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God's War: A New History of the Crusades

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Among the book's strengths are the subheadings of each chapter, which allow the reader to skip around. Vego's sixty-seven pages of notes are excellent, enabling the reader to delve deeper into the battle, and his bibliography is outstanding. There are sixteen appendixes showing the order of battle of the adversaries, as well as six excellent maps. Vego's conclusion, while offering nothing new, does an outstanding job of summarizing the battle. Also, his summary of Halsey's failure in the battle is superior. Professor Vego concludes that "the Japanese came close to accomplishing their mission not because of their skills but because of the mistakes that Halsey made."

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Tyerman, Christopher. *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006. 1,024pp. \$35

Christopher Tyerman, a lecturer in medieval history at Oxford University, offers this work at a crucial moment. With world attention focused as it is on the Middle East and on the social, political, religious, and military interactions between the Muslim East and Christian West, *God's War* could not have come at a more opportune time, especially for those who wish to have a better understanding of this exotic and violent period. Over the past decade, the subject of the Crusades has become a popular one for writers, but Steven Runciman's three-volume *History of the Crusades* remains the primary standard of comparison. Tyerman accurately, if perhaps with a bit of hubris, notes that Runciman's

work is now outdated and seriously flawed. What makes Tyerman's work stand out is the extent of his knowledge of the entire crusading era and his ability to deploy that knowledge in a clear, concise, and generally readable manner in the course of a single (if massive) volume.

God's War is reasonably if not totally comprehensive. The first four Crusades are covered in minute detail, the later Crusades less so. Tyerman, however, also discusses many related movements not normally considered as crusades, such as the *Reconquista* in Spain and Teutonic campaigns in the Baltic, and even the expansion of the concept of holy war to the conquest of the New World. This breadth of coverage makes up for an occasional lack of depth. At times the book does suffer from an overreliance on name-dropping, some of which is repetitive and, for the novice, confusing.

Tyerman stresses that one cannot know how the Crusaders thought or felt—making it ironic when he comments, as he frequently does, on what did or did not motivate them. This is peculiar, as one of the strongest points of the book is its explanation of how the movement originated and the ways in which the Crusades were products of the sometimes paradoxical social, religious, and political forces of the Middle Ages. Another strong point is his descriptions of the personalities of the Crusaders. Tyerman fleshes out the leaders, men like the Christians Godfrey of Bullion and Bohemond, Frederick Barbarossa, or Richard of Anjou, and the Muslim leaders Saladin and Baybars. These people are described from the standpoint both of their apologists and their critics and enemies, and thus as true three-dimensional

personalities. Through these descriptions, Tyerman creates after all a snapshot of how the *crucesignati* and *jihadi* thought, and in particular how they were influenced by the concept of holy war.

Tyerman avoids the controversy of the influence of the Crusades on events in the Middle East today. He outlines the Christian concept of just war and holy war without assessing whether the Crusades were just. He describes the Muslim concept of jihad, yet does not pass judgment on the initial conquest or reconquest of the Holy Land by the Arabs. Additionally, he does not address Western guilt over the Crusades or the Islamic feeling of having been wronged. Only in passing does he mention a certain pope's apology and a certain politician's ill-timed use of the word "crusade." In a word, he neither condemns nor apologizes for the actions and violence of Christians or Muslims but clearly lays out the social, religious, political, and economic causes and results of the Crusades.

For readers searching for a single-volume survey of the crusading movement, Christopher Tyerman's *God's War* is invaluable.

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Reynolds, David. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006. 363pp. \$45

In this insightful and elegantly written set of essays in international history, David Reynolds ruminates on the causes, evolution, and consequences of

what came to be called the "special relationship" between the United States and Great Britain during the Second World War and thereafter through the Cold War. Geostrategically, this relationship originated with the fall of France in May 1940, which Reynolds treats quite rightly as the "fulcrum of the Twentieth Century." Until then, British leaders had counted on France to contain Germany, with England making only a limited commitment of ground forces to the continent and relying on a powerful deterrent based on strategic bombing. In 1940, with the French knocked out of the war and England's small army in ruins, whether the British could fight on against Germany's Wehrmacht depended above all on support from the United States. Winston Churchill's decision to continue fighting turned out to be the right policy chosen for the wrong reasons, because Franklin D. Roosevelt was initially unwilling to supply more than material aid and was later unable to bring Americans into the war until both Japan and Germany declared war on the United States. Shared hatred of a vicious enemy, a more or less common language, generally similar liberal political principles, shared intelligence, combined military staffs, summitry, and the industrial prowess of the United States was to make the Anglo-American alliance perhaps more effective than any other in history.

Year by year, however, British influence within the Grand Alliance waned as American power waxed. In the spirit of Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt sought an alternative to traditional alliances in his vision of postwar international peace and security cooperation by means of