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M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, *Invisible Weapons: Liturgy and the Making of Crusade Ideology*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2017. xxv + 349 pp. Maps, illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. \$69.95 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978150170515.

Review by Richard Gyug, Fordham University.

Invisible Weapons traces the development of medieval crusade liturgies from their roots in early medieval prayers and masses for war, through the creation of a triumphant liturgy and commemorative feast after the capture of Jerusalem during the First Crusade, to the later medieval adaptations of crusade liturgy as invocations of divine aid in war against threats from non-Christians. To make the case for the stages in this history of changing liturgical forms, M. Cecilia Gaposchkin reviews a wide range of edited and unedited liturgical sources and compares them to the narrative sources for events at critical moments. The result is a model demonstration of how the liturgy promoted ecclesiastical goals, and how the technical, seemingly intractable, medieval liturgy can be made accessible to historians.

After useful introductory sections on crusading and liturgical terms, the chapters in the book follow a chronological sequence. Each is supported by a wealth of evidence presenting the changes in the liturgy and arguing for its adaptations to historical needs. The first chapter, "The Militant Eschatology of the Liturgy and the Origins of Crusade Ideology," considers Carolingian and pre-crusade rituals preparing for war and for pilgrimage. The two strands are combined in the lead-up to the First Crusade, an armed pilgrimage to free Jerusalem, as is described in the second and third chapters, "From Pilgrimage to Crusade" and "On the March." After the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099, the victors commemorated their success with triumphant liturgical rituals and the addition of a feast to the Christian calendar, as described in the fourth chapter, "Celebrating the Capture of Jerusalem in the Holy City." In the fifth chapter, the author shows how the famous victory was echoed and remembered in the West in local rituals. With subsequent Crusades responding to setbacks or the loss of Jerusalem, the crusade liturgy shifted to emphasizing internal reform, appealing to God for success, and calling for support of the Crusades, as is shown in the sixth chapter, "Clamoring to God: Liturgy as a Weapon of War." In the seventh and final chapter, "Praying against the Turks," the role of the crusade liturgy shifted once more after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 and was adapted to prepare for what seemed like an existential threat to the Christian West.

Tracing the development of the crusade liturgy is a significant contribution, providing a clear demonstration that liturgical sources reflect historical change and can be as eloquent in their witness as more obvious narrative or quantitative sources. In short, the liturgy is shown to be adaptable in responding to circumstances, and thus a source for ideological and cultural history. Moreover, the evidence of liturgical sources reminds historians that medieval Christian authors, including liturgists, saw events as part of salvation history, and in relation to divine power. In this regard, the book is successful in reading the liturgy through paraphrase and analysis to make ideological sense of the prayers, sequences, and hymns and their coordinated messages. Making the connection between the language of ritual and what celebrants were communicating is an achievement.

Once it is recognized that liturgical rituals shift with changing circumstances and are both retrospective in reacting to developments and prospective in promoting future actions, they come to define historical periods, as Gaposchkin demonstrates well. The history of the crusade liturgy is, therefore, a lens through which the values and goals of much of the medieval period can be seen, from triumphal expansion in the eleventh century to the clash of Christian and Ottoman empires in the fifteenth century. That “medieval Europe placed the crusading project at the very heart of Christian society and of the Christian faith” (p. 15), an introductory assertion the author echoes in the conclusion, is a larger claim that may well be valid but requires a comparative approach and is not supported through the history of the crusade liturgy alone. The questions become what it meant for the crusading project to have been central to Christian goals, and whether crusading was a device contingent on events, and only one among several serving a more fundamental vision of Christian society. In the thirteenth century, for instance, the use of the crusade liturgy to mobilize society against the enemies of Christendom, and to call for internal reform, mirrors the way in which other devices of the “persecuting society,” as R.I. Moore called it, were used. [1] All were part of a growing centralization of ideological and legal means that made such a singular concept of Christendom possible. This is a question, however, about the relative importance of various aspects of late medieval religion, and secondary to the author’s analysis of the crusade liturgy and its development, which is indeed comprehensive, convincing, and successful.

NOTE

[1] R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 1987); Expanded edition, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007).

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