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Language and Power in the Medieval Crown of Aragon: The Rise
of Vernacular Writing and Codeswitching Strategies in the
Thirteenth-Century Royal Chancery

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

Antonio Morales Zaldivar

2014

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Language and Power in the Medieval Crown of Aragon: The Rise
of Vernacular Writing and Codeswitching Strategies in the
Thirteenth-Century Royal Chancery

by

Antonio Morales Zaldivar

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Teófilo F. Ruiz, Chair

Professor John Dagenais, co-Chair

My dissertation offers a case study on the relationship between language and power during a period when a series of institutions, ideas, and practices surfaced that transformed European society and significantly altered the manner in which rulers governed. The growth of bureaucracies within increasingly centralized monarchies, a gradual process of laicization, and the rapid spread of vernacular writing represent three of these major changes as well as the primary focus of this survey. In it, I analyze systematically what drove the thirteenth-century kings of the Crown of Aragon to begin writing in their realms' spoken vernaculars (Catalan and Aragonese), what these motivations reveal about contemporary mentalities and language

ideologies, and how codeswitching (shifting from Latin to the romance and back) figured into the crown's overall governing practices. Using a multi-disciplinary approach that combines historical methodologies with theoretical frameworks from linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and literary criticism, I conclude that the kings appropriated codeswitching strategies as diplomatic instruments in the administration of their realms. The practical impulse to reach a larger, Latin-illiterate audience influenced all vernacular writing at some level during the Middle Ages, including within the royal chancery. Yet, in the vast majority of cases the kings appropriated vernacular writing strategically as a symbolic instrument. In these instances, the switch from Latin to a vernacular language alone signaled a change in tone, usually denoting displeasure or urgency. Employing language as a political tool betrayed the kings' weakness rather than their strength. Like their contemporaries throughout Western Europe, the kings of the Crown of Aragon were in the initial stages of consolidating and expanding their power over a recalcitrant nobility through a combination of violence, better organized bureaucracies, and the support of urban elites. Language choice between writing in Latin and the romance offered the kings an effective and simple means to communicate more forcefully with their subjects, and, in doing so, better exert their relatively fragile authority.

The dissertation of Antonio Morales Zaldivar is approved.

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2014

To my mother,
Enriqueta Catalina Morales

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In this dissertation, I systematically analyze the motivations that drove the kings of the Crown of Aragon to begin writing in romance languages, what these motivations reveal about contemporary mentalities and society, and how codeswitching (shifting from writing in Latin to the romance and back) figured into the crown's overall governing practices during the course of the thirteenth century. In doing so, I offer an innovative case study that explores the relationship between language and power during a period when a series of institutions, ideas, and practices surfaced that transformed European society and significantly altered the manner in which rulers governed. The growth of bureaucracies within increasingly centralized monarchies, a gradual process of laicization, and the rapid spread of vernacular writing represent three of these major changes as well as the primary focus of this survey.

Latin functioned as the sole language of record in the federation of realms under the jurisdiction of the Aragonese kings, commonly known as the Crown of Aragon, until the twelfth century, when documents begin to appear written entirely in the realms' romance languages, Catalan and Aragonese. These romance languages like their vernacular counterparts throughout most of western Europe, did not just replace Latin. Instead, a variety of diglossic situations emerged in which Latin functioned as the high-prestige language and the vernaculars as low-prestige languages.¹ These linguistic situations differed by region and never remained static.

¹ For more information on the sociolinguistic concept of diglossia, see below, 32-4.

Even within the boundaries of the Crown of Aragon, the trajectory of vernacular writing differed between its two founding realms: the kingdom of Aragon and the county of Barcelona (Catalonia). The two realms merged after Count Ramon Berenguer IV of Barcelona, the ruler of Catalonia, agreed to marry the heir of the Aragonese throne, Petronila Ramires, on August 11, 1137. While subjected to the same lord, sometimes called the count-king, both realms maintained their independence from each other, with separate law codes and different traditions of governance. They also spoke different languages. In Aragon, the primary spoken tongue was Aragonese, a romance language from the Iberian family that developed, similarly to Castilian, in a frontier zone during centuries of war with the Muslims.² As a result, Aragonese possessed strong Arabic influences. Catalan, on the contrary, developed largely free of contact with Arabic in Old Catalonia (on the north-east corner of the Iberian peninsula bordering modern-day France) and belongs to the Occitan family of romance languages.³

² For more information on the Aragonese language, see Antonio Ubieto Arteta, *Historia de Aragón*, vol. 2 *Literatura Medieval* (Zaragoza, Anubar, 1981); Manuel Alvar, *El dialecto Aragonés* (Madrid: Gredos, 1953); Manuel Alvar, *El Dialecto Riojano* (Madrid: Gredos, 1976); María Teresa Echenique Elizondo and Juan Sánchez Méndez, *Las Lenguas de un reino. Historia lingüística hispánica* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 2005); Coloma Lleal, *La formación de las lenguas romances peninsulares* (Barcelona: Barcanova, 1990); Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *Orígenes del Español*, 3rd. ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1956); Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *El idioma Español en sus primeros tiempo*, 7th ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1968); and in English, W. D. Elcock, *The Romance Languages*, 2nd ed. (London: Faber & Faber, 1976); and G. W. Umphrey, "The Aragonese Dialect," *Revue hispanique: recueil consacré à l'étude des langues, des littératures et de l'histoire des pays castillans, catalans, et portugais* 24: 65 (1911), 5-45.

³ For more information on the development of Catalan language and literature, see Martí de Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana. Part antiga*, 4 vols. (Barcelona: Ariel, 1985); Josep M. Nadal and Modest Prats, *Història de la llengua catalana*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1996); Antoni Maria Badia i Margarit, *Gramàtica històrica catalana* (Barcelona: Noguer, 1951); Antoni Maria Badia i Margarit, *La formació de la llengua Catalana. Assaig d'interpretació històrica* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'abadia de Montserrat, 1981); Antoni Maria Badia i Margarit, *Moments Clau de la història de la llengua catalana* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2004); Lluís Gimeno Betí, *Els orígens de la llengua* (Alzira: Edicions Bromera, 2005); and in English, Arthur Terry, *Catalan Literature* (New York: Barnes & Noble,

Even though Latin continued to function as the high-prestige language in both realms well in to the early-modern period, the vernacular in Aragon challenged Latin's supremacy as a language of public record earlier than in Catalonia. That is because writing in Aragon remained in the hands of the clergy until the thirteenth century, when the kings successfully imposed notarial practices artificially from above. The practice, which gained favor throughout Aragon's urban centers, produced a fledging community of lay notaries in the second-half of the thirteenth century. But by then, the Aragonese language had evolved sufficiently, with somewhat standardized spelling, syntax, and grammar, to allow it to function alongside Latin as a legal and administrative language. In Catalonia by contrast, a combination of economic growth and the revival of Roman law with its recognition of *fides publica* (Roman concept of public trust) led to the creation of an organic notarial culture, where a class of literate laymen gained the power to legally authenticate deeds before the vernacular had reached enough stability to serve as a language of public record. This class, which gained social prestige and economic benefits from their profession, in turn prolonged a strong tradition of Latin in the public sphere.⁴

In the lands of the Crown of Aragon, Latin maintained one of its strongest grips on the nascent royal chancery. Less than two percent of royal documents from the thirteenth century survive written in a romance language. The kings' ties to Catalonia and its urban, educated elite, with commercial links to the Mediterranean, a commitment to Roman law, and a flourishing notarial tradition, contributed in large part to their Latinity. In fact, they imposed Roman-based

1972); and Arthur Terry, *A Companion to Catalan Literature* (Rochester: Tamesis, 2003). Since there is no evidence that thirteenth-century contemporaries considered Valencian, the name of the Catalan dialect spoken in Valencia, distinct from Catalan, I do not distinguish between the two. I simply use the term Catalan. Furthermore, the variety of Catalan spoken in the eastern parts of the kingdom of Valencia was closer to its northern variety than today. Catalan speakers in the kingdom of Valencia during the thirteenth century were born in Catalonia or they were their children and grandchildren.

⁴ For more information on notarial practices, see below, 20-5.

legal codes and notarial procedures in their other realms during the course of the thirteenth century (Valencia in 1239 and Aragon in 1247). More importantly, Catalan and Aragonese lacked Latin's historic and prestigious pedigree as the language of Rome, the Catholic church and its liturgy, justice, and education (especially higher learning). The kings of the Crown of Aragon, who adhered strictly to tradition, ceremony, and procedure during this period, consequently considered Latin the more suitable language to represent their power and status. For these reasons, even when composing a document in the vernacular, royal scribes usually included sections of the text in Latin, typically the opening (protocol) and closing (eschatacol) formulas, passages from the Bible, or the king's signature (surely written by a royal scribe).

The kings, nonetheless, bypassed writing in Latin from the 1240s onwards when composing a select few documents. In the following chapters, I examine closely these vernacular texts and the circumstances behind their production. I compare them to analogous Latin texts to determine why the kings and their scribes chose to write in the romance, but fell short of popularizing the practice. In other words: what motivated the kings to begin composing documents in a vernacular language? Are certain types of royal documents more likely to appear in the romance? If so, which and why? Did the place of their composition affect the language of production? If so, how? Why did the kings compose so few documents in the vernacular? Finally, I consider the broader historical implications of the vernacular languages' literary trajectories in the royal chancery during this period.

Using a multi-disciplinary approach that combines historical methodologies with theoretical frameworks from linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and literary criticism, I contend that the kings appropriated vernacular writing and codeswitching strategies as

diplomatic instruments in the administration of their realms.⁵ Writing and access to written records emerged as one of the greatest weapons in the arsenals of medieval monarchs during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Kings increasingly relied on writing to administer their realms and communicate with their officials and subjects. Within this record-dependent society, where texts connected rulers to their subjects, language choice offered the kings of the Crown of Aragon a new method of utilizing the written word to their advantage.

The kings and their agents' interest in increasing royal power and prestige drove them to adopt vernacular writing strategically during the thirteenth century. Specifically, a combination of practical and symbolic motivations inspired and/or convinced royal scribes to produce texts in their recipients' native tongue. A practical impulse to reach a larger audience that did not read or understand Latin influenced all vernacular writing at some level, including within the royal chancery. I argue, nonetheless, that symbolism figured as the principal force behind the kings' decision to compose a document in the romance. In these cases, the switch from the standard to the less frequently used linguistic code alone signaled a change in tone, usually denoting displeasure or urgency.

The royal chancery's strong Latinity, central to the success of this strategy of codeswitching, simultaneously impeded the kings from applying it regularly. It seems the kings resorted to writing in the vernacular mostly when they felt their authority threatened and were firmly certain that the recipients of their letters would understand the significance of bypassing the formalities of Latin. The kings' recourse to vernacular writing as a diplomatic strategy when facing eminent danger, however, betrays their relative political weakness and financial struggles. If they had not faced these difficulties or had a stronger hold over their subjects either through

⁵ For more on specific information on these theories, see below, 25-34.

political control or financial incentives, they would not have had to resort to codeswitching tactics to communicate with them more forcefully.

The thirteenth-century kings of the Crown of Aragon communicated with their Muslim and Jewish subjects, as they did with their Christian subjects, predominantly in Latin. The same combination of practical and symbolic motivations also led the kings occasionally to compose texts directed at Muslims or Jews in a romance language. In the case of the Jewish inhabitants, the romance utilized by the crown corresponded with the former's native language. Royal scribes composed Aragonese messages to Jewish communities in Aragon and Catalan to those in Catalonia and Valencia. While Hebrew served as the liturgical and legal language of Judaism, few Jews actually spoke the biblical language in the realms of the Crown of Aragon. In the case of *mudejars*, Muslims living under Christian subjugation, the language spoken by their Christian colonizers determined the romance chosen. The king sent written messages to his *mudejar* subjects in Aragon and the western region of Valencia under Aragonese jurisdiction in Aragonese, and to their counterparts in Catalonia and most of Valencia in Catalan. Mudejars themselves spoke vernacular Arabic. While *mudejars* relied completely on Christian and Jewish scribes, the crown granted Jews the right to authenticate their own documentation in Hebrew and those of the Muslims in Arabic. The kings often employed these Jews to translate and compose Arabic texts in their correspondence with Muslim rulers throughout the Mediterranean. Only Christian notaries could authenticate a business or legal transaction between Christians and members of a religious minority.⁶

⁶ At the turn of the fourteenth century, the situation begins to change. King James II (r. 1291-1325) ordered that Christians be assigned as special notaries for all transactions involving religious minorities. James II's ordinance reflects the gradual loss of rights experienced by Muslims and Jews as well as the overall decline in religious tolerance that began towards the end

I have divided the remaining pages of this introduction into three sections. In the first section, titled “Language and Power in Medieval Europe,” I place the dissertation in a wider historiographic context via a brief literature review of the most important themes addressed in this study: the role of the written word and its modes of reception in thirteenth-century Europe, the crown’s use of writing in the pursuit of power, and notarial practices and the laicization of writing. I then turn to the methodological and theoretical frameworks that I utilize to reach my findings. This “Methodology” section is divided into two subsections. The first describes the theories from sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology that I employ to facilitate and deepen my analyses of language use, especially codeswitching practices, while the second elaborates on the primary sources that set the parameters of my study. Finally, I end with an explanation of the dissertation’s organization, in which I detail my principal arguments.

Language and Power in Medieval Europe

The Written Word and its Mode of Reception

All historical research into language during the medieval period inevitably depends on the written word. While writing rarely replicates a speech act, medieval texts maintained a strong interdependence with their oral performance. Documents were nearly always read aloud.⁷ Silent reading only began to emerge in the twelfth century and remained rare until the

of the thirteenth century and continued to grow throughout the late medieval period, culminating in the expulsion of both communities centuries later.

⁷ Walter J. Ong, “Orality, Literacy, and Medieval Textualization,” *New Literary History* 16:1 (1984), 1; also see, Ong, *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 2002), and the next several pages.

fourteenth.⁸ In the last four decades, historians have begun to explore systematically the state of literacy, its impact on society, and the evolving relationship between texts and speech acts in the Middle Ages. Their excellent work constitutes the shoulders on which this study stands.

Brian Stock's weighty tome (both literally and metaphorically), *The Implications of Literacy, Written language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, set the standard for understanding the repercussions of increased literacy and the interdependence between the oral and written aspects of communication in medieval Europe. In it, Stock argues that an increase in literacy after the millennium produced a new type of interdependence between texts and their oral delivery. Stock believes that at the beginning of the eleventh century, "oral discourse effectively began to function within a universe of communications governed by texts."⁹ This transformation in turn provoked large-scale social, cultural, intellectual, and institutional implications, which he traces via changes in philosophical, theological, and religious modes of thought. Stock, moreover, differentiates between literacy and textuality. According to Stock, literacy differs from textuality in that the latter depends more on mentalities and modes of thought than the ability to read a document. He takes this a step further with the postulation of textual communities, that is, groups of individuals that shared similar text-based ideas regardless if they knew how to read.¹⁰

The "realignment of oral discourse within a cultural reference system based on the logical priorities of texts" that Stock posits centers on intellectual and social changes guided by a small clerical elite during the cultural renaissance of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Michael T.

⁸ See Paul Henry Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

⁹ Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 3.

¹⁰ Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*, 88-92.

Clanchy's classic study *From Memory to written Record: England, 1066-1307*, which appeared four years before Stock's *The Implications of Literacy*, focuses instead on the growth of lay literacy.¹¹ He argues that widespread literacy among the laity in medieval England grew out of the practical needs of a growing royal bureaucracy dependent on the written word rather than from any abstract desire for education or literature. The Anglo-Norman monarchy's rising dependence on writing to expand its authority throughout the realm gradually penetrated noble and knightly circles during the thirteenth century, leading to an established trust in written records by large segments of the population.¹² Clanchy's conclusions regarding lay literacy and the monarchy provide fascinating similarities with the situation in other areas of Europe, including the Crown of Aragon. In both realms, the monarchy increased their dependence on writing, or at the very least recordkeeping, in the thirteenth century as an important, if not primary, facet of their realms' governance. Unlike in England, however, the realm of Catalonia within the Crown of Aragon possessed a culture of lay literacy independent of the monarchy as a result of robust commercial economy.

While Clanchy and Stock revolutionized the historical study of literacy, orality, and textuality in the medieval period, later research questions the chronology of their conclusions and modifies their theoretical models. Early medievalists led by Rosamond McKitterick, for example, argue that literate modes of thought preceded the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹³ They contend that writing and literacy played a fundamental position in Carolingian culture and

¹¹ Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1307*, 3rd ed. (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

¹² Clanchy provides an interesting example of how writing on objects previously used to symbolize property ownership helped with the transition, Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 260-2.

¹³ See Rosamond McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and the articles in McKitterick ed., *Uses of Literacy in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

governance, leading McKitterick to conclude that the change from oral to written occurred in the eighth and ninth rather than the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹⁴ More recently, Adam Kosto, studying the eleventh and twelfth centuries, criticizes the reliance of Stock and Clanchy's theoretical constructs on a fundamentally oral tenth century, which he states was not the case in Catalonia, "or elsewhere, for that matter." Kosto believes the problem with Clanchy and Stock is that "they devalue or simply ignore the abundant early medieval evidence for the various uses of technology of writing."¹⁵

Kosto and McKitterick are right to highlight the existence of a literary culture in Europe before the eleventh century; but the decline in central authority following the collapse of the Carolingian Empire certainly contributed to a reduction in the use of writing. Gradually, violence and intimidation proved more useful to those who exercised power than recourse to the written word in this chaotic period Thomas N. Bisson so aptly coined "The Feudal Revolution."¹⁶ Conditions began to reverse course as centralizing forces gathered strength

¹⁴ Janet Nelson identifies a revolution of documents after 750 AD. More importantly, she argues that the Carolingians in their aim to centralize resurrected successfully the threads that linked *patria* (local documentary production during the Merovingian period) and palace (central authority), resulting in the explosion of writing in the second half of the eighth century: Janet Nelson, "Literacy in Carolingian Government," in *Uses of Literacy in Medieval Europe*, 261-2. For information on the production of documents before the Carolingian period, including the Merovingian era, see the contributions by Ian Woods and Thomas F. X. Noble in the same collection of essays edited by Rosamond McKitterick.

¹⁵ Adam J. Kosto, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia: Power, order, and the Written Word, 1000-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 291 (both quotes).

¹⁶ Thomas N. Bisson, "The Feudal Revolution," *Past & Present* 142: 1 (1994), 6-42; and "The Problem of Feudal Monarchy: Aragon, Catalonia, and France," *Speculum* 53 (1978), 46-78; also see his magnum opus, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); and his powerful essay *Tormented Voices: Power, Crisis, and Humanity in Rural Catalonia, 1140-1200* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). For criticisms of Bisson's "Feudal Revolution," see Stephen D. White, "The Discourse of Inheritance in Twelfth-Century France: alternative models of the fief in 'Raoul de Cambrai'," *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy*, ed. Hudson Garnett (1994), 173-97; White "Debate: the 'feudal revolution'," *Past & Present* 152 (1996),

throughout Europe between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. This is precisely the process guiding the historical changes examined by Kosto in eleventh and twelfth-century Catalonia and Clanchy in late-twelfth and thirteenth-century England. Furthermore, the clergy's monopoly over access to writing, that is, their control of the production of writing in western Europe, began to wane precisely during this period, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In the Crown of Aragon, and I would argue throughout many parts of Western Christendom, two mutually dependent developments converged to foster the gradual increase in the laity's use and access to writing. First, the rise of a profit economy and a robust commercial class involved in ever more numerous and complex business transactions provoked a dramatic increase in the need for documents and lay literacy in Europe's commercial centers. Second, the practical needs of increasingly large secular bureaucracies, be it royal, princely, municipal, or communal, created a demand for lay literacy. These two interdependent factors evolved differently depending on the circumstances of the region in question. The dynamic Italian commercial centers, where the profit economy first took off, developed a culture of lay literacy earlier than anywhere else in Europe. *Commenda* contracts from the tenth and eleventh centuries exemplify the type of documents that emerged to record mercantile business pacts.¹⁷ Secular rulers in these cities, be them princes or a commune, took advantage of writing to assert their authority, but only after an economically-driven increase in lay literacy had occurred. In places like England and the kingdom of Aragon, on the contrary, the political and economic needs of

205-23; and Timothy Reuter, "Debate: the 'Feudal Revolution'," *Past & Present* 155 (1997), 177-95. For alternative views of feudal relations in medieval Europe, see Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe," *American Historical Review* 79 (1974), 1063-88; and Susan B. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹⁷ See Robert S. Lopez and Irving W. Raymond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), esp. 174-184; and Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, 1998).

the crown rather than an organic demand for writing disseminated the practice of and dependence on writing among the laity. Regions like England and Germany, in fact, continued to depend on clerical scribes more heavily than in the Mediterranean and the Low Countries, where the economic and organizational needs of its inhabitants more than political strategies on a ruler's part contributed to the revival of writing.

The unprecedented increase in writing, as Stock eloquently informs us, altered the nature of oral discourse throughout Europe, which began to operate within textual frameworks. At the same time, orality continued to exert tremendous influence at every level of textual production. Scribes transcribed oral exchanges, which were read back to the person(s) or institution(s) commissioning the document, and finally recited aloud to its intended recipients. Medieval texts thus maintained a strong interdependence with their oral performance.¹⁸ Royal documents from the thirteenth-century Crown of Aragon were no exception. Rhetorical formulas constant in the kings' writings point to their aural diffusion. Even the most rudimentary internal surveys, recording purchases, household expenditures, and inventories, that survive from the chancery of the thirteenth-century kings, possess auditory qualities suggesting their projected oral transmission.¹⁹

Some of the most interesting contributions to the relationship between orality and textuality in the Middle Ages since the publication of Stock and Clanchy's works, and key in my own research, focus on the performative nature of texts. Patrick Geary, for instance, builds on the "weak thesis" of literacy and orality in the transmission of historical memory by suggesting

¹⁸ Ong, "Orality, Literacy, and Medieval Textualization," 1; Ong, *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word*; and Saenger, *Space Between Words*.

