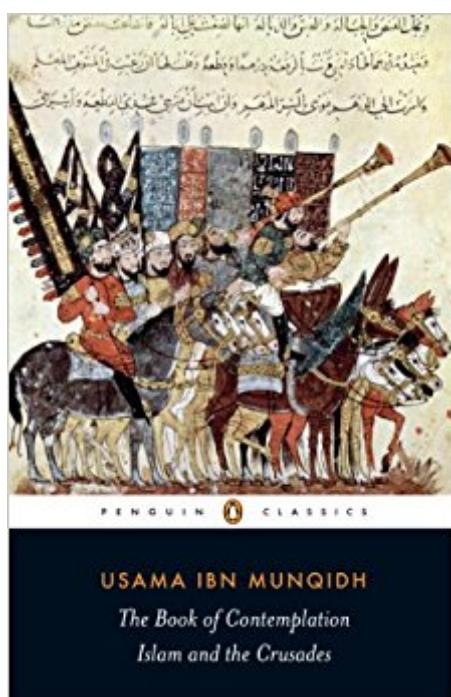


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The Book Of Contemplation: Islam And The Crusades (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

The Crusades as seen through the eyes of Muslims A significant contribution to the understanding of the medieval holy wars between Christians and Muslims, this volume brings together the best and most complete eyewitness account of the Crusades from the perspective of a medieval Muslim writer. Focusing on twelfth-century Arab aristocrat Usama ibn Munqidh's Book of Contemplation but also including extracts from The Book of the Staff and Kernels of Refinement, this volume offers a strikingly human portrayal of Islamic perspectives on day-to-day existence, warfare, and the curious European invaders. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Usama ibn Munqidh (1095-1188) was born in northern Syria. In the last decades of his life he concentrated on writing, collecting his scattered poems into a much-praised Diwan, but specialising in topical anthologies of poetry and prose like The Book of the Staff or Kernels of Refinement. Usama's last patron was the mighty sultan Saladin, to whom he intended his most famous work, the Book of Contemplation. He died in Damascus in 1188.

I was required to read one of three books for a low level history course. I chose this one just because I had never heard of it and didn't really know anything about the Islamic perspective of the crusades (or really anything). It's astoundingly great and I can't believe that it isn't more popular (though according to Wikipedia it is a translated work that has been under many names, and The Book Of Contemplation is just the latest one). The stories are very visceral and sometimes gory, but there's also plenty of light-hearted stories and lessons to be learned. It's definitely a fun read, but can be a little confusing due to the muslim names and places if you aren't familiar with their structure. However, the book includes a glossary of names, maps, and references for expressions and historical things you might not know. I highly recommend this book for anyone that has the slightest interest in the crusades!

Fascinating glimpse of life a thousand years ago in the middle east. Delightful surprises for me included lions roaming the region, hunting with raptors, the state of medicine, and the range of travel. The writer went back and forth from present day Syria to North Africa in an era long before motorized transport. Added bonus, places in the news today crop up including Homs, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo, and Baghdad. These were already well established cities even then. Certainly sheds light on how western intervention was regarded back then, and by extension, now.

Usama's account gives us a glimpse into the medieval world. I highly recommend it if you are having trouble comprehending how crucially different life was back then. People, literally, think differently, their world is governed by religion and every act is subject to judgement. Mr. Cobb does an excellent job, making hundreds of interesting notes on the smallest details.

Excellent

Price of book was better than the one at my University.

I thought this book was clear and direct of its defense of Islam.

AS EXPECTED,CAME IN GOOD CONDITIONS,LOOKS JUST LIKE THE PICTURE.IT'S SOFT COVER.

An easy to read collection of rambling tales and facts. This puts a humanizing face on Islam that is sorely needed in the Western world. Funny, entertaining, and fascinating. Munqidh is unique (almost a palindrome (Well, not really)).

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