The Book of Deeds of James I of Aragon

A Translation of the Medieval Catalan *Llibre dels Fets*

Damian J. Smith and Helena Buffery

CRUSADE TEXTS IN TRANSLATION

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About the volume:

The 'Book of Deeds' is the first known autobiography by a Christian king. Its author was James I of Aragon (1213–76), known as 'The Conqueror', one of the great political figures of 13th-century Europe and a successful crusader. In his 'Deeds', James describes the turbulent years of his minority, the thrilling capture of Majorca, the methodical conquest of the kingdom of Valencia, the reconquest of the kingdom of Murcia after Castile had failed to hold it, and many of the important events of his reign. While crusade and conquest of Spanish territory from the Muslims and Christian–Muslim relations on the frontier are central features of the account, the 'Deeds' are also a treasure trove of information on the image, power and purpose of monarchy, loyalty and bad faith in the feudal order, the growth of national sentiment, and medieval military tactics. At the same time, the book presents a unique insight into the mind of a medieval ruler, the supreme example we possess of the fears and ambitions of a man at the very centre of events.

About the authors:

Dr Damian Smith is Batista i Roca fellow at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Spain, and currently writing a second book for Ashgate on Innocent III and the kingdom of Aragon.

Dr Helena Buffery is lecturer in Catalan and Spanish in the Department of Hispanic studies at University of Birmingham, UK.

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DAMIAN SMITH
Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain
University of Birmingham, UK

HELENA BUFFERY
University of Birmingham, UK

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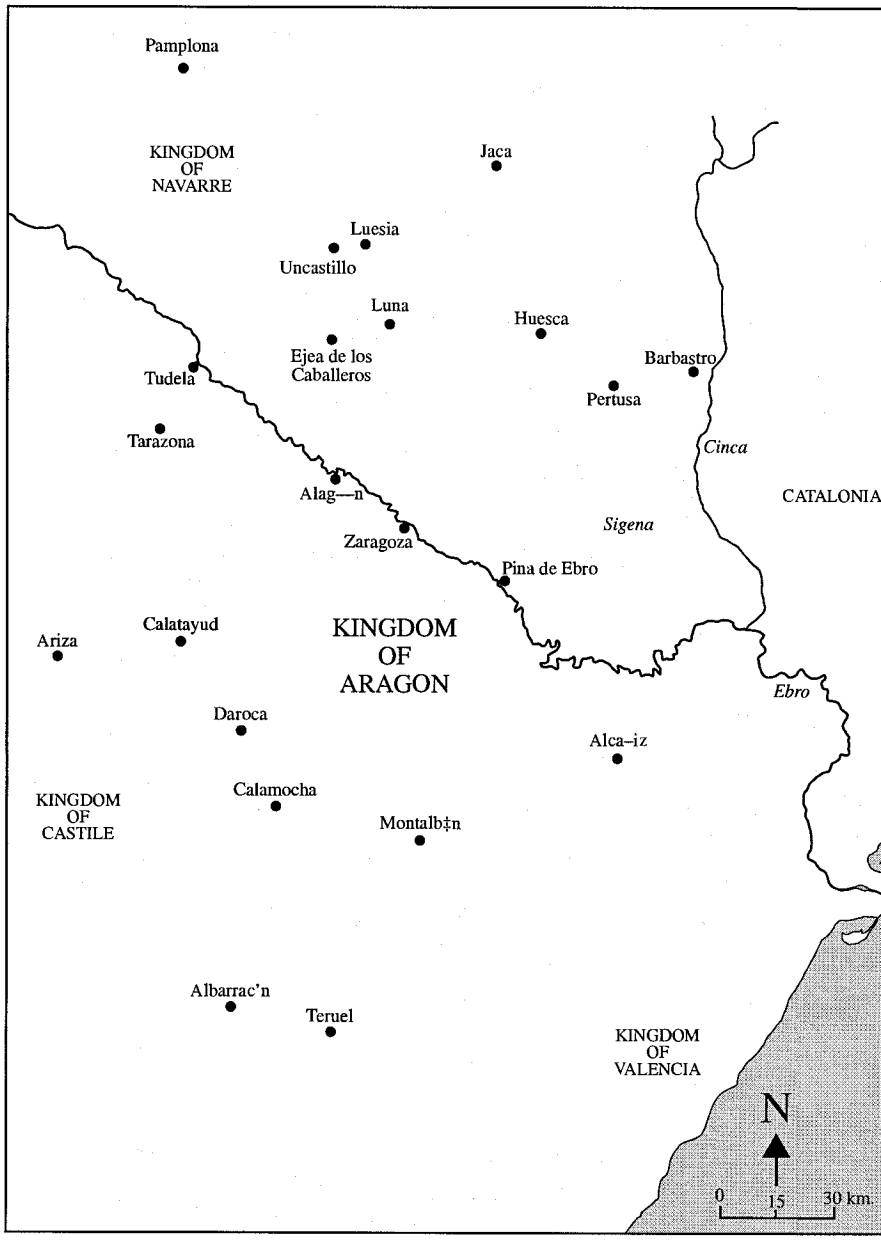
List of Abbreviations

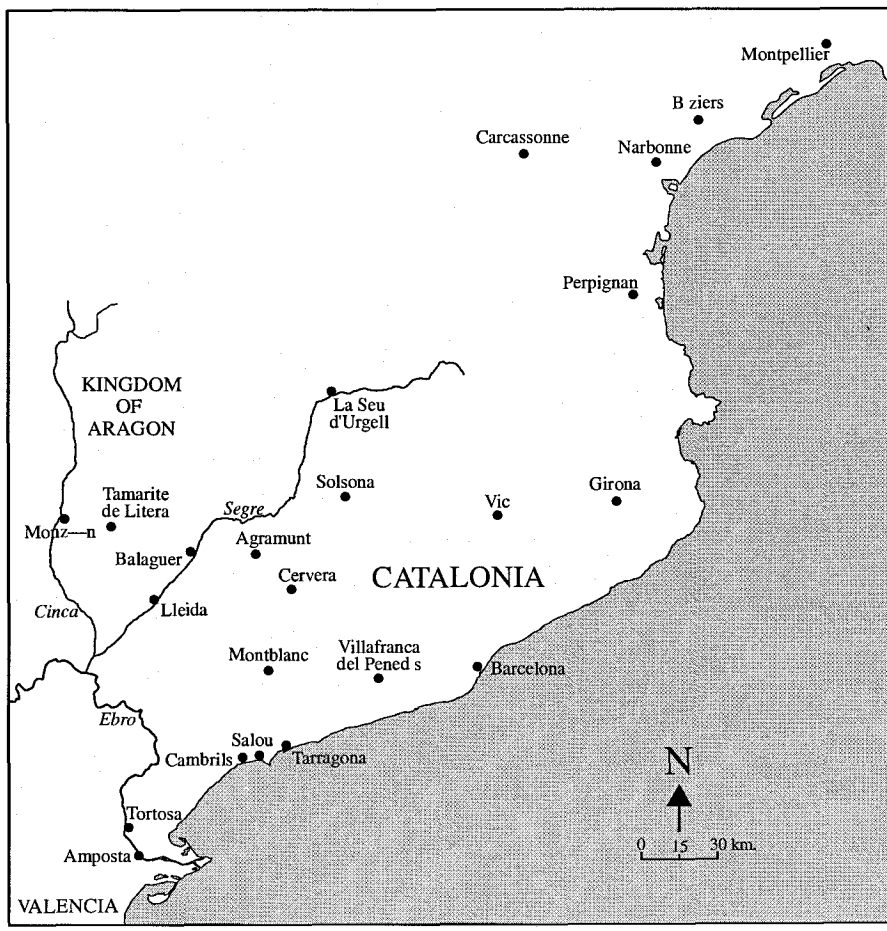
Alicante	*Alicante y su territorio en la época de Jaime I de Aragón*, ed. José Martínez Ortiz, Alicante, 1993.
CDCZ	*Colección diplomática del Concejo de Zaragoza I. 1119–1276; II, 1276–1285*, ed. Ángel Canellas López, Zaragoza, 1972–5.
CDI	*Colección de documentos inéditos del archivo general de la Corona de Aragón*, ed. P. de Bofarull y Mascaró et al., 42 vols., Barcelona, 1847–1973.
CHCA	*Congreso de Historia de la Corona de Aragón.*
Desclot	*Crònica de Bernat Desclot*, ed. Miquel Coll i Alentorn, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1999.
Diplomatarium	*Diplomatarium of the Crusader-Kingdom of Valencia: The Registered Charters of Its Conqueror, Jaume I, 1257–1276*, ed. Robert Burns, 2 vols. to date, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
DPI	*La documentación pontificia de Inocencio IV (1243–1254)*, ed. A. Quintana Prieto, 2 vols., Rome, 1987.
G	*The Chronicle of James I, King of Aragon, surnamed the Conqueror*, translated by John Forster, with an historical introduction, notes, appendix, glossary, and general index by Pascual de Gayangos, 2 vols., London: Chapman and Hall, 1883.
H	*Documentos de Jaime I de Aragón*, ed. Ambrosio Huici and Maria Cabanes, 5 vols., Valencia-Zaragoza, 1976–82.

