

NEWSLETTER

THE ACADEMY OF AMERICAN RESEARCH HISTORIANS ON MEDIEVAL SPAIN

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May, 1977

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS CURRENTLY IN PREPARATION

The Academy will present the following program at the 12th Conference on Medieval Studies, in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on May 6, 1977, from 3-5 p.m.

Title of Session: "Medieval Spain"

Zee Giraldo, Chairperson, Institute for Research in History, New York

Papers: "The Vilest and Most Despicable Thing Which Can Exist Among Men. A Glance at Slavery in Late Medieval Spain." J. R. Webster, Erindale College, University of Toronto

"The Clerical Role in Alfonso VIII's Reconquista." Meldon J. Preusser, Douglas County Schools, Castle Rock, Colorado

"The State of Aragon, North of the Pyrenees Under Peter the 'Catholic'." Robert J. Kovarik, Chicago State University

The Academy will again be offering a program in conjunction with the AHA in Dallas this December. The program was organized by Dr. Lawrence McCrank of the University of Maryland. The day, time, and room in which the meeting will be held will appear in the Fall Newsletter.

Title of Session: "The Reconquista: Saints, Rogues, and Princes in the Expansion of the Medieval Ibero-Christian Kingdoms"

Lawrence J. McCrank, Chairperson, CLIS, University of Maryland

First Speaker: Ruth Gover, No current academic affiliation

Paper: "The Santiago Pilgrimage of the Twelfth Century: Its Impact upon Reconquest Spain"

This paper proposes to briefly trace the origins of the legend of St. James and the growth of his cult at Santiago, with a resultant influence upon the religious fervour of the anti-Islamic offensive as well as the growth of Ibero-Christian unity in Castile-Leon. It also explains the growing identification of Spain as a cultural and regional identity apart from the rest of Europe during the twelfth century reconquest and contemporary popularity of the Santiago pilgrimage. The paper points towards the thesis that the cult influenced the shaping of monarchy in the northern kingdoms and also affected peninsular relations with the papacy.

Second Speaker: Heath Dillard, Institute for Research in Virginia, University of Virginia

Paper: "Rape, Abduction, and Elopement in Reconquest Castile"

This paper examines the social and legal problems of rape, abduction and elopement, especially on the basis of Castilian fueros, in order to explain their functions with Reconquest society, as being something more than signs of unstable conditions or combative mentality. Instead of accepting older generalizations, this paper seeks alternative explanations in related issues such as sexual taboos of Spanish society, the Church's attempt to control marriage, prevalence of custom and the imperatives of geographic mobility caused by Reconquest expansion.

Third Speaker: Carl J. Post, University of Kentucky

Paper: "Another Hundred Year's War: An overview of the struggle between Catalonia and Liguria for Sardinia."

This paper shows that the expansion of the northern Iberian kingdoms involved not only anti-Muslim wars within the peninsula, but anti-Christian aggression in the Mediterranean as well as other areas, which provide the medieval foundations for extra-peninsular conquests and expansion. In this case, the paper relies upon Pisan and Genoes sources to describe the conflict between the Principality of Barcelona on behalf of the Crown of Aragon with Genoa and Pisa over positions around Cagliari in a "proto-mercantilist" bid to protect valuable trade connections with Sardinia. Its chronological focus lies between 1332 and 1410.

Commentator: Lynn H. Nelson, University of Kansas

After both the meetings in Kalamazoo and Dallas there will be a short business meeting.

CALL FOR PAPERS

I would also anticipate that the Academy will be presenting a program at the 13th Conference on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University to be held sometime in May, 1978. At this time a program organizer has not been selected but will be at the business meeting in Kalamazoo this month. As the program will need to be completed as early as October (which may precede the Fall Newsletter) I would suggest that interested participants send their papers and/or program proposals to Professor Benjamin F. Taggie, Department of History, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, 48859. I will then forward the proposals to the individual chosen at Kalamazoo to organize the program.

