

THE RISE OF ARAGON-CATALONIA

David Abulafia

I

‘THE rise of Aragon’ is a term that hides a great deal: in the thirteenth century it was not so much the highland kingdom of Aragon, from which they drew their royal title, as the seaboard county of Barcelona that was the jumping-off point for a remarkable series of successes, military, commercial and political, which catapulted the kings of Aragon from their lowly status as second-rate Spanish rulers into primacy in the western Mediterranean. Nor were these successes confined to the Catalan lands around Barcelona, as Majorca fell to the kings of Aragon and itself became the forward position of Catalan navies poised for the commercial penetration of Africa, and as Valencia became the capital of a newly acquired kingdom rich in potential resources. From 1282 Sicily also fell within the political sphere of the Catalan-Aragonese rulers, and it also had begun to play a role in the provisioning of Barcelona and Majorca which should not be underestimated. The relationship between trade and the flag was not, however, a simple one. There were areas intensively penetrated by the Catalan merchants which were never conquered by the king of Aragon; and there were political successes which were not, at least immediately, matched by generous favours to Catalan traders. The dynastic interests of the crown of Aragon were not necessarily the business interests of the merchant community of Barcelona; equally, those dynastic interests could rarely be fulfilled without the aid of Catalan navies, and thus some measure of reliance on the merchant community.

By the start of the thirteenth century certain broad features can be assigned to Catalonia-Aragon. The territories co-existed in a personal union, which had only been fulfilled in the emergence of effective monarchy within recent memory: Alfonso II of Aragon (I of Catalonia)¹ had pursued a vigorous policy

¹ Considerable confusion can result from the differences in the numbering of the kings of Aragon and of the counts of Barcelona or Catalonia. In this text the Aragonese numbering has been adopted throughout.

of southward expansion into Moorish territory, agreeing in the Treaty of Cazorla (1179) to let Castile absorb Murcia in due course, but setting Aragonese-Catalan sights on the more accessible *taifa* state of Valencia. On the other hand, Alfonso faced more immediate challenges in southern France, where the Aragonese asserted their authority in the imperial county of Provence, only to find it challenged in nominally French Languedoc; it should be remembered that even as counts of Barcelona, let alone as significant territorial lords in Languedoc, the Aragonese rulers were still technically vassals of the king of France. It was in Languedoc that King Peter II (1196–1213) faced his greatest challenge. His wife Maria was heiress to Montpellier, an acquisition that notably strengthened Peter's influence in Languedoc; so too did a marriage alliance with the count of Toulouse, who, like the king of Aragon, had to contend with the fractiousness of the southern French barons. The arrival of northern crusaders under Simon de Montfort, charged to suppress heretics and their supporters (*fautores*), left Peter with an obligation, as he understood it, to defend those of his vassals who had been dispossessed; in intervening, his aim was not to support the Cathar heresy, which he detested, still less to challenge Pope Innocent III, who had crowned him king of Aragon in person in 1204. The death of King Peter at the battle of Muret in 1213, fighting against de Montfort's armies, was a severe check to Catalan ambitions in southern France; but it did not cause their complete abandonment, for the new king, James, remained in and near the Aragonese possession of Montpellier during much of his long minority, and a cadet line of Aragonese counts still ruled Provence until the 1240s. In other words, Languedoc remained an important focus of Aragonese interests throughout the early thirteenth century.

Peter's legacy was not simply one of failure in southern France; in Spain his reputation stood high, and his joint stand with the Castilians against the fundamentalist Almohads, at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) endeared him to the papacy a year before Muret. As Almohad power disintegrated in Spain, where the movement had never struck very deep roots, autonomous Muslim warlords carved out for themselves petty statelets, a new generation of *taifa* kingdoms, loosely under Almohad lordship, but a far weaker challenge to Christian Spain than the unitary empire based in Morocco had been. Peter had plans of his own to invade the pirates' nest at Majorca, which the Almohads only acquired at the start of the thirteenth century, and these plans were eventually taken up with great success by his son. However, the debit side of the reign is clearly revealed in T.N. Bisson's study of the fiscal documentation of this period, showing that the count-king's finances began to go into the red under Peter II, under the strain of internal conflicts, such as the endless struggles with the barons over the application of the count's law (the *Usatges de Barcelona*), and over the ruler's rights of taxation. By 1205 the barons were able

to force Peter to keep the coinage stable, to abandon the much disliked *bovatge* tax and to consult them on the appointment of the comital vicars who were generally lesser knights beholden to the count of Barcelona. The count's own claims had been expressed in the *Liber feudorum maior* of 1194. Yet it is important to distinguish the rights the count-king claimed, and those he could actually exercise; as count of Barcelona he was one of several great lords holding the title of count, and the idea of Catalonia as a coherent 'principality' only really emerged in the fourteenth century. Thus the count-king only gained control of key areas including Roussillon, across the Pyrenees, and Urgell, between Andorra and the borders of Aragon proper, by fits and starts, and the northern edges of Catalonia, where it faded into Languedoc, were rendered all the more imprecise by the oscillating loyalties of such feudatories as the counts of Foix. Even so, he gained the help of several lesser counts who were prepared to take up office as local judges, and he tried to build a financial framework that would enable him to support his ambitious enterprises. Under financial pressure, Peter turned increasingly to the Templars as managers of his fiscal affairs, and he also made use of Jewish advisers, building on their experience as effective tax farmers; a significant proportion of his fiscal documents carry the names of his Jewish officials, written in Hebrew characters.² In this he was not greatly different from his neighbours in both Spain and in Languedoc (indeed, the suppression of Jewish ministers was one of the constant aims of the Albigensian crusaders and of Church councils). Jews were to remain active in the finances of the kings of Aragon until the late thirteenth century. Catalonia, and in many respects Aragon, were thus loose confederations which themselves made up the two elements in a super-confederation whose only real bond was the person of the count-king himself; this itself reflected the origins of Catalonia as a land of castellans, a territory which had a long history of localised power structures.

II

Under James I (1213–76) the power and in many respects the character of the monarchy was transformed. His own birth was widely viewed as a miracle, not least because of the cordial loathing of Peter II for Maria of Montpellier; but the true miracle was the survival of Peter's bloodline. Others, notably James's cousin Sanç of Provence, would gladly have asserted a right to James's crown; yet a semblance of unity was maintained, expressed most notably in the general

² It is essential to distinguish between moneylending and tax farming. Catalan Jews were no more heavily involved in the former activity than the Catalan Christian merchants; in the latter activity, as elsewhere in Spain, they played a notable role. Bisson, *Fiscal accounts of Catalonia*, especially 1, pp. 118–19.