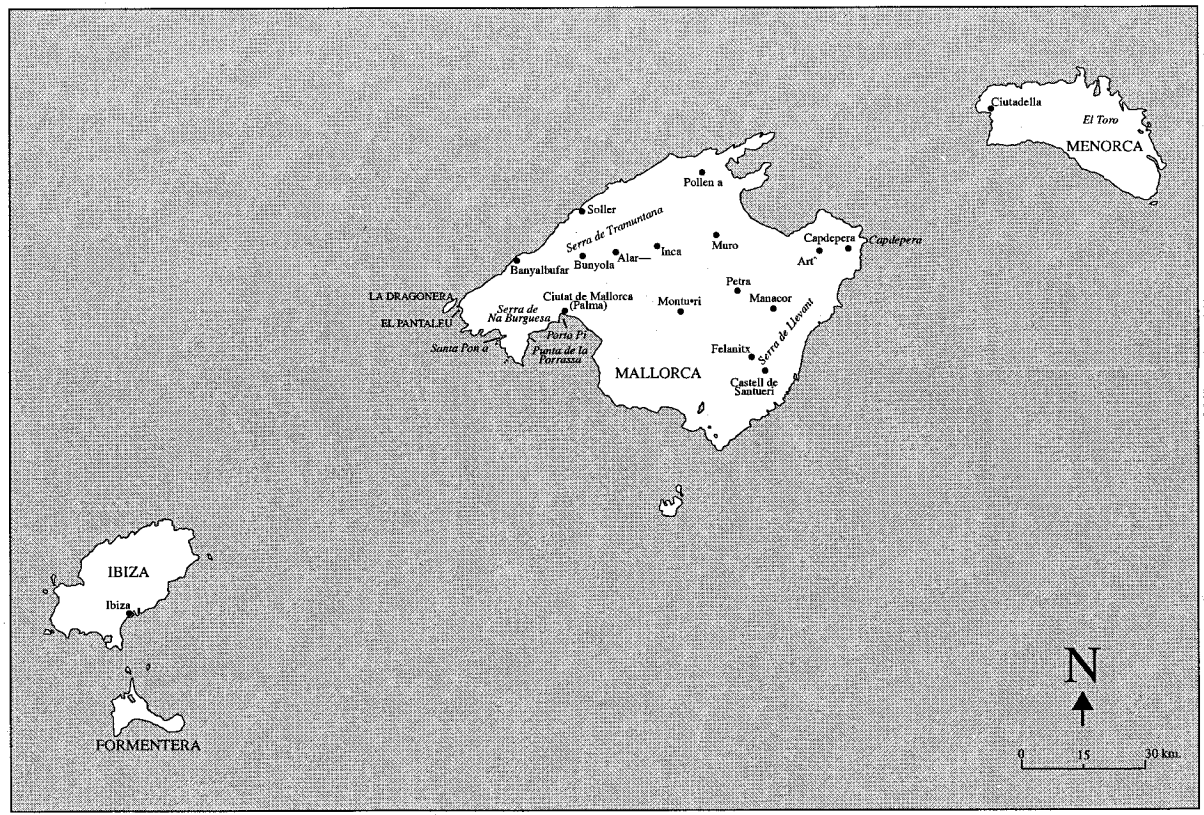
M	Miret, Joaquim, *Itinerari de Jaume I "El Conqueridor"*, Barcelona, 1918.
Marichalar	*Colección diplomática del rey Don Sancho VII (el fuerte) de Navarra*, ed. Carlos Marichalar, Pamplona, 1934.
MDH	*La documentación pontificia de Honorio III (1216–1227)*, ed. Demetrio Mansilla, Rome, 1965.
MDI	*La documentación pontificia hasta Inocencio III (965–1216)*, ed. Demetrio Mansilla, Rome, 1955.
Muntaner	*Crònica de Ramon Muntaner*, ed. Vicent Josep Escartí, 2 vols., Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1999.
P	*Llibre dels Fets*, trans. Josep Pujol, Barcelona: Teide, 1994.
RHGF	*Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, eds. M. Bouquet and L. Delisle, 25 vols., Paris, 1869–1904.
S	*Les quatre grans cròniques*, ed. Ferran Soldevila, Barcelona: Editorial Selecta, 1971.

Map 1 Aragon


Pamplona
KINGDOM OF NAVARRE
Jaca
Luesia
Uncastillo
Luna
Huesca
Ejea de los Caballeros
Barbastro
Tudela
Pertusa
Tarazona
Cinca
Alag—n
CATALONIA
Sigena
Zaragoza
Pina de Ebro
Calatayud
Ariza
KINGDOM OF ARAGON
Ebro
Daroca
Alca–iz
Calamocha
KINGDOM OF CASTILE
Montalb‡n
Albarrac'n
Teruel
KINGDOM OF VALENCIA
N
0
15
30 km

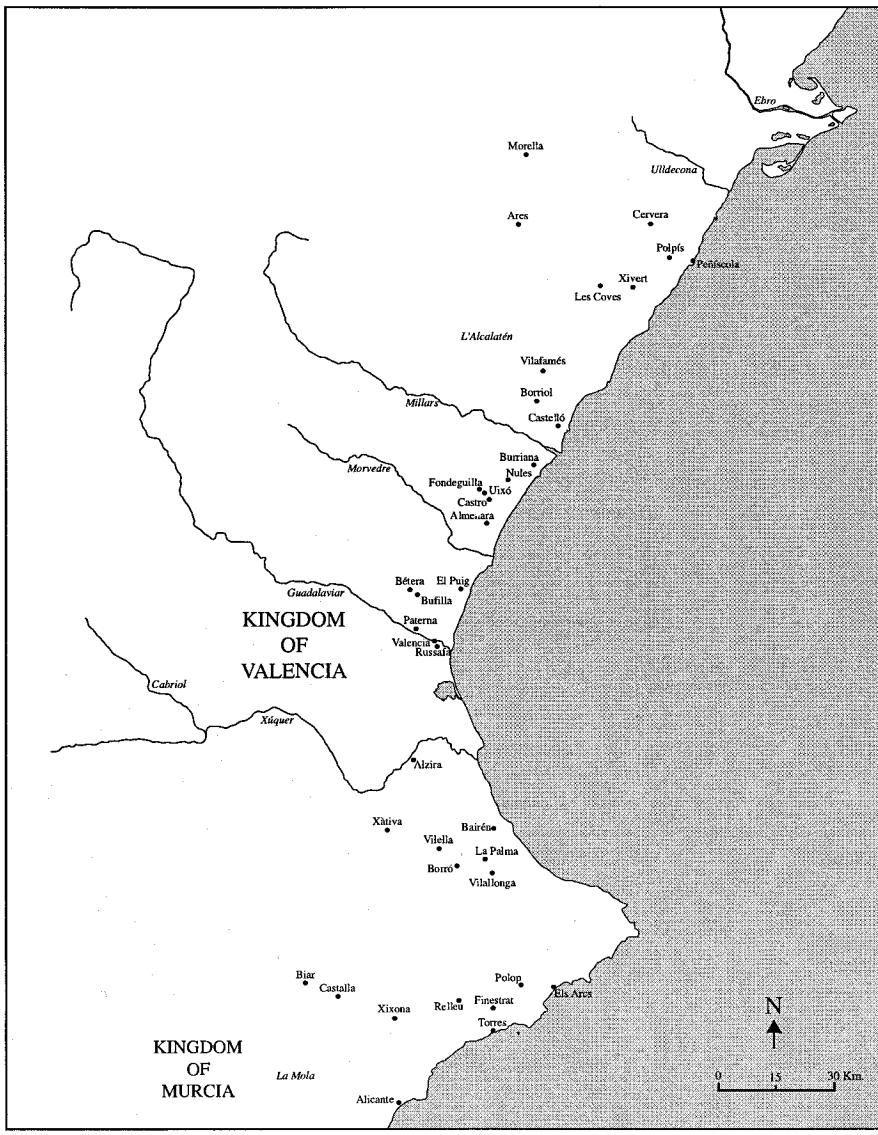
Map 2 Catalonia



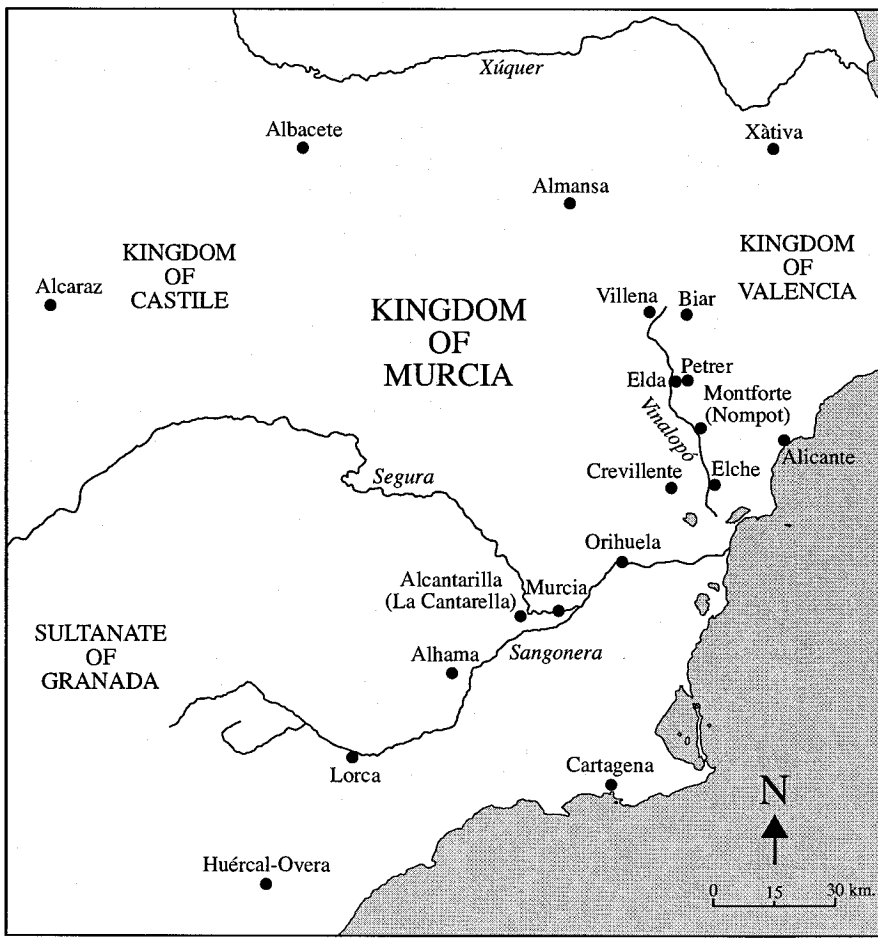


Map 3 The Balearics

Map 4 Valencia



Map 5 Murcia


Xúquer
Albacete
Xàtiva
Almansa
KINGDOM OF CASTILE
Alcaraz
KINGDOM OF MURCIA
KINGDOM OF VALENCIA
Villena
Biar
Petrer
Elda
Montforte (Nompot)
Vinalopó
Alicante
Crevillente
Elche
Segura
Orihuela
Alcantarilla (La Cantarella)
Murcia
SULTANATE OF GRANADA
Alhama
Sangonera
Lorca
Cartagena
Huércal-Overa
N
0 15 30 km.

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Introduction

In 1134,[1] a few weeks after being defeated at the battle of Fraga, Alfonso I of Aragon and Navarre died. Alfonso, known as "the Battler", had been a formidable Christian warrior, imbued with the crusading spirit. He had greatly expanded his kingdom by conquests against the Moors. His exploits had helped ensure that the Church would view the conquest of Spain as little less pressing a task than the conquest of the Holy Land.

