

Scott Bruce has provided us with a useful insight into Cluny and Abbot Peter's writing career. It does not go into depth about Western views of Islam, but the larger picture can be obtained by consulting the works listed in the bibliography.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

THOMAS M. IZBICKI

*The Historia Iherosolimitani of Robert the Monk.* By D. Kempf and M. G. Bull. Pp. lxxiv + 121 incl. frontispiece. Woodbridge–Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2013. £50. 98 1 84383 808 1

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The book edited by D. Kempf and M. G. Bull represents the first modern critical edition of the chronicle of Robert the Monk (after the edition in the *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, 1866), which is preserved in eighty-four manuscripts: that is, many more than in the case of any other chronicle of the First Crusade. However, as the editors rightly remark, this source has not received much attention from historians. This chronicle, dated to about 1110, is one of those which are based on the anonymous *Gesta Francorum* written a few years after the First Crusade. Attention in the introduction is concentrated on the identification of the author and assessing the date of the chronicle, as well as considering the manuscript tradition. Much attention is given to determining whether it is correct to identify Robert as archbishop of Reims, as is usually done (this assumption was contested recently by C. Sweetenham in the translation of Robert's chronicle). We actually do not possess the autograph of Robert's text, and the oldest manuscript can allegedly be dated to the 1140s/1150s. This (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, lat. 5129) was chosen as the base manuscript for this edition (p. lviii), the same as in the case of the *Recueil*. At the same time, while the *Recueil* edition has an *apparatus criticus* based mostly on the manuscripts preserved in France, this edition has no *apparatus criticus*, and only some clearly mistaken readings in the Latin text are amended by reference to other manuscripts (I calculated seventy-one amendments, mostly non-orthographical) (pp. lvi–lvii). The editors justify this way of editing by referring to the 'noteworthy stability of the propositional content of the text' (p. li). That is to say, the present edition contains the same text as the previous one. It should be noted however that this is the first to include a full list of manuscripts, and thus we can see their geographical distribution. There is an interesting suggestion (pp. xlv–xlvi) that fast and widespread dissemination of the text in Germany in the middle and second half of the twelfth century was favoured by German participation in the second and third crusades. In this case it is to be regretted that the edition does not contain a *stemma* analysis, since, among other things, it could help us to have a clearer idea about how many manuscripts were in imperial lands at that time. The editors note that the number of copies of the chronicle decreases considerably after the twelfth century, but that it regains favour in the fifteenth, almost exclusively in Germany. That, it is suggested, is probably a consequence of interest generated by the Ottoman threat to central Europe (pp. xlvii); that could be true. Furthermore, there were several translations of the chronicle into High German at that time. Actually, the list of manuscripts demonstrates that thirty-two manuscripts are clearly of the twelfth century, only nine of the thirteenth, five of the fourteenth and twenty-

eight of the fifteenth, mostly preserved in Germany and Austria. It may also be worth noting that, as I have discovered, we have a similar situation with the manuscript tradition of Humbert of Romans's treatise *De predicatione crucis*, originally destined for crusading in Palestine. Furthermore, as it is possible to see in catalogue records of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library that the *Codex S. Petri b. IX 28* from Salzburg, which contains Robert's chronicle, includes some historical and liturgical materials concerning the Ottomans and the Hussites as well: the later use of the chronicle by Robert the Monk would probably be a good subject for further scholarship.

NOVOSIBIRSK STATE UNIVERSITY

VALENTIN PORTNYKH

*King John and religion.* By Paul Webster. (Studies in the History of Medieval Religion, 43.) Pp. xv +253 incl. 4 maps, 1 fig. and 2 tables. Woodbridge–Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2015. £60. 978 1 78327 029 3

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It is notoriously difficult to study the personal religious beliefs of medieval monarchs. Whilst writers and chroniclers of the time often commented on the spiritual conduct of specific kings and queens during this period, such sources are made up of multiple layers of interpretation. In order to analyse the specific, sometimes unpredictable, opinions and motives of individual monarchs, modern scholars must carry out close and objective readings of contemporary accounts in order to see clearly through the complex views of the medieval writers. Indeed, the Angevin kings of England are no exception to this rule. For Paul Webster, the study of the personal religion of one of England's most notorious kings – King John – indicates the wealth of potential that investigations of this type provide for discussions of religion and the post-Conquest kings of England. The distinction between the phrase 'personal religion' and 'piety' is crucial to this discussion, and is noted by Webster at the very beginning of his analysis. For Webster, there is a useful but under-examined distinction between the study of the monarch's personal devotion and his public piety, i.e. being seen to visit the shrines of saints, undertake pilgrimage and practise almsgiving to enhance his public image as a Christian monarch. Whilst much of his work by necessity discusses the public manifestations of John's religious devotion, Webster is ultimately more interested in investigating John's 'inner soul' (p. 2). In this respect, this study helpfully builds on an already flourishing scholarly tradition that addresses the theme of the religious expression of medieval monarchs, but which, as Webster notes, often does not try to determine whether or not these were pious individuals themselves. This study rethinks scholarly trends to conclude that, whilst John 'saw his dispute with the church in political terms, he viewed his personal religion as a separate matter' (p. 198).

Perhaps the strongest element of this book is its drive to shift the negative focus of scholarship on King John, which has so far encumbered research in this field, by demonstrating that, despite the opinions of his political commentators, John did indeed engage with the most important religious observances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Examples of this are most explicitly indicated in the first five chapters, which deal with John's engagement with various pillars of religious practice during this period, including the offering of masses such as the *Laudes*