cort at Lleidà (Lérida) in summer, 1214, at which the king's leading Aragonese and Catalan subjects were pressed to swear fealty to a monarch many of them were actively trying to deprive of his lands, revenues and rights. Over the next few years royal revenues began slowly to recover, thanks in significant measure to the hard work of the crown's Templar financiers, but thanks too to renewed confidence in the possibility of asking for taxes, as for example at assemblies at Huesca (1221) and Daroca (1223). Clever manipulation of the Catalan coinage by King James, which T. N. Bisson has analysed, brought the crown a profit of 25 per cent by replacing the old coinage.³ Very significant too were the agreements which were made with Catalan grandees, notably Guillem de Montcada, Nunyo Sanç of Roussillon and Guillem Cabrera of Urgell, stabilising Catalonia and permitting a slow reassertion of control over lands which had been alienated during the minority or as a result of Peter II's pledges; Catalonia, at risk of once again becoming a loose assemblage of autonomous counties, was once again being forged together into a coherent principality under the lordship of the count of Barcelona. This is not to suggest that James was consciously forging Catalan nationhood. A particularly important victory for the young king was his winning of influence in the county of Urgell, which had for long blocked the way between the lands held by the king as count of Barcelona and those he held as king of Aragon. In 1228 he set his sights on the heiress to Urgell, Aurembiaix, whose rights he promised to defend; he won back Urgell with a brief and successful campaign which culminated in a secret contract of concubinage between James and Aurembiaix. In this agreement reference was made to his intention before long to set out and conquer Majorca. The pacification of Catalonia and his expansionist plans were indeed intertwined; for, as he pointed out in his autobiography, by seizing Majorca he would be able to impress the Catalan barons with his warrior skills and so bring them into line;⁴ such methods were more promising than any number of *corts*, which could provide uncomfortable opportunities for the barons to press their own claims. The need for a prestige victory became more important after an initial failure to gain control of the Spanish coastal fortress at Peñíscola in 1225–6. And yet the conquest of the Balearics also had commercial implications, of which the citizens of Barcelona were well aware; the presence there of Muslim pirates had interfered with Christian shipping in the past, though there is some evidence that regular traffic between such Catalan ports as Tarragona and Majorca was possible at the start of the thirteenth century. Past attempts to conquer the Balearics had depended on Pisan or Genoese support; only with

³ Bisson, 'Coinages of Barcelona' and other studies gathered together in Bisson (1989).

⁴ *Chronicle of James I king of Aragon*, trans. Forster, I, pp. 98–104. This is an antiquated translation, and editions of the Catalan original are widespread, the handiest being part one of Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*.

the help of Italian shipping did it appear possible to overwhelm the islands, and the Italians were themselves bound to the Muslim rulers of Mayurqa by trade treaties which they had no great desire to forfeit. However, by the 1220s the situation favoured James: as well as Catalan shipping, some of it supplied through the wealthy Barcelona merchant Pere Martell, there was the opportunity to exploit existing family ties with the counts of Provence, and James relied heavily on Provençal naval contingents, and on the help of Montpellier, to supplement the resources organised in Catalonia. Majorca City, the modern Palma, was besieged and taken by the end of 1229. The rest of the island did not capitulate at once, and a further visit by James, who took the title of his Muslim predecessors of 'king of Majorca', was necessary in order to tame Muslim opposition in the mountainous north of Majorca; Minorca, scared by rumours of a Catalan invasion, submitted without shots being fired in 1231, on advantageous terms permitting self-government and the free practice of Islam. Finally, in 1235, Ibiza fell to a group of conquistadors operating with royal licence under the auspices of the see of Tarragona.

The invasion of the Balearics provides the first clue to James's attitude to the Spanish Muslims, many more of whom were to fall under his sway after the invasion of Valencia. While the Minorcan case showed what advantages a rapid acceptance of the new order might bring, obstinate resistance could only result in expulsion, expropriation, enslavement or slaughter, in varying proportions. It is certainly striking that on the island of Majorca a slow process of attrition began; the crown was not particularly interested in allowing Islam to remain strongly represented in a strategically delicate position on the crossroads of the western Mediterranean. Majorca gradually lost its Islamic identity, and was repopulated by Catalan, Provençal and Italian settlers, including Jews from Spain, Languedoc and North Africa, among the most notable of whom was the wealthy Solomon ben Ammar from the great gold centre of Sijilmasa. The Muslims of Majorca appear to have lacked their own community organisation or *aljama*, unlike the Jews, during the thirteenth century; even the evidence for the existence of mosques in conquered Majorca is uncertain. The island was heavily catalanised in speech, religion and population. A few native Christian Mozarabs survived from pre-conquest days, including the prominent Abennasser family, who traded and held land, prospering in the new order; but the old Muslim communities were shattered in pieces, and were often resettled on newly carved up estates, subject to absentee lords such as the viscount of Béarn and the count of Roussillon; the Order of the Temple acquired plenty of land, fulfilling its classic role as manager of frontier territories, but, to meet manpower shortages, the Templars brought Muslim captives from the Spanish mainland and set them to work on Majorcan soil. This gave rise to papal protests; but in other respects the papacy was aware of the special circumstances,

and licensed trade between Majorca and North Africa on the grounds that otherwise the Christian inhabitants would be deprived of a livelihood. The island's population appears to have consisted at least half of city dwellers, and it was trade that had made Muslim Mayurqa important, and that would make its successor Ciutat de Mallorca a major Mediterranean city once again.

The conquest of the Balearic islands is often taken to mark the moment when the outlook of the Catalan-Aragonese monarchy shifted decisively from southern France towards the Mediterranean frontier with Islam. From another perspective, however, the major result of the invasion of Majorca was actually the strengthening of ties to the southern French and Provençal cities, which were showered with commercial and landed rewards in Majorca following their crucial role in the conquest. Nunyo Sanç, count of Roussillon, also gained extensive properties in Majorca City and in the countryside.⁵ Indeed, after 1276 the Balearic islands entered into a form of political union with the territories of the Corona de Aragón in what is now southern France, Montpellier and Roussillon. On the other hand, James made little attempt to assert direct control over his new kingdom. He handed its day-to-day government to Pedro of Portugal, an adventurer whose record was to show him to be unreliable and easily distracted by other projects. It was Pedro who in the end had been given the hand of James's cast-off mistress Aurembiaix, which brought him a claim to Urgell, even though Pedro was prepared to relinquish it in return for rights in Majorca. Thus indirectly the conquest of Majorca brought James Urgell, as in a sense he had prophesied by referring to Majorca in his original agreement with Aurembiaix. As for the exploitation of Majorca's resources, the picture that emerges is one of rather light taxation of trade and of agricultural production; the crown at least was not especially interested in making a large profit out of the Balearics, and even the tribute from Minorca was apparently fairly modest. It was only later, when contemplating how to bequeath his kingdom, that James decided to make Majorca into the seat of an independent kingdom, which then began to develop a more fiscally minded set of policies.

