alice was considered gentry, not aristocracy, and therefore lower on the wealth scale, this woman still had numerous estates, four personal chaplains, dozens of servants and hundreds of peasants working under her.<sup>4</sup> of 4 people found the following review helpful. The Real Deal from a Real Dame

By Kass McGann Fiona Swabey's "The Medieval Gentlewoman" is a terrific book for anyone interested in what life was like for the gentry in late 14th/early 15th century England. Her book is written based on household accounts and records from Acton Manor, the estate of Dame Alice Bryene, a widow in her 50s in the period the book covers. Ms. Swabey analyzes the data from the household accounts to give us a vivid picture of Dame Alice's life and the world in which she lived and conducted business. Despite the fact that it is heavy with primary documentation, this book is not at all dry. Ms. Swabey manages to tell us a story while retaining the accuracy that we historical reenactors desire.

This richly detailed account provides an important addition to current work on women in late medieval England, taking as its starting point the household diary of Alice de Bryene, a Suffolk noblewoman of the late 14th and early 15th century. Like Christine de Pizan, de Bryene enjoyed greater status and influence as a widow and owner of several large estates than most married women of her time, allowing her a remarkable degree of social and financial independence. Moving outward from de Bryene's own life, this illuminating work provides a vivid picture of the medieval household, examining marriage, education, patronage, and the private and public roles of the medieval woman of privilege.

"...this book yields a fascinating perspective of a distant era." -- Bloomsbury "A leader in this field..." -- Caroline Barron, Royal Holloway, University of London "An imaginative, concise, and interesting appraisal of late medieval aristocratic widowhood. A must acquisition for general and undergraduate libraries." -- Choice "[Swabey's] account fires the imagination with details...." -- Publisher's Weekly

About the Author Fiona Swabey received her MA in Women's History, Gender and Society from London University. She has trained as a Jungian analyst and is a writer and reviewer.