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Catlos, Brian A. *Infidel Kings and Unholy Warriors: Faith, Power, and Violence in the Age of Crusade and Jihad*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014. Pp. xviii, 391. \$28.00. ISBN: 978-0809058372.

Reviewed by Jay Rubenstein  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
[jrubens1@utk.edu](mailto:jrubens1@utk.edu)

*Infidel Kings and Unholy Warriors: Faith, Power, and Violence in the Age of Crusade and Jihad* is an ambitious and engaging book written by an enormously productive scholar. Remarkably it appeared the same year as Catlos's monograph *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c. 1050-1614* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). While the subjects of two books differ in chronology and scope, they are clearly related. Each examines the relations of different cultural and religious groups in the Mediterranean. Each challenges the idea of a "Clash of Civilizations," depicting instead a complex world where adherents of different faiths regularly engaged with one another in a variety of forums. While occasional outbursts of religious violence did occur, the supposedly pious motives behind them usually concealed fundamental disagreements over property and power. It is a picture of the Mediterranean with which most medievalists will be familiar, though many of the particulars will surprise. *Infidel Kings and Unholy Warriors*, however, is aimed at audience far broader than specialists and librarians. Like many trade books, it is frustratingly lightly footnoted (no doubt a choice of the editor rather than the author). But it succeeds at maintaining an argumentative purpose while telling its attractive tales. Despite these manifold strengths, the book contains enough errors that it will prove minimally useful for specialists, and generalists should approach it with caution.

Catlos divides his material into five sections of two chapters each. Taken together, they encircle the Mediterranean world of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Each section opens with a deeply imagined and thickly described scene. Snow falls. Dogs bark. A badly decayed body rattles in its casket. A woman on a palanquin looks back regretfully at the city she must abandon. Empirical purists will likely be put off by the more speculative elements in these passages, but they serve Catlos's purpose: They hold eyes to page; they draw readers into intricate narratives that demonstrate the complexities of the medieval Mediterranean. Near the end of each of the first three sections--about, respectively, the breakup of the Umayyad Caliphate, the career of *El Cid*, and the Norman Conquests of Sicily and North Africa--the narrative voice returns to these opening scenes, thus providing each of the divisions with a sense of historical and artistic closure. The final two sections, by contrast, are more straightforward chronological accounts of Fatimid Egypt and the Crusader States, though they, too, are characterized by rich language and narrative flourish.

The stories Catlos tells are sometimes familiar and sometimes delightfully obscure. The first section about (mainly) al-Andalus takes as its focal point Yusuf ibn Naghrilla, a Jewish man who nearly became king of Muslim Granada. On the eve of his accession, however, crowds rioted, drove ibn Naghrilla from the palace, and killed a number of the city's Jewish residents. Did these events represent a turning point in Muslim-Jewish relations? Catlos thinks not, and argues instead, primarily through the use of anecdote, that such occurrences were "politics as usual in the world of the *taifas*" (64). Religion merely provided helpful rhetoric when one's political enemies happened to hold different beliefs. This model similarly explains the career of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, the *Cid* of legend, whom Catlos describes as a Christian Sultan. Not a champion of Christianity, Rodrigo was instead a man who knew how to exploit political conflict to personal advantage. The same can be said of the Norman Kings of Sicily and their brief expansion into North Africa. Though they sometimes fought in the name of the pope, they were in essence extremely talented soldiers out for power and profit. Could any of the leaders of the *Reconquista* or the Norman wars against Muslims be called "holy warriors?" For Catlos, the proof is in the politics. Muslims employed Jews in Spain, Christians employed Muslims and Jews in Sicily, and in Fatimid Egypt, Armenian Christians often dominated the governments of the Shi'i Caliphate. The crusades at first seem to test these rules, but all parties involved quickly revealed themselves more interested in controlling trade routes than in holding Jerusalem. Whatever the Franks might claim about piety, their desire to wrest cities like Antioch from the Byzantine Empire reveals "their true motivations" (256).