III

In winning the approval of his Catalan subjects, who acquired lands and trading stations in Majorca, James only risked alienating the Aragonese barons, who were not worried by Muslim piracy, but who found themselves exposed to border raids from the unstable *taifa* kingdom of Valencia; James's earlier attempt to gain control of Peñíscola proved that he was open to suggestions about Valencia as well as the islands. By the 1230s it was clear that the internal

⁵ Mut Calafell and Roselló (eds.), *La remembrança de Nunyo Sanç*.

divisions within Valencia could be usefully exploited to establish some sort of Aragonese mastery over at least the northern parts of the Muslim kingdom. Its ruler Abu Zayd no longer could claim universal acceptance, and even Valencia city was in the hands of one of his rivals, Zayyan. Abu Zayd not surprisingly turned back to the traditional strategy of Muslim border lords in Spain, appealing to the king of Aragon for help against his enemies in the south. The aim was purely that of more firmly establishing his authority, though in so doing Abu Zayd had slipped a long way from traditional Almohad refusal to do a deal with the Christians. Indeed, he was to slip a long way further, accepting baptism later on.

In 1233 James, newly victorious in the Balearics, was able to redeem his earlier failure at Peñíscola, and to capture Burriana, from which the Muslim population was cleared; in the early stages of the conquest of Valencia the idea of resettling the land with Christians seemed attractive, but James increasingly entered into surrender agreements similar to that already made with the Minorcans, guaranteeing local rights to self-government and the practice of Islam. It is difficult to see how he could have gained an ascendancy in the kingdom of Valencia otherwise; on the other hand, there was an inherent fragility in such a relationship with his Muslim subjects, since large areas were not genuinely controlled by the Aragonese. While Abu Zayd made sure that the major strongholds in the north fell under James's sway, the situation in the centre and south of Valencia was more difficult, and the length of the war made it costly. James looked to the *cortes* at Monzón for financial aid; he benefited from crusade tithes granted by the papacy in recognition of the holy nature of his work; he also tried to persuade the Catalan shipper Pere Martell who had supported him eagerly in the conquest of Majorca to help him against Valencia, but here he was less enthusiastic. Valencia City proved a particularly hard nut to crack, and it was consistent with earlier policy for James to expel the Muslim population after the city surrendered in September 1238; henceforth the Muslims were confined to a *morería* in the suburbs but looting was kept under control, and Valencia became an important Catalan centre of settlement. Whatever the Aragonese barons had hoped, it was towards Catalonia that Valencia increasingly looked, using as its new vernacular a form of the Catalan language, and basing its legal code on Catalan practice; in 1239 James departed from prevailing Aragonese usages issuing a territorial law code or *Furs* for Valencia which closely reflected Catalan customs.

The prime difficulty that made Valencia less easy to manage than Majorca was quite simply that Majorca was an island, whereas Valencia had wide open frontiers linking it to other Muslim states, for Murcia, though technically under Castilian suzerainty from 1243, was not effectively conquered and colonised until 1265, and even then one of the major motives was to limit Muslim incur-

sions from the south into Valencian territory. The volatile nature of Valencia was further revealed in James's last years, when continued uprisings led him to send in his heir Peter, who, as the chronicle of James's reign remarks, conquered Valencia a second time. James took longer to call himself 'king of Valencia' than he had done to take the title 'king of Majorca', assuming at first that Abu Zayd would function as his agent in Valencia; in 1236 James started using the Valencian title.

Valencia was not, in the same measure as Majorca, another New Catalonia. In the north, Christian settlements were founded, such as the lands of Blasco d'Alagó around Morella, or the town of Burriana, and, as in Majorca, the Templars were invited to help hold down the frontier. However, the Muslim population was not generally uprooted, and the use of surrender treaties can be seen at Chivert, where the local Muslims appear to have been granted similar rights to those conferred on the Minorcans not long before. The small Muslim lordship at Crevillente, on the edge of the Castilian sphere of influence, held out until the start of the fourteenth century as a neutralised enclave generally friendly to Aragon. The Muslims of the Uxó valley were granted a typical enough charter in 1250, confirming that they could retain their marriage customs, instruct their children in the Koran, travel freely, appoint their own judges and even prevent Christians from taking up residence among them; the cost of this handsome privilege was a tax of one eighth. Not surprisingly, it was in and around Valencia City, with its fertile agricultural hinterland, that resettlement was most carefully organised, in documents detailing the *ripartiment* or division of the conquered territories among the citizens of several northern towns such as Jaca, Saragossa and Montpellier; while Barcelona had the right to claim one fifth of the urban property in Valencia city and one sixth of the surrounding *horta*. Thus the grants went far beyond the establishment of trade counters; a substantial Christian community came into being in the heart of Valencia City, and, as in Majorca, the Jews too received a significant area for themselves. The map of Valencia became a miniature map of Catalonia, Aragon and south-western France, as the men of Huesca, Roussillon and even of Pyrenean lands beyond James's frontiers were granted the right to erect their own city quarters and suburbs. In the south, a scattering of Christian lordships emerged once Zayyan had been brought to heel, but there were few expulsions, and even fewer massacres, during the conquest; Christian lords here were masters of a Muslim population, and the situation remained volatile. The most dramatic revolt was that of al-Azraq (1247–8), but, as has been seen, trouble was still erupting in the early 1270s.

The financial value of Valencia has been amply demonstrated in the studies by Robert I. Burns of James I's tax regime. But it also had an importance in royal administration of quite a different character: Xàtiva (Játiva), conquered in

1244, was the centre of a productive paper industry which offered James and his successors the chance to record the business of government in the paper registers which are still preserved in their hundreds in the archive of the crown of Aragon in Barcelona; a veritable ‘paper revolution’ occurred which benefited both modern historians and a king anxious to keep an eye on the political and fiscal conditions of his lands.⁶ Valencia City provided the crown with revenues from Muslim bath-houses, bakeries, butcheries, brothels, with poll-taxes charged on Muslims and Jews, with taxes on market place transactions and on trade through the port, itself a growing centre of trade, linking newly conquered Majorca to Spain. In large measure, the crown continued to operate the traditional administrative system established under Muslim rule, a feature of the government of Valencia which distinguished it from Majorca, where the break seems to have been cleaner; James had become the Christian king of a Muslim society, which would retain a sizeable Moorish population right through to 1610. But it was also a society marked by stark contrasts between conqueror and conquered, between Muslims speaking Arabic and Christians speaking Catalan; between Gothic church-towers and Islamic minarets; between clean-shaven pork-eating Christians and bearded Jews or Muslims subject to ancient dietary laws and regulated as far as possible by distinct law courts, which followed the *lex* or religion of the litigants. This was not a society all Muslims could accept; the traditional Valencian leadership, both religious and political, gravitated towards North Africa or Nasrid Granada, thereby underlining the Islamic identity of the one significant Muslim state to remain on Spanish soil, but also weakening the capacity of those who stayed behind to resist the new order. Some, for instance a sizeable group at Valencia City in 1275, converted to the faith of their new masters. Even so, the almost leaderless Muslim communities of Valencia proved to have considerable longevity, and it was only in the late fourteenth century that the Christians became a clear majority of the population.

