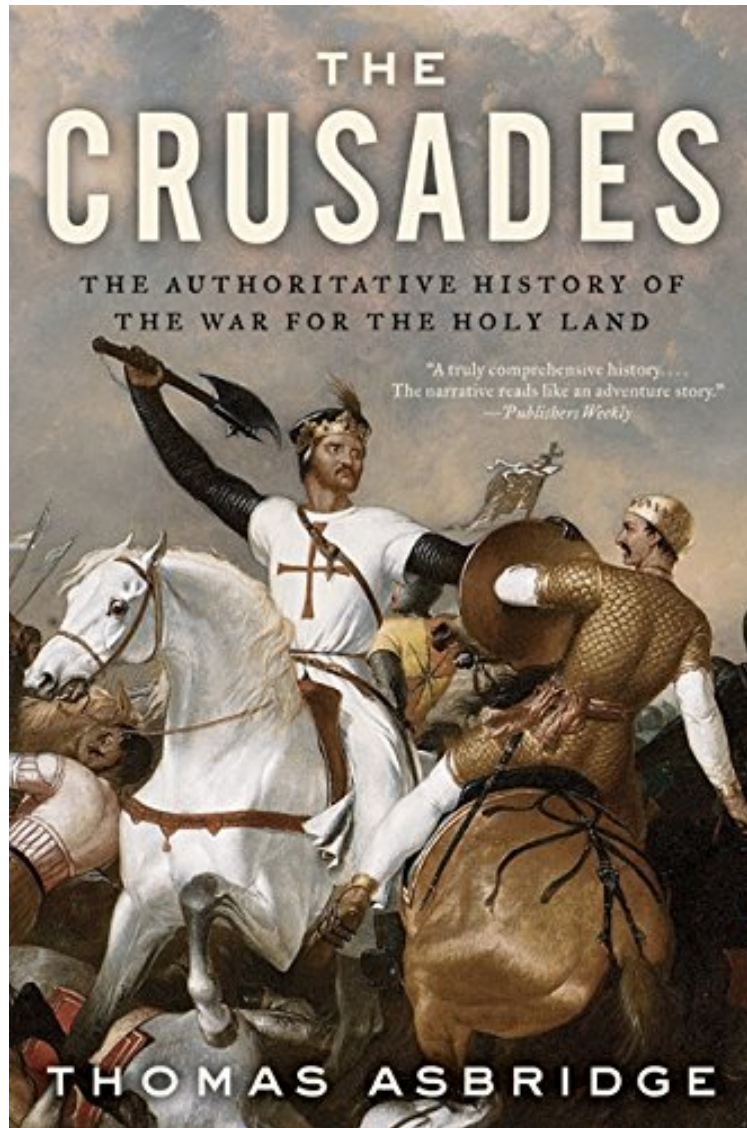


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# The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land

Thomas Asbridge

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#30764 in Books Ecco Press 2011-03-08 2011-03-08 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x 1.26 x 5.311, 1.38 #File Name: 0060787295784 pages Ecco Press | File size: 37.Mb

**Thomas Asbridge : The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good study. By Karen Van Buskirk This book is a very interesting and in depth review of medieval crusades and the powerful men who wielded the swords. I found it quite complicated