But Alfonso had left no heir. In a will of 1131, he had taken the unusual step of bequeathing his kingdom to the military orders of the Temple and the Hospital and the canons of the order of the Holy Sepulchre. The move was certainly that of a crusading king but it was also almost certainly calculated to prevent the ruler of Castile, Alfonso VII, from obtaining his kingdom. The papacy wished to uphold the will, while for the nobles of Aragon that was wholly unacceptable. They demanded a king and the continuation of the dynasty. Alfonso had a brother, Ramiro, and Ramiro was a monk, but, in spite of this, they made him their king. Ramiro took as his wife Agnes of Aquitaine, while Navarre seceded from the union and elected its own ruler. Ramiro and Agnes then produced a child, Petronilla, the name of St Peter's disciple perhaps being chosen by way of apology to the papacy for the whole extraordinarily uncanonical business. Ramiro happily returned to his monastery, while Petronilla was betrothed to Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona,[2] who ruled over a loose confederation of counties in Catalonia. The military orders were richly compensated for their lost inheritance and the papacy accepted the done deed. In 1148–9, Ramon Berenguer undertook the important conquests of Tortosa and Lleida, opening up the path to the kingdom of Valencia. (The conquests were a part of the Second Crusade, which, in spite of these very notable successes, is generally viewed as a failure.) It was the prelude to Ramon's marriage in 1150 to Petronilla, who was then of canonical

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[1]Detailed accounts of the general history of this period are provided by Thomas Bisson, *The Medieval Crown of Aragon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986; David Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms 1200–1500*, Longman, 1997; Josep Salrach, *El procés de feudalització (segles III–XII)*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1998; Carme Batlle, *L'expansió baixmedieval (segles XIII–XV)*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1999; Ángel Canellas López, *Aragón en su historia,* Zaragoza: Caja de Ahorros de la Inmaculada, 1980.

[2]The best account of Ramon's reign remains Ferran Soldevila, *Ramon Berenguer IV el Sant*, Barcelona: Barcino, 1955.

age to marry. Thus was born the union that we tend to call the Crown of Aragon.

Aragonese and Catalans, two peoples with different landscapes and languages, different laws, customs, and institutions, different economic prospects and political ambitions, were tied together in political union. Ramon Berenguer, who never took the title king, was careful to preserve that union. The careful balancing act he performed with regard to Aragonese and Catalonian interests was the policy to be adopted by his successors. Ramon died in 1162, when his heir, Alfonso, was just five years old. For many years Alfonso was supervised by advisers from both his realms and his centre of government was at Lleida, which acted as a bridge between his two lands. Alfonso,[3] a noted troubadour, proved himself a fine administrator (it was during his reign that the *Liber Feudorum Maior*[4] was compiled to secure the ruler's rights to castles in Catalonia and other lands). Alfonso greatly increased the influence of the crown in the south of France but he was frustrated in his attempts at conquest in Valencia and Murcia by the strength of the Almohads, who had invaded the Peninsula in 1157. Such was Alfonso's inability to make any real headway that in the 1170s a pretender arose, claiming to be Alfonso the Battler. The incident of the pseudo-Alfonso reflected widespread baronial discontent with the lack of military action and territorial gain. To strengthen his sacral authority, Alfonso drew himself into an ever closer alliance with the church in Aragon and the papacy. In his last days, with the encouragement of Pope Celestine III, a great expert in the affairs of the Iberian Peninsula, he desperately sought to unite Christian Spain in a crusade against the Almohads, after the king of Castile, Alfonso VIII, had been humiliated at the battle of Alarcos in 1195.

Alfonso's son, Peter II of Aragon,[5] was perhaps the most charismatic ruler of the dynasty. Persuasive, energetic and headstrong, often Peter's ambitions outweighed his means. When, in 1204, a projected crusade to the Balearics proved impractical, the king then planned an expedition to the Holy Land and a marriage to the heiress of Jerusalem, Marie de Montferrat (although he was already married to Marie of Montpellier). Yet Peter did have considerable success in his Valencian campaign of 1210, and, most importantly of all, in 1212, participated in the Christian coalition that defeated the Almohads at Las

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[3]For his reign, see Jordi Ventura, *Alfons el cast, el primer comte-rei*, Barcelona: Aedos, 1961.

[4]*Liber Feudorum Maior*, ed. Francisco Miquel Rosell, 2 vols, Barcelona, 1945–7.

[5]There is no general history of Peter's reign. Jordi Ventura, *Pere el Catòlic i Simó de Montfort*, Barcelona: Aedos, 1960, deals with the Albigensian crusade and Martín Alvira, *El Jueves de Muret: 12 de septiembre 1213*, Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2002, with the events surrounding his death. Enric Bagué's study 'Pere el Catòlic' in *Els primers comtes-reis: Ramon Berenguer IV, Alfons el Cast, Pere el Catòlic*, ed. Percy Schramm, Barcelona: Vicens Vives, 1960, is a rigorous synthesis.

Navas de Tolosa and then led the assault that saw the Christians take the city of Úbeda, a psychological blow from which the Almohads never recovered. At home, prior to Las Navas, Peter struggled to appease his barons and the church. He was profligate; the expenses of his court coupled with costly ventures such as his coronation by Pope Innocent III at Rome in 1204 left his kingdom in a parlous financial state. Though himself a persecutor of heretics, he was drawn into the Albigensian crusade on the side of the southern French lords against the crusade and, in September 1213, was defeated and killed in the battle of Muret when he underestimated his opponent, Simon de Montfort, and perhaps overestimated the loyalty of his Languedocian vassals.

After Muret, Peter's heir, James,[6] five years old and an orphan, was in the hands of Montfort. His kingdom was facing financial collapse. Factions were formed throughout his lands as his relatives contended for power or the throne itself. James survived through the loyalty of many of the nobles, the efforts of Pope Innocent III and his legate, Cardinal Peter of Benevento, and through sound administration and fiscal management, where Templars and Jews played a notable role. Brought up at the forbidding Templar fortress at Monzón, the years of his minority saw almost constant squabbles between the higher nobles who jockeyed for position and influence. James's first attempt to establish his own authority, a campaign against the Muslim castle at Peníscola in 1225 ended in humiliating failure. His next campaigns were against the nobles in Aragon, with whom he came to terms in 1227, and the count of Urgell, whose power he diminished in 1228. By then James already had his heart set on the conquest of Majorca.[7] Backed by papal support, in 1229, between September and December, the king led a dramatic campaign that captured the capital. Militarily, the attack contained many errors of judgement, and two of Catalonia's great lords, Guillem and Ramon de Montcada, fell at the battle of Porto Pí when there was a lack of coordination between the vanguard and the rest of the men. But the brilliance of the venture is without question. In the following years the rest of the island was reduced, while Minorca submitted to a tribute-paying status in 1231 and Ibiza was conquered in 1235, with forces led by the archbishop-elect of Tarragona. Opportunities in León and Navarre failed to capture James's attention since he focused himself on the conquest of the kingdom of Valencia. This was a campaign of a very different nature to that

[6]James's early reign is covered in Ferran Soldevila, *Els primers temps de Jaume I*, Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1968, and much of the later part by the same author's *Pere el Gran*, 2 vols, Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1995. He has been the subject of two congresses of the history of the crown of Aragon, the first in 1908 (I *CHCA*, 2 vols, (1909–13)) and the second in 1976 (X *CHCA*, 3 vols, (1978–82)).

[7]See Àlvar Santamaria, 'La expansión político-militar de la Corona de Aragón bajo la dirección de Jaime I', X *CHCA* (1979), 3, pp. 91–146.

in the Balearics.[8] In Valencia, there was not simply a central Muslim authority to defeat. The disintegration of Almohad power meant there were many rulers of many castles and James had to proceed slowly and patiently, often by tactful negotiation, sometimes by simple bribery, taking major castles and thus forcing the lesser to surrender, often ravaging crops and taking cattle in order to starve the Muslim population or executing the defenders of one captured fortress as an example to the others. The conquest can be divided into four essential stages. In the first stage (1231–5), the northern zone of the kingdom was conquered, the king following in the wake of independent action by the Aragonese barons. James's determined capture of Borriana was the key to the continuation of the conquest. In the second stage (1236–8), backed by strong support from Pope Gregory IX, the region of Valencia and then Valencia itself were taken after help for the Muslim population from the sultan of Tunis proved to no avail. In the third stage (1239–46) the lands to the south of the River Xúquer were captured and, once the formidable castle of Xàtiva (1244) was conditionally surrendered, it was almost inevitable that the entire kingdom would soon be in James's hands. But there was much spirited resistance from individual Muslim rulers. In a fourth stage (1247–58), James was forced to spend much time subduing serious rebellions. The most notable of the Muslim leaders was al-Azraq.

The victories in Majorca and Valencia offset the king's failure to halt the advance of Capetian influence in the south of France. Though the king, born in Montpellier, took a deep interest in the affairs of the region and at least three times broke off from the campaign against the Moors to lend his support to the southern French lords, the 1240s saw Toulouse pass to Alphonse of Poitiers and Provence to Charles of Anjou. Béarn fell to Foix, and James's lack of desire to take decisive action meant that Navarre remained with the counts of Champagne. In May 1258, at the treaty of Corbeil, James renounced almost all his rights and claims in the Midi while Louis IX did little more than renounce rights in Catalonia which had long been a dead letter. Only with the marriage in 1262 of James's son, Prince Peter, to Constance of Hohenstaufen, heiress of Sicily, did the king inflict a blow.

James failed to cut off France's path to the Mediterranean, whereas in spite of differences over Navarre and the definition of their respective conquest zones in the south, he generally supported Castile and especially his son-in-law Alfonso X. In 1264 the Castilians were seriously troubled by a North African

[8]Though many aspects of the chronology of the Valencian campaigns remain very confused, useful accounts are provided by Pedro López Elum, *La conquista y repoblación Valenciana durante el reinado de Jaime I*, Valencia 1995, and Antonio Ubieto Arteta, *Orígenes del reino de Valencia. Cuestiones cronológicas sobre su reconquista*, Valencia: Anubar 1975. An excellent study of post-conquest Valencia is Robert I. Burns, *The Crusader Kingdom of Valencia: Reconstruction of a Thirteenth-Century Frontier*, 2 vols, Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1967.

invasion supported by much of Muslim Spain, which encouraged an uprising in the kingdom of Murcia, tributary of Castile. James took prompt and decisive action to quash that revolt,[9] though only receiving hesitant support from the Catalans and practically none at all from the Aragonese nobles who remained in a permanent state of disgruntlement because of their perceived secondary status. War with the nobles preceded the victory over Murcia, which came with the taking of the capital in January 1266 (though Prince Peter had paved the way in the previous year with damaging raids).