James I could claim Valencia under the terms of twelfth-century treaties with the kings of Castile, carving up the greater part of the peninsula between Castilians and Aragonese. One territory which had been eyed covetously by both sides was Murcia, whose status varied from one treaty to another. Even so, by the 1240s it was clear that Castile now exercised greater influence in Muslim Murcia and, when Alacant (Alicante) indicated a willingness to accept Aragonese lordship (1240), James made it plain that he could not take over the city without doing injustice to Castile; here James generally took care to move carefully, and when the Murcian Muslims refused to renew their tribute pay-

⁶ Burns (1985), pp. 151–81. Abulafia (1994), pp. 9–10, 44–5; see James’s Book of Deeds, cap. 563, in Soldevila, *Quatre grans cròniques*.

ments to Castile, in the wake of uprisings among the Muslims of southern Spain, the chivalric James seized the opportunity to quell Murcia on behalf of Alfonso X of Castile, who had enough difficulties on other fronts. Clearly the fear that trouble in Murcia could spill over into Valencia was a major motive for James's intervention; but his honourable action meant that he laid no claim to Murcia for himself. Indeed, the old rulers, the Banu Hud, were installed in a position of continuing influence as 'kings of the Moors of Murcia'. Yet the Aragonese invasion did have permanent results of a different order: Catalan settlers began to come south to Murcia, and nearly half of the known settlers at this time came from James's realms, more than twice the number who came from Castile. The reality was that Castilian manpower was already overstretched as a result of the conquest of Andalusia in the 1230s and 1240s. Another reality was that James had shown himself to be the most successful of the Spanish kings in the struggle against the Muslims, conferring upon him a wider reputation which was only qualified by his reputation for promiscuity. It was, in fact, a reputation that his crusading contemporary St Louis of France might have had reason to envy, given his own failures in the wars against the Muslims.

IV

Louis IX was another of James I's neighbours, and it is now time to turn to Aragonese relations with the French monarchy and with the rulers of the Pyrenees. Here the successes were uneven. On the death of Nunyo Sanç in 1235, Roussillon returned to his nephew the count-king; it remained firmly within the Catalan orbit politically and culturally. However, the kingdom of Navarre, to which the Aragonese rulers had long realistically aspired, was turned over in 1243 to the counts of Champagne, and after the absorption of Champagne by the Capetians the heir to the French throne acquired the title to Navarre in 1274; a wedge of French-dominated territory thus poked into Spain, though direct interference by the new rulers in the affairs of Navarre was limited. More positive were the results achieved in an attempt to define the boundaries between French and Catalan territory in what is now the south-west of France; this issue also extended beyond the frontiers of France into the imperial county of Provence, where the Aragonese line of counts was extinguished in 1243. The heiress (whose own claim was bitterly challenged by her sisters) in 1246 accepted the hand of Charles, count of Anjou and Maine, launching him on his headlong career in Mediterranean politics, but also initiating what at times seems almost a vendetta between the houses of Barcelona and of Anjou; by 1282 they had quarrelled over most of the great prizes in the Mediterranean, including Sicily, Sardinia and Tunis. Nearer home, the chances

of an Aragonese recovery in Languedoc were shattered when Alphonse of Poitiers acquired the county of Toulouse from the dynasty of Saint-Gilles. The French thus seemed to be tightening a noose around Languedoc, excluding the English and the Aragonese from the power games they had played in the region in the twelfth century. The Albigensian Crusade unexpectedly made Capetian fortunes in the Midi. But there were also economic interests at work: lacking an outlet to the sea, the French developed the stagnant waters of the abbey of Psalmodi into the first French royal port on the Mediterranean, with the intention not merely of offering an embarkation point for crusaders who were accompanying Louis IX on his crusade of 1248, but also as an alternative entry point for trade, rivalling the Aragonese city of Montpellier. Aigues-Mortes, as the new port was aptly called, did not strangle Montpellier; indeed, by the end of the thirteenth century Montpellier and the French port had developed a symbiotic relationship, for Aigues-Mortes was far from being a great city on the scale of Montpellier, and Montpellier lacked adequate ports in the surrounding territory under Aragonese lordship.

Given the high potential for renewed conflict in the region, Louis IX looked for a diplomatic solution which would confirm French ascendancy in southwestern France without humiliating his rivals; thus the years 1258–9 saw him come to terms with both the English rulers of Gascony (at the Treaty of Paris in 1259) and with James I of Aragon, in the Treaty of Corbeil of 11 May 1258.⁷ The price was generous recognition that past French claims to suzerainty over Barcelona, Urgell, Besalù, Roussillon, Ampurias, Cerdagne, Conflent, Girona and other border areas must be allowed to lapse; while the Aragonese reciprocated by renouncing any claim to interfere in Carcassonne, Rodez, Millau, Béziers, Agde, Albi, Narbonne, Minerve, Nîmes, Toulouse and the highly autonomous county of Foix, as well as their dependent territories. The full list of places provides a reminder of how extensive Aragonese interference had in the past been. Yet the peace treaty also had strange omissions. The city of Montpellier does not appear, or rather the royal lieutenant appears as the emissary of James I, without any concession being made in respect of Aragonese rights there, and the question of Montpellier would rumble on throughout the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The rural barony of Montpellier or Aumelas remained under Aragonese suzerainty. The small, remote enclave of Carladès on the borders of Auvergne and Rouergue was also left in Aragonese hands, for whatever obscure reason. To seal the alliance Louis and James agreed to a marriage alliance whereby Philip, heir to France, would take as his bride Isabella of Aragon, James's daughter. This had limited effects

⁷ *Layettes du trésor des chartes*, III, ed. de Laborde, docs. 4399, 4400, 4411–12, 4434–5; *Chronicle of San Juan de la Peña*, trans. Nelson, p. 71; Richard (1992), pp. 204–5; Abulafia (1994), pp. 38–9.

because Isabella died in 1271. James took the opportunity also to renounce any further claims in Provence. It is clear that a faction in Aragon-Catalonia was not prepared to accept the permanent annulment of Aragonese interests in southern France; even James I continued to endow the monastery of Valmagne, beyond Montpellier; and the Chronicle of San Juan de la Peña shows that Peter the Great attempted to resuscitate the Aragonese claim to Carcassonne and other lands in Languedoc in 1280.⁸ Yet from a Catalan perspective the treaty had great advantages, drawing a frontier to the north of Perpignan which was only broached by Louis XI and then, finally, by Louis XIV, though as has been seen the acquisition of Navarre by the French in 1274 posed new threats. The status of Barcelona and the lesser Catalan counties remained for a time imprecise: they were not actually part of the Aragonese kingdom, or indeed any kingdom, though the blanket label 'Principality of Catalonia' came into vogue in the fourteenth century as a way of solving this difficulty. Roussillon and Cerdagne were, however, assigned to the new Majorcan kingdom in James I's will of 1262. The treaty was thus a milestone in the creation of Aragonese-Catalan and French realms which possessed defined boundaries.

