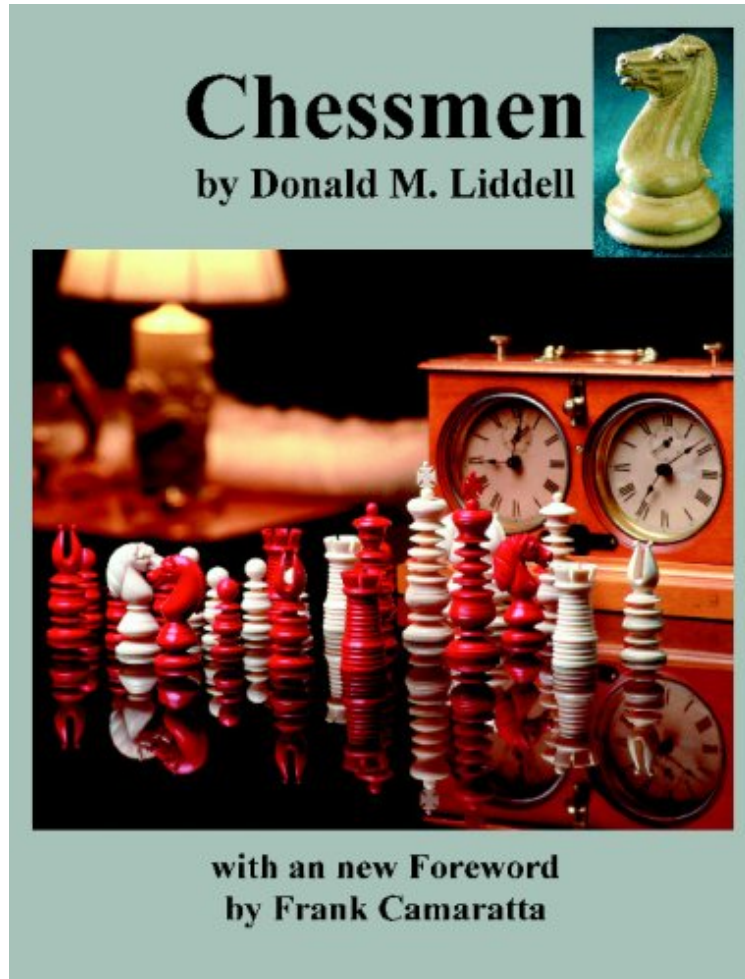


Chessmen

Donald M. Liddell

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Donald M. Liddell : Chessmen before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chessmen:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Good Book, originally published 1937By Rick KnowltonThe best thing about this book for me is that it's got photos (black and white) of some old sets I don't find in any other publications. I'm especially pleased to find the selection of medieval pieces.The disappointment in this book is that, although the modern chess experts, Frank Camaratta and Sam Sloan have their names attached to it, this book was first published in 1937 by a fellow who's long gone. Much of the information is out of date, and of interest more to the "chess history historian" than to the modern "chess historian."If you are looking for a good "old" publication about chessmen, this would be a good choice. It is unfortunate that the listing and description of this book does not clarify the original publication date.

The author begins with the evolution of the chessmen and traces their evolution as the game spread throughout the known World. A short introduction to chessmen from the earliest times is followed by chapters on the impact of Geography, Religion and politics on the design of the chessmen. In these pages, the reader will find fascinating photographs and sketches of the earliest known chessmen. The section on Chess in Art and Archeology by the late collector and accomplished Architect John F. Harbeson of Philadelphia will be of particular interest to the reader. His observation in its opening sentence: All forms of art, all manifestations of the creative impulse, record the life of the civilization which produced them, is very revealing and goes directly to the heart of this work. A chapter on famous Collectors and designers of chessmen, as well as sets owned by significant historical figures, such as Napoleon Bonaparte, along with some amusing anecdotes, makes for some light but interesting reading. There are even the scores of two games allegedly played by Napoleon. There are sections devoted to the crafting of chessmen in various media, including ceramics, metal, bone, ivory and wood. Some famous resorts, such as the Café de la Régence, are visited and their relevance to chess history explored. Interestingly, the oldest chess club in the United States seems to be the New York Chess Club which held its meetings at the Old City Hall in 1801, and the Athenaeum in Philadelphia, which still houses some of the chess artifacts from those early days.

About the Author Donald M. Liddell was an authority on chess history and was also a chemical engineer.