There were few glories after Murcia. An expedition to the Holy Land in 1269 was a failure even for the section of the fleet that arrived, and more so for the king who turned back due to bad weather and, it was rumoured, because he could not bear to be parted from his mistress. Similarly, in 1274, at the council of Lyons, the king's enthusiasm for another crusade to the East did not amount to giving any practical help. Continued support for Castile and tax demands led to further baronial revolts in the 1270s. These were put down by Prince Peter who was thus reconciled with his father after many squabbles, which had first arisen over James's desire to divide his realms between his different sons (though by this time only Princes Peter and James were left of the legitimate ones). In James's final days a renewed Muslim attack, led by al-Azraq, occupied his attentions and those of his sons, and when he died in July 1276 the kingdom of Valencia, which he had laboured so long to conquer, appeared as insecure as ever.

James's reign is notable for (among other things) advances in administrative practice, the influx of Roman law, the increasing sophistication in methods of taxation, the rise (and decline) of parliament, the expansion of Mediterranean trade and shipbuilding, and the beginnings of the Dominicans, Franciscans and Mercedarians. Of course, not all progress was due to James (indeed, the reduction in the number of parliamentary assemblies was his own doing) but in the field of literature we are especially indebted to him. His reign saw the production of the remarkable work that we now usually call the *Llibre dels Fets* or "Book of Deeds", an account in the first person plural (with occasional lapses into the first person singular, usually during direct speech) of James's major military campaigns and some selected political events of his reign. The work that is translated here was produced in Catalan (and only later translated into Latin)[10] and is one of the great works of medieval Catalan literature. It is also an historical record without parallel. For the author of the book was the king.

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[9]Two good accounts are Juan Torres Fontes, *La Reconquista de Murcia en 1266 por Jaime I de Aragón*, Murcia 1966, and Josep-David Garrido, *Jaume I i el regne de Múrcia*, Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 1997.

[10]In 1313, by the Dominican friar Pere Marsili. The best edition is *La crónica latina de Jaime I: edición crítica, estudio preliminar e índices*, ed. Maria de los Desamparados Martínez San Pedro, Almería: Gráficas Ortiz, 1984.

Nobody but James himself could be the author of this work. The arguments against another possible author are strong[11] (Who else could the author be? Why would they have written it? Why would they have written as if they were the king himself? Who would have had sufficient knowledge of the details of James's life? Who would have had the imagination?), but the arguments in favour of James are equally strong. There is the detailed knowledge of all the king's campaigns and the political events of the king's adult life 'dovetailing exactly with the mentality in much of the king's independent documentation'.[12] Events are seen almost entirely from what would have been James's perspective. So, in the Majorca campaign we read of the death of the Montcadas at the battle of Porto Pí only after the battle is over, when James receives news of their deaths, and there is no account of their heroic performance in the battle, since James did not see it.[13] There is a justification of the actions of the king, which nobody but the king need justify.[14] Thus, James labours much on the embarrassing failure of his expedition to the Holy Land in 1269–70, which another author would have passed over quickly as uneventful and irrelevant.[15] The *Llibre* reveals feelings that only the king could have felt. There is an adoration of James's mother, Marie of Montpellier, and an ambivalent attitude to his father, Peter II (hero of Las Navas, villain at Muret, and bad husband to Marie) which another author, even one trained in psychology, would not capture.[16] There are many intimate memories of events (for instance, the indignation of his first wife at James's adopted plan for her escape from the Aragonese nobles; a mother swallow who had nested on James's tent; a night spent sweating at Puig when his knights were ready to abandon him and the Valencia campaign).[17] Throughout the text there is an easy familiarity with the rulers and major figures of James's reign.

The purpose of the king in composing the *Llibre* was, as he says,[18] so that other kings would see what he had been able to achieve with God's help. The kings in question were most likely to be James's successors (and were – the

[11]The argument is well made by Ferran Soldevila in his preface to the *Llibre* (*Les quatre grans cròniques*, Barcelona: Selecta, 1971, pp. 36–7).

[12]Robert Burns, 'The Spiritual Life of James I the Conqueror, King of Aragon-Catalonia, 1208–1276: Portrait and self-portrait', X *CHCA*, 1, p. 328.

[13]Chs. 63–5; Stefano Asperti, 'Il re e la storia: Proposte per una nuova lettura del "Libre dels feyts" di Jaume I', *Romanistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, 3 (1984), p. 276.

[14]Martí de Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, 3 vols, Barcelona: Ariel, 1964, 1, p. 402.

[15]Chs. 476–93.

[16]Chs. 6–7.

[17]Chs. 23 (wife), 215 (swallow) , 237 (Puig).

[18]Ch. 1.

book had no wide distribution outside the family circle).[19] The work is, then, something of a guidebook for how to rule,[20] and no doubt inserts some political events (such as agreements with Navarre and disputes with Urgell) because they were problems James expected his successors would have to deal with and where the crown had claims to defend. The *Llibre* then functions as propaganda, education, and legitimization. The work was probably undertaken at various times in the king's reign. The initial impetus was perhaps provided in the 1230s by demands for the king's personal account of the conquest of Majorca,[21] of which the troubadours sang, and no doubt stories were already being told with additions by those who had taken part in it. The stories of the Valencian campaign were probably told in the 1240s and early 1250s and then, after a long gap, James returned to his stories towards the very end of his life. There is a long gap between 1245 and 1264 when James relates nothing except the campaign against al-Azraq and then only briefly.

The format the king chose owed something to the troubadours, something to Christian *Gestes*, and perhaps a little to a consciousness of the Arab world where rulers customarily set down what they had been able to achieve thanks to divine assistance. The majority of the participants in the Majorca campaign were Catalans and James chose Catalan as the language for his work. On some occasions James inserts words from other languages to indicate that the speaker is talking a language other than Catalan.[22] James most probably narrated his stories[23] (for the *Llibre* is a succession of stories rather than a chronicle) in diverse sessions to knights of his household[24] while a scribe wrote everything down in shorthand. James expected the work to be read out loud.[25] As James's court was itinerant, it is quite possible that sometimes he had many documents to hand which could aid his memory, and at other times very few.

James's work, while a narrative treasure in a land that had possessed few,[26] can only be used with extreme caution for the reconstruction of the history of his reign. The accounts of the king's military campaigns are invaluable but

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[19]Josep Pujol, 'The *Llibre del rei En Jaume*: A matter of style', *Historical Literature in Medieval Iberia*, ed. Alan Deyermond, London: Department of Hispanic studies, Queen Mary and Westfield college, 1996, pp. 35–7.

[20]Lola Badia, 'Llegir el Libre del Rei Jaume', *Serra d'Or*, 385 (1992), p. 55; *Llibre dels Fets de Jaume I*, trans. Antoni Ferrando and Vicent Josep Escartí, Barcelona: Editorial Afers, 1995, pp. 9–10.

[21]Miquel Coll, 'Llibre dels Feits', *Gran Enciclopèdia Catalana*, 14 (1987), p. 71.

[22]Antonio Badia, *Coherència i arbitrarietat de la substitució lingüística dins la "Crònica" de Jaume I*, Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1987.

[23]Pujol, 'Llibre del Rei', pp. 44–7; Joaquim Molas, *Diccionari de la literatura catalana*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1979, pp. 339–40.

[24]Ch. 16; Stefano Asperti, 'Indagini sull' "Llibre dels Feyts" di Jaume I: Dall'originale all'archetipo', *Romanistisches Jahrbuch*, 33 (1982), p. 271.

[25]Ch. 69.

[26]Thomas Bisson, 'Unheroed Pasts: History and Commemoration in South Frankland before the Albigensian Crusades', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), pp. 281–308.

James sometimes wrote of things of which he had little knowledge. For instance, his account of the time before he was born and of his earliest years is, at times, not surprisingly, wildly inaccurate.[27] His grandfather Alfonso had not attempted to marry a Byzantine princess; his father, Peter II, had not given James for Simon de Montfort to raise because he trusted Montfort so much; his great-uncle Count Sancho made little or no attempt to snatch the throne after Peter II's death.[28] At times, James's account is subject to paranoia. He sees all the troubles of his minority in terms of the treachery of the nobles towards him, whereas, in reality, they had little occasion for grievance against him but rather tended to fight against each other. James also leaves out events with which he was uncomfortable. So the failed siege of Peníscola passes without a mention, as does the treaty of Corbeil. Indeed, the king's interventions in the Midi receive barely any mention throughout. James rarely mentions his wives and children (though there was plenty of scope) or matrimonial politics, and rarely any events that had caused scandal, such as when he had been excommunicated for chopping out part of the bishop of Girona's tongue (he had revealed the king's secrets). There was, of course, reason to omit all this since none of it demonstrated how God had successfully guided James in his deeds, but that is of little help to the historian. James often gives us a partial perspective of events. Actions in the Majorcan, Valencian, and Murcian campaigns when James was not present tend to receive much less attention than those where he was present. On some occasions the king is downright deceitful. The impression he leaves of having gained victory over the Aragonese nobles in the 1220s and in the 1260s leaves little trace of the important concessions he was forced to make to them on both occasions. When James tells his story it can be pure propaganda. His accounts of his dealings with Sancho of Navarre and in Urgell are surely designed to help strengthen future claims there.[29] He places all the blame on Sancho for having failed to fulfil a treaty of mutual adoption, which would eventually have given James Navarre, when it was as much the hesitancy of James himself that spoilt the deal. This is not to say that we should ignore James. An account from one great king of his negotiations with another great king cannot be tossed aside lightly. It is to say that while James often tells the truth, as he sees it, he cannot tell us the whole truth and, at times, tells us anything but the truth. The *Llibre* must be read alongside other accounts of the period, where they survive, and, above all, with reference to the rich archival sources.[30]

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[27]Donald Kagay, 'The Line between Memoir and History: James I of Aragon and the *Llibre del Feyts*', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 11 (1996), pp. 169–70.

[28]Chs. 2 (Alfonso), 8 (Montfort), 11 (Sancho).

[29]Chs. 138–52 (Navarre), 34–46 (Urgell).

[30]On which, see Lawrence McCrank, 'Documenting Reconquest and reform: the growth of archives in the Medieval Crown of Aragon', *The American Archivist*, 56 (1993), pp. 256–318.

While the king is a partial commentator, he tells us much of his times and of himself. 'No king in history ever revealed himself better to posterity'.[31] Though we know the king was a serial adulterer, vindictive to his children, often cruel to his enemies, and generally not overly endowed with the virtue of humility, there is little doubt that James believed that he was guided by God in his actions. It was the world of Augustine. History was a plan conceived by God and James was a part of that plan.[32] It is through God's will that James is born, protected in the cradle, and defeats the opponents of his youth. It is with God's guidance that James reaches Majorca though storm clouds gather against him and it is God who gives James that kingdom. It is God who prevents the arrow that strikes James at the siege of Valencia penetrating more deeply into the king's forehead, and it is God who wills that James conquers the city. At the siege of Murcia, James is so confident that God will forgive him if he takes the city that he forgoes absolution from his confessor for the adulterous, incestuous relationship he had entered into with one of the noblewomen.[33] The king was sacralized by divine power and his was a divine commission in which he considered he was aided by Our Lady (to whom he clearly had a special devotion), and which most certainly was supported by churchmen whose military and economic backing pervades the text.

