

NEWSLETTER  
ACADEMY OF AMERICAN RESEARCH HISTORIANS ON MEDIEVAL SPAIN

No. 6:2

April, 1980

Semi-annual Meeting: New York City, December 29, 1980

I. Business meeting, Joseph O'Callaghan, presiding:

MINUTES: On Saturday, December 29, 1979, at 8:30 AM the semi-annual business meeting of the Academy was held in New York in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Historical Association. The President announced that he had proposals for at least two panels for the meeting with the AHA in December of 1980. He said that he would undertake to locate suitable chairpersons and commentators for these panels and to expedite notice to the AHA for listing in their annual program.

The President also announced that he had reluctantly accepted the resignation of Professor Benjamin Taggie, Central Michigan University, as Editor of the Academy Newsletter. He also announced the appointment of Professor James Brodman, University of Central Arkansas, as the new Editor.

There was some discussion of the need for the Academy to have printed a small brochure advertising its interests and functions. It was agreed that such a project should be undertaken with a view to the brochures distribution at an information desk at both the Kalamazoo and AHA meetings.

The Secretary-Treasurer reported that the bank balance of the Academy stood at approximately \$500. with a small bill for the printing of the fall Newsletter outstanding. Membership also held steady in the past year at approximately ninety persons.

The Secretary-Treasurer asked that the meeting approve the inclusion, in the 1980 dues billing, a request that members indicate whether or not they were also members of the American Historical Association. The latter has been anxious over the past several years that its affiliated societies might be draining off its own membership and there was some feeling that we might well collect some facts to reassure them in our own case. Approval was granted.

The Secretary-Treasurer also reported that the organization of a special symposium of the Academy, reported on elsewhere in this Newsletter, for New York in October of 1980 was progressing nicely. The assistance of The Hispanic Society of America, Fordham University, and the Instituto de Estudios Visigótico Mozárabes, Toledo, had thus far been secured.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 and the members fled in search of breakfast.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernard F. Reilly  
Secretary-Treasurer, AARHMS

II. The program of the Academy was entitled: Medieval Iberian Queens; the chairman of the session was the Academy's president, Joseph F. O'Callaghan of Fordham University. Summaries of the papers presented and the comment follow.

A. Bernard F. Reilly (Villanova University): Urraca of Leon-Castile (1109-1126): Sovereign, Wife and Mother

Queen Urraca of Leon-Castile (1109-1126) is one of the two Iberian queens who ruled, not as a consort, but in her own right. The eldest daughter of Alfonso VI, she became his heir and apparent successor upon the death of Alfonso's only son, Sancho, when the latter was killed at the battle of Uclés in the spring of 1108. While her father would designate Urraca to inherit the kingdom, he also arranged for her marriage to Alfonso I of Aragon. This marriage, completed after her father's death, shortly broke up in acrimony and Urraca completed her reign as the sole ruler of Leon-Castile.

The point of this paper is that even the essential outlines of Urraca's policy have never been adequately examined. Her separation from Alfonso of Aragon has been seen in almost exclusively personal terms but the contemporary political factors explain it better. Hostilities between Urraca and Alfonso have been assumed as continuous when, as early as 1117, the two had agreed on a rough distinction of their vital interests which permitted a series of agreements which maintained the peace past her death in 1126. The failure of their marriage has been lamented as the loss of an early opportunity to unite the peninsula but no such practical possibility in fact existed.

Urraca's relationship with her son by a previous marriage, Alfonso Raimunde, has also been misunderstood. Although the boy-king had very considerable support in Galicia, the queen was able to turn it to her purposes, in good measure, by allowing his coronation and designation as heir in 1111. She never lost control of the province for any appreciable length of time. Moreover, by establishing the kingdom of Toledo as an appanage for her son in 1117, she was able to blunt the ambitions of her former husband there. The merest consideration of their respective charters reveals that Urraca managed effectively to keep her son in leading strings to within two years of her death.

In short, the paper hopes to demonstrate that if the reign of Urraca is studied as just that, not as a failed marriage alliance or as a kind of extended regency for her son, its politics then become rather more explicable. While she has her successes and her failures, the queen both followed and revised the policies of her father and so fixed, in good measure, the possibilities and aspirations of her son and successor.

(Summary by the author)

- B. John C. Shideler (University of California, Berkeley): Petronila, Queen of Aragon and the Regency of Alfonso II