¹⁹ Jordi Bruguera, "La llengua del Llibre dels Fets: Una sintaxi marcada per l'oralitat," in *El rei Jaume: fets, actes i paraules*, eds. Germà Colon and Tomás Romero (Barcelona: l'Abadia de Montserrat: 2008), 365-392.

that we view texts as records of oral performances.²⁰ Arriving at a similar conclusion, but from a very different angle, John Dagenais also calls for scholars to consider the manuscript text as a variety of oral performance, which “comes closest to imitating that solidly physical text we seek.”²¹ Marco Mostert, for his part, ventures beyond the oral/textual duality by challenging historians to embrace a broader conception of communication that includes choice of language, rituals, gestures, and imagery.²²

The most fertile area of research regarding the performance of texts surrounds the production of written vernaculars.²³ David H. Green’s ambitious study of the reception of German literature between the ninth and fourteenth centuries offers an in-depth analysis on the relationship between the performance of texts and the rise of vernacular writing in medieval Germany.²⁴ Green uses decades of research into medieval literature and a broad array of sources to lay out a systematic model consisting of three different modes of reception for German writing: the hearing mode, in which texts were directed at a collective audience; the reading mode, rare before the thirteenth century, where the written material was primarily intended for individual reception; and the intermediate mode, beginning in the thirteenth century, in which texts were produced for either collective and/or individual audiences. Regardless of the mode of reception, Green stresses that all reading was performed aurally, that is, aloud.

²⁰ Patrick J. Geary, “Land, language, and Memory in Europe 700-1100,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 9 (1999), 174.

²¹ John Dagenais, “That bothersome Residue: Toward a Theory of the Physical Text,” in *Vox Intexta: Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. by A. N. Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 225. A. N. Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack’s edition aims to unite oral theory and postmodern criticism.

²² Marco Mostert, “New Approaches to Medieval Communication” in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. by Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 23.

²³ For more on the rise of vernacular writing in Europe, see chapter 2.

²⁴ David H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature 800-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Royal Power and the Written Word

As in other realms throughout Europe, the kings of the Crown of Aragon effectively utilized writing and recordkeeping as one of their strongest weapons in the pursuit and exercise of power. While Kosto documents the use of writing to expand committal authority in Catalonia beginning in the eleventh century, a dependence on writing swelled under the reign of Alfonse II (I of Catalonia, r. 1162-1196), the first king of the Crown of Aragon.²⁵ Alfonse was the first ruler of either Aragon or Catalonia to reference his archive. He also ordered the creation of a capitulary to contain the most important historical documents of his realm. The project, completed in 1192 and later identified as the *Liber feudorum maior*, provides one of the most important sources for the study of Catalonia between the tenth and twelfth centuries.

The increase in documentation during Alfonse II's reign allows us for the first time to identify and trace the careers of lay scribes and jurists in the service of the crown.²⁶ During this period, a growing number of wealthy burghers began to send their sons to study Roman law in Italian universities no longer exclusive to the clergy. These learned burghers returned home with the intellectual preparation to lead an ideological push for a more centralized and orderly society as jurists in the service of the crown.²⁷

The crown's concern with the creation and collection of documents grew exponentially in the thirteenth century. As Robert I. Burns notes in his typical poetic fashion: "In their thirteenth-

²⁵ Kosto traces how the counts of Barcelona exercised power through "the general growth of [their] literate administration, the development of the Usatges de Barcelona, and the creation of the *Liber feudorum maior*," *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia*, 268.

²⁶ Kosto, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia*, 273.

²⁷ See Joaquín Miret i Sans, "Escolars catalans al estudi de Bolonia en la XIII centuria," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 8 (1915), 137-55; and Stephen P. Bensch, *Barcelona and its Rulers, 1096-1291* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 380.

century development, archives were the offspring of bureaucracy, which grew like a mushroom in the shadow of that century's rulers, watered by affluence and fertilized by the concepts of Roman law."²⁸ The two most important developments concerning the crown's use of writing as an instrument of power in the high-to-late Middle Ages occurred during the long reign of James I (r. 1213-1276). First, a chancery independent of the royal court emerged fully formed by mid century.²⁹ Charged with managing all of the king's correspondence, the chancery played a fundamental role in the exercise of royal power. In a period when writing and text-based messages began to replace purely oral communication, an institution dedicated solely to the production and collection of documents proved necessary. It provided a more organized and sustained line of communication between the king and his numerous officials that increasingly relied on written orders. These officials (vicars, bailiffs, treasurers, scribes, etc.) represented the military, financial, and legal representatives of the king throughout the realms, and were instrumental in exercising royal authority. The formation of a chancery in the Crown of Aragon parallels similar innovations in writing and recordkeeping in royal courts throughout Europe. The trend, which stretched from Barcelona to London, coincides with Clanchy's observation that in medieval England the thirteenth century was the period of great record keeping.³⁰

Recordkeeping was precisely the point of the second significant development: the creation of royal registers beginning in the second-half of the thirteenth century, which Burns rightly called "the greatest treasure of the chancery."³¹ The concern with recordkeeping was a

²⁸ Robert I. Burns, S.J., *Society and Documentation in Crusader Valencia: Diplomatarium of the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia. The Registered Charters of Its Conqueror, Jaime I, 1257-76*, 5 vols. to date (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1985-), I: 26.

²⁹ Ángel Canellas López, "Las cancellerías catalano-aragonesas. Estado actual de la cuestión," *Boletín de la sociedad castellanense de Cultura* 58 (1982): 351-394.

³⁰ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 71

³¹ Burns, *Diplomatarium*, I: 48.

product of the changes in literate mentalities and practical needs described so thoroughly by Stock and Clanchy respectively. While Thomas Bisson has shown the existence of a few parchment registers from the twelfth-century, they were few in number, largely because keeping parchment copies was expensive and because the twelfth-century kings had not established the bureaucratic machinery required for such a large endeavor.³² With access to Muslim paper mills in Xatíva after the conquest of Valencia in 1238 and armed with the institutional support of a formal chancery, the kings implemented a sophisticated registration system in which royal scribes copied a large portion of the outgoing, and some incoming, correspondence of most interest to the kings. As a result, the extant records from the royal chancery of the Crown of Aragon represent the largest and most detailed set of records for any monarchy or institution in Europe during the thirteenth century outside of the papal chancery. This magnificent collection serves as the primary source material for the present study.³³ It also further evidences the importance placed on writing by the kings. The kings' increasing reliance on the written word during the thirteenth century also surfaces in their constant reminders to officials throughout their realms to keep written records of all transactions, especially financial ones. Some of these writs survive in Catalan and Aragonese and therefore receive detailed attention in future chapters.

Before the thirteenth century, writing served as one of the instruments the kings of the Crown of Aragon and their ancestors, both in Catalonia and Aragon, utilized in administering their realms. The thirteenth-century kings thus gladly embraced Catalonia's notairal culture, with its concept of *fides publica*, to their advantage and implemented it in their other realms.

³² Thomas N. Bisson, *Fiscal Accounts of Catalonia under the Early Count-Kings (1151-1213)*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

³³ For more information on the registers, see below, 35-7.

With the intellectual help of their lay jurists, the kings and their successors claimed sole authority over public matters (*res publica*). The concept of *fides publica*, or public trust, found in Roman law proved particularly appealing to both burghers and kings. Witnesses and memory no longer guaranteed trust in complex economic environments or the expansion of royal authority.

By 1250, writing had become the primary weapon in the royal arsenal. Every aspect of royal governance was documented. The importance of writing reached such heights that the kings attempted to monopolize access to it. Beginning in the second half of the thirteenth century, the kings started claiming jurisdiction over all public matters in their realms, including the appointment of notaries.³⁴ While relatively successful imposing their will in urban areas (some compromise allowed city and municipal officials to name their own notaries and keep some of their profits), they failed implementing their reforms in noble and ecclesiastical circles. Yet, they continued to challenge noble and ecclesiastical authority over the written word and jurisdiction over the *res publica* well into the fourteenth century.³⁵ Vernacular writing in the royal chancery of the Crown of Aragon surfaces in the thirteenth century amid these power struggles.

Some work has been done on the relationship between royal authority and language choice in other parts of Europe. Each focus on different themes because of the particularities of the regions they study. The French historian Serge Lusignan, for example, has studied the

³⁴ The registers contain hundreds of writs either naming notaries, setting regulations for them (including the exams they needed to pass and formulas they had to use), or establishing taxes on their profit, which could be substantial. See Ignasi J. Baiges i Jardí, “El notariat català: origen i evolució,” in *Actes del I congrés d’història del notariat Català*, ed. Josep Maria Sans i Travé (Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 1993) [hereafter *Actes I*], 131-66.

³⁵ For more information on conflicts between the crown and ecclesiastical institutions over public notariates, see Rafael Ginebra, “Les escrivanies ecclesiàstiques a Catalunya,” in *Actes del II Congrés d’Història del Notariat Català*, ed. by Juan José López Burniol and Josep Maria Sans i Travé (Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 2000) [hereafter *Actes II*], 89-160.

connection between law and language choice in the royal chanceries of the English and French kings.³⁶ He concludes that the type of law adhered to in a locale influenced the language utilized by the inhabitants and royal officials in that area. Where Roman law took hold, Latin continued to serve as the primary choice of writing, while areas with stronger traditions of customary law proved more open to writing in French. The major problem with Lusignan's thesis is that distinguishing between Roman and customary law in the Middle Ages presents some difficulty. In the Crown of Aragon, for instance, the kings successfully implemented written law codes heavily influenced by a combination of Roman law and customary rights in each of their realms. They also communicated with all of their subjects in Latin, regardless of their legal status.

Teófilo F. Ruiz arrives at a different conclusion when examining the radical shift from Latin to romance in thirteenth-century Castile. Unlike most of western Christendom, the Castilian monarchy quickly abandoned Latin in favor of their spoken tongue.³⁷ Ruiz credits the lack of an authentic notarial culture and a move "From Heaven to Earth" or laicization as the cause of this rapid shift. Ruiz's observation is seemingly correct. Areas with strong notarial cultures also tended to be the most linguistically conservative. That is the case of Italy and Catalonia, where the majority of documentation remained in Latin. The office of notary offered laymen a path for social mobility when they lived in a society with a strong dependence on written records. Thus, notaries, who increasingly passed on their profession to sons and relatives, had an interest in keeping Latin as the standard written language to protect their profession from widespread competition. Yet, in the kingdom of Aragon, where the kings

³⁶ Serge Lusignan, *La langue des roi au Moyen Âge: Les français en France et en Angleterre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004).

³⁷ Teófilo F. Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth: The Reordering of Castilian Society, 1150-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

successfully implemented a notarial tradition, vernacular writing competed with Latin in the surviving public record.

My investigation into language choice by the kings of the Crown of Aragon offer an alternative explanation to these theories for the perseverance or decline in Latin in the medieval Crown of Aragon. Rather than type of law or notarial culture, I believe the moment when a dependence on writing penetrates the laity contributes more to the language used by the locals and their ruler. On the one hand, in Catalonia, where a lay culture of writing developed organically in the twelfth century before the vernaculars had reached widespread stability, an established tradition of writing in Latin thwarted the use of vernacular writing. In places like Aragon and Castile, on the other hand, where a notarial culture or dependence on writing was imposed from above by a centralized authority after the vernacular languages had developed a form standardized enough to make it convenient for widespread use, these languages competed with Latin in the public domain.

The evolution of vernacular writing in the medieval west, while possessing common features and trends, differed by region. That is why it is crucial that we study and compare the peculiarities of vernacular writing throughout western Europe between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, when some of these vernaculars obtained official status and codified rules. Language choice in the Crown of Aragon, a three-legged stool of sorts, with one leg firmly planted in the Iberian world, another in continental Europe, and a third in the Mediterranean, provides a particularly fertile ground to study the process by which institutions of power in Europe adopted vernacular writing as well as the relationship between this process and state building.

Notarial Practices and the Laicization of Writing in the Crown of Aragon

Notarial practices derive from Roman jurisprudence, which experienced a revival in twelfth-century Europe.³⁸ Advocates and practitioners of Roman law supported a strong central authority that imposed order and structure onto institutions of power, be them the church hierarch or lay governance. The concept of public trust (*fides publica*) within Roman law proved particularly attractive to princes, who could justify their expansion of power via legal grounds. Public trust also appealed to individuals in economically dynamic areas. Rather than depending on witnesses and memory, individuals and institutions authenticated their transactions via a public authority. As a result, writes Robert I. Burns, “the urban-commercial society of the western Mediterranean world was built around these notaries. They were not university-trained jurists, but their function was not unlike that of many American lawyers, and they were nearly as ubiquitous.”³⁹

The office of notary public in the lands of the Crown of Aragon offered its practitioners social and economic benefits. To begin with, the office was economically lucrative. Nearly all legal and business transactions required notarial authentication: testaments, marriages, dowry agreements, and contracts of any sort (loans, deeds, sales, payments, transfers). Notaries also served important administrative functions for central and local governing institutions, recording

³⁸ The classic work on the revival of Roman law in Europe remains Paul Vinogradoff, *Roman Law in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), even though it focuses primarily on northern Europe; also see Kenneth Pennington, “Medieval Law,” in *Medieval Studies: An Introduction*, ed. by James M. Powell, 2nd ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 333-352; Leidulf Melve, *Inventing the Public Sphere: the Public Debate During the Investiture contest (c. 1030-1122)* (Boston: Brill, 2007). For more information on canon law, see James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London: Longman, 1995).

³⁹ Robert I. Burns, *Jews in Notarial Culture: Latin Wills in Mediterranean Spain, 1250-1350* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), online: <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft429005rj/>.

and authenticating tax collection, customs duties, statutes, inventories, administrative minutiae, licenses, notices of appointment, and treaties.⁴⁰

Second, as legal functionaries, notaries gained social prestige among their peers in the lands of the Crown of Aragon and throughout the western Mediterranean. The notarial office offered ambitious urban families a means to educate their sons and establish stature for their family amongst their peers in economically-dynamic areas where Roman-inspired legal codes distinguished between contentious (homicide, theft) and voluntary law (contracts, testaments). Jurists in these areas handled the former and notaries the latter. While notaries lacked the prestige of university-trained jurists, they became instrumental figures in the enforcement and maintenance of the law. Their literacy also distinguished them from most of their contemporaries, bestowing upon them further prestige. As the office of public notary gained status, it became increasingly hereditary, with powerful guilds monopolized by a few families.⁴¹

Since notarial practices evolved gradually in Catalonia, the crown did not propagate ordinances enforcing them in the thirteenth century. By contrast, the kings promulgated notarial practices from above alongside Roman-based legal codes in Valencia (1239) and Aragon (1247), where they spread rapidly within the realm's urban centers. The Catalan-based model of notarial practices imported into Valencia and Aragon by the crown ensured that the requirements for royally-approved notaries and the execution of their office remained similar throughout the

⁴⁰ The standard classic study on notarial institutions in the Iberian peninsula remains José Bono, *Historia del derecho notarial español*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1979-1982); also see Burns, *Jews in Notarial Culture*; and the two collections of articles on the notarial profession in the medieval Crown of Aragon: *Actes I*; and *Actes II*.

⁴¹ For more on notaries' social prestige in the Crown of Aragon, see Sebastià Solè i Cot and Pere Verdés i Pijgan, "L'aportació dels notaris a la societat catalana en els camps del dret, la història, la literatura, i la política," in *Actes I*, 17-45; Laureà Pagarolas i Sabaté, "Notariat i cultura als registres notarials," in *Actes I*, 333-43; and Ramon Josep Puchades Bataller, "El notari valencià baixmedieval: exemple de la posició i percepció social de la professió notarial en l'occident mediterrani dels segles XIII, XIV, i XV," in *Actes II*, 524-25.

federation of realms. Notaries had to be male, Christian, a certain age (usually 20), and, if a local notary, reside within the territory's jurisdiction. After several years of apprenticeship, notaries had to pass an exam (determined by royal agents or a municipal council) and swear an oath to practice their profession.⁴² In the function of their office, notaries depended greatly on formularies, like those of Rainiero de Perugia, Salatiel, and Rolandino, which offered templates for composing and authenticating public documents.⁴³

By the end of the thirteenth century, most notaries in the lands of the Crown of Aragon also kept registers (copies) of their authenticated deeds, which they passed down to their children/successors. The earliest registers that survive in the federation date to the 1220s. Interestingly, they belonged to ecclesiastical rather than lay institutions/individuals.⁴⁴ In fact, 35 of the 44 notarial registers that have survived for the thirteenth century are ecclesiastical; the other 9 belonged to urban or baronial institutions.⁴⁵ While economic activity and a revival of Roman law encouraged and boosted lay literacy in urban areas, clerics maintained a strong hold on writing in the lands of the Crown of Aragon, as they did throughout most of western Europe.

One of the principal aims of the kings of the Crown of Aragon during the thirteenth century was to appropriate sole authority over the *fides publica*, including the notarial profession, and thus limit ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the public sphere. Several royal ordinances from the

⁴² Reference to an exam for notaries first appears in the Costums de Tortosa (Tortosa's legal code) of 1272. The oldest surviving exam dates from 1279 Barcelona, see Baiges, "El notariat català: origen i evolució," 148-9.

⁴³ For more on requirements and execution of the notarial office, see Pagarolas "Notariat i cultura als registres notarial," 333-49; For more on the use of notarial formularies in the Crown of Aragon, see Verdés, "L'aportació Dels Notaris," 21-7; and Ignasi Baiges i Jardí, "El Notariat Català: Origen i Evolució," 131-66.

⁴⁴ Pagarolas, "Notariat i cultura als registres notarial," 333-49. On a practical level, parchment was expensive and only wealthy institutions could afford to keep registers. As paper, called *pergamí de drap*, became more accessible, registers proliferated, especially among lay notaries.

⁴⁵ Rafael Ginebra, "Les escrivanies ecclesiàstiques a Catalunya," 92.

second half of the thirteenth century prohibit clerics from exercising the office of public notary. In the Courts of Huesca of 1247, for example, James I banned religious from acting as notaries in the kingdom of Aragon. The king enforced a similar sanction in the kingdom of Valencia. In reality, however, the king did not have the power to enforce these bans. Local churches, monasteries, and cathedral chapters that benefited economically and politically from these public scriptoria successfully challenged the king's ban via litigation and obtained *ex parte* privileges to exert the office or they ignored the royal directives altogether. In Catalonia, where religious institutions adopted notarial practices as early as their lay counterparts, gaining control of ecclesiastical notaries proved even more difficult.

The kings nonetheless continued to press the issue, as did the papacy in their attempts to reform the church by separating clerical and secular business.⁴⁶ The Roman Curia enthusiastically appropriated Roman law earlier than their secular counterparts. Canon and civil reformers shared similar goals: the partial separation of church and state governance. But realities on the ground, including challenges from cathedral chapters, bishops, and monasteries, prevented the separation. Conflicts over who represented the public trust ensued throughout the western Mediterranean, including within the realms of the Crown of Aragon.⁴⁷

King Peter III (II of Catalonia, r. 1276-85) pursued control over ecclesiastical exercise of notarial practices more keenly than his father, James I. In 1278, Peter prohibited non-royally licensed notaries from exerting their office and nullified their authenticated deeds. Peter aimed his decree at two groups: fraudulent notaries and religious institutions that did not have *ex parte* permission. Three years later, the king escalated his challenge to ecclesiastical authority over the

⁴⁶ For examples, see Acradi Garcia i Sanz, "Origen de la fe pública del document notarial," in *Actes II*, 491-501.

⁴⁷ For more on conflicts revolving around *fides publica*, see Ginebra, "Les escrivanies ecclesiastiques a Catalunya," in *Actes II*, 89-170.

fides publica, appointing the jurist Ramon de Besalu to organize and regulate religious scriptoria that asserted public-customary rights. The Besalu project established that rectors had to act by authority of the king, mention so in documents (state the king's authority as part of the eschatacol formula), and pay a census to the crown as well as a fifth of their proceeds, with the exception of testaments and marriage contracts. Clerical objection to these royal mandates, however, forced the crown to suspend them in the Barcelona courts of 1283.⁴⁸

In the end, the thirteenth-century kings gave in to clerical objections and allowed religious institutions to maintain jurisdiction over certain public notaries. Even though they did not succeed at controlling the *fides publica*, the kings laid the foundational groundwork for their successors in later centuries to pursue greater control over the church in matters of public authority. The laicization of government occurred gradually, albeit never completely, at least in the pre-modern world. Yet, the shift taking place, led by the kings and their lay jurists, proved significant, especially in light of other royal aims and societal transformations. In effect, the thirteenth-century kings of the Crown of Aragon began a fight that they could not win, but which set a precedent for their successors.

The spread of notarial practices throughout the western Mediterranean set an important precedent for the laicization of European society. Lay jurists served as the intellectual architects of new, Roman-based legal practices, while notaries implemented them on the ground level. This laicization did not equate to secularization. For example, the chancellor of the Crown of Aragon's royal chancery remained a high-ranking prelate, usually a bishop or archbishop. Yet the chancellor served primarily as a figurehead, only participating in the most ceremonial

⁴⁸ For more on the Besalu project, see Ginebra, "Les escrivanies ecclesiastiques a Catalunya," 89-170.

occasions.⁴⁹ The royal chancery instead relied almost solely on lay scribes and jurists in their daily operations.