In the *Llibre*, James wishes to give to his successors his vision of the power and purpose of monarchy. James is a military leader involved in epic knightly deeds, leading his people in military conflict and defending the land against encroachments from outside (hence the harsh treatment given to the Castilians when they encroached on James's conquest zone) or internal foes (so the almost constant battles against the nobles). It is also for the king to dispense justice, especially when a person has no other recourse (as with Aurembiaix of Urgell) or when there is a serious threat to the stability of the realm (the forging of coins at Tarazona). It is for the king to persuade the nobles and the church to give taxes for military enterprises (a matter in which James's efforts were rarely outweighed by his success) and not to give away land wastefully (as James's father had done).[34] It is the king's role to conduct political negotiations, as with Sancho of Navarre or Alfonso X of Castile. Most importantly, the king must maintain the divinely ordained order of society. As

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[31]Bisson, *Medieval Crown*, p. 84.

[32]Joan Pau Rubiés and Josep Salrach, 'Entorn de la mentalitat i la ideologia del bloc de poder feudal a través de la historiografia medieval fins a les quatre grans cròniques', *La formació i expansió del feudalisme català. Actes del col·loqui organitzat pel Col·legi Universitari de Girona (8–11 de gener de 1985)*, ed. Jaume Portella, Girona: Estudi General, 1985–6.

[33]Chs. 48 (wills James's birth), 5 (protects cradle), 29 (nobles), 56–58 (storm), 105 (gives Majorca), 266 (arrow), 282 (Valencia), 426 (confessor).

[34]Chs. 339–42 (Castilians), 34–7 (Aurembiaix), 466–71 (Tarazona coins), 11 (wasteful father).

James advises Alfonso, the king must keep the loyalty of all his subjects.[35] Above all, the king should keep the Church, the poor and the cities on his side because the knights are treacherous. The towns, he comments in his later years, know just as much of war as the knights do.[36]

James loved his lands. He was struck by the beauty of Palma and Xàtiva. When he captured Valencia and Murcia, he wept and kissed the ground. "Aragon!" was the king's rallying cry when he pursued the rebel Pedro Ahones. James spared the houses of some of those who had plotted against his lordship in Montpellier, so as not to uglify the town. He is conscious of Spain. Before the Murcian campaign, he calls on the Aragonese nobles to save Spain. He left one session of the council of Lyons of 1274, triumphant, confident that all Spain had been honoured by his performance. However, his greatest love appears to have been reserved for Catalonia, which he considered the best kingdom in Spain.[37] Catalan was the language he chose for his *Llibre* and this Catalonian partiality, like that of the Latin chronicle the *Gesta Comitum Barcinonensium*,[38] could have done little to unify so many different peoples.

There are, no doubt, a thousand and one other things that the reader will find of interest in the king's book. It is a unique historical record. As much as it can be categorized, it is an autobiography, and it is by a king who was a formidable ruler by the standards of any age.

Damian Smith

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[35]Ch. 498.

[36]Ch. 397.

[37]Chs. 67 (Palma), 318 (Xàtiva), 282 (Valencia), 443 (Murcia), 26 (Aragon), 304 (Montpellier), 392 (Spain and Murcia), 535 (Spain honoured), 392 (Catalonia).

[38]*Gesta Comitum Barcinonensium*, ed. Louis Barrau Dihigo and Jaume Massó Torrents, Barcelona, 1925; Paul Freedman, 'Cowardice, Heroism and the Legendary Origins of Catalonia', *Past and Present*, 121 (1988), pp. 3–28; Thomas Bisson, 'L'essor de la Catalogne: identité, pouvoir et idéologie dans une société du xii siècle', *Annales*, 39 (1984), pp. 459–64.

Notes on the Translation

The importance of James's Book can be observed in the range of different manuscripts based upon his narrative account of his reign.[1] Whilst there is evidence that the text as he dictated it became an important reference work and heirloom for his descendants, the original manuscript has been lost. This gap has led to the development of numerous hypotheses about the nature of the original version, including attempts to argue for the existence of an epic poem based on the events recounted.[2] Marsili's Latin translation of 1313 is certainly the earliest surviving manuscript version of James's Book, and was commissioned by James II of Aragon as a way of bringing some order to his grandfather's accounts.[3] For a time it was thought that the earliest Catalan manuscripts derived from the Latin version. However, the many errors which were once thought to be mistranslations from the Latin, as well as the shifts in register that occur in the Marsili's text, and his occasional lapses from a third person narrative into the first person narrative that marks out the history as the memoirs of the king, are now considered to be certain indicators of the priority of a Catalan version, as copied in the manuscripts of 1343 and 1380.[4]

The six later manuscripts are all thought to derive from those of the fourteenth century, and are evidence of the continued relevance of the Book of the King. In particular, there is a strong tradition of transmission of the text in Valencia, and some experts argue for the priority of the Valencian and Occidental Catalan family of manuscripts.[5] However, the majority of philologists and historiographers continue to consider the 1343 manuscript of the monastery of Poblet to be the most closely related to a lost original, and nearly all printed editions of James's book of deeds or conquests have been based on Celestí Destorrents's copy.

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[1]On the manuscript tradition, see, Stefano Asperti, 'La tradizione manoscritta del Libre dels Feyts', *Romanica Vulgaria*, 7 (1984), pp. 107-67.

[2]This view, held by Manel de Montoliu (*Les Quatre Grans Cròniques*, Barcelona: Alpha 1959) and Soldevila (S) has been convincingly refuted in recent years by *Josep* Pujol (*Sens i Cojuntures del llibre delRei en Jaume*, PHD thesis: University of Barcelona, Divisió dels Centres Universitaris del camp de Tarragona, 1991).

[3]Pujol, 'The Llibre del Rei', pp. 35-7.

[4]Asperti, 'Indagini', pp. 276-9.

[5]*Llibre dels fets de Jaume I*, trans. Antoni Ferrando and Vicent Josep Escartí, Barcelona 1995, pp. 18-26.

For our own translation we have referred mainly to Jordi Bruguera's transcription of the Poblet manuscript,[6] although we have consulted the Latin version and variant readings from other manuscripts in order to make our version as coherent and intelligible as possible. We have also consulted other modern editions of James's chronicle. In particular, the edition of Casacuberta,[7] which is accompanied by a parallel translation into modern Catalan, and Pujol's (P) edition of selected passages have proved invaluable in the production of a coherent translation. Furthermore, we have been able to consult the modern translation of the Valencia manuscript,[8] and Forster's nineteenth-century English translation[9].

Our first concern in translating the text has been to facilitate comprehension of a work that has for a long time remained inaccessible to any but the specialist reader. Notwithstanding the importance of James I for the history of the Catalan-speaking regions, and for the construction and projection of concepts of Catalan cultural identity and nationhood, the *Llibre dels Fets* has rarely been published in forms accessible to the majority of the Catalan-speaking population. Although the editions of Casacuberta and Soldevila (S), alongside the studies of Nicolau d'Olwer, Manel de Montoliu and later Riquer, recovered the text as a sign of the richness and variety of the Catalan linguistic heritage, it has remained a text that is rarely read except in fragments in the classroom. Where its relevance cannot be avoided is in Medieval Catalan Philology and in studies of the history of the Crown of Aragon, though even here its legacy has been a contested one, with questions raised over its origins, authorship, authenticity and chronology.

The version we have produced here is marked by the knowledge that the most of our readers are likely to be historians. Hence, where possible, we have sought to resolve textual ambiguities, even when they are the result of the deictic nature of oral narrative, or even evidence of the story-telling prowess of the king. Awareness of our target audience has also influenced other translation choices: the title of the book, the choice of register, the organization of the text, and the translation of names.

Our version is called The Book of Deeds by James I, not because this was the title chosen by the king, but because it is the name by which it is most widely known. Equally, where there are English versions of proper nouns, as in the case of kings, but also certain place-names, we have used them. In other cases, when we have been able to identify the name, we have generally translated all names whose origins lie in Catalonia, Valencia or the Balearic

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[6] *Llibre dels Fets del rei en Jaume*, ed. Jordi Bruguera, Barcelona 1991, vol. 2.

[7] *Crònica de Jaume I*, ed. Josep Maria Casacuberta, 2 vols, Barcelona, 1926-64.

[8] *Llibre dels fets de Jaume I*, trans. Ferrando and Escartí (n. 6).

[9] *The Chronicle of James I, King of Aragon (1208-1276), surnamed the Conqueror*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1883.

Islands into the modern Catalan version, and all other names into the language of their region. Hence, for instance, the names of Aragonese nobles are given their Spanish spelling. Throughout the Catalan text the words En and Don are used interchangeably to refer to nobles. However, usage is not consistent, and for this reason, as well as to avoid confusion with modern Catalan use of 'en' as interchangeable with 'el' with any masculine proper name, we have removed all the ens from the English version. James often uses non-Catalan words to indicate when somebody is speaking a language other than Catalan but this is not an artistic device. Notes indicate the major occasions when this occurs.

Most problematically, we have kept the chapter divisions used in most editions because they are widely used for references by historians. However, we have made every effort to indicate in the layout of the text that these chapter divisions do not coincide with narrative units, and to organize the text into coherent narrative blocks.[10] Our overall division of the text into seven sections is intended to maximize the readability of the text and, at least until the end of part VI, responds to clearly demarked sequences in James's narrative. The final part is made up of a number of miscellaneous episodes, although these all reflect the aims and spirit of the early sections of the text.

It would have been impossible for us to produce a "Medieval English" version of James I's memoirs, thus this is, in the main, a target-oriented translation. Nonetheless, as far as possible we have tried to remain true to the flavour of the king's narrative. His use of the royal 'we' has been maintained as a sign of distinction in the text, as well as allowing us to reproduce the effect of the switches to first person singular which mark the *Llibre* out as being a text dictated by the king. We have also endeavoured to preserve the oral nature of the text, the constant shifts between direct and indirect speech, the asides and the references to its mode of composition.

