

Chronicles of the Crusades

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 07 Sep 2003

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James Wynn — 07 Sep 2003, 01:17

"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.

You might be interested then in Penguin Classics' "Chronicles of the Crusades" which combines Joinville's "The Life of Saint Louis" and Vilain de Villehardouin's "Conquest of Constantinople" into a single volume. I picked up a nice Barnes&Noble edition in the bargain bin at B&N about 5 years ago and was thrilled, horrified, and amazed. And I'm not just talking about Barnes&Noble. ;-)

-- Crush