

Al. Masag, c. 32, sy. 3, 2020 London

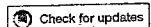
of the authors to challenge the master narrative of Islamic history. On the contrary, at times individual contributors seem to have had great faith in the veracity of the Islamic historical tradition. Nevertheless, perhaps *Qur'anic Quotations Preserved on Papyrus Document, 7th-10th Centuries* might have done more to address such questions directly.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2020.1815304>



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The Conquest of the Holy Land by Salah al-Din. A Critical Edition and Translation of the *Libellus de expugnatione Terrae Sanctae per Saladinum*, Edited and translated by Keagan Brewer and James H. Kane, London: Routledge, 2019, 298 pp., ISBN:13: 978-1138308053

The conquest of the kingdom of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187 was one of the most dramatic series of events in the European Middle Ages. Although an invasion of the kingdom had long been feared, the conquest was more comprehensive, and the defeat of the kingdom's armies more humiliating, than most contemporaries could have predicted. The kingdom was effectively lost at the decisive battle of Hattin on 4 July, but it was the fall of Jerusalem on 2 October that shocked the Christian world. The events of that decisive year are recounted in detail found nowhere else in the composite work known as the *Libellus de expugnatione Terrae Sanctae per Saladinum*. Of the three or four main sources for these events, the *Libellus* is in many ways the most valuable for its combination of narrative with dense biblical allusion and exegesis. Famously, it provides the only contemporary account from a Christian perspective of Hattin.

Brewer and Kane's is the first edition of the text since the 1870s, when Joseph Stevenson published the version that most historians have used until now in the Rolls Series. The present editors pay tribute to Stevenson's editorial skills, but the Rolls edition lacked much in the way of prefatory material, and the fast-moving scholarship on the Crusader States, especially in the last thirty years, makes a modern edition with proper commentary highly desirable. The text itself is short – comprising only 135 pages of this volume with facing Latin and English – and only four manuscripts survive. Yet it presents considerable complexities for editors. It is a compilation of three parts, though in none of the manuscripts is any division between the parts observed. The main part comprises the narrative and discussion of the events from the death of King Baldwin V in September 1186 to the fall of Jerusalem thirteen months later; this is followed by a series of short extracts from the second recension of a different text, the *Itinerarium peregrinorum* (known to Crusade historians as *IP2*), and by the letter purporting to be from Emperor Frederick Barbarossa to Saladin, and the Sultan's reply, both of which are also found in *IP2*.

The authorship of the text was originally attributed by the sixteenth-century bibliographer John Bale to the English Cistercian Ralph of Coggeshall, who made use of the text in his own chronicle. Although Stevenson long ago showed that Ralph was not the author of the *Libellus*, Brewer and Kane argue persuasively that it was the Coggeshall community that preserved the main body of the narrative text and probably added the supplementary material. The author was almost certainly either a resident of Jerusalem or 'a visitor who became swept up in the

drama of 1187' (p.9). Given the familiarity shown with Scripture and exegetical techniques, he must have been a cleric with theological training. Further hints as to his identity point towards the tentative suggestion made by Brewer and Kane that he might have been a Cistercian monk. Such a supposition is certainly warranted by his intimate knowledge not only of Scripture, but also of exegetical techniques and resources associated with Cistercian spirituality, for example the unexpected allusion to the Song of Songs – a text often deployed by Cistercian exegetes – in describing the dead bodies of Christian knights after the battle of Cresson in May 1187.

The purpose for which the text was composed has never been certain, but Brewer and Kane rehearse arguments for seeing it as an *excitatio* for potential crusaders, as suggested by John Pryor in an article of 2010.¹ Features of the text such as the mourning for the loss of the True Cross at Hattin would appear to strengthen such a suggestion. But there are also eschatological motifs and reference to Saladin's conquest as the consequence of the sinfulness of the Christians of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Brewer and Kane's long and scholarly introduction to the text expertly explores the richness of a text that combines the simple narrative of loss and destruction with dense and complex allegory, recounted in a Latin prose style that is sometimes clunky and difficult to translate. The *Libellus* is an important, if puzzling text, and Crusade historians are fortunate that it has at last found editors worthy of the task.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2020.1815302>



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01 Temmuz 2021

Insatiable Appetite: Food as Cultural Signifier in the Middle East and Beyond, Kirill Dmitriev, Julia Hauser and Bilal Orfali, (eds.), 2019, [Islamic History and Civilisation, volume 163], Leiden-Boston: Brill, IX + 362 pp., €25.00/US\$30.00 (paperback), ISBN 9789004413023

A happy event in cultural studies in recent years has been the attention paid to food and foodways, from a variety of angles. Once dismissed wrongly as a trivial or "feminine" (in the pejorative sense) pursuit, this discipline is finding its legitimate place in the academy, answering fascinating and exciting queries on that most basic facet of every human's body and identity: what he or she eats.

This collection brings together the work of scholars at various stages of their careers to offer case studies of foodways in several Middle Eastern countries, as well as one with a special focus on Iberia, one on South Africa and one on Antiquity. The journey takes us through many issues, among them food prohibitions, vegetarianism, the shifting meanings of *halal*, the complex views in Islamicate societies on wine and pork and hashish, experiences of famine, scarcity, and the relationship between food and gender. These are products of a conference held in Beirut in May of 2016 by the Arab-German Young Academy of the Sciences and Humanities, the American University of Beirut, and the Orient-Institut Beirut.

¹John Pryor, 'Two excitations for the Third Crusade: the letters of brother Thierry of the Temple' *Mediterranean Historical Review* 25 (2010), 147-68.