THE DECEMBER, 1976 AHA SESSION IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

At the December 29, 1976 panel of The Academy of American Research Historians on Medieval Spain held in Washington, D.C., three papers were read. In the first of them, Lawrence J. McCrank, of the University of Maryland, dealt with "The Foundation of the

Confraternity of Tarragona by Archbishop Olguer Bonestruga, 1126-1129." He stressed the importance of the Confraternity for the achieving and for the preservation of the goals of the Reconquista in the Tarragona area and the necessary concern of Archbishop Olguer with those goals from the latter's investment with the secular lordship of Tarragona in 1118, through the actual, effective occupation of Tarragona about 1124, until that secular lordship was regranted to a Norman lord in 1129.

Within this period, the Council of Narbonne of 1129 supposedly sees the foundation of the Confraternity, according to two documents of the Archive of Auca. Thus the Confraternity appears rather as a result of the Reconquista process than as part of its dynamic. The author, pointing to a document of 1128 which shows the Confraternity already active in the reasoning of captives, argued rather for the understanding of the Auca documents as the reformation of the Confradia into and Archcofradia at Narbonne as a result of the genius of Archbishop Olguer. The Archcofradia there erected, by encouraging the enrollment of the clergy, monks and laity of both the provinces of Narbonne and Tarragona, would have made a much wider range of resources available for the restoration of the diocese of Tarragona and the protection of its exposed frontiers.

Professor James W. Brodman of the University of Arkansas gave the second paper on "La Merced: From Confraternity to Order, 1218-1235." He was also concerned with origins, this time of the Mercedarians founded by Pedro Nolasco. Professor Brodman questioned the usually accepted sources, in the main a series of six documents dating from 1218 existing only in early modern copies, on diplomatic grounds. He argued for the conquest of Majorca in 1229 by James I of Aragon as the probable stimulus to the founding of the Confraternity.

In this connection, he pointed to the connections established by later documents between participants in the conquest of Majorca and the Mercedarians. The earliest document which refers to the Confraternity that he would regard as beyond question is dated in 1230. The first references which imply a formal organization, as well as a common purpose to rescue captives, is dated to 1232. In 1235 a papal letter suggests the Rule of St. Augustine as an appropriate one for the Confraternity, obviously on the verge of transforming itself into a formal religious order.

The final paper of Professor Benjamin Taggie of Central Michigan University was entitled "Maria de Padilla: A Fourteenth Century Prototype of the Medieval Royal Mistress." In general, the author presented his case for a more serious evaluation of the role of Pedro I of Castile's love for Maria as a factor in his eventual downfall beyond the usual view which regards it as little more than a handy excuse for his enemies.

In the course of a summary review of events between 1353 and the death of Maria in 1361, Taggie based his rationale on a number of events to which the royal affair appears central. First, Pedro dismissed the Portuguese Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, the advisor of his youth and the architect of the disastrous marriage with the niece of the French king, Blanche de Bourbon, as a result of the former's decision to desert the royal Frenchwoman and to return to Maria. Second, the opposition of the Castilian nobility to the growing power of the Padilla family in the realm was an inevitable and predictable reaction to an equally predictable court reflection of Pedro's amour. Finally, Taggie pointed to the extraordinary tenacity with which Pedro pursued his attachment to Maria de Padilla, resulting in his own excommunication by the pope in 1355 as well as that of the bishops of Salamanca and Avila whom he had compromised. Even then papal penalties could secure but a brief and nominal compliance, only her death in 1361 ended Pedro's dalliance with Maria, and his attempts to elevate her status outlived the mistress herself.

RELATED PROGRAMS OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS OF AARHMS

This year at the eighth annual conference of the Society for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies, held at the University of Kentucky 25-27 March, a panel was presented on the Crown of Aragon in the late middle ages. The panel was made up entirely of members of the AARHMS, with Father Burns chairing the session. Z. I. Giraldo presented the first paper entitled "Foreign Policy Considerations of the Crown of Aragon at the Beginning of the Great Schism". Carl J. Post followed with his paper "The Salt Crusade" dealing with the Sardinian conquest. A commentary was provided after each paper by Jill Webster. The questions directed to the panelists during the course of the session indicated considerable interest in developments within the Crown of Aragon in this period.

FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS OF THE CROWN OF ARAGON AT THE BEGINNING OF
THE GREAT SCHISM - Z. I. Giraldo

Miss Giraldo suggests that a solution to the problem of Peter IV's neutrality towards the Papal Schism may be found in the diplomatic relations of the Crown of Aragon with France and England. She intends to check out her thesis this summer by going through the Chancellery Registers for the years 1378-1387. It is therefore difficult at this stage to do more than comment on certain methodological aspects, as no doubt further research will place the problem of neutrality in a different light.

Certainly Peter IV refrained from supporting either the Avignonese or Roman Papacies, and this may well appear strange to the general reader who traditionally associates the Crown of Aragon with the Papacy of Avignon. However, other sectors of the community in Aragon did in fact support Rome, to wit the Franciscan known as "L'Infant Pere", and the author of De Triplici Statu Mundi, who some believe was another Franciscan, Francesc Eiximenis. Obviously opinion was not so uniformly in favour of Avignon as has been contended in the past, and the king may well have been influenced by his close association with the Franciscan Order. While I have no doubt that the perusal of the Registers is a worthwhile endeavor, I do wonder whether it might not be useful to supplement it by reference to ecclesiastical sources. It could be that the records for the appointments of bishops and other church dignitaries within the Crown of Aragon would furnish some contributory evidence which might determine why Peter IV chose to remain neutral regarding the question of the Papal Schism when his son, John, enthusiastically supported the Avignonese papacy. In fact, Miss Giraldo can establish that Peter IV consciously adopted a policy of neutrality, a re-assessment may have to be made of his life and character. This could have repercussions on other aspects of the history of the Crown of Aragon in the fourteenth century and I hope that Miss Giraldo's research will effectively elucidate the whole question of why Peter IV refrained from declaring himself for one or other of the rival popes during the early years of the Schism.

Jill R. Webster, Erindale College,
University of Toronto, March 1977

THE SALT CRUSADE - Carl J. Post, University of Kentucky

The increased importance of salt in the late Middle Ages causes it to become of great significance in international diplomacy. Carl Post's paper exemplifies this tendency by emphasizing the diplomatic and economic aspects of the Aragonese monarchs' concern to conquer Sardinia. The key factor in such a policy, he contends, was in fact salt rather than a desire for national aggrandisement, as many Catalan and Italian scholars concluded from their reading of the contemporary accounts of the chroniclers.

Mr. Post shows how the conquest of Cagliari, the salt region of Sardinia, was facilitated by the Arborea clan who held the area to the north of the saltworks and who had kept in constant contact with the Catalans. Once having obtained control of the salt trade, the Argonese kings did what they could to protect it by passing a series of laws to ensure that it was carried in Catalan bottoms and continued to flow into the Port of Barcelona.

While it is evident that salt played a key role in determining Aragon's attitude towards the conquest of Sardinia, it seems to me that there were other contributory factors. The strategic position of Sardinia as a mid-way base between the Balearic Islands and the mainland of modern Italy and Sicily surely cannot have been overlooked by the Aragonese monarchy. In 1324, Naples had not fallen into the hands of the Aragonese, the Communes of Pisa and Genoa were still a threat to trade and expansion and I would suggest that these aspects were also taken into account when launching the offensive against Sardinia. There may even have been other economic motives, such as the benefits to be derived from the production of wheat, a commodity much in demand in Aragon after the ravages of the Black Death. Perhaps the pestilence itself and the generally unsettled conditions which ensued were factors in preventing further expansion to the north of the island of Sardinia. Whatever the reasons for the Crown of Aragon's attitude towards Sardinia, there is no doubt that salt was prominent among them, although I find it difficult to see it as an exclusive motive for the Conquest. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Mr. Post's paper is valuable in the context of general economic policy in the Mediterranean at the end of the Middle Ages and provides a useful counterbalance to the nationalistic views expressed by some Italian and Catalan historians.

