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Linda Paterson. *Singing the Crusades: French and Occitan Lyric Responses to the Crusading Movements, 1137-1336*. Cambridge, U.K.: D. S. Brewer, 2018. xviii + 332 pp. Maps, illustrations, appendices, and bibliography. \$99.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-1-84384-482-2.

Review by Dan O'Sullivan, University of Mississippi.

Crusade songs have garnered the attention of literary critics for over a century, and although these pieces were inspired by historical events, literary critics have often focused on structural and rhetorical analysis instead of historical accuracy. In turn, historians have been hesitant to include these texts in their work, relying more on chronicles and other "historical" accounts. In *Singing the Crusades*, Linda Paterson undertakes a study both literary and historical of some 151 Old Occitan and 51 Old French texts made helpfully available at http://warwick.ac.uk/crusade_lyrics.^[1] Both the website and book are products of collaborations with other scholars (Luca Barbieri, Ruth Harvey, Anna Radaelli, and Marjolaine Raguin contributed to the book; the contributors to the website are too numerous to list here) and stem from a desire to make crusading texts publicly available together with commentary concerning the circumstances of their production and reception. Not all texts are *per se* crusade songs, i.e., *chansons de croisade*: some are satirical or historical songs, especially the Old Occitan *sirventés*, but all contain crusading elements.

Patterson's introduction addresses questions of transmission, composers' identity, audience, and modes of performance. The question of public is particularly thorny: sometimes the audience is obvious as when Richard the Lionheart sings to his vassals from captivity in Germany. In other cases, genre dictates the audience as in the cases of songs composed in the courtly register. However, when it comes to songs of exhortation, the question of propaganda must be addressed. In the sense that these songs propagate a certain doctrine, they are propaganda, and Peterson does a fine job in synthesizing the scholarly debates around propaganda and predication in these lyric traditions.

Paterson arranges her twelve chapters chronologically, which makes perfect sense given her aims, and starts with songs from early twelfth-century expeditions into both Iberia and the Holy Land. The following chapters are mostly, but not always, limited to a single crusade (and Paterson includes the appropriate caveats in her use of traditional terms like "Third" or "Fourth Crusade"). The last chapter, "After Louis," discusses Philip VI's final crusading efforts, which were ultimately abandoned in 1336. Chapters often open with a brief historical synopsis, followed by textual readings that tease out precious bits of historical data. Paterson cites the original texts

freely and includes English translations, which are essential for a non-academic audience. Copious footnotes provide excellent scholarly context.

For the sake of space, let us examine as a typical chapter, “The Barons’ Crusade, or the crusade of Thibaut de Champagne.” Opening with a consideration of RS 6, “Seignor, sachiez, qui or ne s’en ira,” Thibaut’s exhortation to his brethren to take the cross, Paterson reasonably suggests the song was composed before Thibaut’s departure for the Holy Land in 1239. (It should be noted that Paterson does not always refer to songs by incipit, but often only by index number--Raynaud-Spanke for *trouvère* songs and Pillet-Carstens for the troubadours--whereas providing both systematically would have been helpful.) Paterson then compares Thibaut’s exhortation to two other songs, one in Occitan and the other in French, not only for their possible proximity in terms of compositional date, but also for their reliance on certain rhetorical arguments, namely that God will punish those who refuse to take the cross. From there, she moves on to a cluster of other songs by Thibaut that evoke elements of the *chanson de départie*, songs where the singer must leave his beloved. Paterson cites Barbieri here to posit that the lady is most likely the knight’s wife, not an adulterous beloved, but in the final analysis, it might not be that important: on an aesthetic level, it matters more that Thibaut is mixing motifs and genres, something scholars of the past have observed. She finishes out the chapter with a series of pieces that seem to allude to the ambush of Henry of Bar at Gaza when that count attempted a surprise attack and was surprised himself when he and his troops encountered a massive Egyptian army. This defeat signaled the end of the Barons’ Crusade. Paterson’s approach consists of these kinds of historical and textual juxtapositions, but she is careful not to push her readings too far. Rather, she draws tentative conclusions that will be invaluable to scholars who wish to pursue more interpretative lines of inquiry.

In the book’s conclusion, Paterson concisely synthesizes her readings, remarking how *trouvères* ignored the Reconquista of Spain whereas troubadours dedicated much attention to that effort. Furthermore, troubadours showed much more skepticism towards crusading to the Holy Land when compared to their northern brethren, undoubtedly because the Albigensian Crusade embodied, at least for southerners, a perversion of crusading ideals.

Three appendices round out the volume. The first is a study contributed by Marjolaine Raguin of crusading rhetoric or, as she puts it, the “stylistic devices and ideological content” of the songs Paterson studies (p. 259). Raguin breaks down her analysis by thematic category, e.g., “Salvation and edification,” and then further subdivides those themes into sub-themes such as “Pilgrimage,” “Judgment,” etc. Appendix B, “Chronology of events and texts,” provides a helpful chronology of events (not just of the beginning or ending of crusades, but also of when crusades were preached, important figures died, etc.) and collates them to the lyric texts of the same approximate era. The third appendix lists songs that survive with melodies together with the manuscripts that preserve those melodies. As Paterson points out in her introduction, some texts survive with more than one melody, but that information is not provided here. No musical examples are included, which seems a pity, even if the website includes recordings.

In the opinion of this reviewer, Paterson succeeds in composing a readable, yet richly documented account of the crusades in the medieval lyric imagination. Both non-academic and scholarly readers of medieval literature and history should be indebted to Linda Paterson for both the book and the website.

NOTE

[1] Consulted November 8, 2019.

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