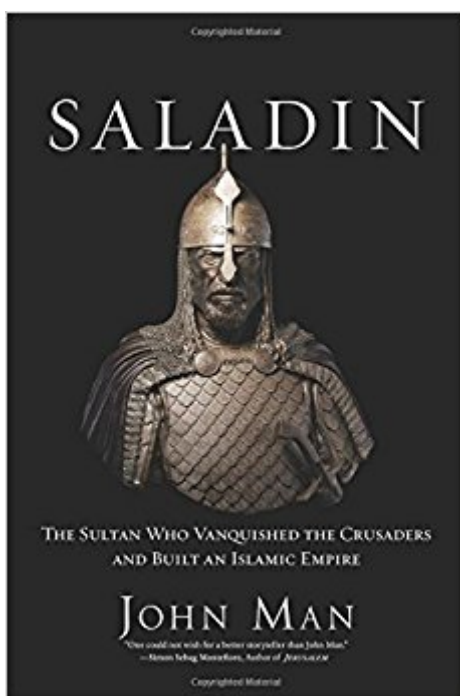


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# Saladin: The Sultan Who Vanquished The Crusaders And Built An Islamic Empire



## Synopsis

Saladin remains one of the most iconic figures of his age. As the man who united the Arabs and saved Islam from Christian crusaders in the twelfth century, he is the Islamic world's preeminent hero. A ruthless defender of his faith and brilliant leader, he also possessed qualities that won admiration from his Christian foes. But Saladin is far more than a historical hero. Builder, literary patron, and theologian, he is a man for all times, and a symbol of hope for an Arab world once again divided. Centuries after his death, in cities from Damascus to Cairo and beyond, to the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf, Saladin continues to be an immensely potent symbol of religious and military resistance to the West. He is central to Arab memories, sensibilities, and the ideal of a unified Islamic state. John Man charts Saladin's rise to power, his struggle to unify the warring factions of his faith, and his battles to retake Jerusalem and expel Christian influence from Arab lands. Saladin explores the life and enduring legacy of this champion of Islam while examining his significance for the world today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Roanoke Times, 5/15/16; Even if you come to this book with no knowledge of the Crusades or what the Middle East was like during the period, Man makes it easy for you to jump in; [He] does a very good job of describing the characters in this story, and he frames his narrative not as a history textbook, but as a tale about the life of a man and the passions that drove him. In reading the book, you get a good sense of the kind of person Saladin was, about his inherent nobility and drive to unite Islam under a single banner, both to defend the Holy Land from the Christians and to bring

an end to the divisiveness and strife that continue to cause problems in that part of the world"; A book that does a great job of introducing a reader to a complex subject. • Military Heritage, July 2016; An interesting account of Saladin's life in detail sufficient to give the reader a sense of the man without bogging the narrative down with too much information; The effects of the Crusades and Saladin's successful struggles against them echo through time to the present, giving this work relevance and scope. • Praise for Saladin Library Journal, 4/1/16; Well written and immensely entertaining; This book will appeal to anyone interested in the Crusades or medieval history. An excellent addition to a public or academic library. • Manhattan Book Review, 4/19/16; The historical side characters of this great narrative are accurately and faithfully identified in the book; Man's is primarily known for his masterful biographies of Genghis Khan. Yet, here he simply excels himself. Those interested in the mysterious qualities of the man's dual acts of kindness and brutalities will not leave this book wanting. • Foreword Reviews, Summer 2016; With the character depth and literary finesse of a novelist, bestselling historian John Man portrays the life of renowned twelfth-century sultan Saladin; Saladin is much more than a character study, however; The battle chapters are riveting; Parallels are astutely drawn to present-day sectarian strife and civil war; The power struggles Saladin faced, the betrayals and reversals, read like modern political dramas; A worthy biography of an important Muslim hero. • Portland Book Review, 5/27/16; Traces the rise of the Sultan from his little-documented childhood in the modern Middle East, through his first major command in Egypt, and finally, to his best-known role as the man who kicked the Christians out of Jerusalem; John Man shows a journalist's gift for context. • InfoDad blog, 6/2/16; Occasionally, not often, but occasionally; a war-focused book not only explains events of the past but also proves to have potentially significant relevance to events of our own time. So it is with John Man's well-written, well-researched Saladin. • Chicago Tribune's Printers Row, 6/12/16; [A] superb and eminently readable biography; Lucid and to the point. • Counterpunch, 7/29/16 • Blends military and general history, biography and myth to compile a fascinating narrative of Saladin's life and times. Neither hagiography nor its opposite, this text at its best provides some insight into the thinking of those who consider themselves the builders of a new Caliphate and at the minimum is a concise and intelligent biography of one of history's most influential men. • Donovan's Bookshelf, August 2016; Any who would understand the foundations of the modern Middle East needs to read this book. • "[A] masterful biography... The book tells a clear, vivid story of seemingly endless conflict, showing the strengths and weaknesses of both Christians and Muslims. The characters are

