



Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology, Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen & Kurt Villads Jensen with Janne Malkki and Katja Ritari (eds), (Studia Fennica, Historica 9), Finnish Literature Society: Helsinki 2005. 320 pp.

Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology represents the work of twenty-two scholars, including a preface and introduction by two of its editors, Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen and Kurt Villads Jensen. The volume is the fruitful result of a colloquium and workshop held in Rome at the *Institutum Romanum Filandiae* and the *Romanum Institutum Danicum* in January 2001. As the preface states, the aims of the meetings were to "examine how the crusading ideology was formulated in medieval historiography and how the crusading movement affected Christianity in the world beyond," as well as to explore the "spread of the crusading movement to Northern Europe, especially Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea area" (p. 13). A reflection of the meetings, the study is a collection of essays divided into three sections. The first third is devoted to the study of a range of medieval ideologies as dynamic sources of motivation and theological justification to take up crusading. The second part of the volume treats crusading notions of violence, the presentation of public policy that supported crusading, and the role of mythologies of the Danish crown. The final third of the book focuses specifically on the Northern Crusades in the Baltic Sea region, as viewed through contemporary sources and modern historical writings.

The book's organization of twenty-two essays into these three sections seemed unwieldy at first, for the contributions differ extensively from one another in subject matter, approach, and breadth. However, the survey of crusading historiography in the volume's introduction and Jensen's accompanying comments on the effects of these traditions of thought on

Northern crusading studies do much to strengthen the cohesiveness of the collection. Jensen carefully situates Northern European peoples not only as important participants in medieval crusading activities, but also as present-day writers and audiences of the histories related to crusading. He challenges the view that Northern countries played little role in the crusades, and points to several contributing factors that have minimized the perception of Northern participation in the campaigns, including definitions of crusading itself, and the biases of medieval chroniclers and present-day scholars. Many of the book's contributors, like Jensen, seek to change past paradigms of crusading studies in interesting ways worth heeding; the material may provide the reader with revised approaches not only to crusade historiography related to Scandinavia, but also to the study of crusading in general.

The book's first section, entitled "Ideology and Medieval Historiography," begins with Arnved Nedkvitne's essay, "Why Did Medieval Norsemen Go On Crusade?," which addresses Danish motivations for crusading, contrasting them with those posited to other Europeans. Through his assessments of Skaldic poetry and saga, Nedkvitne attributes less motivational power to religion than one might have expected, and points up contradictions in sources which pay lip-service to religion, but focus more heavily on other motivators. Among these motivating elements, Nedkvitne proposes types of secular honor—whereby "warrior honor" addresses memorable deeds of arms, while "courtly honor" speaks to the relations forged by Northern crusaders, noting with whom they mixed, and courtly cultures with which they were able to interact. Not all of the essays in this volume are concerned solely with the medieval world of Northern Europe, however, and J.M. Jensen's subsequent chapter is one of these. In "War, Penance and the First Crusade," Jensen asks how scholars should "construct" the concept of crusade, and explores the perception of crusade as a form of pilgrimage as explicated by Jonathan Riley-Smith, Giles Constable, and others. By examining Pope Urban II's letters which comment on the intentions of crusading, Jensen seeks to reconstruct and identify main ideas which may have influenced the pope's famous sermon at Clermont. While Jensen's important essay seeks to recuperate what Urban II thought about crusading, Samu Niskanen, in "St. Anselm's Views on Crusade," explores Anselm of Canterbury's approaches to the campaigns. Niskanen notes that Anselm resisted preaching the crusades, and that he whole-heartedly supported Urban's instructions that no monks were to participate on crusade. Moreover, unlike his ecclesiastical contemporaries in England and continental Europe, Anselm resisted viewing the terrestrial and celestial Jerusalems as joined together figuratively. This well-researched article, with

good use of primary sources provides insight into other studies of resistance to crusade, and Anselmian views of crusading.

