Encountering Islam on the First Crusade. By Nicholas Morton. Pp. xi + 319 incl. 1 fig and 4 tables. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. £64.99. 978 1 107 15689 0

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This book is certainly the new word in studies of crusading to the East. Previous significant publications dealing with how the Christians regarded the Muslims at the time of the First Crusade by Svetlana Luchitskaya (primarily *Образ Другого: мусульмане в хрониках крестового похода* [The image of other: the Muslim in the chronicles of crusades], St Petersburg 2001) and Martin Völkl (*Muslime, Märtyrer, Militia Christi: Identität, Feindbildund, Fremderfahrung während der ersten Kreuzzüge*, Stuttgart 2011) deal mainly with the western image of the Muslims as 'others' opposed to the Christians. Morton's book focuses primarily on two questions: how important were the Muslims for westerners during and immediately after the First Crusade and do we have the right to present this expedition as a conflict between Christian and Islamic worlds?

Firstly, Morton pays attention to the fact that the geographic purpose of the crusade was based clearly on spirituality: the expedition was aimed precisely at the conquest of Jerusalem, which was the primary *stated* goal of the expedition, and not at the 'liberation of the eastern Christians' in general (pp. 74, 83–5). Morton italicises the word '*stated*', obviously because the pope's aims for the First Crusade have been discussed for decades. From my own work I can confirm that the solution proposed by Morton is the best one: theoretically the pope had more global plans, because some passages in the papal correspondence and in the canons of the Council of Clermont can allow that interpretation of the evidence, but it is evident that the only clearly stated purpose of the crusade was the liberation of Jerusalem. Even afterwards it remained the main goal of crusading: on the eve of the Second Crusade, in spite of the loss of Edessa, St Bernard in his letter 363 to archbishops of the German lands does not mention Edessa towards which he seems to be indifferent, but speaks only about the threat to Jerusalem and the Holy Land (p. 261).

Christians were not particularly at odds with Muslims as such. To illustrate that Morton mentions that during their march across the East the crusaders voluntarily concluded treaties with them, and not only when there was a vital necessity to do so: it was not the 'otherness' which automatically made people a military target (p. 169). Only those Muslims who were on the way to Jerusalem were rivals. Furthermore, Morton underlines that the Franks seem to have distinguished between the Turks and Arabs and even tried to profit from tensions among them (p. 145): Muslims were not regarded as an undifferentiated body of enemies. At the same time the crusaders lacked any interest in the Islamic religion, though it was usually negatively characterised (p. 129).

All in all, the crusaders seem to have come to the East because they wanted to liberate the Holy Land and not because they wanted to slaughter the Saracens or to conquer their lands.

Secondly, Morton is correct when he states that, though the chronicles record a certain opposition between Christians and Muslims, Muslims were not the main concern of the crusaders. The main factor for the crusaders related to spirituality: it was their degree of sinfulness and not the respective virtues of Christians or

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Muslims which mattered (pp. 152–4). When the crusaders were sinful, they were punished by God with a new disaster. The Muslims were then presented as an 'instrument of God's discipline upon the crusaders': the 'divine scourges used to correct crusaders' sinfulness' (p. 152). Finally, Morton correctly concludes that the key opponents in the chronicles of the First Crusade were on a spiritual plain: God and the Devil. Sometimes sinful Christians were considered to be instruments of evil (pp. 172–3). Sometimes, despite a generally negative image, Saracens could be presented in a positive way when they converted or recognised that God was on the side of crusaders (pp. 161–2). That is to say, the dichotomy of good and evil did not stand between the Christians and the Muslims (p. 186): there were Christians and Muslims on both sides.

Thirdly, as the last chapter of the book demonstrates, on the one hand the crusades were not an escalation of conflict between the Christians and Muslims, which had existed before in other parts of the Mediterranean region; on the other hand, the First Crusade did not by any means lead to any increase in interest in relations with the Muslims on the part of westerners. That remained marginal.

This suggests that the crusades were not viewed by contemporaries as a stage in an 'alleged war' between 'East' and 'West', but only as a war to recover Jerusalem. Morton's book is a good example of how we should be careful about global conclusions concerning 'clashes of civilisations'. Such an assessment, even when initially seeming to be valid, may prove on thorough examination to be misconceived. Morton's arguments are sound and certainly deserve the attention of scholars.

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Hebräische liturgische Poesien zu den Judenverfolgungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs. Edited by Avraham Fraenkel, Abraham Gross and Peter Sh. Lehnardt. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Hebräische texte aus dem mittelalterlichen Deutschland, 3.) Pp. xxxiii + 486. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016. €130. 978 3 447 10159 2

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The volume under review presents scholarly editions of twenty-seven *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) addressing the crusader onslaught of the Jewish communities of the Rhineland in 1096 which were written in the aftermath of the massacres or at some time in the twelfth century. Twelve of the *piyyutim* are classified as *Qinot*, poems written for the liturgy of 9th of Av, the day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple. Another dozen are *Selichot*, liturgical compositions beseeching forgiveness of sins in preparation for redemption. *Selichot* are a liturgical feature of fast days and the season of the High Holy Days culminating in the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. Three of the *piyyutim* were composed in the format of a *Zulath,* that is to say a liturgical embellishment inserted after the recitation of the *Shema* ('Hear o Israel') component of the service on festivals or special Sabbaths. All of the *piyyutim* are translated into beautiful rhythmic German and provided with exhaustive explanatory notes. Great effort has been made to make the material accessible to non-experts in medieval Jewish religious material. The volume includes a glossary of technical terms; short introductions to each poem explain who the author was and what the interesting characteristics of the

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