fascinating...Man's style and pacing are just right for the general reader. This account provides valuable perspective for the twenty-first century tensions between Islam and the West."?Internet Review of Books, 9/29/16"An excellent overview on this complex man and his time."?Military Periscope

John Man is a historian and travel writer with a special interest in Asia. His many acclaimed books include bestselling biographies of Genghis Khan and Attila the Hun, as well as The Great Wall and The Terracotta Army. He lives in the United Kingdom.

The pages blend with a wonderful succinct narration of one of the greatest figures of the crusades. Two thumbs way up.

Riveting. The author does a nice narrative bit when he highlights how the events of Salah al-Din's life mirror a Hollywood hero's biopic.

Not much to chew on about the man but much offered about the context for his main accomplishments.

Very Informative to what's going on today!

If you want to know the mindset of the under 30 Middle Easterners coming to this country in droves, this is a good book to start with. Mind you, I said "start with". Saladin was Sunni, and most of today's invaders are Shi'a. Saladin could not stand the Shi'a, much as Mohammed could not. Mohammed was peaceful. His sister, Fatima, was not, and it was she who started the Shi'a. Saladin would have been forgotten by his own people, even though he was famous for vanquishing The Crusaders, but Britain kept his legend alive in books and movies. When he was trying to gain military backing from one of the more wealthy caliphs, at the time, and after meeting with failure a number of times, he uttered the now famous battle cry used by the Shi'a in Al Queda, ISIS and other militant groups. What he said was "Jihad is the duty of every good Muslim". They have misunderstood this to mean every day and for any reason. Good book. Read it if you're interested in Middle Eastern history.

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. The history of Saladin's heirs in the short lived Ayyubid dynasty could have been expanded upon with interest even though not of great historical significance. The Crusaders were expelled but not by the Ayyubids. Man makes the point that Saladin was first a Kurd, not an Arab. I wish he would embellish the theme as it doesn't seem to hold sway for Saladin's legacy in today's middle east.

The average American knows very little about Islam, its teachings, its practice, nor its past. I have given this book to several ministers and plan to do more. We must raise the knowledge level in America. This book is an excellent place to start. How we arrived here, I do not know, but political correctness has not presented the correct view of Islam. Just like many other things, there is a "black" and a "white" side of Islam. We must learn to tell which is which and to see the "liberal left" in America for what it is too. This book is very easy to read and I recommend it

This mythos of Saladin is a vehicle to attempt to Westernize and romanticize invasions of the Middle East under the guise of a religious / cultural struggle. Alas Saladin and Islam are treated as symbol with no genuine relativity except as adjunct to the west. The actual writing appears to be transcription of a condescending lecture by a professor too impressed with displaying his research to consider organizing it. Man describes himself as a monologist and I suspect he might be more agreeable over cocktails, the written work appears to be too hastily developed. I think his description

of film version of the crusades speaks to his aspiration more than thoughtful biography of a complicated human being.

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