As a transcription of a number of oral narratives, the Book of Deeds has many features that make it an engaging and enjoyable read. Its directness and simplicity of style lend an immediate and authentic quality to the dramatization of events and dialogues, and we are able to witness the king as a competent and chameleonic communicator in a range of different languages and contexts. However, there are features of his narrative that have had to be modified to aid readability and comprehension. The almost exclusive use of the conjunction 'e' to introduce sentences has been reduced in our version, as we felt that the constant repetition of 'and' or 'and then', notwithstanding its suggestion of speech, would have become rebarbative. More importantly, where James's recourse to deixis – to the 'thats' and 'theses' and 'theys' that indicate the circumstances of the Book's creation, in the presence of others who knew of

[10]See Josep Pujol (*Sens i conjuntures*, 1991) for a detailed reading of the narrative construction of the *Llibre*.

the events and people involved and could see the face and gestures of the king as he told of them – might lead to confusion, we have added information to disambiguate the text.

The Catalan language is the only language in which medieval kings (and two of them) have written their memoirs,[11] leaving the reader with a strong sense of their character, culture and concerns. Although we are well aware that the main interest of this version is in the picture of the conflicts of the Crown of Aragon it provides, we hope to have allowed some of its literary quality to show through: to allow the voice of king, conqueror and storyteller to be heard.

Helena Buffery

[11]See Pere III of Catalonia (IV of Aragon), *Chronicle*, ed. J. Hillgarth and trans. M. Hillgarth, 2 vols., Toronto 1980.

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The Early Years

[1][1] My lord Saint James relates that faith without good works is dead.[2] Our Lord wished this saying to be confirmed in our deeds; for though it is true that faith without works is worthless, when the two are combined they bear fruit, a fruit that God wishes to receive in His mansion. So, although the circumstances of our birth were good, there was need for improvement in our actions. This was not because we did not have the faith in us to believe in Our Creator and His works, nor through lack of prayers to His mother to intercede for us to her Beloved Son that He might pardon the wrongs we had done Him. Rather it was that through that very faith, He might lead us to the true salvation.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who knows all things, knew that our life would be so very long that we would be able to do a great deal of good works with the faith we had within us. Because of this, He showed us such grace and mercy that despite our many sins, both mortal and venial, He did not wish that we should receive any dishonour or harm which could shame us in the court or in any other place. Neither did He wish that we should die before we had completed these works.

So great was the mercy that He conceded to us, that at all times He has granted us the respect of our enemies, both in word and in deed, and He has kept our person in good health throughout our life. If sometimes He has given us illnesses, He has done so by way of warning to us, like a father who corrects his son; for as Solomon says, he who spares his son the rods of chastisement, does him ill and in no way appears to wish him well.[3] Moreover, Our Lord never punished us so greatly that he did us harm. And for this we thanked Him each time He punished us, for the very punishment He gave us. Now we thank Him more than ever, since we know that He did it for our good.

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[1]While this prologue was probably written after the body of the text and it has been suggested (Asperti, 'Indagini sull' "Llibre dels feyts"') that the second half of the prologue may be the work of a second hand (possibly that of Bishop Jaume Sarroca, who may also have influenced the king in the final chapters of the work), nothing in the prologue conflicts with the sentiments expressed by James throughout his work, with the emphasis on God's guidance and the king's sense of mission, and it can reasonably be argued that the prologue too is the work of James (Pujol, 'Cultura eclesiàstica').

[2]James 2: 17, 20, 26.

[3]Proverbs 13:24 (cf. Eccl, 30: 1).

For we remember well a passage of Holy Scripture, which says: *Omnis laus in fine canitur*,[4] and means that the best thing a man can have, he shall have at the end of his days. And the mercy of the Lord of glory has worked in such a manner with us, so fulfilling the words of Saint James: for in our last years He has willed that our works should accord with our faith. And we, contemplating and reflecting on the nature of this world, in which men live their worldly lives, and how petty the times are, how frivolous and full of scandal, and how the other world brings glory everlasting, which Our Lord gives to those who desire and seek it, and contemplating, moreover, how great His power is and how feeble our weakness, we recognized and understood the truth of this phrase from scripture: *Omnia pretereunt preter amare Deum*,[5] which comes to mean that all the things of the world are fleeting and pass away, save only the love of God.

Knowing this to be the truth, and all else lies, we wished to offer our works and our thoughts, and to direct and shape them to the commandments of Our Saviour. Thus, we abandoned the vanities of this world in order to obtain His kingdom. For as He tells us in the Gospel: *Qui vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me*,[6] which means, in romance,[7] that he who wishes to follow Him, should abandon his own will for that of the Lord.

Recalling, moreover, the great mercies that He has done us many times in our life and, above all, towards the end of our days, we have decided to submit our will to His.[8] And so that all men may recognize and know, when we have passed from this mortal life, the deeds that we have done with the help of the powerful Lord, in Whom is true Trinity, we leave this book as a record for those who might wish to hear of the mercies that Our Lord has shown us, and to give an example to all the other men of this world so that they should do as we have done and place their faith in this Lord Who is so powerful.

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[4]Not a direct biblical quotation, but an oft-used medieval proverb (cf. Isaiah, 42: 10; Psalms 48:10). The usual meaning of the proverb (that the result of an undertaking cannot be securely known until it has been completed) has been adapted here to suit the theme of the prologue.

[5]Probably derived from a poem of Venantius Fortunatus (c. 530–600) (Pujol, 'Cultura eclesiàstica', p. 154) but based on a Pauline theme (I Cor, 7:31; 13: 8; cf. Psalms 144: 4). The phrase is also used in the final will of James of 26 August 1272 and in a donation of James to the hospital of Sant Vicenç de València on 13 June 1276. Riera argues for the influence of Jaume Sarroca (Riera, 'Personalitat eclesiàstica', p. 589).

[6]Matthew, 16:24 ("If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me") (cf. Luke, 9:23).

[7]Catalan.

[8]This is a reference to James's decision to retire to the monastery of Poblet (Tarragona), the most powerful Cistercian house in Catalonia, and end his days there as a monk.

[2] It is certainly true that our grandfather, King Don Alfonso,[9] negotiated marriage terms with the emperor of Constantinople,[10] asking for his daughter as a wife. However, although both parties, that is to say our grandfather and the emperor, negotiated and agreed the terms, our grandfather then married Queen Doña Sancha, who was the daughter of the emperor of Castile.[11]

The emperor of Constantinople, unaware that the marriage had taken place, sent his daughter to King Don Alfonso of Aragon, who was the count of Barcelona and marquis of Provence. And, on arriving at Montpellier, a bishop and two nobles,[12] who had come with her, discovered that King Don Alfonso, our grandfather, had married Queen Doña Sancha, daughter of the emperor of Castile. And they were greatly perplexed and worried as to what they should do, since Alfonso had taken another wife.

Now, William of Montpellier was lord of Montpellier and of all that pertains to Montpellier. And those nobles who had accompanied the daughter of the emperor asked him what they should do about the deceit and the insult that they had received. For they had come with the daughter of the Emperor Manuel to the court of King Don Alfonso so that he would marry her, yet the king had married another. And they asked him to advise them in what manner they should proceed. And he replied to them that he would take it before his council.

When William of Montpellier had assembled all his council, he was advised by his nobles, his knights, and all the notables of the city of Montpellier, to take her as his wife. For they said that since God had granted him so great a mercy that the daughter of the Emperor Manuel, who was at that time the most important man in Christendom, had come to his town and the place where he was, and had been abandoned by the husband she should have had, he should take her as his wife and not allow her to return home on any account. On that advice, he gave his response to the bishop and the nobles who had come with

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[9]Alfonso II of Aragon, the first count-king (1162–96).

[10]Manuel Comnenos (1143–80).

[11]James's account is inaccurate here. Alfonso II married Sancha of Castile (d. 1208), daughter of Alfonso VII of Castile-León (1126–57), on 18 January 1174. Later, to cement an alliance against the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1152–90), a marriage was arranged between Alfonso's brother, Raymond Berenguer, the count of Provence, and Eudoxia, daughter of a nephew of the Emperor Manuel. But when Eudoxia arrived (1179), Raymond refused her, possibly due to an alteration in Aragon's relationship with Barbarossa after his reconciliation with Pope Alexander III in 1177. In Spring 1179, Eudoxia was nevertheless married to William VIII (1172–1202) of Montpellier, a key ally of Alfonso II (Vajay, 'Eudoquía', pp. 628–30; Aurell, *Noces*, p. 405). James may have genuinely confused Eudoxia's parentage because, while Manuel would be 'autocrator' and his nephew a 'basileus', both would translate as 'emperador'.

[12]The presence of three envoys is confirmed by the *Annales Pisani* (VI, 2, p. 68). These envoys did, however, obtain success in their main mission in successfully negotiating, in Paris, the marriage of Agnes, daughter of King Louis VII of France (1137–80), to Alexis, son and heir of Manuel, in the winter of 1178–9 (Vajay, 'Eudoquía', pp. 629–30).

her. And this was the response that he sent through his messengers: that since God had granted him such grace that she was unable to have the husband whom she ought to have had, he wished to take her for his wife.

When the envoys of the emperor heard these words the confusion that they had felt at first was doubled, for the daughter of the emperor could not take as a husband any but a king or an emperor, because no other matched her status. And they entreated him most insistently that, for the sake of his own honour and in God's name, he should allow the daughter of the emperor to leave. For they had promised to the emperor that if the marriage did not take place, they would return her to her father by land or sea. And they said that he should not impede them, as there was no reason for him to do so, for she had not come to marry him. But William of Montpellier and his council responded that it could not be otherwise. Thus, when the messengers of the emperor understood their intent and that things could not be otherwise, they asked for time to deliberate, and he gave them until the next day.

Now, the bishop and the nobles who had come with her saw that William of Montpellier and his council would have their way, and they decided to agree to the marriage on one condition: that any son or daughter born to William of Montpellier and the daughter of the emperor, if he or she survived, was to be lord of Montpellier.

So they returned to give their response. And they said to William of Montpellier and to his council that they could attack them, imprison them, or snatch her from them, but that the marriage would not take place with their consent or hers unless it was done in the manner they proposed. He had to promise to them, upon his honour, and make all of the men of Montpellier of ten years and upwards swear, that any son or daughter born of them both would be lord of Montpellier if it was a man, and likewise if it was a woman.[13] And these words were put in writing.

In this manner, William of Montpellier, on the advice of his nobles and his council, agreed the terms and contracted the marriage. And that lady bore William of Montpellier a daughter called Maria.[14]

[3] Much later, a marriage was negotiated between King Don Peter,[15] our father, and the daughter of William of Montpellier (who was lady of Montpellier and of all its territories). And she agreed that she would give her

[13]James is here primarily concerned with his own claims in Montpellier (where, particularly in the 1240s and 1250s, and again in the 1270s, he faced considerable difficulties from many in the town who were prepared to ally against him and in favour of France).

[14]Marie of Montpellier, Queen of Aragon (1204–1213).