Crusade is next viewed through the eyes of William of Tyre, as Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen establishes in his essay, "By the Help of God, Because of Our Sins, and by Chance." In this chapter, Lehtonen explains William of Tyre's views of why crusading Christians were overpowered by their Muslim adversaries. Looking beyond divine providence, Christian eschatology, or apocalyptic views of history as explanations of crusading success or failure, he locates refined motivations in William's work. While some of these ideas are already explicated in Peter Edbury and J.G. Rowe's assessment of William's text, Lehtonen points out the role of *casus* or *fortuna*, as well as the men themselves, in arranging the outcome. Following the theme of crusading motivations, Ane Lise Bysted's "Indulgences, Satisfaction, and the Heart's Contrition in Twelfth-century Crusading Theology" offers a good survey not only of the development of the crusading indulgence, but also of the theology of indulgences in general. Here, Bysted addresses pilgrimage as it related to crusade, and justifies a point of view of crusading as a form of penance. Most interesting is the article's attention to medieval beliefs about the earning of crusading indulgences in spite of extenuating circumstances, addressing what, for instance, would happen to the crusader's soul should the sworn crusader die before leaving on the campaign .

Following penitential theology with mystical theology, Ritva Palmén's "Peregrinatio Imaginaris: Twelfth-Century Mystical Theology and Crusading Ideology" clearly outlines the basic features of medieval philosophies of the mind, and describes cognitive processes of imagination and memory concerned specifically with Jerusalem. Addressing St. Francis' nativity re-enactments in Greccio, Italy in 1217–1221, and the possibility that one could attain the same spiritual merit from visiting Greccio as one could earn in Bethlehem, Palmén concludes that the acceptance of building the Heavenly Jerusalem in the soul (rather than in actuality) operated in conflict with crusading ideologies which demanded a personal interaction with the real Jerusalem. Pauli Annala, in the next chapter, "Brother Francis and the Fifth Crusade," offers another look at the Italian saint. Here, Annala traces the activity of St. Francis during the Fifth Crusade as he met al-Kamil, allegedly in hopes of converting the Sultan to Christianity. Annala offers a pleasing path through the medieval and present-day historiography of this particular event. He examines Francis' motivation, asserting that ultimately, Francis "did not subscribe to the crusade ideology at all" (p. 115); that al-Kamil viewed Francis as a type of Christian Sufi, leading to his alleged merciful treatment of his prisoner; and that Francis was working toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict for both sides. Changing gears somewhat,

Lars Bisgaard's "A Black Mystery: The Hagiography of the Three Magi" draws from Oliver of Paderborn's *Historia Damiatina*, and in doing so reveals an interesting story of the transformations of a cult. In this chapter, the connection to crusading seems less strong than that in many of the other offerings in the book. However, the essay is well-written and offers an exciting account of hagiographical and iconographical shifts in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Christian visual and textual portrayals of the magi. As one of the magi is given notably African features, the program of transforming the three shapes a medieval agenda that the magi would be seen to "come from different continents, Asia, Africa and Europe. Thus the whole world adored the Christ child" (p. 134).

Henrik Janson's "Making Enemies: Aspects of the Formation of Conflicting Identities in the Southern Baltics around the Year 1000" begins part two of a section entitled, "Royal Policies and Violence." Janson's well-written argument succeeds in complicating recent narratives of the creation of modern Europe along nationalistic lines. As Janson shows, this mythos necessitated a certain view of the past that included a continuous struggle for Christianity between the Germans and Slavs across the Elbe river, from the time of the first Ottonians. Janson challenges the idea of Christian Germans versus pagan Slavs through the works of chroniclers Adam of Bremen and Helmold of Bosau. Key to Janson's assessment is how accepting "christianitas" was different from Christianization. Exploring other aspects of history mythologized, Tuomas Heikkilä, in "Pogroms of the First Crusade in Medieval Local Historiography: The Death of Archbishop Eberhard of Trier and the Legitimation of the Pogroms," addresses the reaction of local writers in twelfth-century Trier, Germany, to the pogroms of the *Ashkenaz* Jews during the First Crusade. Legitimation of pogroms in Trier was complicated by the fact that the perpetrators of the violence were not foreign crusaders, but local people. Later chroniclers, however, not only absolved local Christians of the deaths of Trier's Jewish inhabitants, but blamed the Jews for the death of Eberhard, local archbishop. Heikkilä addresses the later chroniclers' versions along several points of analysis, stating that their work represents not only an increase in anti-Jewish feeling, but that it was also used strategically to both focus attention on Archbishop Eberhard as martyr, and to detract attention from the martyred Jewish citizens who committed suicide rather than convert. Sini Kangas explores other portrayals of violence in her essay, "Deus Vult: Violence and Suffering as a Means of Salvation during the First Crusade." Here, Kangas discusses the seemingly incongruous relations among religion, salvation and violence during the crusades. She bases her discussion on the taking of Antioch and Jerusalem in the First Crusade, situating these events as models for later

