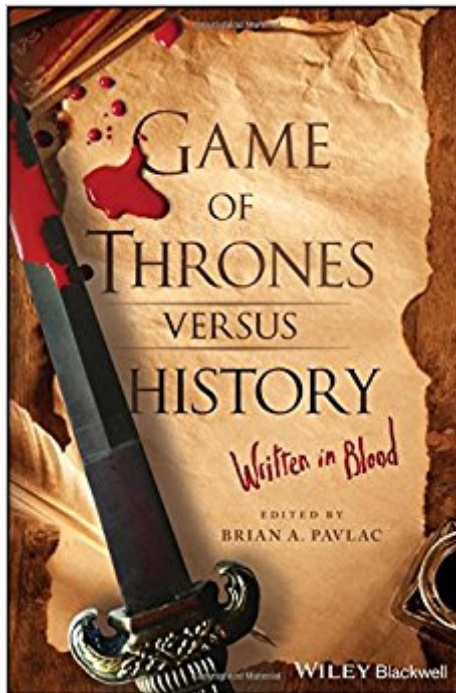




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Game Of Thrones Versus History: Written In Blood



Synopsis

Since it first aired in 2011, Game of Thrones galloped up the ratings to become the most watched show in HBO's history. It is no secret that creator George R.R. Martin was inspired by late 15th century Europe when writing A Song of Ice and Fire, the sprawling saga on which the show is based. Aside from the fantastical elements, Game of Thrones really does mirror historic events and bloody battles of medieval times—but how closely? Game of Thrones versus History: Written in Blood is a collection of thought-provoking essays by medieval historians who explore how the enormously popular HBO series and fantasy literature of George R. R. Martin are both informed by and differ significantly from real historical figures, events, beliefs, and practices of the medieval world. From a variety of perspectives, the authors delve into Martin's plots, characterizations, and settings, offering insights into whether his creations are historical possibilities or pure flights of fantasy. Topics include the Wars of the Roses, barbarian colonizers, sieges and the nature of medieval warfare, women and agency, slavery, celibate societies in Westeros, myths and legends of medieval Europe, and many more. While life was certainly not a game during the Middle Ages, Game of Thrones versus History: Written in Blood reveals how a surprising number of otherworldly elements of George R. R. Martin's fantasy are rooted deeply in the all-too-real world of medieval Europe. Find suggested readings, recommended links, and more from editor Brian Pavlac at gameofthronesversushistory.com.

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Customer Reviews

Brian A. Pavlac is Professor of History at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, USA. His books include *A Concise Survey of Western Civilization: Supremacies and Diversities throughout History*, 2nd Edition (2nd Edition, 2015), *Witch Hunts in the Western World: Persecution and Punishment from the Inquisition to the Salem Trials* (2010), and *Warrior Bishop of the Twelfth Century* (2008).

If you are looking for a light romp through the Game of Thrones, touching on history, this book is not for you. If you want well researched history, written in a fairly academic style (including quotes from research and references) this book IS for you. The book also actually is referencing the "Game of Thrones" television series more so than the Song of Ice and Fire series. Individual sections vary somewhat between referencing the books or the TV series, but the general focus is more on GOT. I have read all the books and seen up to the current series, and as anyone who has done both realized, not everything from the books are covered, and there are deviations from the books in the television series. A list of both is provided at the end of this book, but I found that most of the chapters reference the film versions more than the book. Within each of the sections (listed below) are 3-4 sub articles covering those topics. Each is written by a different author (author bios are given at the beginning of the book) and have slightly different tones and styles. Some are more formal than others ("A defense against the other" reads like a well written journal article) but all have in common thoroughly researched history and readability. In teaching, a technique called "activating or assessing prior knowledge" is used in order to link what a student already knows to new material. Surprisingly, a great deal of Game of Thrones is useful for this technique. I learned a great deal about history from reading this book in a painless manner. Some of my new knowledge is just interesting tidbits (who know that rich and powerful families had MORE children than the poor (not just that survived, which make sense) but actually more. Other information was eye opening (the role of slave soldiers in Islamic history). The book is much more scholarly than I expected from the title (the *Written in Blood* subtitle led me to think it would focus mostly on the violence in history and GOT). I pretty much hate history, and I read this book in two days, which tells you that is it also engaging.

Part I Kings, Queens, Knights, and Strategy
Part II Slaves, Barbarians, and Other Others
Part III Women and Children
Part IV Religion
Part V The Background

Game of Thrones versus History: Written in Blood is an anthology of quasi-scholarly essays written to theorize the historical basis behind George R. R. Martin's Game of Thrones series, *A Song of Ice*

and Fire. After watching the STARZ series "The White Queen" and "The White Princess," adaptations of several of the novels written by Philippa Gregory about the War of the Roses, I noticed the similarity in the family names as well as the brutality employed in Martin's sagas to the actual history of Great Britain royal dynasties. This compilation will more than satisfy a reader's thirst for such facts with actual examples from history and their counterparts in Martin's stories. My one problem with this book is the layout. Grant you, I received a reader's copy so what I am writing may or may not hold true for the actual volume although it has been my experience to note that most of the time the ARC is pretty much in the same format as the first edition. My biggest complaint is the font size used--it is miniscule--the layout seems self-published set up to cram as much print on the page as possible to cut down costs--all at the expense of the reader's eyesight. Publisher, please print this book so that it appeals not only to scholarly types wearing magnifiers, but to actual laymen readers who enjoy a book that is well-formatted.

The book is not without its faults, but those aside this is a pretty good read. The "faults" - to me - are two. First, the book's format. The type is way too small; it looks like you're reading a scientific journal. So if the point of the book is to make history more engaging and relevant by showing how GoT takes (at least some of its inspiration) from historical events and/or "Gee, if you think GoT is fiction, take a look at what really happened!," then the format kind of works against the book's goals (meaning, the format works against the hope of getting a history-disinclined young person "into it"). Second, the anthology format (that is, it's a book of collected essays by different authors grouped by several topics) really doesn't allow for enjoyable, cover-to-cover reading. Instead, it comes across as very much the "school text." I'm not sure that helps. However, if you're willing to overlook the "academic text" feel to the book it's pretty good. Sometimes I felt the parallels were a bit forced, but overall I found it thought-provoking. Frankly, I would find it a bit of a chore if I had to read this for school, but for recreational reading (where I can pick it up/put it down, pick where I want to read, etc.) it makes for a lot of fun (especially if you're a history buff). At \$13.72 (price at the time of this review) it's not hard on your wallet. And it's published by Wiley; a publishing house that I have found over the years seems to put out more books that I find become keepers or favorites than any other publishing house. 4 stars; the strengths overshadow the flaws.

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