

M. Cecilia Gaposchkin. *Invisible Weapons: Liturgy and the Making of Crusade Ideology*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2017. 376 pages. \$69.95.

The word liturgy originally described service for the people of the *polis*. As the Septuagint came into formation, *leitourgia* was rendered as cultic or devotional service to God (Giorgio Agamben, *The Omnibus Homo Sacer*, Stanford UP, 956). In *Invisible Weapons: Liturgy and the Making of Crusade Ideology*, M. Cecilia Gaposchkin delineates another evolution in the use of the term. For Gaposchkin, liturgy includes sacred practices that make crusading a sacramental act. Gaposchkin limits what she calls liturgy to “the formal and ritualized prayer of the [Roman Catholic] Church, which includes the Eucharistic service (the Mass), the Divine Office (the *opus dei*), and a host of other public rites, including processions, blessings, and other formal prayers performed during the Middle Ages (mostly) in Latin” (5). But more expansively, liturgy is, for Gaposchkin, both text and action.

In particular, she examines how Christian rituals and supplications endow the movement of crusading as holy. On one hand, liturgy transforms warfare sparked by particular people during a particular time (initiated by European Christians against Muslims, and some Jews, of the Levant from the 11th to the 15th centuries) into violence of eschatological aspirations. On the other hand, the crusades end up fashioning the prayers of local parishes that represent “the Church.” Liturgy ends up reflecting crusade ideologies. Liturgy shapes crusading, and is reshaped by it. The scandalous relationship between Catholic piety and violence anchors her argument, and Gaposchkin writes *Invisible Weapons* as a devotional history of the crusades.

Gaposchkin delivers her argument not only with historical exactitude and ingenuity, but also with the care of a seasoned educator. The intricacies by which she builds her claims are probably most useful for medieval researchers. For example, in addition to the pioneering lines of interpretation that show how crusading became central to the congregational expression of Christian faith and how the prayers of the faithful became words of institution for holy war, medievalists will find illuminating two appendices that offer extra details such as “The Liturgy of the 15 July Commemoration and Comparative Development of the Clamor” (263, 289). The latter is a timeline that builds upon the study of crusade liturgies from Amon Linder’s *Raising Arms* (Brepols, 2003). A third appendix provides a “Timeline of Nonliturgical Evidence for Liturgical Supplications,” or a list of “evidence” from “churches, letters, and other sources [excluding liturgical manuscripts]” requesting or prescribing “liturgical services to be said for crusades or crusaders” (309). For readers who may have more interest than expertise in liturgical history, those for whom a source like *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Heirosolimitanorum*, aka *Gesta Francorum*, aka *Gesta*, does not roll off the tongue, Gaposchkin begins her book with two essays that prime readers immediately following the introduction. The first essay reviews the “main events” and “principal sources” of the crusades to the Levant, which ground her argument (16). The second introduces liturgical books and liturgical terminology germane to her assertions. She is careful to qualify that the essays are only intended to orient the reader and should not be taken as exhaustive historical summaries or encapsulations of historical claims. However a reader engages those beginning essays, they and the nuanced scholarship and narratives that follow warrant attention from any who seek to understand how Christian practices of faith, and perhaps even practices of faith in general, can motivate centuries-long warfare in the name of God, and how the genealogy of Christian liturgy includes traces of holy war. That kind of correlation and that unfortunate fact amount to much more than a marker of past belief.

Crusaders saw their prayers and the battles consecrated by them as building the future kingdom of God.

In that regard, Gaposchkin's text offers a rich historical counterpoint to watershed titles like Catherine Pickstock's *After Writing* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1997), William Cavanaugh's *Torture and Eucharist* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1998), and others in the generation following them that have positioned liturgical celebration as a kind of antidote to political violence and social upheaval. Gaposchkin's work stands at the top of crusade studies. Her work will strengthen the syllabi of seminars dedicated to liturgical history, especially of the medieval and crusading periods, and associated reading lists for doctoral students. Yet I also see points of connection between *Invisible Weapons* and a think piece such as Bruce Lincoln's *Holy Terrors* (University of Chicago, 2006). Maybe Gaposchkin's preliminary essays can dialogue with Lincoln's title, where he conveys how the actions of the September 11 attackers constituted a form of deep religious conviction.

For teachers of worship and preaching who recognize the importance of challenging their students to think critically about the efficaciousness of liturgy, its relationship to historical and exponential violence in Christ's name, and what that might entail for interpretation, response, and perhaps even prevention with regard to pious violence today, I recommend *Invisible Weapons*.

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