crusader activity and writing. Kangas reviews the theology of crusading and suffering on crusade as a form of penance, an aspect of the *imitatio Christi*. Yet she also places crusading violence within the framework of vassalage and familial obligation, in which crusade is enacted upon an adversary as a point of revenge or blood feud, explaining how crusaders could commit such violence against their enemies, acting without guilt and, at times, relishing their actions.

Like Kangas, B. Bandlien, in his essay, "A New Norse Knighthood? The Impact of the Templars in Late Twelfth-century Norway," explores the perceived contradictions between saintly virtue and violent warfare inherent in crusading, though Bandlien directs his discussion toward the military orders. He asks whether or not the ideals of monastic knighthood expressed by Bernard in his *Praise of Knighthood* had any effect on Norweigan warriors. While it is unclear what the general situation may have been, Bandlien shows that one king, Sverre, king of Norway from 1179–1202, may have operated with ascetic values in mind. As Bandlien productively demonstrates, perceptions of Sverre's strength were shaped by crusading ideals of virtue, whether or not directly influenced by Bernard. Similar to Bandlien, Vivian Etting also displays an interest in the ways crusading associations bolstered the perception of authority in leadership. In "Crusade and Pilgrimage: Different Ways to the City of God," Etting shows the deep involvement of select Danish leaders in the political trends of southern Europe over the course of four centuries. To do so, this chapter offers a review of Danish participation in the First Crusade, illustrating not just closer relations between Denmark and the Pope, but also establishing the import of Danish crusade and pilgrimage interests both at home and abroad. Kurt Villads Jensen, in "Crusading at the Fringe of the Ocean: Denmark and Portugal in the Twelfth Century," also argues for the involvement of Denmark within the affairs of Europe, which he does through simultaneously seeking to explain how Danish King Valdemar II came to marry Berengaria, the sister of Portuguese King Alfonso II in 1214. Through this elegant construction, the essay provides extensive likenesses between Portugal and Denmark, including generalities as to their locations on religious frontiers; each country's levels of crusading involvement; and Valdemar and Alfonso's interest in liberating themselves from the influence of great noble families. Importantly, Jensen shows that Valdemar and Alfonso's activities were highly influenced by each king's interactions with other European powers.

Part three of the volume, entitled "Crusading Movement at the Baltic Sea Region and Beyond," begins with Carsten Selch Jensen's "The Early Stage of Christianisation in Livonia in Modern Historical Writings and

Contemporary Chronicles." Using the thirteenth-century chronicles of Arnold of Lübeck and Henry of Livonia, Jensen reassesses past historical research which divides the twelfth-century Christianization of the Livonians into two clear-cut phases: one of preaching, and another of crusade. Through exploring the building program of the missionary Meinhard in *Øxküll*, Jensen provides compelling evidence that missionaries like Meinhard knew they would need to provide a military aspect to their conversion plans. Like Jensen, Torben K. Nielsen, in his essay "Mission and Submission: Societal Change in the Baltic in the Thirteenth Century," sheds further light on the process of Baltic conversion. Following Henry of Livonia's *Chronicon*, Nielsen singles out the local leader, Caupo, who offered crucial support to German missionaries like Albert of Buxhöveden, a successor of Meinhard. With the noble Caupo held up as the model pagan convert to Christianity, it was thought that the rest of the Livonians would follow suit. Caupo, it turned out, would go on to lead an assault against his own former castle, and conduct regular massacres against Baltic, pagan communities, as well as serve as a mediator. Barbara Bombi's, "Innocent III and the *praedicatio* to the Heathens in Livonia (1198–1204)," also deals with matters of Livonian conversion and subjugation. Citing Benjamin Z. Kedar's study of Pope Eugenius III and Bernard of Clairvaux's campaigns to approach non-Christians with conversion rather than the sword, Bombi asks to what degree Bernard's ideas may have influenced approaches to the pagan Wends in Northern Europe. Exploring the relationship between crusade and mission, Bombi pays close attention to the rhetoric of Innocent III regarding the Livonians, and finds that a limited version of crusade was indeed encouraged in that region against the pagans, namely in defense of the already converted Livonians and the Christian missionaries living there.