It is a model that, in addition to being psychologically rather flat, leaves little room for meaningful religious experience. At the outset, however, Catlos professes that religious beliefs of the Mediterranean were not "hollow and Machiavellian" (5). But the spirit of Machiavelli looms large. Of the Umayyads, who proclaimed themselves rightful successors to Muhammad, Catlos observes, "the Umayyad rulers were interested only in power" (22). Ahmad al-Muqtadir of Zaragoza is described as "the epitome of the successful *taifa* king: cultured, epicurean, and Machiavellian" (90). Likewise, Roger II of Sicily "was driven by the same Machiavellian spirit" as other Mediterranean leaders (156). Machiavelli himself would have approved of--indeed could have written--this maxim: "the true lingua franca of Mediterranean politics was power..." (109).

The stated intent of Catlos's argument is to undermine stereotypes of a civilized West and an exoticized East. But in doing so, perhaps inadvertently, perhaps for stylistic effect, Catlos perpetuates other myths. Instead of an exotic East, he gives us an equally exotic North, cut loose from the rigging of modern scholarship. In the aftermath of the last fifty years of Anglo-Saxon studies, for example, it seems curious to describe England in the 1060s as "a poor and uncivilized land of wooden fortresses and scrubby hamlets, and London a clutch of huts surrounding a single stone building" (130). Similarly, when Catlos writes of "the chaos and violence of 'Dark Age' Europe" (84), or when he describes the Christian north as a place of unrelenting brutality "where violence ruled" (79), or when he designates Europe during the life of Roger II (1095-1154) as a land "still groping its way out of the 'dark ages'" (160), he perpetuates clichés every bit as misinformed as the ones he condemns. Placing scare quotes around "dark ages" is not enough for a writer of Catlos's talent. Put another way, one can attack the legacy of Henri Pirenne, but in doing so, one cannot ignore Marc Bloch, Georges Duby, Dominique Barthélemy, and a host of others.

When Catlos turns, in the final three chapters of his book, to the crusades, his impulse to exoticize the north dovetails with numerous factual errors. Some are minor. Catlos notes, for example, that at the time of the First Crusade, Jerusalem had been a Muslim city for 300 years (258) when it had in fact been ruled by Muslims for 460 years. He dates the conquest of the Frankish county of Edessa to 1147 (226) instead of

(226), when it had in fact been ruled by Muslims for 400 years. He dates the conquest of the Frankish county of Edessa to 1147 (226), instead of 1144. It is mathematically a small mistake, but an unsettling one, since the conqueror, 'Imad al-Din Zengi died in 1146. Catlos then compounds the error with this wholly unnecessary observation: "When word of the defeat reached Innocent II in Rome, the pontiff reportedly dropped dead on the spot" (226). Innocent II died in 1143, not 1144 or 1147. Catlos presumably had in mind the legend that Pope Urban III died of shock in 1187 after hearing that Saladin had conquered Jerusalem. It is thus a remarkably dense collection of errors: three chronological inconsistencies woven around a discredited fable and associated with the wrong battle and the wrong pope. Being not as well versed in the other topics Catlos treats, I cannot say whether such mistakes are prevalent in the first two-thirds of book. The fact that on the very first page, however, he misdates the Battle of Poitiers by 10 years, to 742 instead of 732, does give one pause (3).

Other mistakes seem to be more programmatic, not deliberate but rather the intersection of faulty memory and a theoretical agenda. When discussing the marriage of an Armenian princess and Baldwin I, Count of Edessa and later King of Jerusalem, Catlos writes that Baldwin had "apparently forgotten that he had left behind his first wife in France" (269). Such a cavalier attitude toward marriage law, if true, would indicate that Baldwin had quickly learned the Mediterranean way of doing things. But it is not true. Baldwin's first wife had accompanied him on crusade and had died several months before he reached Edessa.

During the initial eight months of the siege of Aleppo (1097-1098), Catlos observes that Yaghi-Siyan, the ruler of the city, had made several appeals for help to his fellow Muslim princes, but none of them had responded (256). The implied message here is that political enmities among Muslims once again trumped religious alliance. The argument has some validity, as every crusade historian would readily acknowledge. But every crusade historian would also note that, factually, the observation is wrong. Both Aleppo and Damascus sent relief forces to Antioch during those eight months, and both armies were repelled by the Franks.