[15]King Peter II of Aragon (1196–1213).

body and Montpellier with all its appurtenances. So the marriage took place and so increased her renown, for now she had the name Queen Doña Maria.[16]

[4] Afterwards William of Montpellier, with his wife still living, married another lady, who was from Castile (the name of whose father we do not recall, but her name was Doña Agnes).[17] By her he had these sons: one by the name of William of Montpellier[18] who held Paulhan until the hour of his death, and another, Bergunyó; and Bernat Guillem, to whom we gave patrimony and a wife named Juliana, who was, through her mother, of the lineage of Entença and was daughter of Ponç Hug, brother of Count Hug d'Empúries;[19] and another brother, called Tortoseta, who was raised by our father.

Now this William of Montpellier, who was the eldest son of William of Montpellier, fought to be lord of Montpellier, because he was the male heir. And because the dispute came before the pope, our mother, Queen Doña Maria, went to the court of Rome to defend her rights, so that we, who were her heir, would be lord of Montpellier.[20] And they so defended their cause before the pope that he gave them a sentence (and there was a decretal written of the sentence of the pope), judging that the children of William of Montpellier and Agnes were not children of a legal marriage (for they were begotten in adultery, William already having another wife). And the pope judged that Montpellier belonged to the Queen Doña Maria and to us, as we were her son.

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[16]The marriage took place on 15 June 1204 (Miret, 'Itinerario del Rey Pedro', 3, pp. 278–9). Marie had previously been married in 1191 to Viscount Barral of Marseilles (d.1192) and, in 1197, to Count Bernard IV of Comminges (1176–1225), who repudiated her in 1201. Peter II ceded to Bernard the prize of the Val d'Aran in 1201. Bernard may have been 'holding' Marie until a suitable time when she could be given to Peter, who could then marry her and take control of Montpellier after the death of William VIII (1202) (Higounet, *Comté de Comminges*, pp. 79–87).

[17]Eudoxia was politically useless after 1182 when the violently anti-Western Andronicus Comnenus seized power (and she did not provide a male heir). In April 1187, William VIII married Agnes, a distant relation of Alfonso I of Aragon (1104–34), and probably a dame of honour to Queen Sancha of Castile (Peter II's mother) at the court of Barcelona (Aurell, *Noces*, pp. 406–7)

[18]William IX of Montpellier. In fact, Agnes gave William VIII six sons and two daughters.

[19]Juliana appears to be daughter of Count Hug III of Empúries (1154–73) and Jusiana d'Entença and thus sister to Ponç Hug II (1173–1200), while Count Hug IV (1200–30) was Ponç Hug II's son (Sobrequés, *Barons*, p. 74; Aurell, *Noces*, p. 456). Bernat Guillem appears often in James's narrative particularly in relation to the Valencia campaign.

[20]Marie of Montpellier went to Rome for two reasons: to defend herself in the divorce case brought by Peter II (a case that had been running since 1206 (Vincke, 'Eheprozess'), and to defend her own and her son's rights in Montpellier. In January 1213, Pope Innocent III pronounced in favour of the validity of her marriage (*MDI*, no. 497. James does not mention this), and in April 1213 decreed that the marriage between William VIII and Agnes was not a legal one and therefore Marie and not William IX was rightfully ruler in Montpellier (Aurell, *Noces*, p. 434).

[5] Now we will relate the manner of our conception[21] and our birth. Firstly, the manner of our conception: Our father, King Don Peter, did not wish to see the queen, our mother. And it happened that one time the king, our father, was at Lattes, and the queen, our mother, was at Mireval.[22] But a noble by the name of Guillermo de Alcalá came to the king and besought him so insistently that he persuaded him to go to Mireval, where the queen, our mother, was staying. That night when they were both at Mireval, Our Lord willed that we should be conceived.

When the queen, our mother, found out that she was pregnant, she went to Montpellier. And here Our Lord willed us to be born in the house of the Tornamira,[23] on the eve of Our Lady Saint Mary of Candlemas.[24]

As soon as we were born, our mother sent us to Santa Maria, and they carried us there in their arms. In the church of Our Lady[25] they were saying matins, and at the very moment they brought us through the porch, those inside began to sing *Te Deum laudamus.* And the clergy did not know that we were to enter there, but we entered while they sang that canticle. And afterwards they carried us to Saint Firmin, and when those who carried us entered the church of Saint Firmin, those inside were singing *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel.*[26] When they returned us to the house of our mother, she rejoiced at all the good signs that had befallen us. And she ordered twelve candles to be made, all of equal size and measure, and had them all lit at the same time. On each one she placed the name of an apostle, and she promised Our Lord that whichever candle burned longest would be the name we would receive. And that of Saint James lasted a full three fingers breadth longer than the others. Thus, for this reason, and through the grace of God, we have the name James.[27]

And that is how we descend from our mother's side and from King Peter, our father. Moreover, it would seem to be God's work, in that the agreement that our grandfather had made to marry was fulfilled. A woman of the line of

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[21]The theme is a commonplace of Catalan literature, imaginatively developed by the chroniclers *Muntaner* (chs. 3–5) and *Desclot* (ch. 4) who have Marie being surreptitiously substituted into Peter's bed in place of one of his mistresses.

[22]South of Montpellier above Setes.

[23]The temporary residence of Peter II after his palace had been destroyed in an uprising of the Montpellerians in October 1206 against his financially burdensome rule.

[24]1 February 1208 [The eve of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Candlemas Day)].

[25]Notre-Dame-des-Tables.

[26]This is all less miraculous than James makes out. Had the clergy not been singing the *Te Deum* at matins and the *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel* (Luke 1:68–79) at lauds, it would have been more noteworthy. These hymns are part of the ordinary of the divine office.

[27]Marie's practice reflects a normal popular devotion. The name also suggests the popularity of pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Peter II, in his documents, referred to his son as Peter.

the Emperor Manuel married our father King Peter, and, through that marriage, the wrong that had taken place concerning the other marriage was undone.

And later, while we were lying in the cradle, someone threw a rock down on us through a trapdoor, and it fell near the cradle, but God wished to protect us so that we should not die.[28]

[6] Our father, King Peter, was the most generous king there ever was in Spain, and the most courteous, and the most affable. In fact, his generosity was such that his revenues and lands decreased.[29] Moreover, he was a good knight-at-arms, if ever there was a good one in the world.[30] Of the other good qualities that he had we do not wish to speak, so as not to lengthen this work.

[7] Of the Queen Doña Maria, our mother, we wish to say the following: that if ever there was a good woman in the world, it was she, in fearing and honouring God, and in the other good qualities that she had. We could say many good things about her but we will say just one thing that is worth all the rest: that she is loved by all the men of the world who know of her conduct. And Our Lord loved her so much and gave her such grace, that she is called the Holy queen by those who are in Rome and throughout the world. And many sick people are cured when they drink, with wine or water, the stone scraped from her tomb. She lies buried in Rome, in the church of Saint Peter, near Saint Petronilla, who was the daughter of Saint Peter.[31]

And consider, those of you who read this text, if this is not a miraculous thing. Our grandfather, King Don Alfonso, promised that the daughter of the emperor would be his wife but then he married Queen Doña Sancha. Yet, Our Lord wished that the original promise, to take the daughter of the Emperor Manuel as his wife, should be fulfilled. And that would seem to be the case, since the granddaughter of the Emperor Manuel was afterwards wife of our father from whom we descend. For that reason, it is a work of God that the agreement that was not fulfilled in those times should be fulfilled later, when our father took as his wife the granddaughter of the emperor.

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[28]*Desclot* (ch. 4) also reports this and says the force of the blow was such as to break the cradle. *Desclot* comments that the identity of the perpetrators of the crime was uncertain but he believed it to be the work of James's relatives, who hoped to have his lands for themselves.

[29]The study of the financial aspects of Peter's reign by Thomas Bisson (*Fiscal Accounts*, 1, pp. 122–50), bears witness to the king's profligacy and mismanagement.

[30]Peter II was a victor at the decisive battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (16 July 1212) at which the Almohad power in Spain was crushed.

[31]Marie made her final will at Rome on 20 April 1213 and died soon afterwards (Aurell, *Noces*, pp. 435–6). Petronilla was also the name of one of her daughters by Bernard IV of Comminges. The *Gesta Comitum Barcinonensium* (ch. 35) also fostered Marie's cult, commenting that after she had been honourably buried in the church of Saint Peter by the altar of Saint Petronilla, the Lord had worked many miracles at her tomb.

[8] Some time after our birth, Simon de Montfort,[32] who held the lands of Carcassonne and Béziers and, in Toulouse, the land that the king of France had won, wished to be friends with our father. So, he asked him to deliver us to him, that he might raise us. And our father trusted so much in him and in his love that he delivered us to be raised by him.[33]

While we were in his power, the people of those lands that we have mentioned came to our father, and they said to him that he could be lord of those lands if he wished to take them and protect them.[34] Now, King Peter, our father, was sincere and compassionate, and because of the compassion that he felt for them, he said that he would protect them.

However, they tricked him with pretty phrases. And with the one hand they gave their word, and with the other they took it away by their deeds. For we have heard Guillem de Cervera[35] and Arnau de Castellbò[36] and Dalmau de

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[32]Simon de Montfort (d. 1218) was lord of Montfort l'Amaury, near Paris, and also titular earl of Leicester. In 1209 he was chosen as military leader of the Albigensian Crusade, a task he fulfilled with ruthless efficiency. He was made viscount of Béziers-Carcassonne in 1209 without consultation of Peter II, the overlord. One of Simon's sons, also Simon, became earl of Leicester in 1231. The king of France to whom James refers is Philip II Augustus (1180–1223).

[33]This appears to be self-deception. The Albigensian Crusade (to destroy heresy) had proved successful in increasing the power of the Northern Franks in southern France. Peter II's own ambitions in the region were under threat but his prime concern was the battle against the Muslims in southern Spain. Peter sought compromises between the crusaders and the nobles of southern France. In January 1211, Peter accepted Montfort's homage for Béziers-Carcassonne, and sought a reconciliation between Montfort and the count of Foix. Then he agreed to a marriage between James (who was still not three) and Montfort's daughter, handing James over to be brought up by Montfort (Miret, 'Itinerario del Rey Pedro', 4, pp. 16–17). In April 1211, Peter arranged a marriage between his sister Sancha and the future Raymond VII of Toulouse (Vaux-de-Cernay, *Histoire Albigeoise*, ch. 211; Ventura, *Pere el Catòlic*, p. 147). Peter was seeking a divorce from Marie of Montpellier, James's mother. In fact, James was an expendable pawn in a larger political game.

