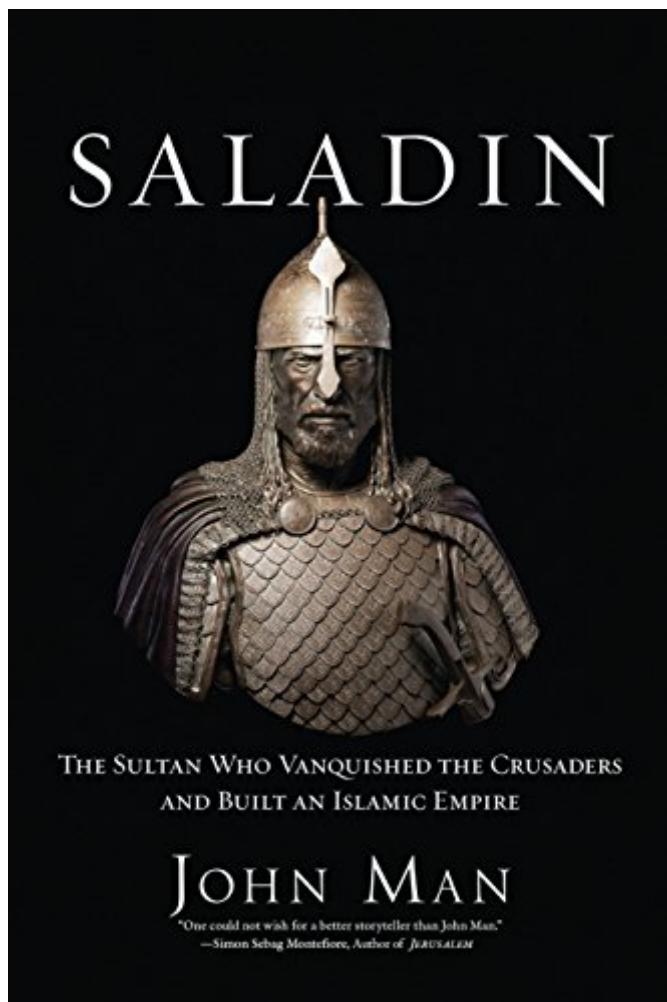


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Saladin: The Sultan Who Vanquished The Crusaders And Built An Islamic Empire



Synopsis

In this authoritative biography, historian John Man brings Saladin and his world to life with vivid detail in "a rollicking good story" (Justin Marozzi).

Book Information

File Size: 26001 KB

Print Length: 314 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 0306824876

Publisher: Da Capo Press (April 5, 2016)

Publication Date: April 5, 2016

Language: English

ASIN: B017QL8XCW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #73,012 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #10 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Middle East #14 in Books > History > Middle East > Syria #14 in Books > History > Africa > Egypt

Customer Reviews

This is a very fine history of the crusading era. With little known of his childhood, it starts with Saladin under his mentors Nur-ed-Din and his uncle Shirkuh, featuring the Sunni-Shia split still in evidence in the Muslim world. Known in the Western world for his successes against the crusaders, his greatest accomplishment was consolidating and expanding the union of Abassid Syria and, formerly Fatamid Egypt, begun by his great predecessors. G.A. Nassar who did the same thing with the short lived UAR, 1958-61, had pretensions to the mantle of Saladin. Man does a good job of wending his way through the politics of Byzantines, Seljuks, Arabs and Ismaili Assassins as well as Christian kings and crusaders. In appealing to the Abassid caliph for support against the crusaders, Saladin noted that jihad is the obligation of every Muslim, something the West ignores today in our evaluation of the Islamic threat. There's a fine account of the wars against his enemies of the third crusade culminating in the battle of Hattin, recovery of Jerusalem and the battle of Arsuf against Richard I that dented Saladin's reputation of invincibility. Saladin was admired in the West for his

generalship, forbearance, chivalry, generosity, truthfulness, and ethics including judicious use of hard and soft power, preferring negotiation to war. His reputation is probably greatest among his former enemies. In studying Saladin's character, the epilogue contains a bit of amateur leadership behavioral psychology. Man notes that Saladin was forgotten for 500 years until resurrected in popular history along with literature and film. I'm not sure whether that's exclusive to the West.

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