in following the timelines and locations so using a historical map (included in the book) helpful. I also tracked the major event dates by building a diagram of sorts. This seemed make the reading flow better. All in all, it is a fascinating time and illustrates the tumultuous growth of the Christian church. Be prepared to take your time. 346 of 355 people found the following review helpful. The best one-volume history of The Crusades I've yet read By Shawn M. Ritchie A good, readable history of The Crusades has escaped me to this point, for whatever reason. I was very excited when Tynerman's *God's War* was released a few years ago, and quickly became disenchanted when I tried slogging through it and realized what a boringly-written brick it was. Couldn't finish it. Runciman's classic volumes, which have been the definitive essential reading for half a century now, are still valid, entertaining reads but have been long since over-taken by newer evidence and much fresher, more-encompassing interpretations. As a read, they're still great fun. As good history, they're quite biased and lacking today. So, when I saw a shiny new tome promising a complete revisiting of long-held assumptions, I couldn't resist. Asbridge's chronology is straightforward; starting with a quick survey of Islam's rise and subsequent takeover of the Christian Holy Land, he moves to Europe to set the scene of the medieval papacy and nascent western kingships that would bring about the concept of Crusading. In a nice touch, he continues to revisit the contemporary meanings, definitions and assumptions behind crusading as it developed from an event without even a name ("crusading" was a later appellation) to the currently-understood form. From these basics, he moves us through each of the main five Crusades, deftly describing the expected peoples, places, and battles. He strikes a good balance between talking about the most important figures and key battles versus the less-glamorous but as-important topics such as trade and societal makeup that, while harder to make exciting, are very important when trying to gain a full understanding of the events. Very crucially, he spends as much time covering the Arab viewpoint as he does the Christian. He also properly gives notice to the fact that, while western sources are fairly voluminous by the standards of the era, the Crusades just didn't have a major impact on the Muslim world at the time, and therefore sources from the Muslim POV are much less available. That said, he does an admirable job of situating the reader as best he can in the Muslim frame of mind during each crusade, giving admirable detail on outside pressures that might've existed, any internal dynastic or civil events that had bearing on their interactions with the Crusaders... other histories I've read of this era often fall flat in this particular regard. He closes with an excellent overview of how the Crusades have themselves been viewed throughout history, both in the West and in the Muslim World; this may have been my favorite part of the book as it's not a topic I've ever seen covered before, much less so well. The writing style is nice and lively as well. It reads almost like a strong historical fiction narrative, a testament not only to the author's skill but to the inherent drama of the period. **BOTTOM LINE:** This will be my only answer for anyone asking for a recommendation on the period for probably years to come. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well done - excellent narration, extensive look at the subject matter By M. Long Well done - excellent narration, extensive look at the subject matter. Outstanding detail, good background into cause effect. A bit of repetition, but overall, a very good book!

The Crusades is an authoritative, accessible single-volume history of the brutal struggle for the Holy Land in the Middle Ages. Thomas Asbridge a renowned historian who writes with maximum vividness (Joan Acocella, *The New Yorker*) covers the years 1095 to 1291 in this big, ambitious, readable account of one of the most fascinating periods in history. From Richard the Lionheart to the mighty Saladin, from the emperors of Byzantium to the Knights Templar, Asbridge's book is a magnificent epic of Holy War between the Christian and Islamic worlds, full of adventure, intrigue, and sweeping grandeur.

From Booklist Author of *The First Crusade* (2004), British historian Asbridge widens his vista to the entire 1195-1291 duration of the crusading era, giving prominence in the holy-war epic to antagonists forever famous: Richard the Lionheart and Saladin. Each leader's role as standard-bearer of his cause reflects Asbridge's significant emphasis on the entanglement of secular politics with the overt religious aspect to the wars between Latin Christianity and Islam. Crass considerations of dynastic power were never separate from the calculations of these champions and their successors, and partly indicate Islam's desultory pace in expunging the Christian states established by the First Crusade. In addition, medieval warfare's high-risk character in which a single encounter, such as the 1098 siege of Antioch or the 1187 Battle of Hattin, could completely turn the strategic tables goes far in Asbridge's able hands to informing readers about the course of the Crusades. With perceptive commentary about spiritual motivations behind crusading and perspectives from contemporary Islamic sources, Asbridge constructs a comprehensive, sophisticated, and arresting analytical narrative rewarding to any level of historical interest, whether recreational or scholarly. --Gilbert Taylor Brilliant, authoritative, and accessible, Thomas Asbridge's *THE CRUSADES* is a must read. Asbridge balances impeccable scholarship with a gifted storyteller's engaging voice. He vividly portrays the driving forces and personalities, the perspectives of Christians and Muslims, and the legacy of the Crusades in Christian and Muslim history and imagination. (Professor John L. Esposito, Director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, and author of *The Future of Islam*.) A truly comprehensive history of holy war in the Holy Land. Emphasizing the dramatic Third Crusade and its heroic antagonists, Richard the Lionheart and Saladin, the

narrative reads like an adventure story, albeit one that is both factual and instructive. (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) From the Back Cover From a renowned historian who writes with "maximum vividness" (The New Yorker) comes the most authoritative, readable single-volume history of the brutal struggle for the holy land. Nine hundred years ago, a vast Christian army, summoned to holy war by the Pope, rampaged through the Muslim world of the eastern Mediterranean, seizing possession of Jerusalem, a city revered by both faiths. Over the two hundred years that followed, Islam and Christianity fought for dominion of the Holy Land, clashing in a succession of chillingly brutal wars: the Crusades. Here for the first time is the story of that epic struggle told from the perspective of both Christians and Muslims. A vivid and fast-paced narrative history, it exposes the full horror, passion, and barbaric grandeur of the Crusading era, revealing how these holy wars reshaped the medieval world and why they continue to influence events today.