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Critical approaches to medieval lyric poetry continue to be shaped by a certain tension between deconstructionist approaches, which emphasize the formulaic, anonymous character of troubadour and trouvère *canso/chanson* (love song), and the biographical, historically oriented analyses applicable to genres such as the *tenso* (debate song)[1] and *sirventes/serventois* (politically topical song). This volume aligns with the latter to the extent that the questions it asks of its corpus concern the social reception of political events rather than linguistic and musicological issues.

But in almost every way, this work breaks new ground, as its complex bibliographical entry indicates. As a critical edition, its textual parameters extend well beyond the physical object bearing the above title. For rather than constituting an autonomous monograph, it serves as the commentary volume for an online edition of over two hundred Old Occitan and Old French crusade songs. The fruit of a five-year Anglo-Italian collaboration involving twenty-two notable scholars, the edition is housed by the University of Warwick at [http://warwick.ac.uk/crusadelyrics](http://warwick.ac.uk/crusadelyrics) and offers new transcriptions of over half the titles featured plus translations; a critical apparatus addressing manuscript sources, versification (and music, if ex-
As with Joseph Bédier and Pierre Aubrey's classic edition, the book's twelve chapters are organized chronologically from "Early Expeditions" to "After St. Louis" but expand the corpus and address responses to crusading efforts on three fronts: the Levant, Spain, and Occitania.[2] Each chapter offers a synopsis of the crusade-in-question, summarizes the overall tenor of lyric responses in each age, and offers representative texts illustrating these responses. Texts are not quoted in full but rather excerpted and translated in one to three stanzas, with the balance of each poem summarized. Three appendices enhance the analysis by offering an essay on crusading rhetoric in this lyric repertoire, a chronology of events contextualizing each of the 202 poetic texts, a list, organized chronologically for each tradition, of the twenty-nine trouvère and seventeen troubadour songs notated for music, followed by a table of manuscript sigla. A glossary and an index complete the volume.

Scholars of medieval lyric are accustomed, particularly with regard to love song, to discerning signs of rhetorical and melodic individuality within a largely conventional set of poetic topoi and melodic formulae, while biographical criticism remains perforce elusive. In this respect, the crusade song has always been the most visibly topical of lyric genres and is indeed one of the few that lends itself to the degree of historicization practiced here. In Linda Paterson's words: "Time and again, generalizing commonplaces in troubadour poetry can be shown to have relevance to particular circumstances known to its audience" (p. 110). Though a great many of Team Paterson's contextualizations are justifiable, the uninitiated reader should exercise some discernment in accepting all analyses as gospel, as in the case of Thibaut de Champagne's lyric response to the Albigensian crusade. That caveat issued, the level of scholarship in the text editing, translation, and commentary is superb, and this reviewer finds himself truly enthused by the precision with which the songs under scrutiny are assigned to a given time and series of events.

The volume offers a number of surprises to the nonspecialist, the most notable being the large disparity between the total number of troubadour versus trouvère responses to the crusading movements. Pertinent to this question are the differences in the genres practiced by the two lyric traditions. The well-attested paucity of serventois in the trouvère repertoire confirms the relatively few songs alluding to the conflict between empire and papacy, while the chanson de départe proves to be an innovation that remained unique to the trouvères. The legacy of this struggle impacted the South far more than it did the North, as is true of the Albigensian Crusade and the Reconquista. In the latter case, the religious wars beyond the Pyrenees were too remote to concern the northern barons, while in the former, these very lords were the perpetrators of the violence in Occitania, while their own lands were unaffected by these campaigns. Nothing adequately explains, however, the
absence of French equivalents of the Occitan lament on the deaths of Richard I of England and Louis IX of France, even granting Doss-Quinby et al.’s observation that the few surviving plaintes are personal rather than political in nature.[3] It is to this project’s credit that these generic differences are thoroughly explored and contextualized, well beyond the simple tally of lyric genres practiced south and north of the Loire that are the standard fare of undergraduate and even beginning graduate courses.

This work is a first-rate critical essay cum edition of crusade poetry that brings this neglected genre to the public eye and offers insightful historical context for a large corpus of medieval songs never before analyzed together. It is regrettable that more attention is not given to the melodies, which are neither transcribed nor given proper scrutiny in the online critical notes. That lacuna aside, Singing the Crusades will appeal to medievals of multiple disciplines, notably history and language/literature, and is certainly accessible to graduate students in those fields. It offers a gold mine of data and analyses and promises to become part of the critical canon in very short order.

Notes

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