[34]By the beginning of 1213, many of the major southern French lords, as well as the consuls of Toulouse, already felt that they had no other option in combatting the crusade than placing themselves under the lordship of Peter II, who had gained great prestige by his victory at Las Navas. Peter, from late January 1213, acted as a virtual 'emperor of the Pyrenees' (Roquebert, *L'Épopée Cathare 1213–1216*, pp. 105–11).

[35]Guillem IV de Cervera (d. 1245), a faithful ally of Peter II, had fought at Las Navas. His second wife was Countess Elvira de Subirats of Urgell, and he was step-father and chief adviser to Countess Aurembiaix of Urgell. In 1230 he entered Poblet (Gonzalvo, 'Guillem IV de Cervera', p. 417). He was a key figure in the politics of James's minority and a member of the regency council appointed by Innocent III in 1216 to support the procurator Sancho in managing the king's affairs (*MDI*, no. 537).

[36]Viscount Arnau de Castellbò (1185–1226), a fixture at the courts of Peter II and James, he was a powerful figure in the Pyrenean world, who constantly battled against the counts and bishops of Urgell. His daughter, Ermessenda (d. 1230), married Count Roger Bernard of Foix, uniting the two houses. Both Arnau and Ermessenda were very sympathetic to Catharism and, in 1269, both were posthumously condemned as heretics by the Inquisition (Miret, *Investigación Histórica*, pp. 164–5).

Creixell,[37] and others who were with him, say that those people said to him: "Lord, see our castles and our towns: take them under your protection and place your bailiffs in them." Yet when he wished to occupy them they said to him: "Lord, what are you doing turning our wives out of our houses? Both we and they are yours and will do your will." And in this way, they did not do any of the things they had promised to him. And they presented to him their wives and their daughters and their kinswomen, the most beautiful they could find, and, as they knew he was a ladies' man,[38] they took away his better judgement and bent him to their will. But as the details would take a long time to relate, however serious and important, we do not wish to speak on them further.

[9] Simon de Montfort was at Muret with a good eight hundred to a thousand knights, and our father came upon him near the place where he was.[39] With him from Aragon, there were Don Miguel de Luésia, and Don Blasco de Alagón, Don Rodrigo Lizana, Don Ladrón, Don Gómez de Luna, Don Miguel de Rada, Don Guillermo de Pueyo, Don Aznar Pardo, and many others of his household.[40] There were others whom we cannot remember, but we remember very well that those who were there and knew the facts said that except for Don Gómez, Don Miguel de Rada, Don Aznar Pardo, and some of his household who died there, the others abandoned the battle, and fled. From Catalonia, there were Dalmau de Creixell, Hug de Mataplana, Guillem d'Horta, and Bernat de Castellbisbal, and they fled with the others.[41]

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[37]One of the principal advisers of Peter II, he also held many interests in the south of France. He took part in the defence of Toulouse in 1217 and 1218. He was brother of Arnau de Creixell, Bishop of Girona (1199–1214). He made his will on 27 November 1220 (Marquès, *Pergamins*, no. 108).

[38]Peter II left a reputation as a notorious womanizer (as did James). According to the chronicler Puylaurens (*RHGF*, 19, ch. 21, p. 208), a letter from Peter to a noble lady of Toulouse, declaring that he came to fight the French for love of her, was intercepted by Montfort, who declared "I shall not fear a king who comes against the business of God for a courtesan."

[39]The battle of Muret (12 September 1213).

[40]Of the nobles who are mentioned here, the most important are Miguel de Luesia, Blasco de Alagón, and Rodrigo Lizana. Miguel, a hero of Las Navas, was the closest noble adviser of Peter II throughout his reign and led the party who called for a battle against Montfort rather than a siege of Muret (*Chanson de la Croisade*, 2, ch. 139, p. 24). Blasco was a key supporter of James in his minority (Arroyo, 'Blasco de Alagón', pp. 80–1) but fell into disfavour. He encouraged the Valencian campaign and took Morella, which he delivered to the king. Roderigo Lizana was an Aragonese noble, who often opposed James during the minority but later greatly distinguished himself in the conquest of Valencia. Guillermo de Pueyo died in 1220 at the siege of Albarracín (ch. 16). Aznar Pardo was a key adviser of Peter II and had distinguished himself at Las Navas (Huici, *Las Grandes Batallas*, pp. 255, 263).

[41]After the battle Dalmau threw himself into the River Louge, crying out, "God help us! A great misfortune has befallen us: the good king of Aragon is dead and defeated, and many others besides, dead and defeated. Never has there been so great a loss!" (*Chanson de la Croisade*, 2, ch. 140, p. 30).

But we do know for certain that Don Nunó Sanxes[42] and Guillem de Montcada,[43] who was the son of Guillem Ramon and Guillema de Castellví, were not at the battle, but sent word to the king saying that he should wait for them. However, the king did not wish to wait for them and waged the battle with those who were with him.

And the day that he went into battle he had lain with a lady. For we later heard his steward, who was called Gil, and was to become a brother of the Hospital, and was present there, along with others, who saw it with their own eyes, say that even at the Gospel he was unable to stand on his feet, so he sat in his seat while it was read. And before the battle Simon de Montfort wished to place himself in the king's power to do his will, and wished to be reconciled with him. But our father did not wish to accept the offer.[44] On seeing that, Count Simon and those who were inside the town confessed themselves and received the body of Jesus Christ, saying they would rather die on the battlefield than inside the town. And, with that resolve, all as one, they went out to fight.

However, those on the king's side knew neither how to place order in the lines nor how to move in formation, and each noble fought for himself, and broke with the rules of arms. And because of their disorder and the sin that was in them, and because they had not shown mercy to those who were inside, the battle had to be lost.[45]

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[42]Count Nunó I of Rousillon and Cerdagne (1212–1241/2). One of the most important figures in James's narrative. He was son of Count Sancho of Provence (d. 1223) and grandson of Count Ramon Berenguer IV of Barcelona (1131–62). In 1209, he gave military aid to King Frederick of Sicily [the Emperor Frederick II (1212–50)]. In 1212, he was made count of Rousillon and Cerdagne by Peter II. He participated in the battle of Las Navas. After the death of Peter II (1213), he led a defensive alliance against Montfort. He fought with the Montcada family for control during James's minority, but then allied with them, leaving James in a difficult position. He participated in the conquest of Majorca (1229–30) where he played a decisive role. Jointly with Peter of Portugal and archbishop-elect Guillem of Tarragona, he conquered Ibiza in 1235. He was present at the siege and capture of Valencia in 1238.

[43]Guillem de Montcada, Viscount of Béarn (1223–9). Together with Nunó, he continued the battle against the crusaders after Muret. During the minority, in a power struggle, he fell out with both Nunó and the king. But he accompanied James in the siege of Peníscola (1225) and later formed part of his council in the campaign against the Cabrera (1228). He was the most powerful magnate in the Majorca campaign, where he died at the battle of Porto Pí (1229). His father, Viscount Guillem Ramon I (1215–23), left a good reputation as an administrator, although as a youth he had notoriously killed Archbishop Berenguer of Tarragona after a bitter dispute (1194) (Shideler, *Montcadas*, pp. 123–8).

[44]The legates with the crusading army attempted to negotiate a peace with Peter several times in the days leading up to the battle but Peter's terms were unacceptable (Ventura, *Pere el Catòlic*, p. 212). Montfort was not personally involved in these negotiations.

[45]It is difficult to establish what happened in the battle. James's work is one of the few which attempts to define the reasons for the defeat of Peter's superior forces, but his view of the battle both reflects his own military outlook and perhaps also his own failure to halt the Capetian advance to the south. There certainly appears to have been dissension in Peter's camp over the battle plan, but most chroniclers concentrated on the king's sinfulness in defending

And our father died there, since it has always been the custom of our line, in the battles they have fought and in which we shall fight, that either we must win or die.

Meanwhile, we remained in Carcassonne in the power of the count, since he was raising us and was lord of that place.

[10] Later on, after that had happened, our subjects, that is to say, Don Nunó Sanxes, Guillem de Montcada, and Guillem de Cardona,[46] father of Ramon Folc, demanded our return and they went to war against the Franks and against the lands held by them. As well as the war that they waged at Narbonne and other places, they sent envoys to the pope, Innocent III, asking him to resolve to threaten Simon de Montfort, through excommunication or by other means, so that they might recover us.[47] For we were their natural lord, since our father had left no legitimate son except us.[48]

And this holy father, Innocent III, was the best pope, so much so that from the time that we compose this book going back a hundred years there has not been so good a pope in the church of Rome. For he was very learned in the matters that it pertains for a pope to know, and he had a natural wisdom, and knew a great amount about the secular sciences.[49] And he sent such forceful letters and such forceful envoys to Count Simon that he had to agree to return us to our people.[50] And so, the Franks took us as far as Narbonne, where a great party of the nobles and the citizens of Catalonia came out to receive us. And we must then have been six years and three months old.[51] On our arrival

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heretics, his impetuous folly on the battlefield, or more favourably, his righteous motives in defending his vassals (Alvira, 'La cruzada Albigense', pp. 947–75).

[46]Viscount Guillem de Cardona (1177–1226), a member of the regency council appointed by Innocent III in 1216, he was also one of James's most important creditors. He had fought at Las Navas.

[47]After Muret, attempts to recover James from Montfort proved unsuccessful, and an embassy was sent to Rome, led by Bishop Hispan of Segorbe-Albarracín (d. 1215) (Rodrigo, *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*, Bk 6, ch. 5).

[48]James emphasizes that he was the only legitimate heir. Peter II certainly had two other children by a lady of the house of Sarroca: Pere (d. 1254), who became sacristan of Lleida, and sometimes acted as an adviser to his half-brother; and Constança, who, in 1212, married the Seneschal Guillem Ramon V (d. 1228), and later became the prioress of the Trinitarian house at Avinganya (Lleida).

[49]Pope Innocent III (1198–1216). He had been educated in Rome, Paris and Bologna. His training was primarily as a theologian.

[50]On 23 January 1214, Innocent III warned Montfort that it would be unseemly for him to hold James and that he should be handed over to the papal legate. The letter was accompanied by a thinly veiled threat of excommunication if he did not do so (*MDI*, no. 516). The pope sent Cardinal Peter of Benevento, a close confidant (Maleczek, *Kardinalskolleg*, pp. 172–4), to recover James and organize the government of the minority. Cardinal Peter played a crucial role in restoring order in Aragon and Catalonia.

[51]James was taken to Capestang and there handed over to Cardinal Peter who took him to the Catalan nobles at Narbonne (Vaux-de-Cernay, ch. 506). This was in April 1214.