Methodology

Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Anthropology

Sociolinguists, linguistic anthropologists, and literary critics offer historians a number of innovative analytical frameworks and useful methods with which to study communication in the widest sense of the term. Historians like J. N. Adams, Patrick Geary, Rosamond McKitterick, Michael Clanchy, and others understood the value of these contemporary theories and applied them successfully to different medieval settings. This dissertation follows their example and pursues a multidisciplinary approach to examine what the language of surviving thirteenth-century documents reveals about communication strategies and mentalities in the medieval Crown of Aragon specifically and socio-cultural and political change more generally in the medieval west. In doing so, it heeds Peter Burke's call twenty-five years ago for "a social history of language" that fills the gap between linguistics, sociology, history, and, I would add, anthropology.⁵⁰ Burke argued that social historians could not afford to ignore language, because it is "so intimately involved with the processes of social interaction and social change." He therefore urged historians to turn to the work of ethnographers of communication, sociologists,

⁴⁹ The first chancellor was the bishop of Barcelona, who also happened to fight alongside the king in several crusading battles (he lost his leg during the conquest of Majorca). As in the case of the bishop of Barcelona, these clerics usually proved close allies of the king.

⁵⁰ Peter Burke and Roy Porter eds., *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

and others who laid the ground work for studying language in its proper social and cultural environment.

Linguistic anthropology, in particular, offers historians of language a rich array of attractive theoretical models. John Gumperz and Dell Hymes pioneered the field with their advocacy for a more ethnographically minded investigation of communication. In a direct rebuke of structuralism, Gumperz and Hymes posited that communication derives from a combination of social factors rather than from any predetermined grammatical structure. For them, speakers' agency and the social norms of their communities guide communication practices.⁵¹ Speech acts or any other type of communicative exchanges must therefore be understood within the context in which they are produced. Gumperz and Hymes's theoretical foundations laid the groundwork for decades of fascinating research into the inferential applications of language use in society and culture. Socio-linguistic and linguistic anthropological work on code switching, markedness, indexicality, diglossia, communicative competence, speech communities, language ideologies, identity formation, and individual agency provide particularly useful guides in my own research into communication practices in the Middle Ages.

Even though these theories were created essentially for oral exchanges, they can be adapted to a medieval setting. This process is not simple. As Gumperz himself noted, conversational exchanges have certain dialogic properties that differentiate them from written texts.⁵² Yet, Hymes understood that one can not limit communication to speech, explaining his

⁵¹ John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes eds., "The Ethnography of Communication," *American Anthropologist* 66:6 (1964), 1-186.

⁵² John J. Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 5.

shift in paradigm from an “ethnography of speaking” to one of “communication.”⁵³ More importantly, as I noted above, medieval communication, even when conveyed by writing, was usually transmitted by speech. That is especially the case with vernacular writing in the Middle Ages.

It is an underlying assumption of this dissertation that surviving medieval correspondence offers valuable clues into the motivations, expectations, and reactions of codeswitching without the luxury and convenience of experiencing the actual exchange. If we consider medieval texts as scripts of an oral performance or as “debris” of a communicative event, then surely we can and should subject them to linguistic anthropological methodologies. The scripted nature of text delivery in the Middle Ages, moreover, may provide a particularly fertile source for the basic premise of linguistic anthropological research, which considers language use to be socially-constructed and meaningful products based on speakers’ interests, social environment/norms, and linguistic abilities.

An analysis of the principal theoretical vocabulary I borrow from linguistic anthropologists, beginning with codeswitching, illustrates both the value and challenge of applying these theories to texts written seven-hundred years ago. Gumperz revolutionized the study of codeswitching in the 1970s by rejecting the notion that codeswitching indicated a speaker’s lack of linguistic competence or knowledge. Instead, he argued that codeswitching reflects a discourse strategy, in which speakers utilize a code change within established social norms to signal a desired message that could or could not alter the definition of a communicative exchange. Altering the definition of a speech event refers to Gumperz’s distinction between situational and metaphorical codeswitching, which according to Kathryn Woolard, “is still a

⁵³ See Gumperz and Hymes, “The Ethnography of Communication,” 1-34.

point of departure for most researchers.”⁵⁴ In situational codeswitching, speakers shift between codes to change the mood and context of a communicative exchange. Metaphorical or conversational switching, on the contrary, reflects a shift in language that does not. Neither functional distinction fits completely with the motives that drove individuals in the period under study to switch codes when writing, although some parallels can be drawn between the situational/metaphorical dichotomy and my practical/symbolic paradigm. Fortunately, Kathryn Woolard, Carol Myers-Scotton, Michael Silverman, Peter Auer, Susan Gal, Jane Hill, Paul Kroskrity, and many others have taken up where Gumperz left off and expanded, replaced, and/or nuanced his strategic conception of codeswitching.

Before I continue discussing codeswitching, two linguistic concepts, communicative competence and speech community, deserve attention. Hymes coined the term communicative competence to refer to the knowledge, both linguistic and social, individuals need to communicate intelligibly with each other.⁵⁵ For Hymes, successful communication requires familiarity with a community’s social norms along with the language’s linguistic components (vocabulary, grammar, syntax). Communicative competence is directly tied to the notion, advanced by Gumperz and Hymes, of a speech community as a social construct. Gumperz defined a speech community as the set of social norms and linguistic forms shared by a group of people resulting from regular and frequent usage. He stressed, moreover, that the speech community and not the individual speakers of a language or the linguistic competence of individuals must form the starting point of linguistic analysis.⁵⁶ Along those lines, Hymes

⁵⁴ Kathryn Woolard, “Codeswitching,” in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, ed. by Alessandro Duranti (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 75

⁵⁵ See Dell Hymes, “On Communicative Competence,” in *Sociolinguistics*, ed. by J. B. Pride and J. Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).

⁵⁶ John J. Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies*, 24.

described the speech community as “a fundamental concept for the relation between language, speech, and social structure.”⁵⁷ More recently, Marcyliena Morgan concludes that they:

reflect what people do and know when they interact with one another. It assumes that when people come together through discursive practices, they intend to behave as though they operate within a shared set of norms, local knowledge, beliefs, and values. It means that they are aware of these things and capable of knowing when they are being adhered to and when the values of the community are being ignored.⁵⁸

She adds, “membership in and across speech communities requires the negotiation of languages, dialects, discourse, styles, and symbolic systems as part of normal practice.” While the concept of speech community is certainly complex—it can not be limited by geographic location nor can individuals be limited to one speech community—it offers historians some theoretical advantages. Along with communicative competence, it serves as one of the foundations for an entire array of linguistic-anthropological constructs that shed light onto the social implications of language, including codeswitching.

Kathryn Woolard’s précis about the state of codeswitching studies, in Alessandro Duranti’s elegant primer *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, identifies two principal challenges to Gumperz’s model. The first comes from linguistic anthropologists who “agree with Gumperz that codeswitching is skilled communicative behavior that can be socially meaningful and can help accomplish interactional functions or goals.” Yet:

they differ on the questions of how such meaning is produced and processed, whether explanation must be culture-specific or involve universal principles, the relative explanatory weight of social structure and individual agency, and the extent to which such meaning is fully determined by any set of factors.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Marcyliena Morgan, “Speech Community,” in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, ed. by Alessandro Duranti (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 8, citing Dell Hymes, *Language in Culture and Society: A reader in Linguistics and Anthropology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 385.

⁵⁸ Morgan, “Speech Community,” 8, citing Dell Hymes, *Language in Culture and Society: A reader in Linguistics and Anthropology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 385.

⁵⁹ Woolard, “Codeswitching,” 78. Woolard further divides these theories into two alternatives: discourse-related codeswitching and the markedness model.

The second criticism levied against Gumperz's model is more substantial. It challenges the universality of social strategies involved in the process of codeswitching. As Woolard notes, "these debates have now brought the view of codeswitching nearly full circle, to open questioning by experts of perceived wisdom about the skill, strategy, and linguistic boundaries involved."⁶⁰ Focusing on the practical motivations rather than the semantic ones offers valuable insight into conversational exchanges and even the early appearances of vernacular writing, when the linguistic competence of the document's producer may have played an important factor in codeswitching. The choice of language in the thirteenth-century royal chancery, however, had little to do with the linguistic competence of the documents' author/sender, and much more to do with the competence of the intended audience and the mood the author wanted to convey.

The most fertile research on codeswitching for my project surrounds indexicality. As developed by Michael Silverstein for linguistic and anthropological studies, indexicality "captures the dynamism that critics have found missing in existing models of codeswitching...[which results] as a dialectical process of extrapolation of meaning from use and use from meaning."⁶¹ It does this by assigning linguistic forms indexical values that are malleable and mutually influential. Thus, "if a specific form presupposes a certain social context, then use of that form may create the perception of such a context where it did not exist before." Silverstein's idea builds on Myers-Scotton's markedness model, which insists that linguistic varieties are always socially indexical. In other words, "through the accumulation of use in particular kinds of social relations, they come to index or invoke those relations, taking on

⁶⁰ Woolard, "Codeswitching," 90.

⁶¹ Woolard, "Codeswitching," 88; also see Michael Silverstein, "Indexical Order and the Dialectics of Sociolinguistic Life," in *Third Annual Symposium About Language and Society, Austin*, ed. by R. Ide, R. Parker, and Y. Sunaoshi (Austin: University of Texas, Department of Linguistics, 1996).

an air of natural association with them.”⁶² According to Myers-Scotton, languages are distinguished between marked and unmarked based on frequency of use. Unmarked codes serve as the expected medium because it is used most frequently in a certain type of conventionalized exchange.⁶³

Indexicality is inherently tied to the concepts of language ideologies and agency. Paul Kroskrity defines language ideologies as:

a set of diverse beliefs, however implicit or explicit they may be, used by speakers of all types as models for constructing linguistic evaluations and engaging in communicative activity. They are beliefs about the superiority/inferiority of specific languages, such as the sentiments expressed during the so-called “Ebonics Debate,” which questioned the legitimacy and appropriateness of African-American vernacular English.⁶⁴

Understanding individual agency in language use helps us decipher a community’s language ideologies. Agency is particularly important because, as Alessandro Duranti notes, any act of speaking [or communicative event for that matter] involves some kind of agency, often regardless of the speaker’s intentions and the hearer’s interest or collaboration.”⁶⁵ Duranti defines agency as:

The property of those entities (i) that have some degree of control over their own behavior, (ii) whose actions in the world affect other entities (and sometimes their own), and (iii) whose actions are the object of evaluation (e.g. in terms of their responsibility for a given outcome).⁶⁶

⁶² Woolard, “Codeswitching,” 81.

⁶³ The problem with Myers-Scotton’s model, according to Woolard, is that it depends on her view that speakers are always negotiating “positions in rights-and-obligations balances.” To account for this problem Woolard believes that “eliminating the term markedness and focusing on indexicality in the markedness model can help clarify the maxims themselves as well as the contribution that the overall argument makes,” Woolard, “Codeswitching,” 81.

⁶⁴ Paul V. Kroskrity, “Language Ideologies,” in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, ed. by Alessandro Duranti (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 497.

⁶⁵ Alessandro Duranti, “Agency in language,” in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, ed. by Alessandro Duranti (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 451.

⁶⁶ Duranti, “Agency in language,” 453; Duranti emphasizes that we need to view agency in language not of language, “because the latter description might assume the uncritical reification of language as an agent with its own goals and even with its own will.”

Duranti's treatment of two mutually dependent, albeit distinct, dimensions of agency, performance (the enactment of agency) and grammatical encoding (its linguistic representation), proves particularly useful.⁶⁷ Duranti cites Silverstein's theory of indexicality as one of the most fundamental contributions to the study of the "linguistic realization of agency." It builds on Charles S. Peirce's concept of indexes (centering on semiotics) and John L. Austin's notion of an illocutionary act (an intention transmitted by the speaker through speech) to create a sophisticated mechanism with which to understand the degree of agency in a performance, or in other words, "the extent to which actions are performed willfully and with specific goals in mind."⁶⁸ In the words of Woolard:

if a specific form presupposes a certain social context, then use of that form may create the perception of such a context where it did not exist before. For example, if a certain linguistic variety is associated with the authority of the classroom or court, it may come to be heard as authoritative language. Its use in a different context can then itself signify authority in a creative form of indexicality.⁶⁹

Thus, while language ideology helps us understand a community's beliefs and attitude toward language use, agency helps us determine the motivations behind codeswitching strategies.

Last, but certainly not least, the concepts of diglossia and registers prove most useful when examining language use in the Middle Ages. Charles Ferguson first developed the sociolinguistic theory of diglossia in 1959 to describe a relatively stable socio-linguistic arrangement in which a high prestige language (H) coexists, albeit on unequal footing, with one or more low prestige languages (L).⁷⁰ According to Ferguson's original paradigm, the H language is an archaic register of the L language. As a result, H is never anyone's mother tongue, and no one is ever as comfortable in H as in L. H and L must be different languages, or

⁶⁷ Duranti, "Agency in language," 454.

⁶⁸ Duranti, "Agency in language," 451.

⁶⁹ Woolard, "Codeswitching," 88.

⁷⁰ Charles Ferguson, "Diglossia," *Word* 15 (1959): 325-340.

at least, different registers of the same language. Furthermore, and this point is stressed by Ferguson, language choice in diglossic situations is based on social context and not social identity. Ferguson also believed that diglossia usually developed when a small elite held a long-term monopoly on literacy.

In an excellent special edition of the *International Journal of Sociology of Language* titled “Focus on Diglossia,” Alan Hudson provides a thorough review of the scholarship on diglossia.⁷¹ Besides outlining the development of the concept by successive generations of sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists, Hudson’s primary aim is to promote a unified, clear, and limited definition of diglossia. He rejects Joshua Fishman’s conception of “extended” diglossia, which broadens the construct to include codes that are not linguistically related. For Hudson, as well as for most of the collection’s contributors, diglossic situations only exist when the languages are linguistically related, as in the four classic examples offered by Ferguson: French/Haitian Creole; classical and colloquial Greek; classical and colloquial Arabic; and High German and Swiss German.⁷² I do not believe that limiting the concept of diglossia to linguistically-related codes rescues the theory from unnecessary clutter, as many of these authors suggest. By doing so, the researcher dismisses a valuable field of comparison into how power dynamics, social environment, and cultural values reflect broader social activity. The similarities between the development of Germanic and romance writing after the millennium in western Europe, for example, suggests that settings conducive to diglossia might exist among non-related linguistic codes. Hudson’s vision of a less stable paradigm, more malleable to change, however, does offer guidance for the study of language use in the thirteenth century, a period that

⁷¹ Alan Hudson, “Outline of a Theory of Diglossia,” *International Journal of Sociology of Language* 157 *Focus on Diglossia* (2002), 1-48.

⁷² According to Hudson, the sociolinguistic situation in the romance-speaking medieval world exemplifies a classic case of diglossia.

witnessed the rapid increase of the romance languages' prestige. It also lays the process by which the L languages may displace their H counterparts. Florian Coulmas's contribution to Hudson's collection, particularly appealing to my work, returns to the importance of literacy in diglossic situations. She urges investigators to focus on how oral and literate varieties of diglossia affect each other.⁷³

The implications of diglossia in medieval Europe depend on the relationship between Latin, the language with the highest prestige, and the vernacular languages or registers of Latin in the case of the romances. Registers, like other cultural models, according to Asif Agha, "are historical formations caught up in group-relative processes of valorization and countervalorization, exhibiting change in both form and value over time."⁷⁴ They are shaped by the process of socialization throughout an individual's life. Agha argues that registers derive from a metapragmatic model of language not language structure, and consequently their evaluation "tells us something, in particular, about the pragmatics of language—that is, the capacity of linguistic forms to index culturally recognizable activities, categories of actors, etc., as elements of the context of language use."⁷⁵ Yet, she also notes that "a register's tokens are never experienced in isolation during discourse; they are encountered under conditions of textuality with other signs—both linguistic and non-linguistic signs—that form a significant context, or co-text, for the construal of the token uttered."⁷⁶

⁷³ Florian Coulmas, "Comments to Alan Hudson," *International Journal of Sociology of Language* 157 (2002), 61.

⁷⁴ Asif Agha, "Registers of Language," in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, ed. by Alessandro Duranti (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 25.

⁷⁵ Agha, "Registers of Language," 26.

⁷⁶ Agha, "Registers of Language," 25.

Sources

Returning to the world of *medium aevum*, the state of surviving royal registers within the Cancillería Real section of the Archive of the Crown of Aragon [hereafter ACA], the richest depository of medieval documents in Spain, and one of the largest in Europe, dictates the parameters of the present historical inquiry. Only a precious few royal documents from the thirteenth-century Crown of Aragon have come down to us in their original parchment form. Most royal sources, including ones composed in the romance, survive as copies recorded in these registers. Even though the practice of registering documents in the Crown of Aragon dates to the twelfth century, it did not flourish until James I gained access to the Muslim paper mills at Xatíva in the mid thirteenth century, which offered a much cheaper alternative to parchment. Fortunately, a commitment to recordkeeping and easy access to paper encouraged the kings to begin keeping detailed records of their written communications. From that moment onwards, all of the medieval kings of the Crown of Aragon kept registers.

These registers are arranged chronologically by the reigning years of the kings of the Crown of Aragon. Eighty one of the first eighty-five registers belong to James I, Peter III, and Alfonse III (II of Catalonia, r. 1285-91). The other four contain copies of important documents for the kings dating back to the eleventh century, including the *Liber feudorum maior*. Even though James II (r. 1291-1327) governed during the last nine years of the thirteenth century, most of his reign (three-quarters) took place in the fourteenth century. James's more sophisticated bureaucratic administration, moreover, resembles those of his fourteenth-century successors more than his thirteenth-century predecessors. For instance, only seven of James I's twenty-two registers have a title (regs. 5, 6, and 7: *Donationum Regni Valentiae* and *Domibus Valentiae*; reg. 8: *Speciale Peytarum. Coenarum*; regs. 17 and 22: *Promiscuum*; and reg. 26:

Partitio Regni Majoricarum). The others either simply state the generic term “diverse matters” (regs. 9, 16, 18-21, and 23-5: *Diversorum*) or do not have a title altogether (regs. 10-15). Even when labeled, the contents of James’s registers, like those of Peter III and Alfonse III do not always match their titles.

Peter III and Alfonse III’s registers are successively more organized than James’s. Just over half of Peter’s twenty-one extant registers (eleven) lack a title. Peter also introduced a set of thematic headings for the registers that outlived his administration, such as *Graciarum* (privileges), *Donaciones* (donations), *Speciale* (miscellaneous) and *Exercituum* (military). The organization of the registers continued to develop under his son, Alfonse III. All of Alfonse’s registers, for example, possess titles. Alfonse’s chancery also generated additional categories of registers that survived into the following centuries, including *Curiae* (court), *Thesaurarii* (treasury), *Peccunae* (financial matters), *Commune* (law and legal matters), and *Legationum* (Embassies).

The organization of Alfonse’s chancery, however, pales in comparison with that of his brother and heir, James II, and the other fourteenth-century kings of the Crown of Aragon. While James I, Peter III, and Alfonse III combined to create a total of eighty-one registers in nearly six decades, James II alone produced three hundred and forty three during his thirty-six-year rule. In addition, James II’s registers are significantly better organized. More specific titles better reflect the contents of its entries, arranged more methodical than in previous reigns. Furthermore, the entries in James II’s registers also tend to include the names of the scribe who composed or supervised the composition of the original document. The clarity of James II’s registers make them easier to peruse than their thirteenth century counterparts. Their sheer volume, however, render it impossible to read individually in a timely fashion, as I did with

those of James I, Peter III, and Alfonso III. Rather than set out to create representative samples of James II's 1291-9 registers, I decided to conclude the project in 1291. The fact that three-quarters of James II's reign took place in the fourteenth century and the closer resemblance between his registers and those of his successors further convinced me to end my survey in 1291 rather than 1299.

Dissertation Organization

I have organized the dissertation into seven chapters, including this introduction and a conclusion. In chapter 2, "The Rise of Vernacular Writing in the Crown of Aragon," I provide a succinct description of the trajectory of vernacular writing in Europe, with emphasis on the lands of the Crown of Aragon, during the course of the Middle Ages. The chapter begins with a historiographic overview of the literature on the rise of vernacular writing in medieval Europe. I follow that description with a concise sketch of the evolution of Catalan and Aragonese writing, from its appearance in the tenth century until the end of the thirteenth.

Chapter 3, "Practical Codeswitching in the Royal Chancery," examines the practical motivations that drove the kings of the Crown of Aragon to compose texts in a vernacular language. I begin the chapter with a comparison of the king and his heir's household expenses to demonstrate the linguistic conservatism of the royal chancery. Unlike the king, who composed them in Latin, thousands of records containing Peter's daily expenses fill the pages of entire princely registers written in Catalan. Once Peter ascended to the throne, however, he immediately began to record these expenses in Latin. The immediate shift suggests that he and his agents, like those of his predecessors and successors, considered Latin the language most

suitable for a king, even when recording internal notes. After establishing the linguistic conservatism of the royal chancery, I analyze instances in which outside demand prompted royal scribes to write in a romance language. In the third and final section, I consider the motivations behind King James I's decision to redact his autobiography, *Llibre dels fets* (Book of Deeds), in Catalan.

