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Book Review by Guy Perry: [G.J.M.Perry@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:G.J.M.Perry@leeds.ac.uk)

*Crusade and Christendom: Annotated Documents in Translation from Innocent III to the Fall of Acre, 1187-1291*, ed. J. Bird, E. Peters and J. M. Powell (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013: pp. xxii + 512).

This book started out as an updated version of Edward Peters' classic, *Christian Society and the Crusades* (1971). But in the hands of Peters and his collaborators, Jessalyn Bird and J. M. Powell, the finished work has ended up as 'no longer a revision, or even a second edition'. It is now 'an entirely new book, with much of a heavily revised older book inside it' (p. xi). Indeed, the project grew so much in scope that the finished work is dedicated to the memory of Powell, who passed away in 2011. And it has to be said, at the outset, that *Crusade and Christendom* does represent a fitting monument to his memory.

This book has no rivals, in the English language, as a compendium of translated and annotated sources illuminating the transformation of the crusading movement from Innocent III to the loss of Acre in 1291. Indeed, the book starts by looking back, very helpfully, at *Audita tremendi* in 1187 – arguably the foundational text for the 'later crusades'. We are then swept off on a long and varied ride through the Wars of the Cross that followed, taking in Frederick II, the Barons' Crusade and Louis IX along the way. Yet the book also delves into aspects of thirteenth-century crusading that still tend to receive far less airtime – such as the 'Italian' and 'Mongol' crusades, for example. In many ways, however, the best part of the book is 'Living and Dying on Crusade'. In this section, we get an eye-opening insight into berths for travel, contracts for service, judicial rulings, wills, and so on and so forth – all the banality, one might say, of crusading.

There is much to praise in this work: not least, the scope and ambition of the project. In particular, the editors have assembled a fine blend of obvious and not-so-obvious texts (many of which have never been translated into English before). In this way, the 'usual suspects' – the likes of *Ad liberandam*, ibn Wasil, Joinville and the 'Templar of Tyre' – are balanced by a variety of other extracts, from Gervase of Prémontré to Abu l'Mahasin. The centrepiece of the book, though, is an old chestnut from *Christian Society and the Crusades*: Joseph Gavigan's translation of Oliver of Paderborn's *Historia Damiatina*. Certainly, it is invaluable to have the whole text reprinted here. Some lingering doubts remain, though, about the details of Gavigan's translation. It is worth adding that although Gavigan's editorial apparatus has been severely cut back, the annotations and connecting passages are done very well in the book as a whole – and the tone is set by an excellent and informative introduction.

The only real criticism to make is that the book comes agonizingly close to being comprehensive. To be fair, the editors themselves consciously decided that it could not be so. At the very start of the work, they emphasize the limits to what they can offer on the first fifteen years of Innocent III's pontificate – perhaps the most transformative period in crusading history. It is easy to sympathize with their point of view. Even as it stands, about half of the book is devoted to Innocent and the immediate aftermath of his pontificate, and any more would have unbalanced things still further. Yet it is possible to regret that more space could not have been found, not just on the Fourth Crusade, the Greeks, the Cathars and the struggle against heresy, but on the thirteenth-century Reconquista and the crusades in the Baltic. That said, when the editors pass lightly over these topics, they connect their sources very well,

with admirable linking passages. Hence, if one accepts the editors' explanations, the only genuine oversight is the lack of anything concrete on the second crusade of Louis IX.

The book is elegantly presented and well laid out. A high-quality index is provided, which covers key concepts (such as 'almsgiving', 'apocalypticism' and 'apostasy') as well as the usual diet of persons, places and peoples. Whilst the maps are limited in scope, they are admirably clear and to the point.

This is a highly important – even, a necessary – volume, that fills in an obvious gap in the primary literature available in English. It will become a crucial resource in libraries, bringing original voices to students. It is always a good sign when the main criticism is to ask for more.

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