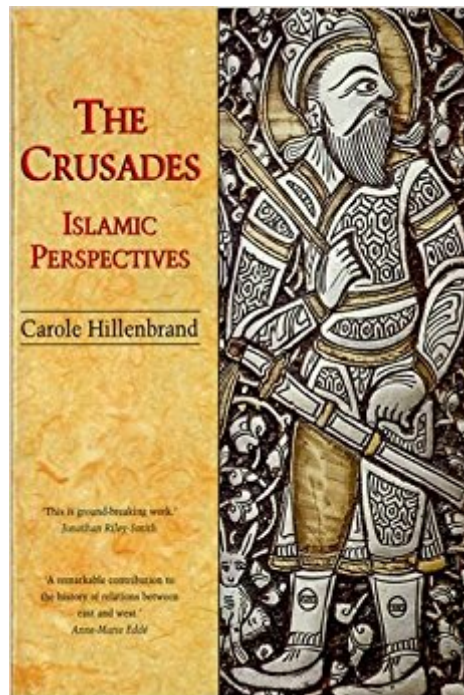


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The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives (Islamic Surveys)



Synopsis

Following the 900th anniversary of the Crusader capture of Jerusalem, it is now time to reflect on how the phenomenon of the Crusades influenced the Muslim world, then and now: militarily, culturally and psychologically. Carole Hillenbrand discusses a group of themes that highlight how Muslims reacted to the alien presence of the Crusaders in the heart of traditional Muslim territory. She examines ideological concerns and the importance of the jihad in the context of the gradual recovery of the Holy Land and the expulsion of the Crusaders.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is ground-breaking work, and its value lies not only in the detailed reportage, but also in the way Carole Hillenbrand gives western historians a guide to source material, either unknown to them or available only in partial translation, and introduces her readers to the mindset of medieval Muslims, providing an entirely different angle from which to look at the crusading movement. By putting modern ideas into context the book will enable readers in both the western and Islamic worlds to understand better events which to some extent are shaping the present. -- Jonathan Riley-Smith The Crusades from a Western viewpoint have produced a very rich and abundant bibliography for more than a century. On the other hand, very few studies on the Muslim response to the Crusade have appeared. For the first time the subject is tackled here globally and an attempt is made to explain, through a deep analysis of the Arabic sources, the motives and aims of the Muslims ! This work - which shows very clearly the impact which the Crusades have had in Islamic

territory up until our own time - is a remarkable contribution to the history of relations between east and west. -- Anne-Marie Edde Hillenbrand's admirable book, the first comprehensive attempt to pull together the relevant Muslim texts on these wars, lets the sources speak for themselves, and provides intriguing insights into the deeply rooted problems which face us today ! she has done a masterful job, providing us with a whole new way to examine the traditional western material on the Crusades. A magisterial and path-breaking study in its own right ! a veritable treasure trove of material heretofore unavailable to the non-Arabist ! The Crusades is a masterly and welcome contribution to the historiography of the Crusades. Hillenbrand has set an enviable standard of scholarship from which teachers and students of the Crusades, the medieval Middle East, and medieval Europe will long benefit. It is a major contribution !The book is profusely illustrated and the illustrations are on the whole well chosen. This is ground-breaking work, and its value lies not only in the detailed reportage, but also in the way Carole Hillenbrand gives western historians a guide to source material, either unknown to them or available only in partial translation, and introduces her readers to the mindset of medieval Muslims, providing an entirely different angle from which to look at the crusading movement. By putting modern ideas into context the book will enable readers in both the western and Islamic worlds to understand better events which to some extent are shaping the present. The Crusades from a Western viewpoint have produced a very rich and abundant bibliography for more than a century. On the other hand, very few studies on the Muslim response to the Crusade have appeared. For the first time the subject is tackled here globally and an attempt is made to explain, through a deep analysis of the Arabic sources, the motives and aims of the Muslims ! This work - which shows very clearly the impact which the Crusades have had in Islamic territory up until our own time - is a remarkable contribution to the history of relations between east and west. Hillenbrand's admirable book, the first comprehensive attempt to pull together the relevant Muslim texts on these wars, lets the sources speak for themselves, and provides intriguing insights into the deeply rooted problems which face us today ! she has done a masterful job, providing us with a whole new way to examine the traditional western material on the Crusades. A magisterial and path-breaking study in its own right ! a veritable treasure trove of material heretofore unavailable to the non-Arabist ! The Crusades is a masterly and welcome contribution to the historiography of the Crusades. Hillenbrand has set an enviable standard of scholarship from which teachers and students of the Crusades, the medieval Middle East, and medieval Europe will long benefit. It is a major contribution !The book is profusely illustrated and the illustrations are on the whole well chosen.