Chapter 4, "The Rise of Defiance Letters in the Vernacular," constitutes the first of three chapters that treat the symbolic, and most common, use of vernacular writing in the royal chancery. In it, I trace the emergence of the earliest invective messages in the romance between rebellious nobles, almost exclusively from Old Catalonia, and the king, James I. Both the nobles and the king composed antagonistic and defiant letters to each other in Catalan to augment the impact of their messages. Transmitting these messages in the spoken, low-prestige register amplified their effect in two ways. First, it provided an unexpected break in protocol. By replacing the standard language of communication with a low-prestige code, the nobles inflicted a blow in decorum alongside their declarations of war. Second, using the vernacular allowed the nobles and the king to communicate their antagonistic messages clearly and evocatively to an audience whose members did not all understand Latin. These documents were, after all, read aloud in the presence of the recipient's court. Both parties switch back to Latin once the conflict ends, signaling a return to normality.

In chapter 5, "The Height, Evolution, and End of Defiance Letters in the Romance Languages," I focus on two major developments in the practice of composing defiance letters in the vernacular before it ended. First, the pattern spreads to Aragon in the mid 1270s. Second, besides signaling an end to conflicts after mutual communications degenerated into the vernacular, Latin becomes a means by which the hostile parties indicated an interest in

reconciliation. Defiance letters in the vernaculars, however, come to an abrupt end with the collapse of noble rebellions in 1280. Once Peter III subdued the nobility and enforced the superiority of the crown, defiance letters ceased to exist. By the time the crown faced serious opposition from their nobles in the following centuries, vernacular writing had evolved to a point where vernacular defiances were ineffectual.

Chapter 6, “Transmitting Anger, Emphasis, and Urgency in the Vernacular,” shows how James I and his thirteenth-century successors appropriated vernacular writing when seeking to emphasize certain orders they considered important to their authority. By forgoing established protocol and choosing to write these commands in the “marked” or less commonly used codes (romances) rather than the “unmarked” register (Latin), the kings underscored the magnitude of their requests. Peter III’s military instructions following the French invasion of 1285, which constitute the majority of extant orders in a romance language, exemplify the crown’s adoption of codeswitching to consign a sense of emphasis and urgency onto their orders. Before the French army entered Catalonia, the king dispensed preparations for the imminent war to his subjects, as he and his predecessors had always done, in Latin. But an unexpectedly early incursion by the French army forced Peter to gather his host sooner than anticipated. When Peter informed his subjects of the invasion and ordered them to prepare for war, he switched from Latin to the vernacular to transmit the importance of his instructions as well as the urgency of the situation.

Finally, chapter 7, the “Conclusion,” provides a succinct summary of my major arguments and their contributions, which includes a better understanding of the rise of vernacular writing in the Crown of Aragon and how the kings and their contemporaries utilized language choice as a linguistic mechanism to further their political and socio-economic pursuits.

Chapter 2: The Rise of Vernacular Writing

The following chapter offers a succinct précis of the trajectory of vernacular writing from the ninth until the thirteenth century. It begins with a brief historiographic overview of early romance and, to a lesser extent, Germanic writing in medieval Europe. I then proceed to concentrate specifically on the evolution of vernacular writing in the lands of the Crown of Aragon. In this second section, I compare the development of Catalan and Aragonese writing, the two most widely spoken languages in the Crown of Aragon, and place them within a wider European context.

Vernacular Writing in Western Europe

A discussion on the origins of vernacular writing in the romance-speaking areas of medieval Europe must begin with Roger Wright's monumental study *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France*, which revolutionized our understanding of the development of the romance languages.⁷⁷ Wright boldly states in the first sentence of his book that medieval Latin was a Carolingian invention. In their pursuit to return to proper classical Latin, the Carolingians reformed the phonetic and morphological rules of contemporary Latin.

⁷⁷ Roger Wright, *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France* (Liverpool: F. Cairns, 1982); also see the collection of articles in *Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Roger Wright (New York: Routledge, 1991). For an alternate view of vernacular writing's evolution, see Michel Banniard, *Viva Voce: Communication écrite et communication orale du IVe au IXe siècle en Occident Latin* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1990).

These changes, especially the pronunciation reforms urged in Alcuin's *De orthographia* (the pronunciation of each letter), made Latin unintelligible to most people, creating the need for a transliteration of the spoken tongue. For Wright, writing in the romance vernaculars developed for practical purposes, chiefly to communicate with the uneducated, who no longer understood Latin. Wright supports his thesis by noting that the seventeenth decree of the 813 Council of Tours, a product of the Carolingian Reforms, identified a romance vernacular and the existence of a non-literate audience, that is, one that did not understand Latin, for the first time. The decree urges clerics to preach in the *lingua romana* (romance) or *teudisca* (Germanic) so that their audience could understand their sermons. Likewise, Wright points to the 842 Strasbourg Oaths between two of Charlemagne's sons, Charles the Bold, king of the west Franks, and Louis the German, king of the east Franks, as evidence of his thesis. According to the Frankish chronicler and Charlemagne's grandson, Nithard, Charles and Louis pledged allegiance to each other against their brother Lothar, ruler of the central Franks and nominal emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, in the spoken vernacular of each other's realms. Charles pledged his oath to Louis in a Germanic tongue, while Louis swore his oath to Charles in the romance (proto-French). Nithard's chronicle contains the monarchs' pledge in their respective vernaculars.

Although Wright's thesis is certainly convincing, and I believe fundamentally correct, the surviving evidence from the early Middle Ages does not fully support his chronology. After the Strasbourg Oaths, writing in the romance essentially disappears until the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Rosamond McKitterick attempts to solve this inconsistency by arguing that the Latin-romance distinction created by the Carolingian Reforms took a long time to take effect.⁷⁸ That is why vernacular writing did not take off in western Europe until after the millennium.

⁷⁸ McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 12-22.

McKitterick expands on her position in an article belonging to a collection of studies edited by Wright focusing on the distinction between linguistic and metalinguistic changes.⁷⁹ In the article, McKitterick diminishes the importance of the recognition of proto-French in the 813 Council of Tours, which she believes “has been blown out of all proportion” and may not have many implications outside of the metropolitan see of Tours.⁸⁰

McKitterick also notes that rather than an accurate reflection of the linguistic capacities or affiliations of the Carolingian rulers and their followers, the Strasbourg Oaths were a “clever and essentially literary use of language” by Nithard.⁸¹ Like Janet Nelson, McKitterick contends that Charles the Bald and Louis the German may have never even sworn allegiance to each other in their respective vernaculars. Instead, they propose Nithard used the oaths as “a rhetorical device in the traditions of the great classical history writers” to stress the unity and coherence between the eastern and western regions of the empire.⁸² Nithard accomplished this, according to McKitterick, “by giving each army a tongue” and “putting the language of the other army in the mouth of their leaders.”⁸³ McKitterick argues that the Carolingian language reforms did not coalesce until the eleventh century. She strengthens her argument by noting that there was seldom a reference made for a need to translate capitularies. The few translations of capitularies that survive from the period are from the eastern realms and in German. Latin writing,

⁷⁹ Rosamond McKitterick, “Latin and Romance: an historian’s perspective,” in *Late Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Roger Wright (New York: Routledge, 1991), 130-45. Metalinguistic changes signify changes in ways to conceive of language, not changes in usage or language system, see Tore Janson, “Language Change and Metalinguistic Change: Latin to Romance and Other Cases,” in *Late Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Roger Wright (New York: Routledge, 1991), 20.

⁸⁰ McKitterick, “Latin and Romance,” 137.

⁸¹ McKitterick, “Latin and Romance: an historian’s perspective,” 137-8.

⁸² McKitterick, “Latin and Romance: an historian’s perspective,” 138; also see Janet Nelson, “Public histories and private history in the work of Nithard,” *Speculum* 60 (1986), 251-93; and Nelson, “Literacy in Carolingian Government,” 285-96.

⁸³ McKitterick, “Latin and Romance: an historian’s perspective,” 138.

nonetheless, retained its supremacy in both the western and eastern realms of the empire, and in clerical as well as lay writing.

The primacy of Latin, highlighted by McKitterick and others in both the eastern and western corners of the former Carolingian Empire, itself raises some important questions. Why exactly did it take so long for a metalinguistic change to follow the Carolingian Reforms? Furthermore, what is the relationship, if there is one, between metalinguistic consciousness and vernacular writing? Germanic-speaking natives conceived of their language as categorically different from Latin. That was not the general case in the romance-speaking world before the thirteenth century.⁸⁴ Yet, a cursory glimpse at the trajectory of vernacular writing in the romance and Germanic-speaking areas of Western Europe after the millennium appear jarringly similar. Green's detailed description of German writing offers an insightful narrative of the latter's historical evolution. Green informs us that German writing underwent different stages of evolution between the second century B.C. and the fourteenth century A.D.. The central focus of the book concerns the reappearance of writing in German in the second half of the eleventh century after its virtual disappearance for two-hundred and fifty years. According to Green, a century and a half of a clerical monopoly over literacy led to the disappearance of German writing. He credits changes in education, an increase in book production, and the rise of secular chanceries for the revival of German writing in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. The spread of writing by townsmen and petty nobles during the thirteenth century, furthermore, increased its rate of growth dramatically and guaranteed its longevity.

⁸⁴ Anglo-Norman England offers a fascinating confluence of both, resulting in particularly interesting linguistic situation. For more on England's unique linguistic situation see, Clanchy's *From Memory to Written Record*.

Even though Green does not attempt to place his conclusions in a wider European context, a number of scholars have begun to do so.⁸⁵ Their work along with my own findings lead me to conclude that two basic motives seem to have inspired the birth of vernacular writing in medieval Europe. If we accept McKitterick and Nelson's contention that Nithard transliterated German and romance as a rhetorical device in the ninth century, symbolism represents the first. Patrick Geary also identifies strategic uses of vernacular writing in the early Middle Ages in his excellent study *Language & Power in the Early Middle Ages*.⁸⁶ He convincingly argues that property descriptions included certain passages in Old High German for additional emphasis.⁸⁷ The second and more common motive involved practicality. Clerics throughout Europe, who largely monopolized access to the written word before the thirteenth century, created vernacular writing to reach a larger audience that no longer understood church or medieval Latin. That explains the survival of sermons as some of the first extant texts written in the vernacular languages. Yet, not all clerics read or even understood Latin; they too benefited from vernacular translations. In fact, biblical glosses, used for pedagogical purposes, that is to teach other monks how to read and/or interpret biblical passages, survive among the

⁸⁵ Some exceptions include Patrick J. Geary, *Language & Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Lebanon: Breandeis University Press, 2013); Tony Hunt, "Some Aspects of Orality in the Anglo-Norman St. Modwenna," in *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages: Essays on a Conjunction and its Consequences in Honour of D. H. Green*, ed. Mark Chinca and Christopher Young, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 103-18; and Michel Banniard, "Rhabanus Maurus and the Vernacular Languages," in *Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Roger Wright (New York: Routledge, 1991, 164-74; also see Banniard, *Viva Voce*. A systematic comparison between the historical evolution of vernacular writing in the romance and Germanic-speaking worlds in medieval Europe remains to be done. But then again, we also lack a comprehensive comparison of the romance languages' historical trajectory from the eleventh century onwards, a critical moment in their evolution and standardization.

⁸⁶ The title of my dissertation is an homage to Patrick Geary's graduate research seminar, "Power Languages in the Middle Ages." Professor Geary's seminar, where I first considered the historical implications of language use, not only inspired this dissertation, but proved to be one of the most rewarding intellectual pursuits of my graduate career.

⁸⁷ Geary, *Language and Power*, 66-7.

earliest vernacular writing.⁸⁸ Vernacular writing, as David H. Green notes, was a means to an end.⁸⁹ In other words, it functioned initially as a technology. Writers, overwhelmingly clerics, experimented with this technology increasingly after the millennium to transmit knowledge.⁹⁰

Vernacular languages stabilized (in large part through clerical experimentation), and spread more rapidly through Europe and the lands of the Crown of Aragon as lay literacy increased. Literacy in the vernacular tongues required less training than Latin, and, more importantly, reached a larger audience. The outburst of demand for devotional, historical, and leisurely literature throughout Europe during the thirteenth century suggests that a laity more interested in practical than contemplative learning began to bypass Latin when writing; surviving inventories inform us that the laity represented a growing percentage of this audience.

Translations or compositions of legal codes in the vernacular during this same period further testify to lay interests in understanding the transmission of the written word.

⁸⁸ Patrick Geary demonstrates how in Germanic areas Latin remained the primary language of record in the early Middle Ages, while German was confined to glosses, vocabulary lists, and other tools intended to teach the basics of Latin, Geary, *Language and Power*, 63.

⁸⁹ Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading*, 36.

⁹⁰ Unfortunately, most of the evidence pertaining to medieval education, the laboratories of vernacular writing, have not survived the ravages of time. This is due in large part to the fragile materials, like wax tablets, used by educators and students when teaching and learning how to read and write (the two were not learned simultaneously). Learning to read and write was still accessed through Latin. Students learned to read by phonetically reciting the alphabet and then individual words without actually understanding what they meant. For more information on early education during the high and late Middle Ages, see Robert Black, *Education and Society in Florentine Tuscany: Teachers, Pupils, and Schools, c. 1250-1500* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 43-60; David L. Sheffler, *Schools and Schooling in Late Medieval Germany: Regensburg, 1250-1500* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 2.

Vernacular Writing in the Crown of Aragon

The evolution of vernacular writing in the lands of the Crown of Aragon parallels the trajectory of other romance languages, albeit with its own individual characteristics based on local customs, ideologies, and need. Practical motives drove literate and/or semi-literate individuals to experiment with transliterating their spoken tongues using the Latin alphabet and Latin pronunciation rules. These authors, usually religious, forged a path out of the wilderness for vernacular writing to reach a larger, lay audience. Not surprisingly, religious and/or devotional literature appears among the first vernacular writing in the lands of the Crown of Aragon.

By the thirteenth century, the European trend of turning historical and literary verse into prose reached the lands of the Crown of Aragon. Soon, translations and original historical texts appeared written in Catalan and Aragonese. An increase in the laity's dependence on writing and written law codes during this period also created a demand for translations of legal texts in the vernacular. In Catalan-speaking lands, a more literate laity, with its exposure to linguistic, intellectual, and cultural trends from other regions in the Mediterranean and north of the Pyrenees, encouraged authors, most notably Ramon Llull (d. 1315/6), to adapt vernacular writing to other genres, including theological, philosophical, and moralizing fiction. While central authorities—the king in Aragon, the count in Catalonia, or the king of the Crown of Aragon from the mid twelfth century onwards—did not instigate or lead the charge of vernacular writing in their realms, they played an important role in its evolution by commissioning vernacular translations, dictating chronicles in the romance, enforcing written-based law codes, and promoting lay literacy in their realms, which increased experimentation with writing in Catalan and Aragonese.

Catalonia

A limited number of documents containing Catalan proper names (people, objects, or most often, places) begin to surface in ninth and tenth-century Catalonia, precisely after the Carolingian orthographic reforms.⁹¹ The act of consecration of the Urgell cathedral, produced approximately between 860-80, is the first identified text with words in the Catalan romance. It contains the names of many localities in the bishopric of Urgell in the vernacular.⁹² Similarly, an inventory from the tenth century lists certain objects in the romance.⁹³ Scribes in these instances did not set out to write in Catalan. Instead, as linguists and philologists have noted, they resorted to transliterating the vernacular name because they did not know its Latin equivalent or it might not have existed.⁹⁴

By the eleventh century, entire phrases in Catalan begin to surface in feudal contracts. Scholars have traditionally attributed these phrases to two possibilities: first, the rise of a new feudal socio-economic system that relied on terms which did not exist in Latin; and second, an individual scribe's ignorance of Latin. While these explanations make sense, they are not entirely convincing. To begin with, many of the feudal terms that appear in eleventh-century documents, like *cavaller* (knight), *comanar* (entrust), *acaptar* (obtain), existed in Latin.⁹⁵ More

⁹¹ Scholars have identified these terms as *Latin farci*, see Jérôme Belmon and Françoise Veillard, "Latin farci et Occitan dans les actes du XI^e siècle," *Pratiques de l'écrit documentaire au XI^e siècle* 155 (1997), 149-83.

⁹² Lluís Gimeno Betí, *Els orígens de la llengua* (Alzira: Edicions Bromera, 2005), 37.

⁹³ Nadal and Prats, *Història de la llengua catalana*, 255, citing ACA, parchment [hereafter parch.], Borell, 119; also published in Miguel Tarradell, *Història del País Valencià*, vol. I (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1971), doc. 141.

⁹⁴ For example, see Betí, *Els orígens de la llengua*, 37; Nadal and Prats, *Història de la llengua catalana*, 255-7.

⁹⁵ Joan Anton Rabella, "La relació entre el llatí i el català a la documentació arcaica," *Llengua & Literatura* 10 (1999), 9-12.

importantly, instead of individual terms, which signal an inability to construct a Latin equivalent for a word, we find entire sentences in the vernacular. The vernacular sentences in these texts, not coincidentally, represent the most important sections of a feudal oath.⁹⁶ As with the eighth-century property descriptions in Old High German studied by Geary, the choice to record these passages was clearly strategic. What is not so clear is whether a practical aim to make the crucial formula in the feudal oath intelligible to its recipients/participants solely explains its redaction in the romance. Perhaps symbolism also influenced the codeswitch. Shifting from Latin to the vernacular when recording the mutual oaths may have also emphasized the most important passages of the text to the parties involved, as Geary suggests was the case with the Old High German passages found in eighth-century property descriptions.⁹⁷

Aragon

The situation in Aragon is less clear for two reasons. First, Aragon lacked Catalonia's literary output; and second, it has received much less scholarly attention. Specialists that have studied the earliest traces of writing in the romance in Aragon, nonetheless, consider early Aragonese writing closely related to those of neighboring Iberian realms, including Navarre, Leon, and Castile.⁹⁸ They convincingly argue that these regions shared a common Iberian language (proto-Spanish), albeit with regional variances. The political reconfiguration of the eleventh century in the northern Iberian peninsula accentuated these variances and set them on separate paths adhering roughly to political boundaries: Aragonese, Castilian (modern-day

⁹⁶ For more information on feudal documents in Catalonia, see Kosto, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia*.

⁹⁷ Geary, *Language and Power*, 66-8.

⁹⁸ For more on the Aragonese language, see above, footnote 2.

Spanish), Navarese, and Leonese. As these political boundaries disappeared through the course of the late medieval and early modern period, the regional variances gradually diminished.

Rather than inventories or feudal oaths, the earliest Aragonese phrases surface in religious texts.⁹⁹ The *Glosas Emilianenses* survives as the oldest known document with entire phrases in Navarro-Aragonese, an eastern variety of proto-Spanish. This Rosetta Stone-like text for Iberian languages produced in the monastery of San Milán de la Cogolla, records biblical glosses in three languages: Latin, Navarro-Aragonese, and Basque. A combination of practical motives, missionary and educational, most likely drove its production in the vernacular. The monks who composed these glosses in modern-day Navarre sought to explain biblical passages to an audience, both religious and lay, unable to read proper Latin. They may have also likely utilized the vernacular to teach fellow religious how to read the high-prestige register. The decision to include two vernacular languages by the monk testifies to the linguistic diversity that existed west of the Ebro river in the Iberian peninsula, as opposed to Catalonia's linguistic unity.¹⁰⁰

Troubadour Poetry

Only in the second half of the twelfth century do texts written entirely in the vernacular begin to appear in both realms. Interestingly, rather than Catalan or Aragonese, the earliest romance texts survive in Provençal (Occitan). Poets in Catalonia, and to a lesser extent in Aragon, followed the tradition set by troubadour poets from Languedoc, who began composing lyrical, rhythmic poetry in their native romance at the beginning of the twelfth century. The art

⁹⁹ This is not surprising considering that feudalism did not take hold in non-Carolingian Spain as strongly as in Catalonia.

¹⁰⁰ Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 474; Nadal and Prats, *Història de la llengua catalana*, I: 459.

form spread like wildfire in elite circles throughout southern Europe and France, with its most productive centers in Languedoc, northern Italy, and Catalonia.¹⁰¹ Performers, either a troubadour or more likely a joglar in his place (entertainer who memorized troubadour poems), usually altered pronunciation of words to meet their audience's needs. In Catalonia, not much altering was necessary, since Catalan closely resembled Provençal. The linguistic similarities between the two languages combined with a strong tradition of using Occitan as a poetic language ensured the continuation of Provençal as the language of Catalan poetry until the fifteenth century.¹⁰² Troubadour poetry gained the patronage and following of kings and nobles alike throughout Catalonia. Sometimes kings and nobles themselves composed troubadour poems. Both King Alfonse II (I of Catalonia), the first king of the Crown of Aragon, and his great-grand son, Peter III (II of Catalonia), authored troubadour verses. Most troubadour poems, including these kings' lyrics, focused on courtly love.¹⁰³

Besides themes of courtly love, political propaganda emerged as an important genre of troubadour poetry. In Catalonia, it became an essential part of propaganda campaigns in the conflicts between kings and factions of the high nobility. I believe they also set a precedent for and influenced the thirteenth-century practice of writing defiance letters in the vernacular.¹⁰⁴ These *sirventès*, or service songs, served as a “vehicle of ire, hate, moralizing reprimands, personal attacks,” vitriol, and calls for war.¹⁰⁵ They functioned equally as entertainment and

¹⁰¹ Troubadour poetry was an elite art form that required advanced linguistic skills. It even reached Castile, where Galician served as the primary language of poetry.

¹⁰² Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 22, 509-12.

¹⁰³ In fact, Alfonse engaged in a poetic debate with the troubadour Giraut de Bornelh over the nature of courtly love, specifically, the relationship between love and power, see Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 23.