It was not so much the senior branch of the house of Capet as Charles of Anjou's cadet line that henceforth seemed to be the major obstacle in the way of Aragonese ambitions. Charles's involvement in Italian politics, culminating in the conquest of southern Italy in 1266, appeared to block whatever hopes James I's heir Peter might have of redeeming the claims of his own wife Constance, grand-daughter of Frederick II, whom he had married in 1262 to the consternation of the papacy; James's protestations that this had no political implications were not entirely credited. In 1267 James I was pursuing plans to win Sardinia for his second son, James, to add to the Balearics, Roussillon and Montpellier, which he already intended to grant him; here again it was Philip of Anjou, Charles's son, who stood in the way, and the pope refused to adjudicate the island to any of its claimants. In 1267–9, James begged the pope for a crusade privilege for an expedition to the east to which the pope was strongly opposed, partly on the grounds that James persisted in his immoral life; in any case the Catalan fleet was rapidly scattered by Mediterranean storms. When Charles of Anjou and Louis of France launched a crusade against Tunis in 1270, this again interfered with established Catalan interests, since Tunis was rapidly emerging as one of the major trading partners of Barcelona. Of course, several of the 'challenges' posed by the house of Anjou were not real ones: James had no chance of gaining Sardinia, and he did not have the means to conquer Sicily while engaged in the constant suppression of Valencian

⁸ *Chronicle of San Juan de la Peña*, trans. Nelson.

rebellions. The issue remained, however, one of rights: the trampling of Aragonese rights in Provence, Sicily and elsewhere; and this rankled more insistently with James's eldest son Peter than with the king himself.

The question of what lands to bequeath to each of his sons had great significance for the future development of the crown of Aragon. By 1262 his two surviving sons were offered the last of a series of deals, in which James's many territories had been divided up several different ways. The disposition of 1262 ensured that virtually all the lands he held on the Spanish mainland would go as a core patrimony to Peter, while his second son James was to receive a kingdom of Majorca expanded to include Roussillon, Cerdagne, Carlat and Montpellier; the trans-Pyrenean counties were not to depend on the count of Barcelona, nor was the king of Majorca to do so. In a sense, he was taking advantage of the security provided by the Treaty of Corbeil to carve out a wedge of land on the French side of the Pyrenees, which, he artlessly assumed, would be ruled by James of Majorca in a spirit of harmony with Peter of Aragon. But Peter set his own face against such a division. James clearly suspected that things would not turn out well, for on his deathbed James was still urging his sons to work together in a spirit of brotherly love.⁹ Peter's difficulties with James were compounded by other family rivalries, notably that with his half-brother Fernan Sanç, and issues such as control of Urgell reared their ugly heads again. Taking into account too the trouble in Valencia, the reign ended on a rather sour note.

James was a man of intriguing paradoxes. At one extreme he threatened to empty Valencia entirely of its Muslims when they opposed him; at the other, he issued surrender agreements which could be read by their recipients, at least in the Arabic version, as little more than agreements to co-operate with the king of Aragon. Attuned to Moorish ways, on one occasion he received some Muslim emissaries from Murcia by offering them a feast of *halal* meat in a tent, telling them that he and his ancestors had always sought to foster the Muslim communities in all their realms, 'just as well as if they were in a Saracen land'; only if Muslims failed to submit, he said, was it his habit to take their land and repeople it with Christians. This is a fair account, from his own presumed autobiography, of his philosophy of *convivencia*. He understood the need for good diplomatic relations with the North African rulers in whose lands his Catalan subjects traded, but he was desperately anxious to be seen in the Christian world as a great crusading hero and as a hammer of heretics. In his relations with the Jews, a similar ambivalence can be observed. James chose the company of the acerbic friar Ramon de Penyafort, who directed his campaigns against Jews, Muslims and usurers, all of whom could easily be found in James's

⁹ James I, autobiography, in Soldevila, *Quatre grans cròniques*, cap. 563.

realms. The same king who in 1263 presided over the damaging confrontation between the Girona rabbi Nahmanides and the zealous friar Pau Crestià, on the subject of whether the Messiah had come, also extended his protection to his Jewish subjects, quickly revoking his requirement that they should listen to missionary sermons, and he encouraged Jews to settle in Majorca. His private life, with its succession of mistresses, and his scandalous treatment of churchmen for whom he conceived a dislike (notably the confessor who lost his tongue for revealing what he had heard), only made him more aware of his need to placate God by serving Him in war, and only made the pope more aware of his moral turpitude. He was excommunicated twice, but he made easier going of his loss of the Church's favour than his contemporary Frederick II. The truth was, as Catalan chroniclers emphasised, that under James thousands of masses were now being recited in lands that had once resounded solely to the call of the muezzin.

v

The rise of Barcelona in this century is as clear as it is inexplicable, though recent research by Stephen Bensch has done much to make it more comprehensible.¹⁰ Anyone observing the western Mediterranean at the end of the twelfth century would have concluded that Genoa and Pisa would simply block the chances of a third commercial power emerging in those waters. And, as Bensch has shown, the take-off of Barcelona was different in character from that of the Italian maritime cities; their strength lay in their capacity to emancipate themselves from the authority of a higher lord such as the emperor, and failure to shake off such a lord could inhibit the freedom to conduct an independent foreign policy, as can be seen in the case of Amalfi. By contrast, the strength of Barcelona lay precisely in the opposite direction; close co-operation with the king of Aragon brought diplomatic advantages in foreign ports, an acceptable tax regime and a court which was itself a good market for articles imported from al-Andalus, North Africa or the Levant. Its position within reach of but not perilously close to the Muslim border had brought the city a handsome income in tribute under the eleventh-century counts of Barcelona, though in the twelfth century there was a recession, coinciding with the appearance of aggressive Berber empires encompassing much of central and southern Spain. As the town grew, its role as a centre of consumption of primary foodstuffs channelled profits into the hands of mill owners and grain shippers, while its position at the end of trade routes bringing cloths from northern and southern France into the Mediterranean made it

¹⁰ Bensch (1995).

a major centre of redistribution in the early thirteenth century. To these activities must be added the existence of finishing workshops, utilising dyes such as the kermis of southern Spain; Barcelona was thus able to bring together in one place the essential materials needed for a successful woollen cloth export industry. But even around 1230 other cities in James I's realms seemed as likely to lead the commercial invasion of the western Mediterranean; Montpellier developed a close relationship with Barcelona, visible in mid-century commercial documents that reveal the activities of such men as Joan Hom de Deu, who moved easily between his hometown of Montpellier and the Catalan capital. Montpellier, it has aptly been said, was the 'tutor' of Barcelona, a relationship greatly reinforced by the fact that Montpellier was also a possession of the king of Aragon. From the late twelfth century, the trans-Pyrenean Catalan city of Perpignan also became a significant intermediary in the textile traffic between northern France and Spain, and it became a centre of cloth and leather production in its own right, a function still recorded in the street names of the old city. Its links to Saint-Antonin in the thirteenth century assured a regular flow of cloth down the western flanks of France. In Catalonia, the most obvious rival was Tarragona, which traded directly with Muslim Mayurqa among other places; it is no coincidence that Pere Martell, merchant and shipowner of Barcelona, was based there when he offered the king and his court a banquet at which plans were laid for the invasion of Majorca. Following its fall to the Catalans in 1229, Ciutat de Mallorca with astonishing speed became another important focus for Catalan commerce, a sort of clone of Barcelona itself, and a forward base from which it was possible to penetrate North African markets. Beyond these maritime cities, textile centres in the Catalan interior, notably Lleidà, and bankers from Girona and elsewhere, helped lubricate the expansion of the Catalan economy. By the end of James's reign the *consell de cent*, the council of one hundred, had been granted day-to-day control of the affairs of Barcelona, while other towns such as Perpignan and Montpellier also possessed privileges guaranteeing internal self-government. The king had his own *batlle* or bailiff in Barcelona, and he had the benefit of the support of the leading patrician families such as the Grony (who supplied bailiffs) and the de Banyeres.