Carole Hillenbrand is Honorary Professorial Fellow, Professor Emerita at the University of Edinburgh. In 2005 she became the first non-Muslim scholar to be awarded the prestigious King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies, reflecting her 'revolutionary approach to the largely one-sided subject of the Crusades'. She is author of *The Crusades* (EUP, 1999), *The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate* (Albany, 1989), *A Muslim Principality in Crusader Times* (Brill, 1990), and co-editor (with C. E. Bosworth) of *Qajar Iran* (Edinburgh, 1984) and editor of *The Sultan's Turret* (Brill, 1999).

I used this book for my Master's thesis and I found it to be an interesting read in spite of having to read it for school work. Great accounts of Muslims at the time of the Crusades- what they did and what they thought. Very rare in Crusades history, sadly. It's a large, scholarly work, but broken up into many sections like a textbook and containing lots of artwork so it's very approachable for the scholar or Crusades enthusiast alike. The pictures alone are worth the price of the book. Those interested in art history of this period and cultures will find the book very valuable.

Hillenbrand researched hundreds of Arabic sources to provide an excellent overview of Islamic writers' opinions about crusaders and the crusades. She arranges the work chronologically with chapters on daily life, arms, the conduct of war and the heritage of the crusades. The work is lavishly illustrated. The writing is accessible.

This is the best-produced academic paperback I have ever seen. The book is wonderfully illustrated. The photographs are supplemented by hundreds of intriguing drawings in the wide margins. The text is spaciouly presented and easy to read. I found zero typographical errors in more than six hundred pages of text, a delight in these days of hasty editing. Hillenbrand's writing is clear, straightforward, and balanced. The book presents a much-needed new perspective on the Crusades. Five stars.

Hillenbrand did a fantastic job writing this book. It is easily the most detailed, nuanced, and evenhanded treatment about the Crusades from the Islamic perspective available. The only drawback is that it is extensively illustrated, with images on nearly every page, and few of the images have any direct relationship to the text. Hillenbrand herself states that most of the illustrations were included simply to give readers a feel for the visual character of medieval Islam. This is a sensible goal, but surely could have been achieved with less. I suspect that it is because of

the printing costs of so many unnecessary pictures that the cover price for the paperback is over \$70 and the hardcover a whopping \$250. The publishers should seriously consider issuing a second edition with 90% of the illustrations removed and a cover price around \$25-35 for the paperback. Then this book could receive the wide readership it deserves.

I have only skimmed the surface of this book, yet am very impressed. The bibliography alone is a treasure for anyone studying the Crusades. It's arranged so that the translated chronicles are used to illustrate points in the narrative. The index is detailed and useful, while the narrative itself is easy to read and divided into subsections within the chapters (for example: Old Frankish Women, Marriage, Medicine etc.) A welcome addition to Crusades scholarship, especially for students/readers who cannot read the originals.

This book is an excellent review of the most up-to-date knowledge we have about contemporary Islamic perspectives on the "Wars of the Cross." The author carefully sets out her purpose in writing this work, which includes both Muslim sources for the major figures and events, as well as Muslim perceptions of the Crusaders and how the Crusades have influenced Middle Eastern history. Anyone wishing to learn fully about this time period must read this work.

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