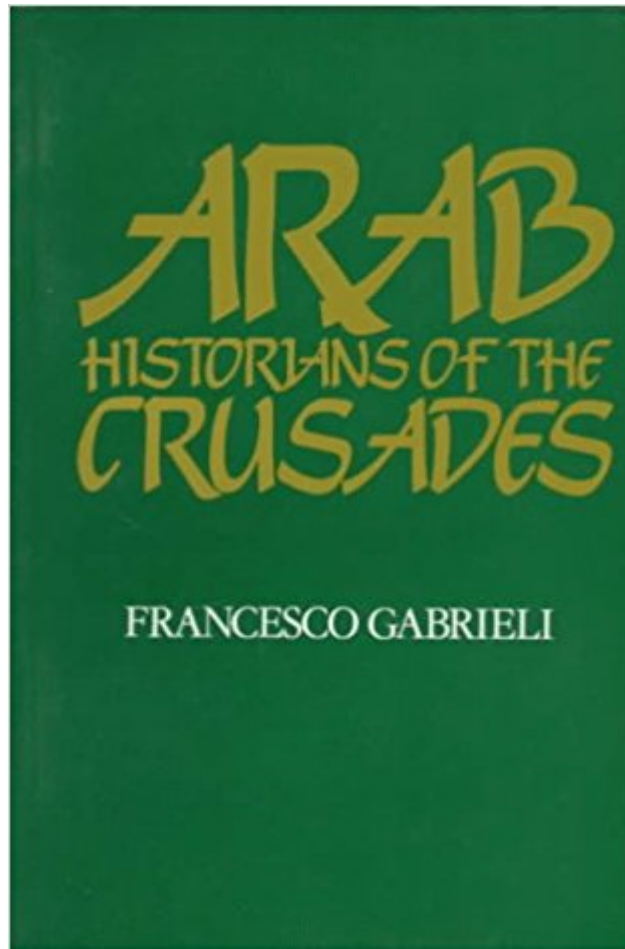




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Arab Historians Of The Crusades (Islamic World Series)



Synopsis

The recapture of Jerusalem, the siege of the Acre, the fall of Tripoli, the effect in Baghdad of events in Syria; these and other happening were faithfully recorded by Arab historians during the two centuries of the Crusades. For the first time contemporary accounts of the fighting between Muslim and Christian have been translated into English, and the Western reader can learn 'the other side' of the Holy War. Seventeen authors are represented in the extracts in this work, which have been drawn from various types of historical writings. The excerpts are taken firstly from the general histories of the Muslim world, then from chronicles of cities, regions and their dynasties, and finally from biographies or records of the deeds of certain persons. The Arab histories of the Crusades compare favorably with their Christian counterparts in their rich accumulation of material and chronological information. Another of their merits is their faithful characterization, which they practiced in the brief but illuminating sketches of enemy leaders: Baldwin II's shrewdness, Richard Coeur de Lion's prowess in war, the indomitable energy of Conrad of Motferrat, Frederick II's diplomacy. The chronicles are generous, naturally, with their praises of the great champions of the Muslim resistance, especially of Saladin, who towers above all the other leaders in heroic stature. Although, this book gives a sweeping and stimulating view of the Crusades seen through Arab eyes.

Book Information

Series: Islamic World

Paperback: 362 pages

Publisher: University of California Press (June 18, 1984)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0520052242

ISBN-13: 978-0520052246

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #269,460 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #227 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Middle East](#) #1113 in [Books > History > Middle East](#) #1657 in [Books > History > World > Religious > Christianity](#)

Customer Reviews

'Professor Gabrieli has been completely successful in presenting a precise, vivid and impartial picture of these two centuries of relations between the Arabic-speaking world of the Middle East and

the Christian world of Europe' - Asian Affairs

Text: English, Italian, Arabic (translation)

If you are interested in the Crusades, this is a must have in your library. This gives eyewitness accounts from the perspective from the Arab historians. This book is very readable and valuable for amateur student of the Crusades like myself. You will find yourself using this book a lot for cross referencing other books on the Crusades. The third Crusade is covered very well in this book, since it was a very important era for the Arabs during these historical times.

fast shipment as described.

This book is full of first hand accounts by muslim chroniclers during the various crusades. Some of the opinions are biased and may be hateful exaggerations of the truth but I found it a fascinating read. It seemed to me the muslims wrote from a more authentic voice than that of many crusader points of view from the various books I have read. Well worth your time. Also read The Alexiad by Anna Comnena, The Crusades through arab eyes is also good. If anyone has any other historical reads worth reading please post. I really enjoy reading first hand accounts.

This book as a number of other reviewers have pointed out is a collection of Muslim (The author presents them as Arabs though thats another matter) accounts of the Crusades. While there have been quite a number of other similar books written in recent yeas (Maalouf "The crusades through Arab eyes") For example which is written largely based upon ibn Athir's "Complete history" There is little (Especially at an affordable price) Translated into English from the original historians themselves. The book itself is divided into chapters or rather chunks of translation from a number of contemporary Muslim historians who wrote about significant events of the crusades. The conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, the rise of Saladin, the Seljuks of Anatolia, the battles in Palestine, the re-capture of Jerusalem and the rise of the Mamluks which resulted in the final expulsion of the Crusaders from the holy land. The translator uses not only ibn Athir but also ibn Munqidh (Also translated by Philip Hitti amongst others) One problem with this method of translation is that in parts it can become quite confusing. For example, the translator will translate accounts of the conquest of Jerusalem by one author, move onto another event then translate something by another author returning back to the conquest of Jerusalem. In another words, the book appears quite disjointed

and doesn't really have much of a flow to it. You will often find yourself reading the same event written by a different historian which isn't really a problem if you give all the accounts in the same place but the translator tends to just translate one large chunk of a book at a time without any real effort to make it chronological. A second problem is there is no real time scale for events so a reader not especially familiar with the history of the crusades may very quickly find themselves lost especially in events regarding the attempted conquest of Egypt or the Mamluk conquest of the remaining crusader castles of Palestine. Contrary to what one reviewer has put this book makes no mention of the Balkans or Spain and quite why she has put that is frankly beyond me so if you are buying this book expecting the history of the Balkans and Andalusia expect to be disappointed. I would recommend Harvey "Muslim Spain and Portugal" or the books of Halik Inalcik if you are interested in that part of history. All in all an interesting book. If you have watched the film Kingdom of Heaven you may be intrigued to read this as the account that Saladin initially refused to negotiate a surrender and was only convinced when Balian informed him that a population who were left no choice would fight with all the more determination (As the film depicts) Was actually based upon Arab sources.

As other reviewers have noted, this book is an engrossing, highly informative text, that is (generally) quite an easy read. It can be gory and propagandistic at times, as some have noted. Overall, it's a very good digest of Muslim narratives of several key events. The main drawback is that I would not consider this a stand-alone book, particularly on a lot of the convoluted political arrangements - I'd suggest Wasserman's "Templars & the Assassins: The Militia of Heaven" for that - and I really don't think one can get the full understanding of the Muslim mentality in fighting the Crusaders from it. For that I'd suggest al-Sulami's "Way of Sufi Chivalry" (for those on a budget) or preferably Sabzawari's "Royal Book of Spiritual Chivalry" (for those who aren't) to get into the mindset of the Muslim warriors. For while "Arab Historians" includes a lot personal commentary from the authors, these last two books were written as guides for the emirs and warriors, and once reading them one gets the feeling that "Arab Historians" was written by some military public relations officer. Still a highly recommended, enjoyable read, though.

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