¹⁰⁴ For more information on the use of vernacular writing to compose defiance letters, see below, chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁰⁵ Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 30.

propaganda. Troubadours or joglars performed *sirventès* accompanied by music, like all troubadour poetry. Giraut de Bornelh, a popular troubadour and strong supporter of the king, composed poems defending the crown's policies, especially in the latter's conflict with the count of Toulouse. Other troubadour poets who wrote on behalf of the kings of the Crown of Aragon during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries include Folquet de Marselha, Arnaut Daniel, Arnaut de Maruelh, Piere Vidal, and Pere Salvatge. King Peter, for example, commissioned Pere Salvatge on July 13, 1285 to compose a *sirventès* in response to the French invasion of Catalonia in 1285. King Peter even composed verses himself describing the French threat: "En greu pessar, mi fan estar, dins ma maizo, las flors que say volon passar, sense gardar, dreg ni razo" (In great distress, I find myself, in my lands, because of the flowers [fleurs-de-lis] that want to pass, without having any, right or reason).¹⁰⁶ For their part, the French side had the troubadour Bernat d'Auriac author *sirventès* against the Crown of Aragon.

Not all Catalan poets supported the royal cause. Nobles also patronized and sometimes even wrote troubadour poetry attacking the crown.¹⁰⁷ The famous troubadour poet Guillem de Berguedà produced various *sirventès* critical of the kings while in the service of rebel nobles. Giraut del Luc and Bertran de Born likewise composed politically satirical *sirventès* mocking the king. In 1184, Bertran even encouraged the count of Toulouse in a *sirventè* to rebel against Alfonso II, because of the latter's unjust behavior.¹⁰⁸ Some troubadour poets served the interests of both sides during the battles between the crown and the feudal nobility during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. While these troubadour poets certainly had their own political opinions, they

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 168.

¹⁰⁷ Guerau de Cabrera, Viscount of Cabrera (known in Provençal as Giraut de Cabreira) composed a poem known as the *Ensenhamen*, educating joglars on how to perform troubadour poetry. For more on Guerau de Cabrera, see Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 56-66.

¹⁰⁸ Bertran and his contemporaries also accused the king of usury in their *sirventès*, see Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 53.

tended to gravitate towards financial compensation. The prolific troubadour Cerverí de Girona exemplifies these merchants of words. He composed poetry for King James I and his son, King Peter, as well as their enemy, Ramon Folc IV de Cardona.¹⁰⁹

Catalan Texts, 1150-1300

Provençal, the language of troubadour poetry, influenced the development of Catalan writing according to historical linguists and philologists. Entire texts written in Catalan begin to surface in the surviving documentation only in the second half of the twelfth century, precisely when troubadour poetry was taking off in Catalonia. The linguistic similarities between the two languages allowed Catalans to borrow writing frameworks from the older and more established vernacular. That is why many early Catalan writings contain Provençal terms or phrases.¹¹⁰

Catalan poetry, meanwhile, remained written in Provençal until the fifteenth century, when poets like the Valencian Ausiàs March (1397-1459) liberated it from the confines of Occitan. Even though the switch from Provençal to Catalan poetry took more than two centuries, by the mid thirteenth, Catalan poets, including Ramon Llull, increasingly Catalanized their Occitan.¹¹¹

A diglossic linguistic environment evolved in Catalonia during the second half of the twelfth century that determined which language or register of Latin to use for specific genres.

Latin remained the language of the liturgy and the church, business, government, and law, while

¹⁰⁹ Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 126-8. Cerverí, for instance, wrote in favor of Peter III's siege of Castelló de Farfanya, where the rebel nobles, including Ramon Folc, were harbored, while he severely criticized Peter III for drowning his half brother, Ferrán Sánchez de Castro.

¹¹⁰ Provençalisms are found in many early Catalan writings, including in James's *Book of Deeds*, Desclot's *Cronica*, and even Ramon Llull's prolific production.

¹¹¹ Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 235, 344. Jordi Rubio i Balaguer, *Estudis Literaris: Trames culturals i individualitats creadores* (Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1996), 95.

Occitan and, to a lesser extent, French, served as the languages of poetry. Within this conservative, yet permeable, diglossic milieu, Catalan began to build a small niche in the second half of the twelfth century. By 1300, Catalan had developed into a distinct and vibrant literary language.

The growth of Catalan, like other vernacular languages, posed a challenge to contemporaries, who had the option between linguistic innovation or tradition. The conflict between these two forces determined which language to utilize when writing in Catalonia during the course of the late Middle Ages. Studying how these linguistic values evolved provides an important and revealing window into Catalan culture and society during this period. Catalan writing advanced primarily in four literary categories: religious/devotional; legal; historical; and in the prolific works of Ramon Llull. I believe these four categories, although not always entirely separate from each other, provide a simple and useful categorization to summarize the evolution of Catalan writing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as its broader social and cultural implications.

It is not surprising that religious and devotional literature appears as the earliest genre of Catalan writing. Clerics throughout Europe, who largely monopolized access to the written word, created vernacular writing to reach a larger audience that no longer understood church or medieval Latin. That is certainly the case of the *Homilies d'Organyà*, the oldest extant text written entirely in Catalan.¹¹² Most likely written by a cleric in *Organyà*, on the southern outskirts of the Pyrenees, it consists of six Lenten sermons. The *Homilies* derive from a religious genre of sermons already vernacularized by Provençal priests. In fact, some scholars believe the

¹¹² *Homilies d'Organyà: facsimil del manuscrit*, ed. Amadeu J Soberanas and Andreu Rossinyol (Barcelona: Editorial Barcino, 2001); *Homilies d'Organyà, transcripció diplomàtica*, ed. Antoni Griera (Barcelona: Tipografia d'E. Subirana, 1917).

Homilies are a translation of Provençal sermons, rather than original compositions. Regardless if the *Homilies* were a translation or not, composing them entirely in the local vernacular could not have been easy. Early writers of any romance language had to forge their own ground, borrowing from Latin to construct a new textual register comprehensible to the non-educated, majority of the population. These individuals therefore had to be trained in Latin, and, in Catalonia, also may have been familiar with Provençal. While clerics stood at the forefront of translating religious and devotional literature, an elite strata of the laity yearned for such works. In 1287, for example, King Alfonso III (II of Catalonia) commissioned his councilor, Jaume de Montjuic, to compose a Catalan translation of a French Bible.¹¹³ Other notable religious texts translated into Catalan during the thirteenth century include the book of *Psalms* and the *Golden Legend* (texts popular with both the clergy and the laity in the period).¹¹⁴

Legal texts further illustrate the relationship between vernacular writing and a heightened dependence on texts among the laity. The oldest legal text translated into Catalan, which dates to the second half of the twelfth century, is a partial translation of the Visigothic legal code, the *Forum Iudiciorum*. Promulgated in the seventh century by the Visigothic kings, the *Forum* remained enforced, in a variety of levels, throughout the Iberian peninsula. In fact, translations, partial and complete, of the code surface in various Iberian languages during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹¹⁵ These legal translations evidence the need by nobles, military orders, and a rising urban elite of direct recourse to written legal codes. The revival of Roman law and increased economic activity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries heightened the Catalan laity's

¹¹³ Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, II: 297.

¹¹⁴ *Psalms* translated by Romeu Saburgera, a Dominican friar trained in the convent Santa Caterina in Barcelona and the University of Paris, Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, II: 299.

¹¹⁵ In 1241, King Fernando III of Castile ordered its translation from Latin to Castilian. The Castilian version is known as the *Fuero Juzgo*.

dependence on legal codes and textual evidence. During the thirteenth century, the number of legal texts translated from Latin to Catalan increased dramatically. The crown's interest in promoting Roman-inspired legal codes throughout their realms motivated the kings to order translations of them, including the *Usatges of Barcelona*, the *Furs of Valencia*, the *Llibres de Repartiment de Majorca*, and the *Commemoracions de Pere Albert*, into the vernacular.¹¹⁶

The third category, historical chronicles, represent the most widely studied and well known genre of medieval Catalan literature. James I's autobiography, titled *Llibre dels Feys*, or *Book of Deeds*, stands as the most unique and arguably important source for the history of the Crown of Aragon in the thirteenth century.¹¹⁷ It is the first of four historical chronicles written in Catalan during the Middle Ages, commonly known as the *Great Catalan Chronicles*. The king personally dictated most of the *Book of Deeds* during the last six years of his life, 1270-6.¹¹⁸ The

¹¹⁶ For a critical edition of the Latin and Catalan versions of the *Usatges*, see Joan Bastardas et al, *Usatges de Barcelona: El codi a mitjan segle XII. Establiment del text llatí i edició de la versió catalana del manuscrit del segle XIII de l'arxiu de la corona d'Aragó de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 1984). For an English translation of the *Usatges*, see Donald Kagay, *The Usatges of Barcelona: The Fundamental Law of Catalonia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). Also see *Furs de València*, ed. Germà Colón and Arcadi García, 11 vols. (Barcelona: Barcino, 1970); *Documents capdals del Regne de Majorca*, ed. Guillem Rosselló Bordoy, vol. 1 (Palma: Parlament de les Illes Balears, 2007); and Elisabet Ferran Planas, *El Jurista Pere Albert i les Commemoracions* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2006).

¹¹⁷ The bibliography of studies on the *Book of Deeds* is rather extensive. Its exceptionality, the first autobiography by a medieval monarch, led nineteenth-century philologists and paleographers to question its authenticity. Rigorous debate and philological research, much of it inspired by a strong sense of Catalan nationalism, eventually led to a general, positive consensus about its veracity, see, Nicolau d'Olwer, "La crónica del conqueridor i els seus problemes," *EUC* 11 (1926), 79.

¹¹⁸ According to Cingolani, James began dictating to chronicle in summer of 1270 in Valencia to his scribe Jaume Sarroca, Stefano M. Cingolani, "El llibre dels fets del rei Jaume i el llibre del rey en Pere de Bernat Desclot," in *El rei Jaume: fets, actes i paraules*, eds. Germà Colon and Tomás Romero (Barcelona: l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2008), 292. An earlier tradition, headed by the Catalan philologist Nicolau d'Olwer, contends that James dictated the *Book of Deeds* in two different installments: the first in 1244 and the second in 1272, see d'Olwer, "La crónica del conqueridor i els seus problemes," 79-88; also see the bibliography in Jordi Bruguera's excellent

Catalan linguist Jordi Bruguera, an authority on the *Book of Deeds* and the author of its most thorough critical edition, contends that its colloquial style, with references to proverbs, popular idioms, and conversational tone, provides an unrivaled window into the language spoken by the king and his court.¹¹⁹ While the linguistic and historic value of James's autobiography have received much attention, the decision to compose it in Catalan has not.

I address fully the king's motives for recording his chronicle in Catalan in the following chapter, "Practical Codeswitching in the Royal Chancery."¹²⁰ In it, I argue that the work's literary genre, its intended audience, and James's motivations for writing it drove him to compose the *Book of Deeds* in Catalan. Although unique, James's autobiography belongs to a larger literary genre that began in twelfth-century Europe, in which individuals or institutions commissioned or composed historical chronicles in their native romance to justify their own ideological pursuits to a like-minded audience. Thirteenth-century kings, for instance, deployed the strategy of writing historical texts to legitimate their expansionist aspirations.¹²¹ With the increase in vernacular writing capable of reaching a wider audience, medieval kings increasingly translated or composed their historical propaganda in the vernacular. In fact, before James redacted his autobiography, he ordered the translation of the *Gesta Comitum Barcinonensium* in

critical edition of the *Book of Deeds*, *Llibre dels feits del rei en Jaume*, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Editorial Barcino, 1991), 1: 135-51.

¹¹⁹ Jordi Bruguera, "La llengua del Llibre dels Fets: Una sintaxi marcada per l'oralitat," in *El rei Jaume: fets, actes i paraules*, eds. Germà Colon and Tomás Romero (Barcelona: l'Abadia de Montserrat: 2008), 365; also see Bruguera, *Llibre dels feits del rei en Jaume* for a good English translation see *The Book of Deeds of James I of Aragon: A Translation of the Medieval Catalan Llibre dels Fets*, ed. Damian Smith and Helena Buffery (London: Ashgate, 2003)

¹²⁰ See below, 83-8.

¹²¹ In fact, Jaume Aurell argues that the design of national historiographies reflect the expansionist aspirations of thirteenth-century monarchs, such as Philip Augustus and St. Louis in France, Fernando III and Alfonso X in Castile, and James I and Peter III in the Crown of Aragon, see Jaume Aurell, *Authoring the Past: History, Autobiography, and Politics in Medieval Catalonia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 131.

1267.¹²² Nearly a century later, King Peter IV (III of Catalonia, r. 1336-1387) composed his own princely autobiography in Catalan. Peter also commissioned an official history of the realm, known as the *Chronicle of San Juan de la Peña*, in three languages: Latin, Catalan, and Aragonese.¹²³

Royal supporters and urban elites in Catalonia contributed to this genre of historical propaganda. Not long after James I redacted his deeds, sometime between 1283-88, Bernat Desclot composed a history of the Crown of Aragon.¹²⁴ Desclot's chronicle, redacted between 1283-88, begins with the union of Aragon and Catalonia in the twelfth century. But it focuses mostly on the eventful reign of Peter III. It is more sophisticated than James's autobiography, relying on official records from the royal chancery, but not any more objective.¹²⁵ Some scholars believe that Bernat Desclot's real identity was Bernat Escrivà, a prominent royal official who died in 1289.¹²⁶ The assertion seems very probable. While nothing is known about the figure of Bernat Desclot apart from his chronicle, Escrivà exemplified the educated, urban elite that tied its fortunes to the crown in this period. He was a royal official that rose through the

¹²² Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 204.

¹²³ *Crònica de San Juan de la Peña*, ed. by Antonio Ubieto Arteta (Valencia: CSIC, 1961).

¹²⁴ Bernat Desclot *Crònica*, ed. by Miguel Coll i Alentorn 2 vols. (Barcelona: Editorial Barcino, 1949); also in *Les Quatre Grans Cròniques: Jaume I, Bernat Desclot, Ramon Muntaner, Pere III*, ed. by Ferran Soldevila (Barcelona: Editorial Selecta, 1971), 403-585; and the more recent edition: Bernat Desclot, *Llibre del rei en Pere*, ed. Stefano M. Cingolani (Barcelona: Barcino, 2010). For an English translation, see *Chronicle of the Reign of King Pedro III of Aragon, A.D. 1276-1285*, trans. by F. L. Cirtchlow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1928). Among several excellent descriptions of Desclot's chronicle, stand Stefano Maria Cingolani, *Historiografia, propaganda i comunicació al segle XIII: Bernat Desclot i les dues redaccions de la seva crònica* (Barcelona: IEC, 2006); and Aurell, *Authoring the Past*, 55-70, 164-8, 185-7.

¹²⁵ According to the historian and literary critic Jaume Aurell, Desclot's dynamic attitude toward invention when writing allowed him to freely engage history and fiction, Aurell, *Authoring the Past*, 179.

¹²⁶ Aurell, *Authoring the Past*, 58.

ranks to become the king's treasurer. Escrivà therefore was literate and had access to royal documents used by the author of Desclot's chronicle.

The fourth and final category consists of Ramon Llull's writings. Llull stands as the most important figure in the history of the Catalan language, with the possible exception of Pompeu Fabra (1868-1948). His prolific corpus, 243 surviving works, has earned him the title "creator of the Catalan language."¹²⁷ The philologist Aina Torrent-Lenzen even compares his contributions to the development of Catalan with those of Dante in Italian.¹²⁸ Scholars also often match up Llull to his Castilian contemporary King Alfonso X (r. 1252-84). Both were innovators of writing in their respective languages, and both elevated the status of their vernaculars.¹²⁹ Llull wrote in four languages: Catalan, Latin, Arabic, and Provençal. Most of his works were composed both in Latin and Catalan, and survive in both. Many of his earlier treatises were originally written in Arabic and later translated by the author into Catalan and Latin. Unfortunately, none of his Arabic works survive.

Born in Majorca to an elite urban family originally from Barcelona, Llull became a seneschal to Prince Jaume, James I's son and future King Jaume II of Majorca (r. 1276-1311), at a young age. After experiencing a mystical experience at the age of thirty, Llull abandoned his station in life, provided financially for his wife and children, and took minor Franciscan orders. He dedicated the rest of his life to proselytizing, writing, and promoting his ideas. Converting

¹²⁷ Antonio Maria Badia i Margarit, *Moments clau de la història de la llengua catalana* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2004), 191; Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 197; Nadal and Prats, *Història de la llengua catalana*, 301; Betí, *Els orígens de la llengua*, 111.

¹²⁸ Aina Torrent-Lenzen, "Ramon Llull: el Dant catalan," *Estudis de llengua i literatura*. While Llull's contribution to the development of Catalan writing was incomparable, Dante's legacy succeeded in implementing a regional variance of a language onto an entire peninsula. Catalan, unlike Italian, was a unified language.

¹²⁹ Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 343. For more on the Castilian vernacular in Castile's royal chancery, see Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth*, 29-36.

Muslims was Lull's priority. Like Peter the Venerable, he believed Islam posed the greatest obstacle to the world's conversion to Christianity. Influenced by the missionary work of Catalan Dominicans like Ramon de Penyafort, Lull learned Arabic, and founded a language school in Majorca in the 1270s to prepare friars to convert Muslims. Lull's missionary interests appear frequently throughout his corpus, including as the feature of his great theological, scientific, and philosophical tract, the *Ars Magna*. The *Ars* combined rational, mystical, and scientific knowledge, both Christian and Islamic, in a compendium aimed at the conversion of Muslims.¹³⁰ Lull complimented his passion for missionary activity with interests in theology, religious devotion, and philosophy. In fact, even though his philosophical arguments appear dated for his age, he earned a Masters of theology from the University of Paris and gained the following of at least one master at Paris during the fourteenth century.¹³¹

Lull's most important, or at least most studied, works are the *Llibre de contemplació de Deu*, *Blanquerna*, and the *Llibre de meravelles* (also known as *Felix*). Jocelyn N. Hillgarth considers the *Llibre de contemplació* Lull's greatest work and "one of the most extraordinary books of the Middle Ages."¹³² In it, Lull combines philosophical and theological material into 365 short phrases (one per day) meant to contemplate the glory of God. *Blanquerna*, considered by some as the first European novel, tells the fictional story of a hermit who rises through the ecclesiastical ranks to become pope, only to resign and return to his monastery. Finally, the *Llibre de meravelles* is an allegory of the relationship between celestial perfection and human

¹³⁰ For example, see Mark Johnston, *The Evangelical Rhetoric of Ramon Llull: Lay Learning and Piety in the Christian West around 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) and Johnston, *The Spiritual Logic of Ramon Llull* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹³¹ Lull received a Masters of theology from the University of Paris. He could not receive a doctorate because he was officially married. For more on Ramon Llull, see Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, *Ramon Llull and Lullism in Fourteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

¹³² Hillgarth, *Ramon lull and Lullism*, 30.

actions narrated through the exchange of a master and his pupil. In each of these writings, Llull aims to instruct his contemporaries in devotional practices, provide a better understanding of God, and promote his vision of how to convert Muslims. Llull's perpetual aim to reach a learned Muslim audience explains why he composed many, if not all, of his tracts in Arabic.

Ramon Llull's prolific corpus offers us some insight into his philosophy as well as his society's perception of language.¹³³ Indeed, Llull tells us in the *Ars Amativa* why he wrote in Catalan: first, to reach a wider audience that did not understand Latin; and second, so that Latin writers could learn how to translate philosophical terms into Catalan. Llull consciously created Catalan terms using his knowledge of Latin grammar. He also describes the difficulty of composing in the vernacular: "and because we lack certain terms that do not exist in the vernacular, it is necessary for us to use some words in Latin."¹³⁴ In fact, Llull's Catalan is very Latinized, precisely because he created so many new terms using the learned language. Scholars approximate around 7,000 new Catalan words in his corpus.¹³⁵ All of Llull's works, with exception of the *Ars generalis ultima*, appear to have been originally written in Catalan or Arabic. As Hillgarth argues, Llull understood the importance of the romance languages. He was the first Christian writer of the Middle Ages to compose elaborate philosophical treatises in a language other than Latin, and intended for his peers to do the same. Llull's writing also suggests that he believed there was a demand for his intellectual tracts in the vernacular within Catalonia. Yet unlike James I and Desclot, Llull's intended audience exceeded the blurry

¹³³ For more on Llull's philosophy of language, see John Dagenais, "Speech as the Sixth Sense—Ramon Llull's *Affatus*," *Estudis de llengua, literatura i cultura catalanes*, ed. by Albert Porqueras-Mayo, Spurgeon Baldwin, and Jaume Martí Olivell (Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 1979), 157-70; and Johnston, *The Evangelical Rhetoric of Ramon Llull*.

¹³⁴ "Cor havem fretura de vocable qui no son en vulgar, cove-nos usar alguns vocables qui son en lati," Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 342, citing the prologue of Ramon Llull's *Art amativa*.

¹³⁵ Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 342.

boundaries of Catalan-speaking lands. Llull informs us that he translated his works into Latin so that they could have a wider reading audience.¹³⁶

Aragonese Texts, 1200-1300

Aragon lacked the literary production of Catalan-speaking lands during the thirteenth century. A lack of direct participation in and, to a lesser degree, demand for texts on the part of the Aragonese laity help account for Aragon's small literary output. Catalonia's increasingly robust economy and adoption of Roman law in the twelfth century created a dependence on writing among the laity that led to an increase in lay literacy and the demand for literary texts. In Aragon, the clergy continued to dominate access to writing until the second-half of the thirteenth century, when the kings encouraged Roman law codes and began promoting lay literacy. The crown, therefore, had a larger role in the expansion of writing, both in Latin and the vernacular, within the realm of Aragon than in Catalonia. In fact, most of the early extant texts written in Aragonese concern royal power, even though they were not always produced or even commissioned by the crown. Unlike in Catalan-speaking lands, where vernacular writing penetrated various literary genres during the course of the thirteenth century, in Aragon only religious, historical, and legal/juridical texts survive in the romance.