Further afield, Barcelona played a more modest part in the commercial conquest of the eastern Mediterranean; together with several southern French and Provençal ports Barcelona acquired its first privilege for trade in the Holy Land, in 1190, but it was only in the late thirteenth century that the Catalans acquired a notable role in the Levant trade, for example the fur trade between Constantinople and the west. The Italian merchants stood in their way, and it was important for Barcelona to reach an understanding with the Genoese and Pisans, whose past support for the Muslim rules of Mayurqa and whose inter-

ests in North Africa had explosive potential; it was an act of statesmanship for James not to expel the Italians from Majorca, but instead to grant them a renewal and enlargement of the commercial privileges the Muslim emirs had bestowed on them. On the other hand, Italian merchants were not given free access to Barcelona itself, where Catalan shipping was not surprisingly given absolute priority; and Italian bankers were repeatedly declared expelled from Barcelona, a policy that was repeated often enough to suggest how half-hearted it was. In addition, the hostility to usury of leading courtiers, in particular Ramon de Penyafort, occasionally made the Italian bankers an obvious target (particularly since the Jews were much less heavily involved in money-lending than they tended to be in northern France or England). None the less fruitful partnerships of Catalans and Italians operated grain shipments out of Sicily and assured other essential supplies; and the image of Catalans and Italians literally at one another's throats which is supplied by some of the fourteenth-century chroniclers needs to be set against a long tradition of co-operation in Maghribi trade.

A crucial factor in the rise of Barcelona was the reputation it gained for shipping skills; the conquest of Majorca acted as a vital stimulus, since close links to the Balearics could only be sustained by perfecting the art of year round navigation. Majorca itself became a major centre of cartography by the early fourteenth century, a further reflection of these realities. Evidence from 1284 shows that shipping was regularly leaving Majorca even in the depths of winter and heading across to North Africa; the mainstay of the merchant navy was the smallish *leny* (literally, 'wood'), but growing demand for bulk goods such as Sicilian grain encouraged the use of big, slow round-ships as well. Another sign of Catalan skills at sea was visible by 1281, when Majorcan ships reached England through the Straits of Gibraltar alongside Genoese vessels. Maritime law codes issued in the Catalan ports also became influential in the Mediterranean; the fifteenth-century versions of the Valencian *Consulate of the sea* code incorporate thirteenth-century material, including royal decrees. As has been seen, the role of the crown was very important; one area where the monarchy was able to make its influence keenly felt was the money supply: the king actively encouraged the minting of the *doblench* coins from 1222, and of the *tern* coins in 1258, the latter a quarter pure silver; the availability of reliable and widely used coins further fuelled the expansion of Catalan trade.

The influence of the crown over the fortunes of Barcelona is most clearly seen in the development of overseas consulates, particularly in North Africa; the aim was to represent the commercial interests of the Catalan merchants as well as the political interests of the king of Aragon. In the mid-thirteenth century, both the city of Barcelona and the monarchy asserted the right to

appoint consuls, but this did not give rise to serious rivalry, and in the longer term, the king obtained greater influence, even drawing under the wing of his own consuls the Catalans of Majorca and elsewhere. By the 1250s Tunis had a Catalan fonduk or warehouse; many fonduks also contained offices for the consul, accommodation for visiting merchants, a chaplain and a bakehouse. James I vigorously encouraged the establishment of new consulates, sending Raymond de Conches of Montpellier to Alexandria in 1262 to negotiate for a foundation there; later, Guillem de Montcada became consul in Egypt, a member of a leading family with personal links to the royal court in Tunis as well. However, relations with Muslim rulers were always delicate, and Raymond de Conches had returned to Alexandria in 1264 to complain at the seizure of Catalan cargoes. He was instructed to warn the sultan that the only result would be licensed piracy against Egyptian shipping. Thus force no less than diplomacy was needed in order to protect Catalan interests overseas. Royal motives were not entirely altruistic: the crown drew handsome revenue from its consulates. In 1259 James I was startled by the discovery that his consuls in Tunis were paying him a rent estimated at one third of what the fonduk was genuinely capable of producing; the rent was immediately trebled. In 1274 James sent a representative to Tunis to find out why two years of rent had not reached the royal coffers. The monarchy saw in the consulates a major source of revenue which might enable the king to emancipate himself from dependence on internal taxation within Aragon and Catalonia; in view of the value of the overseas fonduks, the establishment, from 1302 onwards, of rival Majorcan consulates subject to the king of Majorca was seen as an extremely serious development.

