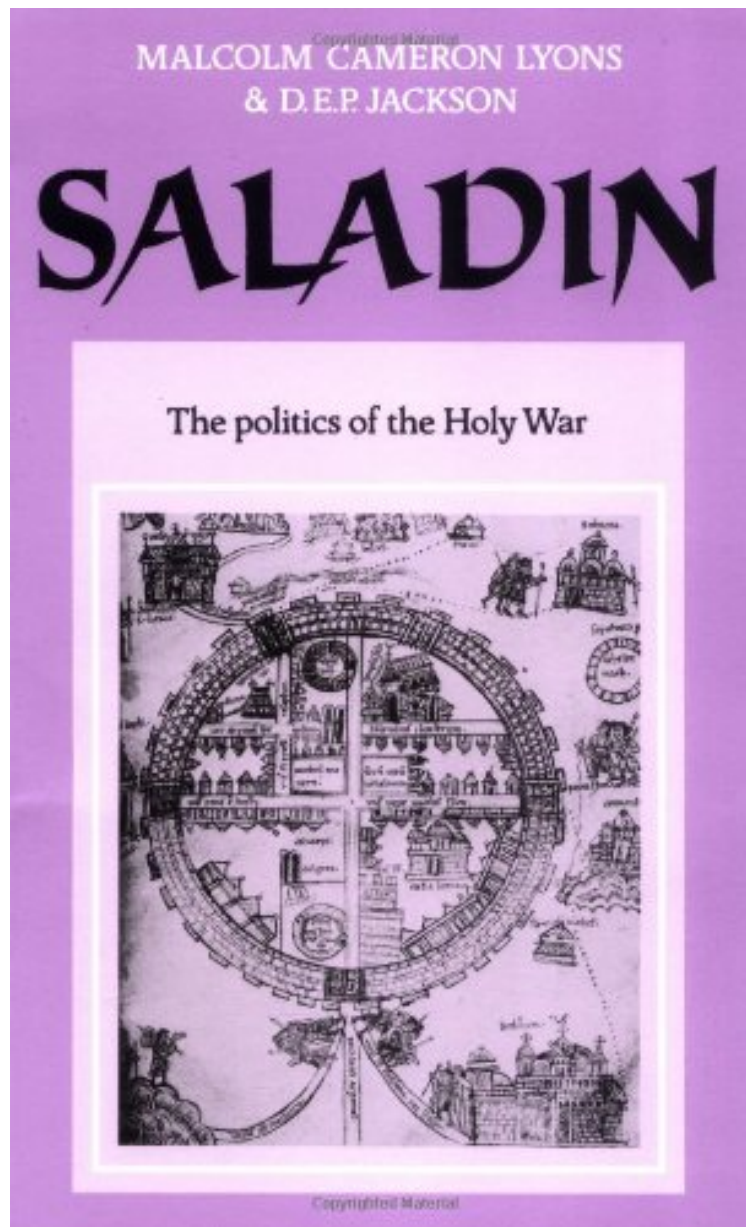


(Library ebook) Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications No. 30)

Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications No. 30)

Malcolm Cameron Lyons, D. E. P. Jackson
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Malcolm Cameron Lyons, D. E. P. Jackson : Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications No. 30) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all

praised Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications No. 30):

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good solid work
By Brian Hawkinson
This is, to say the least, not a book for the lay person to pick for a casual read. The work is thorough and detailed, starting from beginning to end to how Saladin came into and held onto power. I knew going into this biography that it would be difficult reading the Arabic names and places, so nothing new there. I must say that I was impressed with how the point of view remained with Saladin the whole time, using Arabic sources instead of western (other than William of Tyre), and didn't waiver when Saladin came into contact with Richard the Lionhearted and so on. All too often authors tend to naturally revert to the western point of view rather than understand Saladin for what he was, a Muslim, which helps us better understand who he was. My only complaint would have to be the same as the other reviewer, that the maps were not included during the reading (it would have been great to have the map at the beginning of each chapter for the time being discussed) and a list of the whose who and their relation to Saladin. Lyons would mention an Arabic ruler and I couldn't place where he ruled and why he threatened Saladin because of how the names are so alien, which causes the western reader to not easily remember. Other than those two things, I think this is a great read for the amateur as well as the professional historian, adding a valuable source of information, if not being the best, to what we know of Saladin. Push past the dry, scholarly feel of the book and you have a wealth of information.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Saladin's Life at War
By Samuel J. Sharp
Lyons's and Jackson's "Saladin" is the product of impressive scholarship, but less impressive writing. As other reviewers have noted, the authors keep a tight focus on Saladin's activities. The book contains sometimes day-by-day accounts of marches, but never zooms out to put Saladin's actions in broader focus. Crusader armies or Sicilian fleets appear on the scene but the reader is provided no sense of why they are there. The authors eventually relent and provide some analysis in the final chapter, but I am afraid most readers will not make it that far. Hindley's "Saladin: Hero of Islam" may be a better choice for newcomers to this period in history.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. One of the best biographies of Saladin
By Albnas
This is definitely not a book for someone who has just started learning about the Crusades: from the very first page it assumes the reader has a good knowledge about events, places and names; if you don't, you will miss a lot since the writers are not concerned about explaining who's who, in particular among the Franks. It's not a book for casual reading either: I read it as serious studying, making notes, underlining important passages and occasionally re-reading a whole page just to make sure I got it right. This is a book for a reader who wants to learn the details that made Saladin one of the most preeminent figures in the history of the Crusades. Half of it describes his ability unifying Islam (basically, Egypt and Syria) by creating alliances or, when they failed, fighting other Muslim leaders with the final goal of defeating the Christians. The book's second half describes his campaigns against the Franks which ultimately led to the fall of Jerusalem and the conquest of most of the Christian cities in the Holy Land. The authors, Lyons Jackson, based their research on tens (if not hundreds) of letters written by Saladin himself and his contemporaries for a period over 40 years detailing the political game that made him a victorious leader. The authors also refer to the writings of the most important Western commentators of that time (William of Tyre, in particular), but this is definitely a book written from a Muslim perspective. The authors do a very good and impartial job pointing out Saladin's successes and failures through the Arab eyes and, when there's conflict between several sources, they express their own opinion based on a reasonable analysis of the facts. Saladin was unquestionably a great leader but as all leaders in History he had his weaknesses, fears and moments of indecision. The book doesn't try to create a superhero but shows a man who had the ability to patiently gather tens of local Arab leaders with their own personal agendas, showing generosity when possible and ruthlessness when necessary. It is this quality that perhaps made several experts to consider Lyons Jackson's work probably the best biography of him.

Saladin is one of the best known figures of the Middle Ages, and this study makes use of hitherto neglected Arabic sources, including unpublished manuscript material - notably the correspondence, both private and official, of Saladin's own court - to set the whole of Saladin's career and achievements, civil and military, within the specific framework of his age.

'Lyons and Jackson have produced a distinguished and extremely well researched book which is likely to become a standard work in the field and become required reading for all students of Ayyubid history. It has the added merit of being accessible, as the authors themselves intend, to the non-Arab historian: despite its wealth of documentation and factual description it reads easily and will be readily understood by the non-specialist.' History Today