About the conquest of Jerusalem (1099), Catlos writes that "Tancred's disciplined Norman troops" breached the city walls before heading to the Tower of David, where they negotiated the surrender and release of the Fatimid garrison (257). According to every historical record of the battle, however, Tancred (whose men fought alongside equally disciplined Lotharingian knights) did not head to the Tower of David. Instead they stayed around the Temple Mount, plundered the Dome of the Rock, and took hostages at al-Aqsa mosque. Ransoms at the Tower of David were negotiated instead by Raymond of Saint-Gilles. Why this mistake in connection to such a well-known story? Perhaps Catlos imagined that only a true citizen of the Mediterranean (in this case Tancred, from southern Italy) could possess the right combination of foresight and greed to ransom hostages in the midst of religious carnage. If so, it is a doubly unfortunate error, since Raymond of Saint-Gilles, as Count of Toulouse, was like Tancred a product of the Mediterranean. Catlos, however, dismisses Raymond as someone "whose integrity was apparently matched only by his naïveté" (259).

Skipping over the presentation of the Third Crusade, which engages in similarly heedless programmatic speculations (for example, that Richard the Lion Heart "probably" hired Ismaili Assassins to murder Conrad de Montferrat--a slight possibility at best and certainly not a probability) (312) by the time we reach an epilogue about the Fourth Crusade and the Fall of Constantinople in 1204, the narrative's wheels have come off. Catlos does smartly situate the events of 1204 in the larger sweep of Byzantine politics, but he undermines his credibility when writing of the crusade itself. Particularly, he claims that, at the moment when the crusaders decided to attack Constantinople instead of heading straight to Egypt, Pope Innocent III, the Venetians, and the Latin leadership all eagerly embraced the diversion. In the historical record, the Venetians' attitudes are difficult to discern. The Latin leadership was divided; many prominent crusaders abandoned the enterprise in disgust. And Pope Innocent III explicitly condemned the diversion to Constantinople twice--no reading of the evidence could suggest any other interpretation of the pope's attitude. As Catlos observes regularly throughout this book, medieval people were every bit as complex as their modern counterparts. As such, they deserve the courtesy of not being forced into a theoretical model, however flexible that model might be.

I would presume that, the date of the Battle of Poitiers notwithstanding, the rapid-fire errors of the final 100 pages of *Infernal Kings and Unholy Warriors* are not characteristic of the first 200. I also suspect that Catlos's model of religious warfare suits the history of the Iberian Peninsula, Southern Italy, and to a degree North Africa better than it does the crusader states. Errors and speculations aside, the book can serve (and I know from conversations with colleagues that it already has served) as a wonderful classroom tool, bringing the medieval Mediterranean to life and provoking lively conversation.

Toward that latter goal, I would like to address directly the book's central contention about the political character of holy war. In a historiographical context, Catlos's argument about the variety, complexity, and frequency of exchange among Muslims, Christians, and Jews around the Mediterranean is on the mark. Along with other scholars, most notably David Nirenberg, he strikes a nice balance between conflict and collaboration. And it is an argument with implications for current events. As Catlos writes his introduction, "through these stories we can better understand the conflicts that we find ourselves embroiled in today" (12). We are thus addressing not just the communities of the medieval Mediterranean, but also the political climate that produced 9/11, the War on Terror, and its ugly offshoot, the war in Iraq. The moral that Catlos draws from his medieval stories is surprisingly hopeful: "conflict among different peoples is not inevitable, as long as we are willing to make compromises as individuals and communities, and to regard one another as fundamentally well-intentioned, and as sharing the same goals" (324). But such a conclusion is problematic. For to a surprising degree it echoes the Neo-Conservative philosophy that justified war in Iraq--the by now clearly misguided idea that Democratic capitalism would trump the Sunni-Shi'i divide along with other ideological and confessional differences. As faith-based hatreds dissolved, so it was believed, Western-style governments would flourish, because we, as individuals and communities, ultimately share the same goals, the same desires for prestige and profit.

The place of religious belief in sparking execrable acts of violence is as crucial as any we face as medievalists or as students of the Mediterranean. My sympathies on this point lie with, among others, Thomas Sizgorich's *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* and Philippe Buc's *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror: Christianity, Violence, and the West*, books whose arguments lead to very different endpoints. But it is a debate worth having, and Brian Catlos is to be commended for making such a substantial contribution to that discussion.