The oldest surviving text written entirely in Aragonese, or more specifically Navarro-Aragonese, is the *Liber Regum* (also known as *Libro de las generaciones y linajes de los reyes*). It stands as the oldest extant history written in an Iberian romance. Scholars believe a monk in the region of Borja, on the outskirts of Zaragoza, composed it in the opening years of the

¹³⁶ Llull had assistants and disciples who could help him compose them in Latin, like the Franciscan fr. Simó de Puigcerdà, Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 235.

thirteenth century.¹³⁷ The *Liber* consists of a list of genealogies dating back to Adam and Eve, featuring those of the Iberian (Navarre, Castile, Crown of Aragon) and French monarchies associated with the historic kingdom of Navarre. It belongs to the genre of universal histories, like the contemporary *Chronicon mundi* of Lucas de Tuy or the later *De rebus Hispania* of Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, that sought to justify the present through a strategic interpretation of the past dating back to creation. Yet, the *Liber* predates these works, which were written in Latin instead of the romance.

The *Liber*'s principal function was to legitimate the kingdom of Navarre, which the author considered a direct descendant of the Visigothic kingdom and the birthplace of the *Reconquista*, in a period when it had fallen into decline. Unlike Castile, Portugal, and the Crown of Aragon, Navarre no longer shared a border with Islam in the thirteenth century, which meant it could not rely on war with the Muslims to expand its territories or collect tribute. For that reason, the *Liber*'s author emphasizes the prestige of Sancho III Garcés "El Mayor," the king of Navarre (r. 1004-35), who rose to become the most powerful Christian king in the Iberian peninsula, titling himself *rex Hispania*. Upon his death, Sancho divided his realms between his surviving sons: García inherited Navarre; Fernando inherited the county of Castile (he later conquered the kingdom of Leon, creating the kingdom of Castile-Leon); Gonzalo inherited the counties of Sobrarbe and Ribagorza; and Ramiro inherited the county of Aragon. With the exception of Gonzalo's lands, which fell under Aragonese control, the other realms emerged as sovereign kingdoms during the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The *Liber*'s language, Navarro-Aragonese (a dialect spoken throughout La Rioja), which resembled closely the spoken vernacular of various peninsular realms (Aragon, Navarre, Castile,

¹³⁷ Juan F. Utrilla Utrilla, "Historia y ficción en las crónicas Aragonesas: cronistas y propaganda política en la edad media," *Aragón en la edad media* 18 (2005), 94.

Leon), allowed for its wide diffusion beyond Aragon and Navarre. In fact, it influenced other historical chronicles written in the Iberian peninsula in the vernacular, like Alfonso X's *Primera cronica general* and James I's *Book of Deeds*. The closeness between spoken Aragonese (and its various dialects) and other Iberian languages, including Castilian, also may help explain Aragon's scarce literary production. Its inhabitants could have easily enjoyed the richer literary corpus of its neighbors in the vernacular, especially Castile.

Demand for legal texts far eclipsed that of histories in the Aragonese-speaking lands of the Crown of Aragon. Every major Aragonese law code in practice during the thirteenth century was translated from Latin to the romance. The kings of Aragon created these codes as foundational charters (*carta pueblas*) meant to populate frontier zones (villages and towns near the border with Islam). King Sancho Ramírez (r. 1063-94) promulgated the earliest charter in Jaca sometime around the 1070s, hoping to attract pilgrims traveling to and from Santiago to settle in the city and its surrounding areas. While the original text was composed in Latin, illiterate (or Latin illiterate) individuals commissioned its translation into the Aragonese romance during the early thirteenth century.¹³⁸ As the kingdom of Aragon expanded further south in the twelfth century, the kings granted additional foundational charters to the newly-conquered areas, called Extremadura (extramural). The Aragonese kings published Extremadura charters in Calatayud (1131), Daroca (1142), and Teruel (1177). Of these, the latter emerged as the most important and wide-reaching charter, replacing the earlier ones. The two oldest copies of the

¹³⁸ *El Fuero de Jaca*, ed. Mauricio Molho (Zaragoza: CSIC, 1964).

Fuero of Teruel date to the thirteenth century; one survives in its original Latin (known as the *Forum Turolii*) and the other is an Aragonese translation (known as the *Códice turolense*).¹³⁹

During the thirteenth century, the kings of the Crown of Aragon sought to further consolidate the kingdom of Aragon's legal charters and unite the entire realm under one single code. Under the leadership and insistence of James I, the Cortes of Huesca in 1247 debated the crown's proposed law (*Fueros de Aragón*). The representatives of the nobility, the church, and towns rejected the crown's most ambitious pursuits in the administration of justice, but voted to approve a set of normative status based on the judicial work of Bishop Ramon Vidal de Canellas of Huesca.¹⁴⁰ As a result, the juridical tome is best known simply as the *Vidal Mayor*. Ramon based the statutes on a combination of previous local *fueros*, like the ones discussed above, and Roman-based legal concepts, like *fides publica* and notarial practices. The original Latin code composed by Ramon Vidal between 1247-52 does not survive. In its stead, an anonymous translation in Aragonese produced sometime in the 1250s survives as the oldest copy. King Peter's 1283 privilege extending the *Fueros de Aragón* to the entire realm, examined in the next chapter, was originally composed in a combination of Latin and Aragonese. Many Aragonese nobles and villages, however, refused to abide by the *Fueros de Aragón*, preferring the traditional *fueros*, like the one of Teruel, which offered its followers additional liberties.

In addition to legal codes, the daily exercise of law, administered by notaries, also appears increasingly in the romance during the course of the thirteenth century. By the end of the century, nearly all legal documentation, including publically authenticated acts, survives in

¹³⁹ The inclusion of a statute (*De sacrament de calupnia*) passed by the crown in 1243 in both versions suggests the translation postdates 1243, see *El Fuero de Teruel*, ed. by Max Gorosch (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1950), 12.

¹⁴⁰ Ramon studied canon and civil law at the University of Bologna in the 1220s, where he met the famous Catalan jurist Ramon de Penyafort, see Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 214.

the vernacular.¹⁴¹ Most vernacular writing in the realm of Aragon during the thirteenth century, unlike in Catalonia, surfaces in official/administrative documentation rather than literary texts. In that sense, Aragon resembled Castile, where administrative and legal documents switched over from Latin to Castilian in the mid thirteenth century, more than Catalonia. But as opposed to Castile, a notarial culture blossomed in Aragon similar to its Catalan counterpart.

Conclusion

Vernacular writing evolved slowly during centuries of experimentation. This process, as Patrick Geary, Franz Bäuml, and others have noted, was not linear, inevitable or universal. It developed gradually based on the specific conditions of different linguistic communities throughout Europe. In romance-speaking areas, it only began after the Carolingian linguistic reforms, which made Latin unintelligible to the uneducated masses. The reforms led to a metalinguistic change among romance speakers, who began to distinguish between a high-prestige Latin and low-prestige varieties. Use of this low-prestige Latin, as Geary notes in his analysis of language choice in the early Middle Ages, was predominantly strategic.¹⁴² That is, scribes did not write in the romance, or German for that matter, because they could not do so in Latin. Instead, strategic motives, either practical or symbolic, drove them to bypass the

¹⁴¹ For example, see the following collections: Ildelfonso Rodríguez de Lama, *Colección diplomática medieval de la Rioja (923-1225)* (Logroño: Gonzalo de Berceo, 1976-89); and Tomás Navarro Tomás, *Documentos lingüísticos del alto Aragón* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1957).

¹⁴² Geary, *Language & Power*, 72. Geary also notes that Carolingian reformed Latin became both the functional language of the empire as well as a means for the elite to demonstrate its prestige; knowledge of this reformed Latin separated its practitioners from the masses, Geary, *Language & Power*, 64.

traditional language.¹⁴³ The practical drive to reach a larger, non-Latin literate audience, as in the case of Ramon Llull's Catalan texts or devotional literature in the vernacular, functioned as the most common motive for bypassing Latin in the Middle Ages. In the aftermath of the linguistic reforms spearheaded by Alcuin in the ninth century, language choice could also be utilized for symbolic purposes, as in the case of the Strasboarg Oaths or the feudal oaths that survive in Catalan. Language choice in the thirteenth-century royal chancery of the Crown of Aragon was solely strategic. But unlike vernacular writing outside of the chancery, symbolism rather than practicality primarily inspired the kings to bypass Latin when composing a text. In the following chapter I begin to describe the kings' strategic co-switching policies by focusing on their practical appropriation of vernacular writing.

¹⁴³ In fact, philologists and historians have shown that vernacular languages, both romance and Germanic, only appeared in writing after undergoing serious Latinization, see Geary, *Language & Power*, 57. That was certainly the case with Catalan and Aragonese. *Latin farci* (single vernacular words within a Latin document, usually denoting toponyms or personal names), stands as an exception. In these cases, it seems that the scribe composed individual terms in the vernacular because he did not know the Latin equivalent.

Chapter 3: Practical Code-Switching in the Royal Chancery

Practicality and symbolism represent the two primary motives that drove the kings of the Crown of Aragon and their scribes to write in vernacular languages. These two broad and imperfect categorizations were not mutually exclusive. Practical considerations often surfaced in symbolically-inspired texts and vice versa. Yet, it helps to try and distinguish between these two motives as best we can, without ignoring their correlation, in the hope of better understanding why royal scribes chose to compose some documents in the vernacular, while continuing to write almost solely in Latin. Regardless of their motivation, be it primarily practical or symbolic, the kings and their scribes judiciously chose to switch codes cautiously only if it suited royal interests. Language choice emerged as one of the many instruments royal agents utilized to enhance the crown's authority in the second-half of the thirteenth century.

The kings utilized vernacular writing chiefly for symbolic purposes during this period. In these cases, the switch in code alone signaled a change in tone, which transmitted a specific message that transcended the text. While I examine the symbolic motives that prompted the kings to write in the vernacular in subsequent chapters, in the following pages I concentrate on the crown's more limited use of practical codeswitching.

I begin by discussing the linguistic conservatism of the Crown of Aragon's royal chancery. Latin remained the standard language in the royal chancery throughout the entire thirteenth century. The kings' strict adherence to Latin explains why they only adopted vernacular writing in approximately less than two percent of all their surviving documentation.

A comparison between James I's household expenditures and those of his son, Peter III (II of Catalonia), provides a vivid and characteristic example of the royal chancery's Latinity. Unlike James, who recorded all of his household expenses in Latin as king, thousands of entries containing Peter's daily expenditures fill the pages of entire princely registers written in Catalan. Once Peter ascended to the throne, however, he immediately began to record these expenses in Latin. The abrupt shift suggests that Peter and his agents, like those of his predecessors and successors, considered Latin the more suitable language for his office, even when recording internal memoranda.

In the second section of the chapter, I explore how outside demand influenced vernacular writing in the royal chancery. Evidence from the registers leads me to conclude that outside demand by individuals in Aragon and Valencia prompted the kings and their agents to compose several dozen financial records in the vernacular. The kings' agents strategically acquiesced to the recipients in these particular cases because it suited the former's financial and political interests. Obliging small lenders with receipts in their native language proved an easy and cost-free method of accommodating minor financiers in Aragon and Valencia, where vernacular writing had made more inroads in the public sphere than in Catalonia.

The third part of the chapter focuses on texts that survive in the royal registers written in the vernacular because they were not originally or solely produced by the king. That is, these texts were either transcriptions (copies) of texts sent to the king or documents produced under the joint authority of the king and an outside entity.

Finally, in the fourth section I explore James I's motivations to redact his autobiography in Catalan. While James's chronicle, *Llibre dels fets* (*Book of Deeds*), has received much scholarly attention, the same cannot be said for the king's decision to write it in the vernacular. I

attempt to fill this scholarly gap by arguing that two interrelated and practical considerations encouraged James to compose his chronicle in Catalan: first, its genre; and second, its targeted audience, members of the royal court.

The Royal Chancery's Latinity

Nearly all royal documentation before 1291 survives in Latin. A combination of factors persuaded the thirteenth-century kings of the Crown of Aragon to adhere to writing in the high-prestige language. First and foremost, the kings considered Latin a more suitable language to represent their power and status. Catalan and Aragonese lacked Latin's historic and prestigious pedigree as the language of Rome, the liturgy, justice, and education (especially higher learning). The kings, seeking to project their authority by associating it with the high-prestige language, maintained a strict Latinity.¹⁴⁴ Second, Catalonia's increasing commitment to Roman law and a flourishing notarial tradition, also likely encouraged the royal chancery's Latinity.¹⁴⁵ The kings enjoyed particularly close ties to Catalonia, whose dynamic economy encouraged a burgeoning urban class closely allied with the king. Royal policies in turn favored Catalonia over the federation's other realms until the late fourteenth century, when Valencia overtook Catalonia as the federation's richest realm and leading cultural center. Finally, an interest in establishing a universal language to administer their multilingual federation of realms may have fuelled the kings' affinity for Latin as well. Scholars, including Robert I. Burns, have posited that the

¹⁴⁴ The kings of the Crown of Aragon followed in the footsteps of other secular lords throughout Europe, who inherited the association between status and language from the Carolingian reforms, see Geary, *Language & Power*, 59-63.

¹⁴⁵ Burns, *Society and Documentation in Crusader Valencia*, I: 116-7. For more on notarial culture, see above, 20-5.

imperial nature of the Crown of Aragon influenced the royal chancery's Latinity, by allowing for the widespread use of a universal language "to avoid the appearance of favoritism."¹⁴⁶ But the kings' willingness to forgo Latin in specific occasions when communicating with their Aragonese and Valencian subjects in the romance, described below, proves this theory unsustainable alone.

The royal chancery's Latinity is evident in the fact that even when composing a document in the vernacular, royal scribes usually included sections of the text in Latin, typically the opening (protocol) and closing (eschatacol) formulas, passages from the Bible, or the king's signature (surely written by a royal scribe). Internal notes in the registers, ranging from document descriptions to the king's household expenditures, survive in the high-prestige language. For example, individual and sets of documents are sometimes introduced by a short description in the registers. These descriptions are always in Latin.¹⁴⁷

A comparison between Peter III's choice of language when registering household expenditures as prince and king best underscores Latin's hold on the royal chancery. Prince Peter's household expenses have come down to us primarily in Catalan.¹⁴⁸ These expenses are internal, administrative documents that list the prince's daily expenditures on food, clothing, and other miscellaneous items. The Catalan historian Ferran Soldevila published the earliest of these household expenses from the prince's court precisely because of their composition in the romance.¹⁴⁹ It contains the purchases made by Peter during a period of thirty-eight days while traveling through various Catalan cities, including Barcelona, Lleida (Lérida in Aragonese and

¹⁴⁶ Burns, *Society and Documentation in Crusader Valencia*, I: 117.

¹⁴⁷ For examples of this, see the following paragraph as well as chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁴⁸ Peter's princely registers, in fact, contain more folios written in the vernacular than the registers of all the thirteenth-century kings combined, including his own royal registers.

¹⁴⁹ Soldevila, PG, I:4, citing ACA reg. 27 fols. 13-9.

Spanish), and Villafranca. Even though the heading for each day, certain items, and the total daily costs in these entries remained in Latin, the document was composed predominantly in Catalan.¹⁵⁰

The subsection titles of the records, which identify the listed expenses, appear mostly in Latin with occasional exceptions: for example, in Latin: “In minutio” (On minutia), “Panis in curia” (Bread in court), “Vinum in curia” (Wine in court), “Pisces in curia” (Fish in court); and in Catalan: “Carn en cort” (Meat in court), “Repost” (Provisions), and “Civada” (Barely).¹⁵¹ The descriptions of the daily totals spent on these household items also remain in Latin: “Summa major istius diei” (Total sum for this day). Other notes in the entries that do not refer to expenditures are recorded in the high-prestige language as well. For example, on the first Saturday in May, an entry in the register notes that two individuals joined Peter in Barcelona: “Ista die venit Bernegarius de Vilalta et Guillelmus Puyo” (On this day Berenguer of Vilalta and Guillem Puo came to Barcelona). On the second Wednesday in May, the same note appears

¹⁵⁰ (Latin Italicized) *Die Jovis III aprilis recessit dominus infans de Villafrancha et intravis Barchinonam et manlevaverunt officiales: In minuto: ligna—VI sol. VII d.; sal—II d.; Cols—XX d.; juyvert—III d.; vinagre—III d.; mostaylla—X d.; ous—XII d.... Carn en Cort: X moltons IX pessas a rao de VI sol. fan LXVIII sol. VI d.... Vinum in Curia LXXXI quarter a rao de III d.—XXVII sol.... Repost: Pebre I unce et media—V d. et obol; Ginebre—II d.; Safra—VI d.; Gerofle—II d.; aportar les taules—VI d.; Cera III libras—VI sol VIII d. a XX, pobil—VIII d.; mel—VIII d.; Sal—II d.... Summa maior istius diei—CCXXXVIII sol. III obols. (On the third Thursday of April the lord prince left Villafranca and entered Barcelona and these were his official expenditures: On minutia: logs—6 sous 7 diners; salt—2 d.; cabbage—20 d.; (?)—3 d.; vinegar—3 d.; mustard—10 d.; eggs—XII d.... On Meat in court: 10 bulls 9 fish at 6 s. come out to 64 s. 6 d.... On wine in court: 81 quarts at 3 d.—27 s.... On confectionary: one and a half ounces of pepper—5 d. and 1 obol; gin—2 s.; saffron—6 d.; cloves—2 d.; moving the tables—6 d.; three pounds of wax—6 s. 8 d. at 20, matches—4 d.; honey—4 d.; salt—2 d.; total sum for this day—234 s. 3 obols.)*

¹⁵¹ It is interesting to note that the most comprehensive Catalan dictionary, *Diccionari Català-Valencià-Baleàric* [hereafter DCVB], cites this document in its definition of *repost* (provisions). In its antiquated form, the term maintains the p from its Latin origins (*de repostum*), while the contemporary Catalan word, *repost*, replaces the p with a more phonetic sounding b. The DCVB is available free online: <http://dcvb.iecat.net>.

again in Latin, but with the names of the individuals written in the vernacular: “Iste die venit P. de Offegato et Michel de Bolas et P. Falconer” (On this day P. of Offegato and Michel de Bolas and P. Falconer came). Similarly, Catalan place names infiltrate Latin sentences: (Catalan italicized) “Die Dominica II Madii exivit dominus Infans de Villa Francha et ivit apud *za Reyal* et ibi stetit cum hominibus eiusdem” (On the second Sunday in May the lord Prince exited Villafranca and entered *ça Reyal* and stayed there with his men).¹⁵² The trend of writing place names and proper names in the vernacular, dating back to the ninth and tenth centuries, began to spread increasingly during this period, even though most Latin documents emitted by the royal chancery continued to redact place and personal names in Latin.¹⁵³

As the years passed, the prince’s scribes experimented with writing the entire entries in the vernacular, including the daily totals: for instance, “Summa de carn” (meat total), “Summa de pan” (bread totals), Summa de vin (wine totals), and “Summa maior deste dia” (total sum for this day).¹⁵⁴ Register titles also begin appearing written in Catalan: “Libre de messio de casa del infant en Pere fill del senyor Rey en Jacme” (Book of expenses of the house of Prince Peter, son of the lord King James).¹⁵⁵ This is the first title of a princely register (register 32) that survives in the vernacular. Most, like register 28, list the register’s title in Latin: “Hoc Registrum est de tempore domini Infantis Petri filii domini Regis Iacobi Super confirmationibus peccunia assignationibus et comisionibus peccunie” (This is the register of the time of lord Prince Peter son of the lord King James which contains financial confirmations, assignments, and

¹⁵² Curiously, the next day’s entry of expenses contains the Latin name, *de Regali*, see Soldevila, PG, I:4, citing ACA reg. 27 fols. 13-9.

¹⁵³ For instance, see ACA, r. 8 f. 73r (personal names in Catalan), ACA, r. 8 f. 73v (personal names in Catalan), ACA, r. 8 fol. 74r (personal names in Aragonese), ACA, r. 17 f. 38v (personal names in Catalan), and ACA, r. 18 f. 98v (personal names in Catalan).

¹⁵⁴ ACA, r. 38 fs. 3r-4v. For more information on the origins of place names in the vernacular, see above, 23-9.

¹⁵⁵ ACA, r. 32 f. 1r.

commissions), even when containing numerous records of daily expenses in Catalan.¹⁵⁶ But it is not the last. Register 34 also titles the book partly in the vernacular: (Catalan italicized) “*Aquest registre o libre es de tempore domini infantis P filii domini Regis Jacobi super quitatione familie domus suo et super ordinatione eiusdem domus*” (This register or book is from the time of Prince Peter son of the lord King James and treats the expenses of his family’s house and the ordinations of his house).¹⁵⁷ The transition from Latin to Catalan in these register titles while significant was not permanent. Royal scribes recorded the title of register 36, which contains household expenses for the prince and his court entirely in the vernacular, and postdates registers 30, 31, and 32, in Latin.¹⁵⁸

The type of internal code-switching found in these registers suggests that the prince’s court was less conservative or not as tied to the formalities of Latin as its royal counterpart. Unlike royal scribes, Peter’s princely scribes felt comfortable experimenting with composing internal records in the vernacular. Once Peter ascended to the throne, however, the records of his household expenses switch immediately from the vernacular to Latin.¹⁵⁹ Similarly to his father, Peter and his agents considered writing these expenditures in the vernacular unfitting for the royal record. Latin even strengthened its grip on the royal and princely chanceries during the closing years of the thirteenth century. Unlike Peter, his sons, Alfonse and James, composed all

¹⁵⁶ ACA, r. 28 f. 1r.