Like Bombi, Iben Fonnesberg Schmidt, in "Pope Alexander III (1159–1181) and the Baltic Crusades," directs his discussion toward papal policy; this study, however, explores the period after Innocent's pontificate, focusing on the nature of the indulgences granted to participants in the Baltic crusades. Schmidt's careful research of a wide range of papal letters shows papal policy in the Baltic as "discontinuous," varying from pope to pope (251). Important to Schmidt's sampling is his ability to contextualize the exigencies of regional, secular politics with the varied approaches toward the Baltic adopted by the papacy. The next chapter offers a change in gears. Thomas Lindkvist, in his essay "Crusading Ideas in Late Medieval Sweden," charts the tumultuous political circumstances of the 1490s which led to the use and creation of Sweden's crusading saint. As the author explains, no Swedish king participated in the crusades to the Holy Land, but a tradition of Swedish crusading developed upon the integration of present

Finland. Other historians, such as John Lind, have traced the use of crusading ideology in the service of increasing the authority of King Magnus Eriksson, but Lindkvist shows how these ideologies were mobilized in defending the borders against Moscow. The discussion of the deployment of crusading ideology in the service of national wars is useful information, as is his research on Sweden's participation, "authentic" or not, in the crusades to the Holy Land. John H. Lind also takes up the matter of "authentic" participation in crusades in his interesting essay, "Puzzling Approaches to the Crusading Movement in Recent Scandinavian Historiography: Danish Historians on Crusades and Source Editions as well as a Swedish Historian on Crusading in Finland." Here, Lind works to redefine what the Scandinavian crusades were, and to challenge what he identifies as a prevailing Protestant attitude adopted by some recent Scandinavian historians when presenting or assessing source material. Lind goes on to question present-day historians and editors who may have relied inadvertently on unreliable sources or editions affected negatively by the biases of modern editors.

The following chapter, Mari Isoaho's, "The Warrior in God's Favour: The Image of Alexander Nevskiy as a Hero Confronting the Western Crusaders," begins by introducing Alexander Nevskiy as a disputed figure, who "for Russians has for centuries represented a warrior ideal defending their country and religion" (284). Russian historiography presents Nevskiy as a hero who resisted crusading movements, with many of his exploits based on the hagiographical, late thirteenth-century *Life of Alexander Nevskiy*. In demonstrating the legend's growth, embellished both locally and through sources more far-flung, Isoaho provides a fascinating discussion of battle exhortations, and follows the effects of these conventions on the production of the Nevskiy legends. Antti Ruotsala's essay, "The Crusaders and the Mongols: The Case of the First Crusade of Louis IX (1248–1254)," concludes the collection. In this chapter, Ruotsala examines opportunities of peaceful interaction between crusaders and the Mongols, focusing in particular on the Mongol-Persian army commander, Eljigidei, whose letter proposed a coalition to help Mongol powers overturn the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad. While the subject matter seems different in focus from the rest of the book, the chapter's call for wider application of "crusading" is in line with the aims of the rest of the volume.

The essays in the volume are of good quality, and represent several new voices in the field of crusades studies. While the transitions between varied chapter themes are sometimes rough, it is a small price to pay for such a wide collection of ideas, some of them on topics that have, until now, received little attention, and some of which achieve, quite successfully, a

shift in the way scholars may perceive the role of Northern Europe in the crusades.

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