



ASSASSIN'S —CREED—

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY (1189–1868)



A V I S U A L G U I D E



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Scholastic Inc.

An Insight Editions Book

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INTRODUCTION



Artwork of the Thames River from *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*. In 1864, just a few years before the game begins, a summer of nauseating stench known as the Great Stink led to the construction of two enormous sewers along the Thames.

The *Assassin's Creed* series of action-adventure video games from Ubisoft has become one of the most popular franchises in gaming history. The main reason, of course, is that they're simply fun to play. Each title features gripping action based on fiendishly clever stealth and movement mechanics (parkour, anyone?), all unfolding across meticulously rendered open-world environments. Each tale is well told and well acted, with gameplay smoothly integrated into a story filled with compelling characters. Ubisoft has received much-deserved critical praise for taking interactive gaming to higher levels of narrative sophistication.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please be aware that we've organized our chapters according to the strict chronology of history. Thus our historical overview of *Assassin's Creed III* (American Revolution) drops down in our timeline to fall behind *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* (Golden Age of Piracy) and *Assassin's Creed: Rogue* (Seven Years' War)—even though *Assassin's Creed III* was actually released before the other two titles.

But one other aspect of Assassin's Creed has truly captivated fans of the series: the painstakingly accurate historical setting of each story. Whether it's the Third Crusade, the Italian Renaissance, the Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth century, the Golden Age of Piracy, the Seven Years' War, the American or French Revolutions, or Victorian London, each era has been carefully, lovingly recreated, down to the smallest details. Ubisoft's design teams are so dedicated to historical accuracy, in fact, that they have actual historians on staff.

Since you're here, you're obviously a fan of the series. We assume that, while playing one of the games, you've wondered at some point: *Is that really the way it was back then? Did that actually happen?* This book takes a closer look at the "true history" behind the settings, events, and characters of each Assassin's Creed game.



ASSASSINS VS. TEMPLARS



YOU MAY BE SURPRISED TO LEARN that both of the factions depicted as mortal foes in the games actually existed in history. At the time of the Third Crusade, the Assassins—a secret society within the Nizari Shiite sect of Islam—had been active in Masyaf and other mountain strongholds for many years. Their skill in the art of assassination was widely known and greatly feared. And by the twelfth century, the Knights Templar had become an elite military order operating in Crusader-conquered lands and elsewhere. Associated with the Catholic papacy, the Templars were quite powerful and well financed during that era. However, the "ancient rivalry" between the two groups as depicted in the games is entirely fictional.