¹⁵⁷ ACA, r. 24 f. Ar.

¹⁵⁸ “Hoc Registrum est de tempore domini Infantis Petri filii domini Regis Jacobi Super confirmationibus peccunia assignationibus et comisionibus peccunie” (This is the register of the time of lord Prince Peter son of the lord King James which contains monetary confirmations, assignments, and monetary commissions), ACA, r. 28 f. 1r.

¹⁵⁹ Rather than take up space with examples of these royal household expenditures in Latin, see ACA, registers 38 and 39.

of their household accounts as princes in Latin. As shall see, furthermore, Alfons III as king produced less vernacular documentation than James or Peter.¹⁶⁰

Outside Demand and External Production

Latin remained the sole language of public record and administration in Catalonia for most of the Middle Ages. Individuals in Aragon and, to a lesser extent, Valencia, however, began to experiment writing administrative and legal texts in the vernacular during the second half of the thirteenth century.¹⁶¹ Evidence for the use of the romance in official notarial documentation in Aragon and Valencia is widespread. There are several collections of Aragonese and Valencian documents from the thirteenth century that contain hundreds of notarial and administrative records in the vernacular.¹⁶² Some of these Aragonese texts also survive in the ACA. The royal parchment collection contains a contract between private individuals from 1272 drawn up in Lecina entirely in Aragonese.¹⁶³ It authenticates the sale of a Muslim slave by his Muslim master to a Christian buyer for 165 morabitins. Another legal deed drawn up in 1283 contains an *inter vivos* donation from the noble Pedro Cornel to his son,

¹⁶⁰ See below, chapters 4-6. Carreras i Candi named Alfons III the “Liberal” for his concern with organizing his household finances, see Ferran Valls i Taberner, “Els sobrenoms dels reis Alfons II i Alfons III,” *EUC* 9 (1915-6), 102. An increase in scribal practices from Sicily after its conquest, traced by Ángel Canellas López, may have also contributed to the increased Latinity of Alfons’s reign, see Canellas López, “Las cancillerías catalano-aragonesas,” 352.

¹⁶¹ For more information on the reasons why Aragon and Valencia were more receptive to vernacular writing, see above, 5-6.

¹⁶² For Aragon, see: Maria Luisa Ledesma Rubio, *Cartas de población del Reino de Aragón en los siglos medievales* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1991); Luis Gonzales Anton, *Las uniones aragonesas y las cortes del reino (1283-1301)*, 2 vols. (Zaragoza: CSIC, 1975); For Valencia, see *Pergamins, processos i cartes reials. Documentació dispersa valenciana del segle XIII*, ed. Enric Guinot Rodríguez (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2010).

¹⁶³ ACA, Peter II, parch, 76.

Exemen Cornel. Gil de Peralta, a public notary of Zaragoza, wrote and authenticated the latter deed in Aragonese.¹⁶⁴

Demand by individuals in Aragon and Valencia, in turn, occasionally prompted the king to write in the vernacular. The royal chancery obliged these individuals in certain cases, but only when it benefited the king's interests. These cases were not random. On the contrary, they were specific and unique to the cultural environment and political realities the crown faced on the ground. Nearly all of these texts are financial in nature, specifically debt recognitions by the king to individuals in Aragon and Valencia. In these cases, outside demand by individuals accustomed to vernacular writing drove their composition in the vernacular. The kings' agents strategically acquiesced to the demands of the recipients in these particular cases because it suited their financial and political interests. Yet, these linguistic accommodations demonstrate the crown's weakness rather than strength. The kings depended on lenders of all sizes to finance their policies. Granting small lenders in Aragon and Valencia vernacular receipts of their debts proved an easy and convenient method of satisfying them. Even though the kings redacted some of these financial grants and royal privileges in the vernacular, they continued to produce the vast majority of them in Latin. Furthermore, even in the cases where the text appears in a romance language, its beginning, ending, and authentication formulas remain in Latin, once again demonstrating the chancery's strong Latinity.

Financial Documents in Catalan and Aragonese

The proliferation of writing in the Crown of Aragon and throughout most of western Christendom during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries affirms the increasing importance of the

¹⁶⁴ ACA, Peter II, parch. 371.

written word in European society. Increasingly complex economic environments and bureaucratic institutions made it necessary for those involved in a note-worthy or legal transaction to have written proof of their act. Most individuals did not understand Latin, including the king. Financial documents composed either in their entirety or partly in the romance would appeal to them. The king and his officials (not trained in Latin), however, had ready access to translators, forgoing the need to understand a document directly.

James I's scribes conceded to producing financial documents in the vernacular for recipients in the kingdoms of Aragon and Valencia nonetheless. The majority of these financial documents are debt recognitions directed at small debtors. In these cases, the royal chancery obliged small debtors because it benefited, or at the very least did not undermine, royal interests. The Crown of Aragon was one of western Europe's most impoverished monarchies.¹⁶⁵ James's ambitious pursuits therefore relied on numerous lenders of various sizes, who the king certainly sought to keep content. Large creditors did not have much of a need for these records in the vernacular. Urban elites, wealthy Jews, and the church, who provided the larger sums the crown borrowed, either read Latin or had access to someone that did because of their business needs. That explains, I believe, why only minor creditors received vernacular copies of their loans to the kings in the surviving documentation: because they were the only ones to request them.

The totals exchanged in these vernacular recognitions of debt prove relatively insignificant, especially for a crown that borrowed much larger quantities on a daily basis. There is no evidence of or reason why the king or his agents possessed any particular interest in

¹⁶⁵ For more on the Crown of Aragon's financial troubles, see Pierre Bonnassie, *La Catalogne du milieu de Xe à la fin du XIe siècle: croissance et mutations d'une société*, 2 vols. (Toulouse: Association des publications de l'Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1975-1976); and Thomas Bisson, *Fiscal Accounts of Catalonia under the Early Count-Kings (1151-1213)*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

recording these debts in the vernacular. A demand by the recipient for these receipts or parts of them in the vernacular combined with an interest in keeping their lenders, however small, happy provide the most convincing explanations for their redaction in the vernacular. Because of the similarity between these recognitions of debt, I have limited my examples to two, one in Catalan emitted in Valencia and another in Aragonese drawn up in Aragon.

The earliest royal document involving a financial transaction that I have found in a vernacular language was composed in Valencia on July 1, 1258.¹⁶⁶ In the text, a royal scribe acknowledges a debt of 1,049 sous and 2 diners owed by King James to Pelegrí Baldoví for his custody of the castle of Sexona (Jijona) during an unspecified period of time. The short document was composed in Catalan. Following this opening line, the letter states that the crown would return the money to Pelegrí with a receipt, which the scribe will keep a copy “because the king will want to see it.”¹⁶⁷ It is unlikely that James literally requested to see a receipt for this transaction. One-thousand sous seems like a very small sum to worry the king, especially when compared to his more expensive debt recognitions exceeding hundreds of thousands of pounds (millions of sous). Instead, the scribe was most likely referring to the emphasis James and his thirteenth-century successors placed on producing receipts for all royal business.¹⁶⁸ Even if the king had requested to see this record, it is improbable that he ordered its composition in Catalan. After all, James had translators that could impart the message in the romance. A more convincing scenario has the royal scribe composing the receipt in the vernacular at the request of its recipient, Pelegrí, who certainly must have valued one-thousand sous more dearly than the

¹⁶⁶ Cubells, doc. 28, citing ACA r. 11 f. 269r.

¹⁶⁷ “Car lo Rey lo volra veer.”

¹⁶⁸ For more information on the king’s interests in and reliance on recordkeeping, see above, 19-20.

king, and therefore sought a record of the amount of money owed to him in a language that he could understand.

The contention that outside demand motivated the production of this text in Catalan strengthens when we consider that a record of Pelegrí's loan also survives in Latin: "Sciendum est tamen quod coequatis recepcionibus cum missionibus et expensis remanet quod debemus vobis resituere mille quadraginta novem solidos et duos denarius" (It is also known that we owe you 1,049 sous and 2 diners (pence) with a receipt for the costs and expenses that remain).¹⁶⁹ The Latin recognition of debt text appears alongside the audit of the tax receipts submitted by Pelegrí for the castle, town, and district of Jijona in Latin. If this document contains all of the information necessary for the king: why compose a duplicate in the vernacular? A desire on Pelegrí's part once again offers the most convincing answer.

Recognition of debts from James's reign also survive entirely or partially in Aragonese. For example, a payment guarantee to a certain Bonanato, written primarily in Latin, contains an itemized list in Aragonese.¹⁷⁰ The document notes that the king owes 6,529 sous to various individuals for a variety of supplies, including horses, cattle, and wine:

Debet dominus Rex Bonanato cum albarano pro equis, vaccis, ciuata, et aliss III milia DCCC XLII solidos regales. Item M D XXX solidos jacenses pro Matheo Baboti. Item pro CCC L *quarters* de vino CCC LXXX VII solidos VI denarius *reales*...

The lord king owes Bonanato 3,842 royal sous and a receipt for horses, cattle, civet/perfume, and other things. Also, he owes 1,800 sous to Matheo Baboti. Also, he owes 387 royal sous and 6 diners for 350 quarts of wine....

As we can see in the quote above, the Aragonese words *quarters* and *reales* infiltrate the Latin text. This is unlikely the result of incompetence on the part of the scribe. For starters, he writes the Latin version of *reales* (*regales*) at the beginning of the document. Rather, it probably

¹⁶⁹ Burns, *Diplomatarium*, II: doc. 168, citing r. 10 f. 68v.

¹⁷⁰ Cubells, doc. 27, citing ACA r. 11 f. 268v.

reflects a careless mistake when translating and transcribing an oral transaction in the vernacular, Aragonese in this case, into Latin. Below the summary of the debts owed, the text informs us that Bonanato's purchases in Alcira for the king are not included in the totals: "No sunt in isto computo expense quas Bonanatus fecit...domini Regis" (The expenses which Bonanato made for the king are not included in this account). A hole in the register prevents us from knowing what the sentence directly proceeding this one reads, but a list of items in Aragonese, most likely detailing Bonanato's purchases, still owed to him by the king follows: "Item una bacha con su filla. Item III cargas de lino. Item media arroua de filado delgado. Item III lançueles. Item una juba dalcaton. Item una alcapecia viella..." (Also one cow with its female calf. Also 3 loads of thread. Also half a quarter of fine wool/silk. Also, 3 lances. Also a cotton jacket...). There is no reason to believe that the royal scribe did not know how to write these terms in Latin, especially since proficiency in the high-prestige language was a requirement for all royal scribes. Furthermore, most of the document was recorded in the high-prestige language by that same scribe. It appears more plausible that the scribe redacted it in Aragonese for the benefit of Bonanato, who, like Pelegrí, may have sought to possess a record of the items owed to him in a language that he could read or more likely understand directly when read back to him. Recognitions of debts in the vernacular decline after James I's reign. I have found very few in Peter's chancery, and none in Alfonse's.

External Production

Practical or functional motives on the part of royal agents also explain the appearance of two other types of texts in the royal registers recorded entirely or partly in the vernacular:

transcriptions of texts not produced by the king; and texts produced under the joint authority of the king and an outside entity.

The first type encompasses texts or sections of texts produced in the vernacular outside of the chancery and transcribed word for word by scribes into the royal registers. Defiance letters sent to the kings of the Crown of Aragon by rebellious nobles comprise the single largest category of vernacular texts composed outside of the chancery that survive transcribed in the royal registers. While I argue that the nobles' motives for writing these defiance letters in the vernacular were primarily symbolic, practicality drove the royal scribes' decision to transcribe them into the registers "faithfully" (*fideliter*), including the language in which they were originally written. That is, royal scribes made an effort to reproduce texts exactly as they received them. Yet, these same royal scribes prefaced these vernacular transcriptions with Latin explanations: e.g., "Hoc est translatum fideliter factum" (This is a transcription faithfully made). Royal scribes also introduced transcriptions of externally-produced texts in the registers in Latin. The opening and closing formulas of these transcriptions, moreover, that is, the sections produced directly by the king, remained in Latin.

Besides defiance letters, judicial complaints and demands for privileges brought before the king constitute most of the remaining vernacular texts transcribed in the royal registers. The content of these documents reveals a common thread with defiance letters. They all involve legal complaints or demands, either as the negotiation of rights, pleas for justice, or feudal ruptures. The similarities between the genres (judicial complaints; demand for privileges; defiances) of these vernacular texts, in turn, sheds light on the potential of codeswitching in the processes of conflict resolution in the thirteenth-century Crown of Aragon, even within Catalonia's strict Latinity. In the summer of 1286, for example, the royal scribe Bernat del Vall

transcribed a complaint brought to the king by the citizens of Lleida. Before beginning to copy the transcription, Bernat introduces it with a sentence written, as usual, in Latin: “Hoc est translatum fideliter factum” (This is a transcription faithfully made). Likewise, he signs and authenticates the text in Latin: “Signum mei bernardi de vallo notary publici Iller et auctoritate Regia per totam terram et denominationem domini Regis qui hoc transcripsi” (Signed by me, Bernat del Vall, public notary of Lerida, and royal scribe in all the lands and possessions of the lord king, transcribed this).¹⁷¹

Most of these externally produced documents that survive as transcriptions in the registers, derive from Aragon, where vernacular writing made greater inroads during the thirteenth century. For example, a text from Peter’s register documents a complaint sent to the king by Aznar Perez de Recessol against Sancho Ruiz, Garçia Ferrandis, and Ramiro Ferrandis residents of Mallén.¹⁷² The document begins with an introduction of its contents by a royal scribe in Latin: “Die veneris pridie nonas Decembri anno Domini MCCLXX sexto. Açnarius Petrus de Reçessol obtulit domino regi hoc repartamentum in huic modum” (On the Friday December 4, 1276 Aznar Perez de Recessol presented the king with the following complaint in this manner). The introduction indicates that the record, even though copied into the register by a royal scribe, was originally produced by Aznar, whose declaration appears entirely in Aragonese. In his statement, Aznar accuses the three individuals of assaulting him, taking him prisoner unjustly, and killing two of his companions. After Aznar’s testimony, the register records in Latin that a certain R. P. Nadal paid the collateral on behalf of Aznar and that the king requested that the three accused present themselves in his presence the following Tuesday (in Zaragoza).

¹⁷¹ ACA, r. 83 f. 118r-119r.

¹⁷² ACA, r. 39 f. 137r-v. Published by Cubells, doc. 86 and Soldevila, PG: 2, 47.

A royal transcription of a complaint sent to the king by certain inhabitants from Zaragoza against some of their neighbors also survives in Aragonese. The document, like the one above, appears in the register with a statement by the king agreeing to hear the case in Latin. It then includes a transcription of the original complaint by the inhabitants of Zaragoza in Aragonese.¹⁷³

The second category, much fewer in number, and all deriving from Aragon, includes royal grants and privileges produced with the combined authority of the king and a noble. Because of their scarcity, one example suffices. On February 7, 1256, a public notary from the city of Calatayud drew up a privilege granted to the noble Alvaro Perez de Azarga, in which the king promises to protect him against any attacks by Castile.¹⁷⁴ The document, which survives in its original parchment form, is recorded entirely in Aragonese, except for the date. It specifically states that Domingo Perez, a public notary from Calatayud, wrote the text upon request from the king and Alvaro: “Domingo Perez, public notary of Calatayud, by order of the lord King and don Alvaro Perez, wrote the above texts, in the abovementioned day and year.”¹⁷⁵ The fact that the text’s eschatacol recognizes the authority of the Aragonese noble in the act and its ensuing record suggests that the exceptionality of producing this text in the vernacular originated with Alvaro.

¹⁷³ ACA, r. 83 f. 118r-119r.

¹⁷⁴ *Documentos de Jaime I de Aragón*, ed by Ambrosio Huici Miranda and Maria Desamparados Cabanes Pecourt, 5 vols. (Zaragoza: Anubar, 1976-1988), 5: docs. 1596 and 1597 [Hereafter Huici], citing ACA, James I, parch. 1440.

¹⁷⁵ Latin italicized: “Domingo Perez notario publico de Calatayud que por mandamiento del senor Rey y de don Alvaro Perez sobredito esto escrivio *loco die et anno quo supra*” (Domingo Perez, public notary of Calatayud, who by the order of the lord King and sir Alvaro Perez, I wrote the above text in the day and year abovementioned).

Llibre dels Feyts (Book of Deeds)

James I's autobiography, titled *Llibre dels Feyts*, or *Book of Deeds*, represents the most unique and arguably important source for the history of the Crown of Aragon and the state of Catalan writing in the thirteenth century.¹⁷⁶ As much attention as scholars have dedicated to the linguistic and phonetic implications of the text, they have neglected to examine why the king recorded it in Catalan in the first place. Scholars simply assume that James requested the *Book of Deeds* in Catalan because that was the language of his household and court.¹⁷⁷ While a connection between Catalan's role as the language of the royal court and the king's decision to use it to chronicle his life is evident, it alone does not explain why James decided to bypass Latin when setting his deeds to parchment (or paper initially).

A close examination of the chronicle's genre and its intended audience, I believe, explain why James commissioned it solely in Catalan. Countless other internal records of the royal court survive in Latin rather than Catalan. But unlike most of those documents, the *Llibre* was not an administrative or legal text. It was not a chancery document, although members of the chancery certainly participated in its production.¹⁷⁸ A copy of the autobiography does not appear in the registers. In fact, the oldest copy of the text is a Latin translation commissioned by King James II in 1313.¹⁷⁹ A later Catalan version from 1343, according to literary scholars, is an authentic copy of the original thirteenth-century text. The *Llibre*'s exceptionality, the first autobiography

¹⁷⁶ For more information on the *Llibre*, see above, 55-7.

¹⁷⁷ For example, see Martí Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, 395-425; Germà Colon, "El aragonés cancelleresco: sociologia de un idioma" in *El español y el catalán, juntos y en contraste* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1989), 237-270; d'Olwer, "La crónica del conqueridor i els seus problemes," 79-88; and Burns, *Diplomatarium*, I: 117.

¹⁷⁸ Martí de Riquer, among others, believes that the royal scribe Jaume Sarroca probably redacted the text narrated by the king, Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, 292.

¹⁷⁹ For more information, see Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, 385.

by a medieval monarch, led nineteenth and early twentieth-century philologists and paleographers to question its authenticity. Rigorous debate and philological research, much of it inspired by a strong sense of Catalan nationalism, eventually led to a general, positive consensus about its authenticity.¹⁸⁰

The Italian literary-critic and historian Stefano Maria Cingolani, who has studied the *Book of Deeds* closely and utilized it to write an excellent biography of James I, speculates that a political drive to compete with Castilian historical propaganda propelled the king to publish his chronicle. More specifically, he believes that James aimed to create a historical legacy that could compete with Bishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's *De rebus Hispanie*, an early thirteenth-century, Castilian-centered general history of Spain. While Cingolani's assertions that *De rebus* directly inspired the *Book of Deeds* prove appealing, albeit not entirely convincing (there is no evidence that James I ever read Jiménez's chronicle), he correctly identifies propaganda as a primary contributor behind its production.¹⁸¹ The title of the chronicle alone, *Book of Deeds*, points to its propagandistic nature, as do its opening lines:

Retrau mon senyor sent Jacme que fe sens obres morta és; aquesta paraula volc Nostre Senyor complir en los nostres feits: e jassia que la fe senes les obres no valla re, quan abdues són ajustades fan fruit: lo qual Déu vol reebre ne la sua mansió. E ja fos açò que començament de la nostra naixença fos bo, en les obres nostres havia mester mellorament.¹⁸²

My lord St. James declares that Faith without works is worthless; our lord wills us to fulfill our deeds with those words; and though faith without works is worth nothing, when both are joined they bear fruit, which God will receive in his kingdom. And although the situation at the beginning of our reign was fine, we improved it greatly with our deeds.

¹⁸⁰ For example, see, Nicolau d'Olwer, "La crónica del conqueridor i els seus problemes," *EUC* 11 (1926), 79.

¹⁸¹ Stefano M. Cingolani, *Historia y mito del rey Jaime I de Aragón*, trans. Juan Carlos Gentile Vitale (Barcelona: Edhasa, 2008), 54-63; also see Cingolani, "El llibre dels fets del rei Jaume i el llibre del rey en Pere de Bernat Desclot."

¹⁸² Quotations from the *Llibre dels fets* are extracted from Ferran Soldevila's useful edition, *Les quatre grans cròniques* (Barcelona: Editorial Selecta, 1971) [Hereafter *Llibre dels fets*], ch. 1.

A similar sense of import comes across when James tells his heir Peter in the presence of the royal court how:

Nostre Senyor nos havia honrat en aquest segle, e especialment sobre nostres enemics, e en qual manera Nostre Senyor nos havia fait regnar al seu servii pus de seixanta anys, més que no era en memoria, ne trobava hom que negun Rey de David o de Salamó ençà hagués tant regnat, e que amás sancta Església.¹⁸³

Our lord honored us in this century, especially over our enemies; and how our lord allowed us to govern in his service for more than sixty years, longer then any other king since David and Salomon reigned, and loving more strongly the holy Church.

