

an important topic and encourage further related research. The fact that it gives rise to these questions is ample proof that it has succeeded.

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OSMAN LATIFF, *The Cutting Edge of the Poet's Sword: Muslim Poetic Responses to the Crusades*. (The Muslim World in the Age of the Crusades 3.) Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017. Pp. xii, 299. \$127. ISBN: 978-90-04-34521-8. doi:10.1086/706367

Osman Latiff explores the role played by poets and poetry in the promotion of jihad against the Franks and demonstrates how this poetry is essential for understanding the twelfth- and thirteenth-century zeitgeist. *The Cutting Edge of the Poet's Sword* is a valuable addition to the recent outburst of research on Muslim responses to the Crusades.

The book can be divided into two parts: the first consists of three introductory and contextual chapters; the second comprises five analytical chapters. Chapter 1 provides thematic and historical background, considering the various contexts within which poetry was produced. This chapter is not wholly new in its conclusions, but it nevertheless provides a solid overview of the Sunnī revival and jihad in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the so-called counter-crusade or Anti-Frankish jihad. Chapter 2 provides an overview of modern works—both in Arabic and English—that have dealt with the relevance, function, and appeal of poetry in the crusader period. Chapter 3, which discusses jihad and martyrdom, favors the juristic discourse of jihad over other discourses of jihad, notably the Sufi discourse of *mujaḥada*, more commonly referred to as *jihād al-naḥs* in Western scholarship. Latiff shows a great deal of nuance in his discussion of historiography and poetry, but less so in his discussion of jihad theory.

Chapter 4 discusses three crucial events: the loss of Jerusalem to the First Crusade, the Muslim victory at Edessa in 1144, and Saladin's reconquest of Jerusalem in 1187. Through comparison of poems written in response to these events, Latiff is able to demonstrate the evolution of various themes over the course of the twelfth century, namely, how the initial themes of subjugation and humiliation gave way after the victory at Edessa to the importance of Jerusalem and the necessity of its conquest, before moving to themes of Muslim resolve, in the face of the Third Crusade.

Chapter 5 focuses on the religious themes that developed after the reconquest of Jerusalem, which stressed the religious superiority of Islam, the otherness of the Franks, and Frankish polytheism. Of particular interest is Latiff's discussion of how the eschatological roles of Jerusalem and Constantinople were inverted: the poets, in contrast to religious scholars, were inclined to view the conquest of Jerusalem as the more important victory.

Chapter 6, the most substantial chapter, draws attention to how poetry was used to strengthen jihad efforts, offset crusader interest in Jerusalem, and challenge Christian religious ascriptions. The chapter therefore continues the discussion of Muslim perceptions of the Franks and Christianity in general, emphasizing how poetry came to be used to demonstrate that Christians had no right to the Holy Land. At the same time, however, Latiff problematizes the issue of Muslim perception of the Franks through discussion of several poems by Ibn al-Qaysanārī, wherein the poet explores his infatuation with Frankish women. A standout part of this chapter discusses how poetry, especially that of 'Imād al-Dīn al-İṣfahānī, was used to frame Nūr al-Dīn as the ideal representative of a pious-warrior ethos.

Chapter 7 discusses the use of poetry as a medium for diplomacy and cross-cultural exchange, in particular to stress the importance of Syrian and Egyptian unity. In this way, the chapter challenges modern understandings of both Muslim-Christian relations and intra-Muslim relations. Chapter 8 continues the discussion after the conquest of Jerusalem,

exploring the posthumous praise of Saladin and the outrage and dismay that greeted the dismantling of Jerusalem's fortifications in 1219 during the Fifth Crusade. Regarding the latter, Latiff notes that while many of the same themes continued to appear, the lamentations of the early twelfth century had no parallel.

Latiff is to be commended for his command of an expansive corpus and the ease with which he analyzes its contents and themes, relating both to the broader narrative of the anti-Frankish jihad. One of the main strengths of the work is the vast quantity of poetry that is translated and dispersed throughout the eight chapters; there is also an appendix that provides critical editions of many of these poems. *The Cutting Edge of the Poet's Sword* cogently makes the case for the necessity of reading Arabic poetry not merely as a cultural artifact but as a vital part of the historiographical context, shaped by and shaping the events to which it responded.

Furthermore, it contributes to a growing trend of problematizing the model of the counter-crusade, which has highlighted, to take two examples, the importance of separating the reactions of the ruling elite from the lay population and the fact that Muslim-Christian relationships were more complicated than simply antagonistic. It is in this regard, however, that the book's notable failing emerges: a number of important works are entirely absent from the discussion. Works such as Suleiman Mourad and James Lindsay's *The Intensification and Reorientation of Sunni Jihad Ideology in the Crusader Period* (2013), Alexander Mallett's *Popular Muslim Reactions to the Franks in the Levant, 1097–1291* (2013), and Michael A. Köhler, Konrad Hirschler, and P. M. Holt's *Alliances and Treaties Between Frankish and Muslim Rulers in the Middle East* (2013) are overlooked. Latiff's work would have benefited from deeper engagement with this scholarship. Nevertheless, *The Cutting Edge of the Poet's Sword* is essential reading for anyone interested in Muslim responses to the Crusades and suggests a number of fruitful avenues for future research, of which two are the relationship between eschatology and jihad, and the inner workings of Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin's program of jihad propaganda.

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LUDOLPH OF SAXONY, "*Your Hearts Will Rejoice*": *Easter Meditations from the "Vita Christi"*, trans. Milton T. Walsh. (Monastic Wisdom Series 49.) Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press for Cistercian Publications, 2016. Paper. Pp. xviii, 195. \$19.95. ISBN: 978-0-8790-7349-7.
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A critical edition of the *Vita Christi* does not, to my knowledge, exist. Milton T. Walsh's translation is based on the *Vita Jesu Christi* edited by L. M. Rigollot and published in Paris by Victor Palme in 1870.

Ludolph of Saxony was, in all likelihood, a Dominican friar before he entered a charterhouse near Strassburg in 1340, and it was there that he probably died in April of 1378. A Catalan translation of the *Vita Christi* was read by Ignatius Loyola and was likely an instrumental factor in his conversion. Teresa of Ávila urged the inclusion of Ludolph's work in the libraries of all the convents adhering to her reform. Walsh points out that the *Vita Christi* was also read by Mary Magdalene dei Pazzi and Robert Bellarmine "and was recommended to Jane Frances de Chantal by Francis de Sales" (xiii).

Walsh's translation contains only a portion of Ludolph's *Vita Christi*, that part which extends from Holy Saturday to the Resurrection. Ludolph's sources are much more comprehensive than the biblical narratives, and for some scholars this may be the most useful aspect of this work. Of the early Latin Christian authors quoted or cited, Ludolph most often relies