



The Trial of Gilles De Rais

By Georges Bataille

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The Trial of Gilles De Rais By Georges Bataille

Georges Bataille presents the case of the most infamous villain of the Middle Ages: Gilles de Rais. Fascinated with the depths of human experience—the meeting points of sexuality, violence, ritual, spirituality, and death—Bataille examines with dispassionate clarity the legendary crimes, trials and confessions of this grotesque and still-horrifying 15th-century child-murderer, sadist, alchemist, necrophile and practitioner of the Black Arts.

Gilles de Rais began his remarkable career as lieutenant to the devout martyr and saint Joan of Arc; after her execution, he fled to his estates in the countryside of France, where he began to ritually slaughter hundreds of children. After his arrest and subsequent trials, he was hanged and burned at Nantes, France on October 25, 1440. The latter section of The Trial of Gilles de Rais consists of the actual ecclesiastical and secular trial transcripts, annotated by Bataille, and translated from the ecclesiastical Latin by Pierre Klossowski.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This book about the notorious 15th-century serial killer of young children, written by France's famous connoisseur of transgression—the man the surrealist André Breton labeled an 'excremental philosopher'—represents a marriage not made in heaven, perhaps, but surely nowhere on this earth ... the fact is that The Trial of Gilles de Rais gives us Bataille at his most accessible—he had been trained as a medievalist librarian, after all—and is probably, taken in its entirety, the best thing now available in English on one of the most bizarre figures in European history." -- New York Times Book Review

About the Author

Georges Bataille

Richard Robinson

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