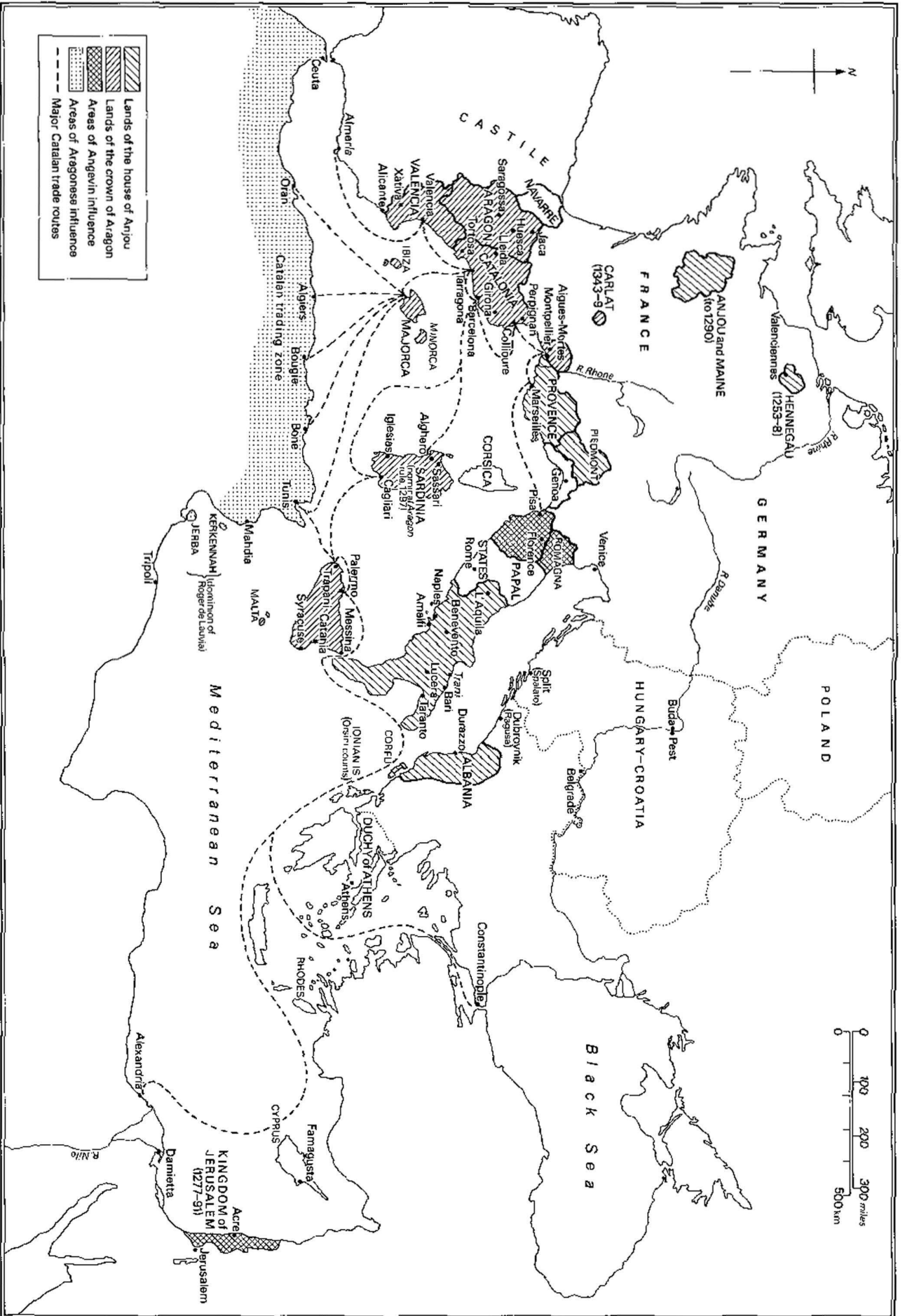
Still, the count-kings had little option but to ask the *corts* of Catalonia and the *cortes* of Aragon for votes of *bovatge* and *monedatge*, the former of which was tending to turn into a regular general tax. The *corts* did not possess the influence that they were to acquire under later kings, and James apparently became disenchanted with them, summoning them less often at the end of his reign; there was no simple linear development towards the 'pactist' monarchy of the late fourteenth century. Indeed, James relied less on the *corts* as his own finances became slightly firmer; the count's Peace proclaimed early in his reign in Catalonia provided a framework for James's vicars to extend their authority into the localities, so that, as in contemporary France and England, the ruler's justice was increasingly experienced by all his subjects. Financial administration benefited from the expertise of Jewish advisers such as Aaron Ibn Yahya or Abinafia, who acted as a tax collector on James's behalf in Valencia; even in the Catalan and Aragonese towns Jewish bailiffs looked after royal lands and rights, though under Peter the Great the *corts* insisted that Jews be excluded from public office.

VI

The chivalric James was succeeded in Aragon-Catalonia by a determined and ambitious ruler whose programme consisted in the defence of the rights of the house of Barcelona, as he conceived them, whether in Majorca, where his younger brother was installed as independent king, or in Sicily, where his wife Constance possessed an unredeemed claim to the throne. He was, Bisson says, 'that rarity in history: the greater son of a great father'.¹¹ To keep relations with Castile evenly balanced, he took into his custody the Infantes de la Cerda, disinherited members of the Castilian royal house. Peter was, however, not prepared to accept his younger brother's claim to independence, despite his awareness of his father's intentions; and he twisted James II of Majorca's arm successfully, forcing him in 1279 to acknowledge his elder brother as his suzerain. He also wanted to punish James for supporting his enemies in a renewed struggle for mastery of Urgell. His toughness towards James was a serious miscalculation; Peter aimed to draw James away from the French court, the obvious source of support for a Majorcan kingdom that ruled over Roussillon and Montpellier and was hard pressed by Aragon-Catalonia. But the resentment that James felt for his brother only pushed James of Majorca more rapidly into the French camp when conflict between France and Aragon finally broke out. James found himself obliged, technically at least, to attend the *corts* of Catalonia, an odd humiliation seeing that Catalonia was not even a kingdom; he was denied the right to mint his own coins in Roussillon, which Peter treated not as counties within the Majorcan state but as Catalan counties that happened to be held from him by the lord of Majorca; he became, to all intents, a powerful baron under Peter's jurisdiction who was distinguished by an especially grand title, and not surprisingly he and his successors worked hard to re-establish the parity with Aragon that James I had envisaged in his will.

Peter's less romantic approach to politics, by comparison with James I, is also apparent in his handling of his North African crusade in 1282. His attempts to convince the pope that he deserved a crusading indulgence fell on deaf ears (Pope Martin IV was an intimate ally of Charles of Anjou); the papacy, and the Angevins of Naples, rightly suspected Peter's motives in campaigning so close to his wife's claimed inheritance of Sicily. And, despite Peter's insistence that he had useful allies in the Maghrib who would soon turn Christian, there is little doubt that Peter journeyed to Collo (Alcol) in the hope of influencing events in Sicily. In any case, his presence close to Tunis constituted a challenge to Charles of Anjou, who had been actively competing with the Catalans for influence in the Hafsid state since the Tunis Crusade of St Louis in 1270.

¹¹ Bisson (1986), p. 86.



Map 10 Aragon and Anjou in the Mediterranean

Peter was not the architect of the revolt of the Sicilian Vespers, which broke out apparently spontaneously in Palermo in March 1282. But his court was an obvious place of refuge for those south Italians such as John of Procida who had rejected or been rejected by Charles I of Anjou. Once invited to Sicily to take the crown in right of his wife, Peter came not as an Aragonese conqueror but as the vindicator of the rights of the house of Hohenstaufen. He was sufficiently conscious of this to decree that Sicily should not be passed on to his eldest son, but should be divorced from the other lands of the *Corona de Aragón* after his death, and ruled by a half-Catalan, half-Sicilian cadet dynasty, though the course of events proved more complicated. What was unacceptable in the case of Majorca, the separation of a conquered island territory from Catalonia-Aragon, was absolutely required, logistically and politically, in the case of Sicily.

The Sicilian war spilled into Spain, and threatened Barcelona itself. Capetian support for the Angevins of Naples and Majorcan sympathy for the Capetians almost spelled the end of Peter's regime in Catalonia. By early 1283 Sicily was his, and his armies were beginning to make headway in Calabria, and there were serious hopes that the Angevins would be thrown out of southern Italy as well as Sicily itself; the farcical attempt to settle the quarrel of Anjou and Aragon by a duel at Bordeaux produced no results. But the Bordeaux duel brought Peter back from Sicily, leaving his wife in charge in what was, in any case, 'her' island. The Aragonese *cortes* exploited the king's discomfiture to secure confirmation of its ancient privileges. The Catalan *corts* demanded major concessions: not merely the usual promises not to levy a regular *bovatge*, but the dismissal of the king's Jewish officials, such as the financiers Muça de Portella, Aaron Abinafia and Mossé Alconstantini. The same *corts* also enacted legislation *en les terres o llocs*, 'in the lands and places', insisting that unfree peasants must pay a fee for their redemption, thereby setting on a firmer basis long-term trends towards peasant servitude in Catalonia. The *corts* were clearly anxious to squeeze the monarchy while the chance was there.

