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Catlos, Brian A. *The Victors and the Vanquished: Christians and Muslims of Catalonia and Aragon, 1050-1300*. Cambridge University Press, 2004. 449 pp.

Brian Catlos traces the history of the Muslims of the Ebro watershed from the time of the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula through the Christian conquest and its aftermath. Catlos explains that the geographical unity of the region justifies its consideration as a "socio-geographic unit." (4) His intention to break away from the tendency to study Mudejar *aljamas* as isolated units is noteworthy. However, most of the book deals with the Mudejars of Aragon, leaving those of Catalonia to play a secondary role. Moreover, Catlos admits that some of his conclusions do not apply to Catalonia, which housed a considerably smaller number of Mudejars than Aragon.

The first part of the book provides a panoramic view of the region under Muslim control. This section is based on secondary sources and fails to offer any new perspectives. Catlos, who mentions the historiographical debate over "continuity" or "change," uses the historical background as a point of reference to analyze the effects that the Christian conquest had on the local Islamic society. He concludes that the Christian conquest of the Ebro watershed did not destroy the Islamic society of the region, but simply altered it. Given the fact that information from the pre-conquest period is scarce, Catlos often argues for the continuation of Islamic structures and practices based on assumptions. He concludes, for example, that "generally, it is reasonably safe to assume that whatever fiscal structures had been in place before the conquest continued to function in the transitional period" with some changes. (138) For Catlos, in general, the fact that the area continued to be largely inhabited by Muslims "speaking the same language and practicing the same customs, reflects the fundamental continuity which such a process of transformation implies." (118) Based mainly on archival sources, the second part of the book contains Catlos's socio-anthropological study of the Mudejar society of the Ebro watershed. In this section, which constitutes the core of the book, Catlos discusses the gradual transformation of the society of the Andalus *thagh* while dividing this process into three stages: occupation until the 1180s, consolidation until the 1230s, and entrenchment thereafter. His study of Mudejar society, however, does not follow the division stated above. Instead, Catlos employs a thematic approach by examining the administrative, economic, ethnic, and social aspects of the Mudejar society. Like most of the current researchers in the field, Catlos successfully proves that the Mudejars, in this case those from the Ebro watershed, were not an impoverished and passive group. Rather, they were a dynamic body and an integral part of the region's economy, capable of successfully defending their rights. Group identity, however, is not Catlos's main concern. Instead, he examines the dynamics of individual Mudejar identity and its manifestation in daily contacts with Christians and Jews.

The third part of the book, which follows a micro-history approach, details the individual experiences of some Mudejars to prove the main conclusion of the work. Namely, Catlos's theory is that "in the medieval Crown of Aragon religious identity may have been the single most important defining characteristic, but it was not the only one." (10) Self-interest often overrode religious identity. For example, the author mentions several examples of alliances between Christians and Mudejars against Jewish creditors. Most of the individuals cited are slaves or members of the Mudejar "upper-class." (238) We should ask: what was the relationship between group and individual identity for the rest of the Mudejars?

In this book, Catlos reiterates his theory of *conveniencia*, or pragmatism, against Castro's *convivencia*. (See his article in *L'Avenç* 263 [2001]: 8-16) While it is true that individual and group interests did not always coincide, Catlos puts too much emphasis on individual identity to the detriment of the communal one. For example, by referring often to *franquitas*, or the tax free status that some individual Mudejars enjoyed, he stresses the fact that the *aljama*, or Mudejar administrative body, did not represent the interests of all the Mudejars of a locale. *Franquitas* did pose an added fiscal burden on the rest of the Mudejar community; however, Catlos exaggerates the divisiveness that it caused in the community.

Moreover, the idea of social integration across religious lines is taken too far; indeed, at times Catlos seems to perpetuate the *convivencia* theory. For example, according to Catlos, the fact that the *Costums*, or Christian law code of Tortosa, dictated that when the local *curia* met, Jews and Muslims had to sit on the floor while Christians sat on benches would not have represented "a source of humiliation or discomfort" to the Mudejars, who were accustomed to sitting on the floor. (272) Overall, though this book is not the revisionist work that the author promises, it is a good contribution to the ongoing dialogue in the field.

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Reviewer misrepresents or misunderstand the text: "As much as a conscious effort to marginalize non-Christians, this was an expression of the accepted social hierarchy: Muslims' expectations as a subject people would have included their exclusion from certain official spheres and the recognition of their community's status as secondary. Given this, we should not assume that the symbolic representation of their status in public would be a source of humiliation or discomfort. One may recall that the general Arabic and Maghribi custom is to sit (on cushions) on the floor..."