Jill R. Webster, Erindale College,
University of Toronto, March 1977

Professor John Williams of the University of Pittsburgh reports that a symposium commemorating the 1200th anniversary of Beatus of Liebana's Commentary on the Apocalypse, was held in Madrid at the end of November, 1976. Those wishing further information on the contents of the program should contact Professor Williams.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

The membership of the Academy has continued to grow at a modest but steady pace. Four people have first enquired about its activities and then subsequently joined it since September of 1976 and enquiries continue to come in.

The Newsletter currently is sent to some eighty-nine persons in the United States, Canada, Spain and Israel which seems to be one current definition of membership. A somewhat sharper one would involve the recognition as members of only those people who have currently paid dues, of whom there are fifty-seven to date. For the next year at least it would be the recommendation of the Secretary-Treasurer that membership and the payment of dues continue to be separately considered.

It seems to the latter that "the promotion of research on Medieval Iberia", which is the whole point of the Academy, is best served by the widest possible advertisement and stimulation of interest in its activities. Moreover, there is no current problem of finances. The current bank balance of the Academy is \$209.25 and there are no outstanding bills. The publication of the fall Newsletter cost less than twenty-five dollars. We may want to consider, however, the related question of to whom ballots should be sent before the next election of officers.

In addition to the members, the Newsletter is presently sent as well, to The American Society for Hispanic Art Historical Studies, to the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, to the Library of Congress and to The Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University. The Secretary-Treasurer believes that this category should be expanded to include at least The Medieval Academy of America and The Hispanic Society in New York and will do so unless there is vigorous protest from the membership. Members should consider making additional suggestions along these lines.

The Secretary-Treasurer would also like to seek the approval of this meeting for a new survey of the membership in connection with the impending billing for 1977 dues. The content of the proposed questionnaire would deal with the subjects of the members' current research activities, and those projected for the immediate future, the archives in which the work was done or in which it will be done, and hopefully a list of each member's publications over the past two years.

The purposes of such a survey would be several: (1) to increase the knowledgeability of the membership as to work in the field and so to promote useful research, (2) to enable us to publicize the work of the Academy, (3) to facilitate the planned efforts of the Secretary-Treasurer to promote cooperation and perhaps occasional joint meetings with other groups of parallel interests, (4) to simplify the task of arranging the two annual programs of the Academy, and (5) to enable the Secretary-Treasurer to respond more adequately to requests from individuals for information as to members working in fields of interest to them. It should be noticed that three such requests have been received in the past six months.

Finally, it should be brought to the attention of the meeting that the deadline for submitting a program for the Academy for the 1977 meeting of the AHA is February 1, 1977. The latter will be held in Dallas, Texas and should represent a particular opportunity to members of the Academy from the South, Midwest and Southwest.

Respectfully submitted,
Bernard F. Reilly, Secretary-Treasurer

NEWS ITEMS

Two members of the Academy, Professor James Powers of the College of the Holy Cross, and Professor Clara Estow of the University of Massachusetts, Harbor Campus, were invited to speak at Harvard University to a National Endowment for the Humanities Seminar being conducted by Professor David Herlihy.

James Powers spoke in December. The subject with which he dealt was the law of the Cattle Towns of Castile and the impact of the Reconquest on the Castilian Charters. In April Professor Estow spoke on the subject of Castilian queens, particularly Catalina, the daughter of John of Gaunt and granddaughter of Pedro I.

In both cases the papers were well received by the NEH fellows and professor Herlihy. Both were followed by lively discussions.

Another item worth noting concerned the retirement of one of the Academies most distinguished members, Professor C. J. Bishko. A retirement dinner was held for him at the University of Virginia by the Corcoran Department of History. Included among the over one hundred guests in the Rotunda on the evening of April 22 were Lewis Hanke and James Powers who spoke in behalf of his scholarship and teaching respectively.

Members are reminded that the dues of 1977 are now due. Any information related to membership or dues should be directed to the Secretary-Treasurer, Bernard F. Reilly, Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania, 19085. All members wishing to include information in the Fall Newsletter should send their material to Benjamin F. Taggie, C.M.U., Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, 48859.

-----Best Wishes for a Good Summer-----

See You In The Fall