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The Crusades Through Arab Eyes (Saqi Essentials)

Amin Maalouf

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European and Arab versions of the Crusades have little in common. For Arabs, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were years of strenuous efforts to repel a brutal and destructive invasion by barbarian hordes. Under Saladin, an unstoppable Muslim army inspired by prophets and poets finally succeeded in destroying the most powerful Crusader kingdoms. The memory of this greatest and most enduring victory ever won by a non-European society against the West still lives in the minds of millions of Arabs today. Amin Maalouf has sifted through the works of a score of contemporary Arab chroniclers of the Crusades, eyewitnesses and often participants in the events. He retells their stories in their own vivacious style, giving us a vivid portrait of a society rent by internal conflicts and shaken by a traumatic encounter with an alien culture. He retraces two critical centuries of Middle Eastern history, and offers fascinating insights into some of the forces that shape Arab and Islamic consciousness today. 'Well-researched and highly readable.' Guardian 'A useful and important analysis adding much to existing western histories worth recommending to George Bush.' London Review of Books 'Maalouf tells an inspiring story ... very readable ... warmly recommended.' Times Literary Supplement 'A wide readership should enjoy this vivid narrative of stirring events.' The Bookseller 'Very well done indeed ... Should be put in the hands of anyone who asks what lies behind the Middle East's present conflicts.' Middle East International

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