

*Preaching the crusades to the eastern Mediterranean. Propaganda, liturgy and diplomacy, 1305–1352.* By Constantinos Georgiou. Pp. xii + 293. London–New York: Routledge, 2018. £115. 978 1 138 74370 0  
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The central role of preaching in the promotion of crusading has been recognised by contemporaries and later historians ever since Pope Urban II's seminal oration at Clermont in November 1095. This remained true in the fourteenth century when successive attempts to launch large or smaller scale crusades, whether against Mamluks and Turks or political rivals of the papacy, were punctuated by formal sermons to elite audiences as well as more general preaching campaigns. While these examples of crusade oratory have been widely noted by previous writers, Constantinos Georgiou's study is the first to focus exclusively on them and to provide a list of manuscripts and editions of four of the most prominent, one by James of Lausanne OP and three by Pierre Roger OSB, later Pope Clement VI. As Georgiou explains, these represent merely some of the most prominent examples from a large body of hitherto under-researched material.

The study opens with a useful historiographical introduction followed by a detailed narrative of crusade diplomacy in the period. Here Georgiou treads in paths made familiar in studies by Sylvia Schein, Sophia Menache, Norman Housley and others, but takes a distinctive line on papal agency, regarding successive popes as the driving forces behind crusade initiatives in the face of reluctant, devious or equivocating secular authorities, in particular the kings of France, without whose involvement no major crusade was feasible. Turning to the sermons themselves, Georgiou then discusses the relationship of preaching to the developing liturgy of the crusade. He confirms what others have noted: that crusade motifs extended beyond recruiting sermons to those *de Cruce* more generally directed at encouraging penance (including, it might be noted, Roger's), and builds on Amnon Linder's work to emphasise the incorporation of specific crusade elements across liturgical practices and ceremonies, notably the injection of special prayers into the mass. Examination of popular reactions to crusade promotion in 1309, 1320 and 1345 allows Georgiou to argue, perhaps optimistically, that preaching and liturgy exerted a direct mass influence on public enthusiasm, although the question why this appeared to be the case on those occasions and not elsewhere is left somewhat hanging. Finally, alert and detailed analyses are provided of two sermons to the French court, by John of Lausanne (of 1320, it is convincingly argued) and Pierre de la Palud OP (1331), and two by Pierre Roger at the papal curia in 1332 and 1333 as part of the diplomatic efforts surrounding Philip VI of France's proposed crusade. The educated language and sophisticated inter-textuality expose the artifice of these written texts, which may render them only tangential witnesses to any delivered speeches whose actual impact can only be gleaned from equally contrived chronicle descriptions. The texts demonstrate a lively academic tradition, not least in Roger's reliance on Humbert of Romans OP. Any genuinely demotic dimension must remain clouded. Five appendices conclude the book, providing a selective handlist of early fourteenth-century crusade sermon manuscripts as well as the useful editions of the sermons.

A welcome addition to the growing literature on later medieval crusading, not least in its meticulous study of liturgy and the texts themselves, Georgiou's book

raises some issues of method and interpretation. At the level of politics, he appears to take papal correspondence at face value, a trap others have fallen into. He sees successive popes as initiators almost *contra mundum*, which might have surprised Clement v, at the very least. The idea that crusade appeals came without long prior discussion stretches credulity and evidence. There is too little acknowledgement of concurrent competing pressures and concerns: the Templars; the priority of papal interests in Italy; the erosion of the trade ban with Egypt; relations with the German emperor; the issue of the Spiritual Franciscans; the Hundred Years War etc etc; and the abiding need for popes, within unavoidable limiting constraints, to assert, at least rhetorically, papal authority in the face of overt French assertion of its own version of royal caesaropapism. Georgiou's belief in papal 'fervour' ignores the formulaic nature of papal official language. The depiction of preaching's dynamic role in the process of inciting support for crusade (or anything else) seems naive. Audiences, especially the elite ones of Georgiou's examples, knew what to expect, the sermon acting as a performative focus for an extended process of commitment. Away from courtly set-pieces, preaching provided the occasion, not the cause, for settling matters of fund-raising, the public legitimisation of crusade privileges or recruitment. Roger's sermon at Avignon on 16 July 1333 is described as 'completely successful', pointing to the papal bulls conferring leadership of the crusade and church taxes on Philip vi ten days later. Are we seriously to imagine that John xxii, hardly a sentimentalist or an obvious push-over, who had been discussing the crusade with the French for over a year, was so swayed by Roger's oratory as to arrive at a major political and fiscal implications as a consequence? No. Roger's sermon formed part of the diplomatic dance, its deliberate echo of Urban ii designed to cover in traditional crusade glitter the mundane heavy-pounding of hardnosed negotiation.

Much of the argument both for papal initiative and the impact of preaching depends on seeing the French as reluctant crusaders. This overstates the case, for example ignoring the commissioning of luxury crusade-related manuscripts by French courtiers throughout this period, the founding of a Parisian crusade *confrarie*, the material commitment of some individuals, and the continuing political kudos attached to the tradition of St Louis. If crusade diplomacy was a game of blind man's bluff, popes and kings were equal players. There are some misunderstandings, such as of the timing of the crusade fleet's move to the Channel in 1336 (p. 71 n. 40 misleads), and unexpected judgements (for example, on p. 120 the supposed novelty of Clement vi circulating miracle stories related to the crusade). However, although in places the political survey seems skewed and superficial, and the perception of preaching's practical operation over-simple, this is a serious and significant examination of important texts of interest to a range of historians.

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