Peter was obliged to march into Roussillon in search of his treacherous brother James, in an attempt to close James's territories to French armies; holed up in the Palace of the Kings of Majorca at Roussillon, James of Majorca managed first to feign illness and then to escape down a drain, though he must have known that the price would be the seizure of a large part of his territories by Peter's armies. The pope, meanwhile, declared the king of Aragon deposed from his throne, on the grounds that Aragon was a vassal kingdom of the Holy See (a relationship that had been largely ignored since Peter II was crowned by Innocent III in 1204); the new king was to be Philip III of France's younger son Charles of Valois, a second-rate imitation of his own great-uncle Charles of Valois. A second, massive French invasion of Catalonia,

in 1285, launched as a full-scale crusade, was accompanied by civil unrest in Barcelona; this Peter ruthlessly suppressed by hanging the ringleader despite assuring him of a safe-conduct. James of Majorca proved his unreliability by opening the French campaign with an attack on Elne, the sometime capital of Roussillon, in the hope of wresting it from Peter's men. The passes across the Pyrenees seemed sufficiently well guarded to hold back the French, until a route across the mountains was apparently betrayed by one of James of Majorca's men. What saved Peter was not his military skill, for he largely avoided confronting the massive French host, but the outbreak of disease in the French ranks; even King Philip III was a victim, so that the army turned back when it was already in charge of Girona, and the dying Philip was borne to Perpignan, where he died, and with him the crusade.

Other factors ensured the survival of the house of Barcelona, too. The death early in 1285 of Charles I of Anjou occurred when his own heir Charles, prince of Salerno, was a captive in Aragonese hands, having been captured at sea by Admiral Roger de Loria. Peter saw the need to gain control of the western Mediterranean, leaving his brilliant admiral in charge of a small but deadly fleet which challenged his foes from Malta to the shores of southern France and Catalonia, and had a starring role in the otherwise ineffective resistance to the French invasion of Catalonia. Peter's heir Alfonso was despatched to Majorca with an army that rapidly overwhelmed an island that had not yet had time to grow accustomed to the idea of independence from Catalonia-Aragon, and whose merchants, if anything, suffered during the war from lack of free access to Catalan markets. The same year, 1285, saw the death of Peter the Great; but, whereas he had spent much of his reign in ardent defence of his crown, it was abundantly clear now that his bloodline would persist on the throne of Aragon and on that of the island of Sicily (hopes of further gains on the south Italian mainland began to recede).

VII

The new king, Alfonso the 'Liberal' (1285–91) began his reign on a high note, with the suppression of James of Majorca's rights in Majorca itself, followed soon after by the invasion of Minorca (1287), whose surrender treaty was deemed to have been breached when the Minorcan Muslims had sent messages to North Africa advising their co-religionists of Peter the Great's Collo campaign.¹² There were also strategic advantages in directly controlling the largest natural harbour in the Mediterranean at Maó (Mahón). The mass enslavement

¹² Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica*, caps. 170–2, in Soldevila, *Quatre grans cròniques*.

of the Minorcan Muslims was not simply a chance to make money: Alfonso's actions were part of a wider trend towards the assertion of the Christian identity of the western Mediterranean kingdoms, and it was the same ruler who initiated the enclosure of the Jews of Majorca City in a *call* or ghetto. Such actions were perhaps all the more important for a ruler who faced the implacable hostility of the pope even after Charles of Salerno was released from captivity in 1289. Under pressure from the *unión* formed by the nobles and towns of Aragon, distracted by rebellious Aragonese barons in Valencia, Alfonso not surprisingly began to bend, and indicated that he would abandon his support for his younger brother James of Sicily. His unexpected death in June 1291 put a temporary end to such initiatives; he was childless, and his heir, James of Sicily (James II of Aragon) was not at first prepared to abandon the island for which he had fought so hard.

VIII

James II was perhaps the wildest of the thirteenth-century Aragonese rulers. He was able to beguile the Angevins and the papacy into plans for an exchange of Sicily for some other Mediterranean territory; Cyprus was one dream that had even been dangled in front of Alfonso III, but Corsica and Sardinia were close, larger and bereft of a single monarchy. Matters were eased when James's attempts to discard Sicily were matched by Sicilian insistence that a descendant of Frederick II could alone sit on their throne; the prospect of an Angevin return was firmly rebutted with the connivance of James's own younger brother Frederick, royal lieutenant in Sicily. And so Frederick was elected king, finding himself subsequently at war with James, who sent troops and ships in rather half-hearted aid of the Angevins, while maintaining a loving private correspondence with his brother. In 1297 Boniface VIII granted the title to the *Regnum Sardinie et Corsice* to James II, but he was deceiving himself if he imagined that James was now firmly in his camp. In 1298, resisting unsuccessfully, James of Aragon had to concede the restoration of his uncle James II of Majorca to power in the Balearics and Roussillon, though the Majorcan kings were obliged to acknowledge again the overlordship of the ruler of Aragon-Catalonia. This did not prevent James of Majorca from initiating ambitious schemes to establish tariff barriers around his kingdom: a new customs station at the port of Collioure claimed the right to tax Barcelonan merchants, similar measures were enforced in Majorca, and the king of Majorca began from 1302 to create his own consulates along the coast of North Africa, in open rivalry with James II of Aragon; the merchants of Barcelona responded with trade boycotts aimed at Majorca.¹³ This uneasy relationship, after a more open

¹³ Riera Melis (1986); Abulafia (1994).

period under King Sancho of Majorca (1311–24), culminated in the defiance of the king of Aragon by James III of Majorca and the invasion and incorporation of his kingdom in 1343–4.

The treaty of Caltabellotta in 1302 did not end the rivalry of Sicilian Aragonese and Neapolitan Angevins for control of Sicily; but it drew the houses of Barcelona, Naples and indeed Majorca closer together by means of marriage alliances and, later, trade treaties. The Aragonese monarchy was thus freed for new opportunities in southern Spain, where Alacant (Alicante) was ceded to James by the king of Castile (1304), and, ultimately, the invasion of Sardinia (1323–4). Hopes of securing glory in the Near East were revived with the Aragonese assertion of the right to protect the Christian holy places, and James pushed further his ambitions to become king of Jerusalem and Cyprus, though without final success. It was thus clear, at the start of the fourteenth century, that the house of Barcelona had not merely survived the War of the Vespers, but had emerged from the war with further grandiose ambitions. But the unity of the Catalan-Aragonese commonwealth should not be exaggerated. Three dynasties of Aragonese origin held sway in mainland Spain, Majorca and Sicily, sometimes at odds with one another. Looking back from the vantage point of the 1320s, the Catalan soldier-chronicler Ramon Muntaner enthused about the community of interest that bound together all kings of Catalan blood, indeed all men of Catalan speech. This was a pious aspiration, rather than an accurate observation.