The death of Alfonso I the Battler in 1134 led to a major succession crisis since the childless king willed Aragon to the military orders. In order to perpetuate the royal line, however, the barons of Aragon ignored the will and instead proclaimed Alfonso's brother, Ramiro, as the new king. External threats from Castile, Navarre, and the papacy, which sought to enforce the Battler's will, caused Ramiro to forge an alliance with the count of Barcelona. In order to ensure the succession, Ramon Berenguer IV was given the hand of Ramiro's daughter, Petronila, control over the kingdom of Aragon and the right to transmit the succession the couple's joint heir. Their first-born was known first by the Catalan name of Ramon, and then by the Aragonese one of Alfonso. This shift in appellation is probably due to Petronila's desire to emphasize dynastic continuity in Aragon through the use of this traditionally Aragonese name. The new king, Alfonso II, was but five years old at his father's death and his mother, Queen Petronila, evidently played little role in the government of the minority. Power in the royal court rested in the hands of Aragonese and Catalan barons. This absence of personal involvement on Petronila's part raises several questions, particularly since it is clear that she believed that she had a right to be queen and that her son's rights descended through her. Documents attest that she claimed regalian rights of transmission. In fact, during her lifetime, the legitimacy of such transmission through her seems not to have been questioned. It may be true, on the other hand, that Petronila lacked the personal interest or the force of personality necessary to influence the regency. A more likely explanation, however, is that the queen was deferring to new attitudes of a maturing feudal society wherein the queen's rights were less equal and associative than they had been in the past. Petronila's role, therefore, unlike that of the strong-willed Queen Urraca or the later one of Blanche of Castile, is to be viewed as a passive one. Nevertheless, Petronila should occupy a notable place in the history of Catalonia and Aragon for her role in uniting these two territories and in transmitting rights of kingship to her son.

(Summary by Marian Brodman)

- C. Comment by James F. Powers (College of the Holy Cross)

The reigns of Queens Urraca and Petronila offer a considerable basis for comparison of contemporary personalities and styles of government in states where female rule is possible but exceptional. Their rules were complicated by aristocratic pressures and territorial instability so it would be remarkable if either queen rose above a holding action until the maturity of their eldest male heir. Consequently Urraca's reign justifies Professor Reilly's interest. Two matters, however, should be pointed out: the importance of urban revolts alongside baronial resurgence in times of monarchical crisis, and Urraca's forfeiture as a consequence of her truce with

Alfonso the Battler in 1117 of Zaragoza as a chesspiece in the game of peninsular unity. Professor Shideler's work on Petronila, on the other hand, shows a strong contrast in the role a queen was able to play. Shideler is right in ascribing much of the difference between the two queens to the growing feudalization of Aragon, although ambiguity remains over Ramon Berenguer's attitude toward Petronila's rights as queen. The entitling of Petronila as queen in Catalan documents raises interesting questions that have to be worked out. The presenters have offered us valuable insights into the two great nascent monarchies of the Peninsula, where expanding frontiers, the death of monarchs and male heirs in the chance of battle, and the interplay of growing institutional roots allowed these two women to affect the destinies of monarchical growth and the diversity that is Spain.

(Summary by J. W. Brodman)

#### FUTURE MEETINGS

- A. Fifteenth International Congress on Medieval Studies (Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo), May 1 - 4, 1980.

The Academy's session will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 3 in Room 205 of Valley II.

Presiding: Norman Roth (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

"The Friars of the Sack in the Social Order of the Realms of Aragon: Archival Traces" by Rev. Robert I. Burns, S.J. (University of California at Los Angeles)

"The Rural Economy of Catalonia and the Process of Enserfment" by Paul Freedman (Vanderbilt University)

"The Role of Booty and its Distribution in the Municipalities of Castile and Aragon during the 12th and 13th-Century Reconquest" by James F. Powers (College of the Holy Cross)

"The Professionalization of the Rabbinate in Medieval Spain" by Wallace Greene (Hebrew Youth Academy of Essex County, NJ)

The semi-annual meeting of the Academy will follow the session at 5:00 p.m.

- B. On October 10-11, 1980, the AARHMS will sponsor a symposium in New York at Fordham University and the Hispanic Society entitled: "The 900th Anniversary of the Reception of the Roman Rite in the Kingdoms of Leon and Castile." Sessions are planned on Cluny and the Reception of the Roman Rite, the Scriptorium of Sahagun, the Monarchy of Alfonso VI, and From Pre-Romanesque to Romanesque in Leon-Castile.

- C. The tentative program for the Academy's meeting in Washington in December, 1980 follows:

Jill Webster, "Debts and Duties: Aspects of Mendicant Life in Medieval Valencia."

James W. Brodman, "Rents and Ransoming: The Valencian Patrimony of the Order of Merced."

Robert I. Burns, S.J., "Castles and Battle Lines in the Mudejar Revolt of 1276."

James F. Powers, "The Military Motif as a Sign of Cultural Transference: The Confronted Warriors of Spain and France."

John Shideler, "Crime and Coercion: The Political Tactics of the 13th-Century Moncada Lords of Vic."

Jeath Dillard, "Female Criminals in Medieval Castilian Towns."

- D. Kalamazoo 1981: Those members of the Academy interested in offering a paper at the Sixteenth International Congress should send quam primum proposals to:

Professor Bernard F. Reilly  
Secretary, AARHMS  
Department of History  
Villanova University  
Villanova, Pennsylvania 19085

ANNUAL DUES: These are levied at the rate of \$3.00 per annum and are currently due for 1980. Members who have yet to pay their dues may do so by sending a check to Professor Reilly, in his guise of Treasurer of the AARHMS, at the above address.

NOTICES:

The Fundación Universitaria Española recently published the first English translation of Claudio Sanchez-Albornoz, Spain: A Historical Enigma. The Foundation's aim is to contribute to a better understanding of Spanish history abroad. Part of the press run is being distributed to specialists in the field and to university libraries. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the book, free of charge, it is available upon request to: Fundación Universitaria Española, Alcalá 93, Madrid 9.

News and other items for inclusion in future newsletters, including notices of recently published works of Academy members, should be sent to:

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