Journal of Islamic Studies Advance Access published May 11, 2015

BOOK-REVIEW

Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c. 1050–1614
By Brian A. Catlos (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), xix + 628 pp. Price: . EAN 978–0521889391.

This is the first book that considers Muslims as they live under Christian domination (in the *dār al-ḥarb*) in a Mediterranean perspective. Patrick Harvey provided a fine precedent in writing about the Muslims who remained in Christian Spain. Catlos goes further in considering the whole question of Muslim minorities in Christian lands. As he writes: ‘No scholarly monograph has undertaken to analyze the subject Muslim communities of Latin Christendom as a phenomenon, or has taken a broadly inclusive, comparative approach to the subject’ (p. xiii). He tries to look at Europe from the perspective of the Arabs, for whom the *Ifranj* or Franks were only ‘one group of tribal barbarians originating on the undeveloped fringe of the Islamic world’ (p. 11) and all Christians were infidels. First of all he looks at the changing relationships between Muslims and Christians in Spain. He makes the point that most Muslims were not ‘foreigners’ in the lands across which Islam spread, but natives, who acculturated Islam to their own contexts; and after the reconquest of lands ruled by Muslims, the Muslims remained natives of these conquered lands. Nevertheless, in the Middle Ages, differences tended to be drawn up along religious lines, rather than by race or colour or language. Not only religious practices but also laws and customs applied exclusively to the religious communities. Thus Muslims in Christian lands had a conspicuous and distinct presence, just as did Jews. Nevertheless they did interact in many ways with their neighbours and took part in the greater life of the community. Religion did not determine the whole of their lifestyle, and Catlos prefers to use the term ‘Islamicate’ (introduced in 1974 by Marshall Hodgson in his *The Venture of Islam*) rather than ‘Muslim’ to characterize their wider interests. There were fatwās against Muslims living in the lands of the infidels, but nevertheless many communities remained, and included people of a wide range of statuses. Catlos rehearses all the arguments for and against remaining in the *dār al-ḥarb* (Christian territory) on the one hand, and the reality of the Muslims remaining (*mudéjares*) in Spain. Even false conversion was tolerated, when a mudejar was living in Spain under duress, until, in the 1504 dictum of al-Maghrāwī the Moriscos were recommended to comply fully ‘with Christian social and religious attitudes’ (p. 319) outwardly.

One sign of the acculturation was the loss of Arabic as a spoken language from the thirteenth century onwards, and the consequent necessity to perform parts of the liturgy (e.g. the sermons) in the local vernacular, while retaining Arabic script when writing this vernacular (the so-called ‘aljamiado’). Some parts of the religious practice were influenced by surrounding Christianity, such as the

© The Author (2015). Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. All rights reserved. For Permissions, please email: journals.permissions@oup.com

Downloaded from http://jis.oxfordjournals.org/ at University of Colorado on May 28, 2015

taṣliya—the blessing on the Prophet—which mirrored the Christian practice of devotion to Jesus and Mary. Open attacks on Christianity or proselytism were not encouraged or performed—the emphasis being on the 'greater jihād' the improvement of one's soul, rather than on the 'lesser jihād' of war against the infidel. More common was religious debate, often publicly orchestrated, including one between Juan de Segovia and an envoy from Nasrid Granada in 1431. Relations between *mudéjares* and Muslims in the *dār al-Islām* continued, and the most recent Arabic writings in Granada often appeared in *aljamiado* form in Christian Spain.

Catlos sees the differences between the three religions as being minimal. Hence the possibility of the 'new Aristotelianism of the Latin Averroists, the kabbalistic musings of Llull and the Sufi-tinged mysticism of Joachim di Fiore' (p. 347). He also sees the translation movement as due to the 'persistence of Muslim communities under Latin rule' (p. 347). Science was a 'neutral zone'. Religions were regarded as 'laws' (the Qurʾān being the 'lex Saracenorum') rather than 'religiones', and each religious community had its own laws and regulations, though these were progressively trumped by the prevailing law of the land. It was in the thirteenth-century that the great law-codes, based on the revived Roman Law, came into being, such as the Constitutions of Melfi (1231) and the *Siete Partidas*, which had to take into account the position of religious minorities. Because Spanish Muslims were not full subjects they 'required and deserved special royal protection' as *servi regis* (p. 353). Muslims in court were allowed to swear their own oaths ('berelle yale aylle illen' as one non-Arab transcribed it, p. 358), and hold a Qurʾān, which was in imitation of the Christian practice of holding a Bible. In Canon Law, references to Muslims tended to focus on miscegenation, and therefore the requirement that they wear distinctive garments lest a Christian should mistakenly have sex with them.

The first part of the book provides the historical data for the Muslims that remained in each of the areas concerned: the 'Christian Spains', Italy and North Africa, and the Latin East. These communities Catlos aptly calls the 'static diasporas'—Muslims did not migrate from where they had always been. A chronological sequence is maintained, ending with the completion of the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain in 1614. (It is amazing that some 320,000 Moriscos were removed from Spain in a very organized and thorough fashion, in such a way that 'on February 20, 1614, the Count of Salazar, who had overseen the expulsion, reported to Felipe III that his mission had been completed' p. 303).

The second part of the book is analytical, arranged cleverly under the headings of 'Thought', 'Word' and 'Deed'. Here the Iberian peninsula predominates. This reflects not only the main interests and competence of the author, but also the lesser importance and the fewer primary materials of the other areas. Examples are drawn from across the Mediterranean; e.g. in speaking of church laws and decrees, the Canons of Nablus (1120) are quoted alongside the decree of Pope Alexander II (1061–73), Roger II of Sicily's *Assizes* and Pere the Ceremonious of Catalonia's concessions to the Valencian *mudéjares* as well as a law code (pp. 370–8). But the picture is largely of the different Spanish societies in which

Downloaded from http://jis.oxfordjournals.org/ at University of Colorado on May 28, 2015

Muslims lived, as is reflected too in the 60-page bibliography, in which Spanish primary and secondary sources predominate.

One merit of the book is the richness of the information it provides, from sources both in Western languages and in Arabic (the latter include *al-Tafrīʿ* of Ibn al-Jallāb, a tenth-century Mālikī treatise on jihād which was translated into *aljamiado*, Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn's memoir of Frankish Nablus, and Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī's extensive travels). There is a welcome number of direct quotations, all accurately translated into English.

In spite of the volume of primary material that the volume brings together, inaccuracies and mistakes are rare. Peter the Venerable did not include the translation of Islamic law among the Muslim works whose translation he commissioned in the early 1140s (p. 330). The consensus nowadays is that ʿĪsā b. Jābir (Yca Gidelli)'s otherwise lost translation of the Qurʾān did not provide the basis for an extant early seventeenth-century version of the Qurʾān into Aragonese (p. 331), though he could have provided the precedent. There is no evidence that the translator of Arabic medical works, Constantine the African, had converted from Islam (p. 337); unlike his student Johannes Afflacius, who is explicitly stated as having been a Muslim. Sometimes the Latin phrases are shaky: *studia arabicum* (p. 333) for *studia arabica*, and *scriptor Arabicum* (p. 417) for *scriptor arabicus*. English readers would generally be more familiar with Isidore of Seville rather than 'Isadore' of Seville (p. 308).

This book will become the standard book in English for any aspect of Muslim presence in Christian society in the Middle Ages.

Charles Burnett
Warburg Institute, University of London
E-mail: Charles.Burnett@sas.ac.uk
doi:10.1093/jis/etv036

Downloaded from http://jis.oxfordjournals.org/ at University of Colorado on May 28, 2015