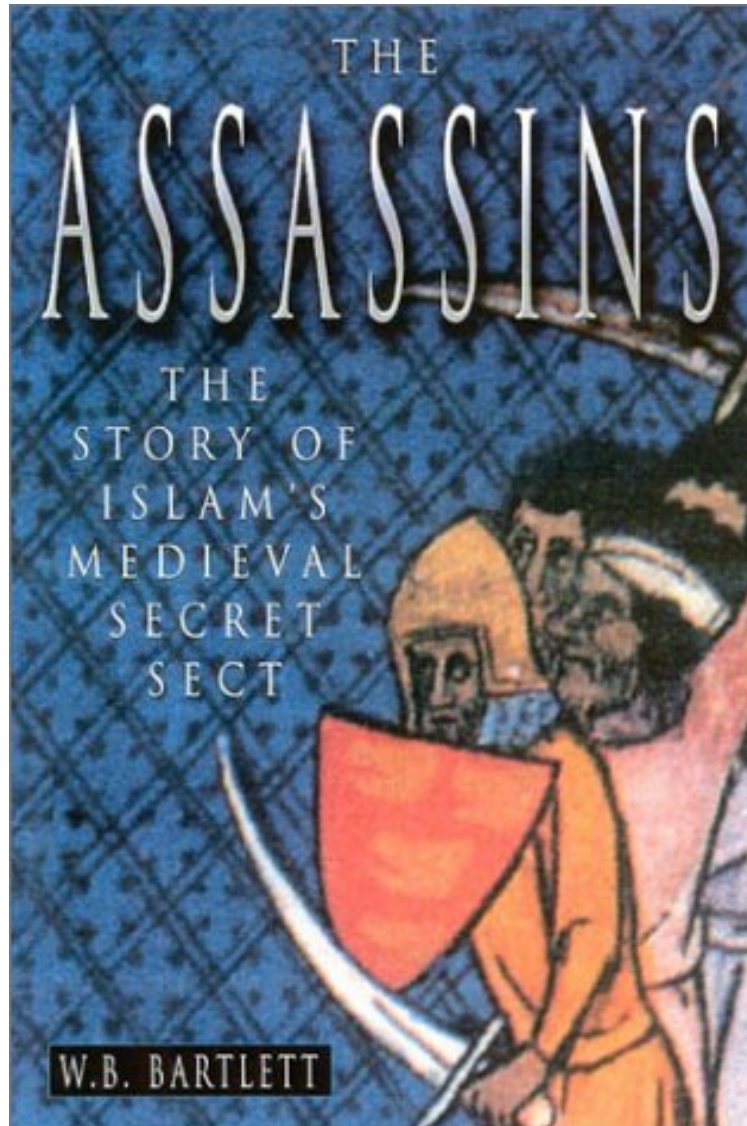


(Download) Assassins: The Story of Medieval Islam's Secret Sect

Assassins: The Story of Medieval Islam's Secret Sect

W. B. Bartlett

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W. B. Bartlett : Assassins: The Story of Medieval Islam's Secret Sect before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Assassins: The Story of Medieval Islam's Secret Sect:

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. DisappointingBy GogolWhen I originally bought this I was hoping for something more refreshing than the book by Lewis on the Assassins however on reading the preface and finding out that one of the first things the author does is pay homage to Lewis (Is this some kind of prerequisite to getting your book published these days?) I didnt hold out much hope.If you have the Lewis book on the assassins then you almost certainly dont need to buy this one. A number of things let me down with this book not least on checking

the bibliography at the back and finding largely the standard Western translations of a few of ibn Athirs books, Juwaynis and ibn Munqidh. The book covers the well trodden ground in the history of the Assassins, largely from an entirely western perspective. The first encounters from a Western crusader to the early history of the Ismailis in Egypt and the split causing the Nizari sect. The establishment of their castles in Persia and Syria and the various assassinations that took place leading up to their eventual fall and spread into India. Unfortunately this book offers nothing new. There is no study of the Ismaili philosophy, nothing on what happened to the religious beliefs of the Nizaris or the Ismailis beyond the Mongol invasion. Nothing on the all too obvious links with the Kizilbashi in North East Iran and East Turkey or the Alevi groups in Syria and Turkey or even their possible influence on Sufism through the Bektashi order. In short nothing. If you really want to read something of substance about this group you may want to try the institute of Ismaili studies. This and the book of Bernard Lewis is nothing more than coffee table sensationalism. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great Book! By Walter One of the most amazing books, not only on the Nizaris (Assassins), but also on the changes in the balance of power in the middle east.

The Assassins are among the most compelling figures of medieval history, with a reputation as drug-crazed fanatics who murdered their enemies and terrorised the medieval world. Since the colourful tales of Marco Polo, the myths surrounding them have been wildly exaggerated and the truth has become ever more obscure. This new book separates fact from fiction and shows that the Assassins of history are just as interesting as the Assassins of legend. The group first appeared in the late eleventh century as an offshoot of the Ismaili sect of Islam. They called themselves Nizaris but to some other Muslims they were 'hashishiyyum', a derogatory term meaning 'hashish taker'. Usually based in mountain fortresses, over the next two centuries they spread from Persia into Syria, central Asia and India, using assassination as only one of a number of methods of achieving their aims. Widely loathed and feared, they were especially threatening because they had no fear of death. If they were to die in the execution of their mission they were hailed as martyrs and promised eternal life in a secret garden of paradise. Indeed, most of the assassinations they carried out were suicide missions, usually committed in public in broad daylight and with little opportunity for the Assassin to escape. Often, he would befriend his intended victim months beforehand and then, once trust had been established, he would suddenly strike - servant or friend turned killer. W. B. Bartlett's pacy narrative follows the history of the group with special reference to the Alamut period (1093-1256). Fascinatingly, he shows how their history and mythology have been developed over time through the writings of Western chroniclers.