

mostly OT: Herodotus

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 07 Sep 2003

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Lisa Schaffer-Doggett — 07 Sep 2003, 00:22

Hey everyone,

I just want everyone to know that I'm having a damned entertaining time reading Herodotus. I'm beginning book three and I don't know if it's the translation (U of Chicago, by David Grene) or what, but it's really great. It reads like an engaging classroom lecture or sitting room conversation. Herodotus easily holds his own with any writer past or present. His style, that of recording what people thought of their past, calls to mind an excellent book that I'd like to recommend: "Deus Lo Volt! Chronicle of the Crusades" by Evan S. Connell. He also wrote "Son of the Morning Star" about the battle of Little Bighorn (a blow by blow account that manages to digress in huge arcs into a comprehensive history of the Indian Wars without ever losing sight of the main story. An amazing book.) Anyway, "Deus Lo Volt!" is categorized as historical fiction but what it really is is the shoehorning of a gazillion primary sources into a comprehensive narrative of the Crusades from the first to the last. It's narrator is Jean de Joinville, a knight of Saint Louis, the last real Crusader. All of the conversations and monologues are paraphrases of recorded encounters. It is a beautiful book, well written and engaging, and definitely a history in the Herodotian sense, albeit a counterfeit one.

Don

matthew.malthouse — 09 Sep 2003, 10:17 · follows Lisa Schaffer-Doggett

On 07/09/2003 01:22:17 Lisa Schaffer-Doggett wrote:
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"Deus Lo Volt! Chronicle of the Crusades" by Evan S. Connell.

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Jean de Joinville, a knight of Saint Louis, the last real Crusader.
All of the conversations and monologues are paraphrases of recorded
encounters. It is a beautiful book, well written and engaging,

I found "Deus Lo Volt!" deeply irritating. The faux-chronicle style maddening. The inconclusive narrative frustrating, very far from comprehensive.

Particularly nauseating (although possibly not the author's fault) was it's publication by an imprint whose principal line is historical work and with publicity that downplayed its fictional aspect to the point of invisibility: go took at Amazon.co.uk which categorizes it as history, Europe, Vikings, Dark Ages, Medieval Europe 501-1500.

Matthew

Don Doggett — 11 Sep 2003, 03:32 · follows matthew.malthouse

On Tuesday, September 9, 2003, at 03:17 AM,
matthew.malthouse at guardian.co.uk wrote:
I found "Deus Lo Volt!" deeply irritating. The faux-chronicle style
maddening. The inconclusive narrative frustrating, very far from
comprehensive.

We're just on opposite ends here. I love counterfeit history/religious documents. I want to write
one myself someday. Something with Elvis I think. To each his own though.

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it's publication by an imprint whose principal line is historical work
and
with publicity that downplayed its fictional aspect to the point of
invisibility: go took at Amazon.co.uk which categorizes it as history,
Europe, Vikings, Dark Ages, Medieval Europe 501-1500.

That sounds like Amazon's fault. It says very clearly on the cover of my copy "A Novel by Evan
S. Connell". Plus I found mine in fiction. Oh well, back to Wolfe.

Don