James clearly considered his reign historic and sought to celebrate his most important accomplishments: the conquests of Majorca, Valencia, Murcia, and the pacification of his realms.

But James's propagandistic motives alone do not explain the *Llibre's* composition in Catalan. Latin would have offered a more appropriate choice than the vernacular. It served as the king's standard language of communication. Latin also functioned as the lingua franca of western Christendom, and hence the natural option to reach a wider audience or envelope the text, and by extension the king's actions, in the learned language's higher prestige. James's choice to redact the chronicle in Catalan suggests that these were not his intentions. We must look closely at the *Llibre's* genre and intended audience to understand the king's reasoning.

There is a broad consensus that the book fits in with two popular literary genres common during this period and increasingly written in the vernacular: knightly deeds and historical chronicles. These genres exemplify a wider shift taking place in western Europe from verse to prose and from Latin to the romance. James's chronicle in fact represents a larger trend of historical writing elegantly documented for medieval Flanders by Gabrielle Spiegel. In both cases, an institution or group of elites commissioned the production of favorable histories

¹⁸³ James I, *Llibre dels fets*, ch. 562.

legitimizing their own ideological program in an engaging prose narrative to a sympathetic audience.¹⁸⁴ Building on the work of Catalan literary studies and historiography, Jaume Aurell also posits the *Llibre* within a Crusade literature popularized by the knightly authors Robert of Clari, Geoffrey of Vilehardouin, Jean of Joinville, and Philippe of Novare.¹⁸⁵ These historical genres, well-studied by historians and literary critics alike, served both propagandistic and entertainment purposes. Their audience, increasingly educated noble and urban elites with a growing taste for historical prose and lacking a formal Latin education, desired and commissioned works they understood.

A work's genre is intricately tied to its intended audience. The latter often influences the former. In the case of James's *Llibre*, like those other vernacular histories, a combination of authorial design (genre) and, perhaps more importantly, the linguistic abilities of the target audience determined its language of production. James wrote his autobiography for a specific group of people: his heirs as kings of the Crown of Aragon and their courts. Even though the royal court was a multi-lingual institution—functioning in Latin, Catalan, and Aragonese—Catalan functioned as its primary language during this period. The *Book of Deed's* limited audience explains why manuscripts of the text did not circulate outside of royal circles during the last two decades of the thirteenth century, and rarely in the fourteenth. Very few private medieval inventories of books, either ecclesiastical or secular, list a copy of the Book of Deeds.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: the Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁸⁵ Jaume Aurell, *Authoring the Past: History, Autobiography, and Politics in Medieval Catalonia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 42, 138.

¹⁸⁶ For example, see Jocelyn Hillgarth, *Readers and Books in Majorca, 1229-1550* vol. 1 (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1991).

The preoccupation with good governance throughout the text suggests, as other scholars have maintained, that James also intended the work as a mirror for princes, a manual on how to govern for his heirs.¹⁸⁷ In one of the most dramatic episodes in the *Llibre*, a dying James confers upon his eldest son and heir some final words of advice:

Trametem misatge a l'infant En P., fill nostre, que ell personalment vingué a nós a Algezira...E quan venc l'endemà lo dit fill nostre fo ab nós, e oim nostra missa. E oida la missa... Moltes d'altres paraules a ell dixem, donant a ell benedicció així com pare deu dar a son bon fiyl a bo ordonament de sa persona, les quals llongues serien de dir... E, totes estes paraules dites, l'infant damunt dit així com fill obedient a pare, reebé los nostres manaments dessus dits e els precis així com a bons e a vertaders, e promés-nos complir tot açò damunt dit.¹⁸⁸

We conveyed a message to the prince, Peter, our son, to personally come to us in Algezira... And when the next day arrived, our said son joined us and we heard Mass together. And having heard Mass... Many other words did I say to him, with my blessing; such words as a father should say to his son for his good conduct and which would be long to tell... All that being said, the said prince, as a dutiful and obedient son, accepted my aforesaid requests and commands as good and true; and promised to fulfill them to the letter.

This passage, especially the reference to necessary fatherly advice, carries particular weight when we consider that James grew up as an orphan under the tutelage of the Templars in Monzón, a city on the border between Aragon and Catalonia. James witnessed Catalan and Aragonese nobles capitalize on his minority to increase their patrimonies. The difficult experience remained with James his entire life, and comes across vividly in the *Llibre*.

James dedicates several passages of his autobiography to recount his dependence as a child on the advice of feuding relatives and nobles.¹⁸⁹ The king portrays himself as a young, helpless boy, who yearned desperately for fatherly guidance. James's likely hope that none of his heirs would have to experience similar difficulties contributed to the king's motivation for creating his *Book of Deeds*. It also factored in James's decision to compose it in Catalan. The

¹⁸⁷ For more on the *Book of Deeds* as a primer or governance, see Colon, "El aragonés cancelleresco," 237-270.

¹⁸⁸ James I, *Llibre dels fets*, chs. 561-65.

¹⁸⁹ James I, *Llibre dels fets*, chs. 12-16.

king, assuming his heirs would share his inability to understand much Latin, redacted the chronicle in his native language to help his heirs navigate the perilous waters of governance.

Surviving evidence points to the realization of James's desire that the *Book of Deeds* reach his heirs. In 1313, James's grandson, James II, ordered a copy of the *Book of Deeds*.¹⁹⁰ That same year, the king also commissioned Fr. Pere Marsili to translate the chronicle into Latin, most likely attempting to broaden its audience and increase its prestige.¹⁹¹ Two decades later, 1330, Alfonse IV (III of Catalonia, r. 1328-36) wrote to his sister asking her to return his copy of the *Book of Deeds*.¹⁹² Finally, Peter IV, who imitated his great-great grandfather and composed his own autobiography in Catalan, notes that he enjoyed reading the *Books of Deeds* at night before going to bed.¹⁹³ The evident interest within the royal court for James's *Book of Deeds*, combined with its lack of circulation outside of it, strongly corroborates the notion that the chronicle was most likely intended for a limited, Catalan-speaking courtly audience.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to convey four major points. First, Latin remained supreme in the thirteenth-century royal chancery. The kings enveloped their authority in the prestige of the learned language, making a conscious effort to include Latin at some level in all of its written production. Second, royal scribes experimented with composing documents in the vernacular for practical purposes. They conceded recording debt recognitions in the vernacular at the request of

¹⁹⁰ Antonio Rubió i Lluch, "La crònica del rey en Jaume en el XIVE segle," *EUC* 1 (1907), 352, citing ACA, r. 274 f. 10v.

¹⁹¹ Rubió i Lluch, "La crònica del rey en Jaume en el XIVE segle," citing ACA, r. 240 f. 200. Marsili's Latin translation is the oldest surviving manuscript of the book.

¹⁹² Riquer, *Història de la literatura catalana*, I: 398.

¹⁹³ Peter IV, *Crònica*. In *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 1086-7.

their small lenders in Valencia and Aragon. Practicality also led royal scribes to transcribe texts written in the vernacular outside of the chancery into the registers in the language they were originally written. But the most important royal text composed in the vernacular for practical reasons was not an “official” administrative text, but James I’s autobiography. James’s *Book of Deeds* set an important precedent for writing royal chronicles in the romance, which his great-great-grandson, Peter IV, imitated in the following century.

Third, close examination of these practicality-driven documents in the vernacular sheds light on wider cultural trends and socio-political transformations taking place in the Crown of Aragon. A rise in the laity’s dependence on writing encouraged the proliferation of a new technology, vernacular writing, for more direct access to a text. Local conditions determined the course of this development. In Catalonia, where a class of literate laymen emerged before the vernacular had gathered some grammatical stability, Latin remained the language of public record. Catalan immigrants transplanted this Latin-notarial culture to Valencia. But even as Latin remained predominant, vernacular writing made greater inroads in Valencia than in Catalonia, where established families monopolized the notarial profession. In Aragon, the rise of a literate laity after the romance had developed a somewhat standardized form, proved even more conducive to vernacular writing as a language of public record. By the end of the thirteenth century, nearly all notarial and municipal documentation in Aragon survives in the romance.

Finally, the kings’ choice of language when composing a text testifies to their political acumen and administrative creativity in the face of serious obstacles to their policies and ambitions. The kings understood their realms’ regional differences and adapted to them when necessary. In fact, language choice, even when initiated outside of the chancery and reflective of

the crown's inherent weakness, as in the case of debt recognitions, became one of the many instruments the kings utilized to project their authority, alongside the writing of history, legal codes, urban ties, religious policies, a growing royal bureaucracy, and increased recordkeeping. These practicality-inspired royal texts moreover foreshadow the royal chancery's fourteenth-century practice of recording financial transactions in the vernacular.

While emblematic of larger social trends and reflective of future uses of vernacular writing in the royal chancery, texts produced in the romance for practical reasons only represent a small fraction of the documents produced by the kings in the vernacular during the thirteenth century. In the following chapters, I turn our attention to the symbolic motives that drove the kings of the Crown of Aragon most often to break their strict adherence to Latin and redact a text in the vernacular.

Chapter 4: The Rise of Defiance Letters in the Vernacular

Defiance letters constitute one of the largest genres of vernacular writing in the Crown of Aragon's royal chancery during the thirteenth-century. Only royal orders conveying a sense of urgency, examined in chapter six, outnumber defiance letters in the surviving records. More importantly, defiance letters altered the use of vernacular writing in the chancery. They initiated the practices of symbolic codeswitching and by doing so influenced its application in other ways, including, most notably, to transmit dissatisfaction and/or a sense of urgency.

The earliest defiance letters for which we have records were sent to the king from rebel nobles in Old Catalonia. These nobles innovatively and cleverly appropriated the low-prestige language to augment the impact of their defiance. Until then, Catalan nobles, like their counterparts in the Crown of Aragon's other realms, composed their defiances in Latin. Defiance letters themselves already transmitted a verbal attack when delivered in the high-prestige language. These *Diffidamentum* or *acuyndamentum*, as they were known in Latin, were in fact declarations of war. In them, vassals disavowed their lords and reproached them with various accusations and threats or vice versa.¹⁹⁴

Transmitting these messages in the spoken, low-prestige register amplified their effect in two ways. First, it provided an unexpected break in protocol. By replacing the standard language of communication with a low-prestige code in these antagonistic messages, the nobles

¹⁹⁴ Defiance letters were called *desafiament* or *acuyndament* in Catalan. For more on the origins of Defiance letters in twelfth-century Europe, see Marc Bloch, "Les formes de la rupture de l'hommage dans l'ancien droit féodal," *Nouvelle Revue Historique du Droit français et étranger* 26 (1912), 141-177; and Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Mangon, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 1: 228.

inflicted a blow in decorum alongside their declarations of war.¹⁹⁵ Second, using the vernacular allowed the nobles to communicate their antagonistic messages clearly and evocatively to members of the royal court, including the king, who were largely unlearned in Latin. As I discussed earlier, these documents were performed; that is, they were read aloud with the intention of projecting the sender's voice. The nobles were thus guaranteeing that the king and all of those with him when the contents of the letters were read understood perfectly their grievances and threats.

Composing defiance letters in the vernacular was a premeditated, collaborative, and strategic measure on the nobles' part. They usually composed these documents on the same day and in the company of other rebellious nobles, who themselves drafted defiance letters in the vernacular. The rebels' collaboration in planning and producing these letters played an instrumental role in their effectiveness. If only one or two nobles had sent their defiances in the romance, it may not have made much of an impact. But by strategizing to compose their feudal ruptures in Catalan as a group, the rebels successfully created a linguistic mechanism to heighten the effect of their invective messages. Simply put, they added insult to injury.

How exactly the nobles came up with the idea to defy the king in the vernacular escapes us. But we can trace some of the influences that may have inspired them. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, vernacular writing made greater inroads in texts involving legal complaints or demands, including within the royal chancery.¹⁹⁶ In chapter 2, I also discussed the possible

¹⁹⁵ For more information on the linguistic anthropological theories of indexicality, markedness, and diglossia, see above, 25-34.

¹⁹⁶ Not coincidentally, Catalan first appears in the records of the general courts of Barcelona in the individual complaints presented to the king by his subjects during the mid fourteenth century. Catalan first appears in the Court of Perpignan held in 1350 and 1352, see *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de Aragón y de Valencia y principado de Cataluña*, 3 vol. (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1900-22).

influence of *sirventès* on the nobles' decision to defy the king in the romance.¹⁹⁷ These service songs, performed in Provençal, a romance language closely related to Catalan, were popular among elite circles in thirteenth-century Catalonia. One can picture Catalan nobles gathered in their castles plotting their rebellion in the same rooms where they heard joglars and troubadour poets recite *sirventès*.

The royal chancery, aware of the political symbolism of the nobles' defiance in the vernacular, responded in kind, demonstrating the effectiveness of the latter's strategy. Royal scribes redacted the king's responses to the rebellious vassals' accusations and threats in the vernacular. Like the rebels, the king was communicating directly to an audience that needed intermediaries to understand messages transmitted in Latin. As the practice of composing invective letters in the vernacular gained traction in the second half of the thirteenth century, royal scribes also began to initiate antagonistic exchanges in the romance. Once the conflict lapsed, the king and the nobles returned to communicating in Latin. Both parties therefore utilized the low-prestige languages to augment the impact of antagonistic messages during periods of heightened hostilities, while switching back to the high-prestige code when signaling an end to the conflict.

No letter sent out by the royal chancery during James I's reign (1213-1276) was composed entirely in the vernacular, however. Beginning and ending formulas in royal documents remained in Latin. The royal chancery's dependence on the high-prestige language was too strong to sever completely. Royal scribes found it inconceivable to send out a royal charter entirely in a low-prestige language. Nobles were more linguistically brazen than the king, and they began to free themselves sooner from the confines of Latin. For starters, they

¹⁹⁷ See above, 50-2.

initiated the strategy of communicating defiance messages in the vernacular. They also experimented with recording a letter's opening formula and parts of its ending formula in Catalan as the century progressed. Yet this process was gradual and not linear. Some nobles continued to open their letters in Latin and less than a handful omitted Latin entirely in their ending formulas. Latin's hold in Catalonia during this period appears to have inhibited most scribes from composing a document entirely in the vernacular.

In the following two chapters, I examine the crown's appropriation of the romance languages, Catalan and Aragonese, to communicate antagonistic messages. In this chapter, I trace the emergence of the earliest invective messages in the vernacular between rebellious nobles, almost exclusively from Old Catalonia, and the king. These antagonistic messages comprise a large percentage of the extant, Catalan documents produced by the royal chancery in the thirteenth century. The evidence presented below therefore sheds light on the rise of vernacular writing in the royal chancery and its social, cultural, and political implications. In particular, my conclusions illustrate how the king and his agents as well as some of their contemporaries utilized language choice as a linguistic mechanism to further their political and socio-economic pursuits.

A Brief Political Background of the Conflicts Between the Crown and the Nobility

Most noble rebellions during this period, including the ones discussed in this chapter and the next, rose from the tensions between the ambitions of the great magnates and those of the crown. Conflicts between noble clans and noble attempts to preserve their patrimonies and traditional rights in the face of an expanding and ambitious monarchy were brewing for decades. These noble clans resented the increasing authority of the king, which limited their traditional

political autonomy. The political environment was further complicated by the internal rivalries of the noble clans, producing a tangled web of shifting alliances.

The county of Urgell was particularly troublesome and prone to violence since the Cabrera clan, led by Ponç Cabrera, established a rival claim to the county in the second half of the twelfth century. The monarchy intervened to pacify the situation and gain some influence in this large and important region. Via its mediation, Ermengol VIII count of Urgell signed a peace accord with Ponç Cabrera in 1187, and managed to hold on to the county until he died in 1209 without a male heir. Ermengol's widow, Elvira, afraid of Ponç's son, Guerau Cabrera, turned over the county to the king, Peter I ("The Catholic," 1196-1213). Peter defeated Guerau and imprisoned him in the castle of Loharre, near Jaca in Aragon. With the sudden death of the king in the battle of Muret (1213), however, Guerau fled prison and mounted a campaign to usurp the county from Aurembaix, Ermengol of Urgell's daughter and heir.¹⁹⁸ Apparently acknowledging Aurembaix's tenuous position, Elvira married the young girl to a Castilian noble and sent her away to Castile, leaving the county by default in Guerau's hands, who ruled it unchallenged during James I's minority. In 1228, Aurembaix divorced her husband and returned to Catalonia, wishing to reclaim her inheritance with the help of the young king. In order to protect her from the Cabrera's, James arranged for her to marry the exiled Portuguese prince, Pedro, in 1231. But a short time later, Aurembaix died and Pedro traded the county to the king for a portion of Majorca kingdom. From this moment onwards, James and his immediate successors, Peter and Alfonso, laid claim to the county and titled themselves counts of Urgell.

¹⁹⁸ Peter died defending the rights of his vassal, the count of Toulouse, from French crusaders during the Albigensian Crusade. A year earlier, ironically, Innocent III commended Peter for his role in the Christian victory over the Almohads (Berber and Spanish Muslims) at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, which earned him the epithet, "The Catholic."

Possession of the county, however, never left the Cabrera's control. The king, while continuing to consider himself the rightful count of Urgell, reached a pact with Ponç. Under the terms of the agreement, Ponç kept control of the county, but surrendered its capital, Balaguer, to the king. A decade later, Ponç died and left the county to his eldest son Ermengol, who died twelve years later, leaving his younger brother, Rodrigo, as heir to this war-torn county. Rodrigo's tutor, Jaume Cervera, brought the young count, a minor at the time living in Castile, to Urgell and ruled for him during his minority. Shortly after his arrival in Urgell, Rodrigo changed his name to Àlvar, probably trying to link himself, if not his entire lineage, with the county he inherited. Àlvar, after all, was born in Castile and had never stepped foot in Catalonia. With a minor heading the Cabrera line, the king saw a perfect opportunity to increase his influence in Urgell.

Instead of beginning an expensive civil war against the young Àlvar and his allies, James opted to gain a foothold in the county via diplomacy. The king pressured the young Àlvar to marry his niece, Constança de Montcada (daughter of James's sister, also named Constança, and Pere de Montcada, one of the king's most loyal vassals), to bring him under his sway. The marriage backfired when Àlvar abandoned Constança and married Cecilia of Foix, daughter of the count of Foix, Roger Bernard. The Urgell—Cabrera conflict, which evolved into a Cabrera—royal clash, morphed into a wider Cabrera/Foix—royal/Montcada struggle. Before long, a large segment of the Catalan nobility took sides in the conflict.

These noble clans chose their loyalties based on a number of factors: kinship ties, family rivalries, economic ambitions, and last but certainly not least, political sovereignty. Ramon Folc V viscount of Cardona, one of the revolt's principal instigators and its de facto leader, for example, was the count of Foix's nephew. The Cardona's were also intermarried with the counts

of Urgell and Empúries. Ramon, moreover, appears in the documentation as one of the fiercest defenders of the nobility's traditional autonomy, perhaps explaining why he played a leading role in these rebellions. Finally, his family's traditional rivals, the Montcadas, were one of the king's closest collaborators, further inducing Ramon to rebel.

Noble clans like the Montcadas had their own selfish reasons for supporting the crown. These families, although at times also at odds with the king, were willing to forgo some of their sovereignty in order to abstract additional rights and privileges for their loyalty. The crown's eventual success against the nobles, nevertheless, depended largely on the support and collaboration of the realm's cities and towns. The cities' militias successfully defended the nobles' attacks and participated in the sieges of the latter's castles. Without their support, the king would not have been able to subdue the rebels.

It is amid these expensive and prolonged disputes, which provoked much chaos and bloodshed in Catalonia, that defiance letters first appear in the vernacular.

The Earliest Defiances in Catalan

Ramon Folc V viscount of Cardona and Berenguer Arnau d'Anglesola wrote the earliest defiance letters in the vernacular for which we have records. Both nobles composed their letters to the king on the same day, November 6, 1259, from the same place, Castelló de Farfanya.¹⁹⁹ Both letters bypass Latin in the opening formulas, instead choosing almost identical honorific phrases in Catalan:

Al molt amat et honrad et noble seyor en Jacme, per la gracia de deu Rey darago, de mi en R. de cardona, per la gracia de deu vescomte de cardona. Salut et amors. [and] Al molt

¹⁹⁹ Francesc Carreras i Candí, "Rebelió de la noblesa catalana contra Jaume I en 1259," *BRABL* (1911), doc. 4 [Hereafter Rebelió], citing ACA, r. 11 f. 244r; Rebelió, doc. 5, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 244r-244v.

honrad et noble seyor en Jacme, per la gracia de deu Rey darago, demi en Bg. A. danglerola. Salut et amors. [respectively]

To the most loving, honorable, and noble lord James, by the grace of God, king of Aragon, from me, Ramon de Cardona, by the same grace of God viscount of Cardona. Greetings and love. [and] To the most loving, honorable, and noble lord, James, by the grace of God King of Aragon, from me, Berenguer Arnau d'anglerola. Greetings and love. [respectively]

Yet like most messages composed in the vernacular during this period, both letters end by recording the date of its composition in Latin: “*Datum...VIII idus November* (Presented on the 7th ides of November).

The message of the two letters, while serving the same ends, are different. Ramon’s letter is longer and more specific than Berenguer’s. Ramon informs the king that he is defying him and breaking his vassalage for several reasons: “*fas vos saber queus accuide et quem desisc de vos*” (know that I defy you and that we excuse ourselves from you). First and foremost, Ramon rebelled because of the abuses the king committed against the Catalan nobility, which were in violation of the customs of Barcelona, that is the Usatges of Barcelona (Catalonia’s legal code). Ramon is especially upset at the offenses committed against the count of Urgell: “*fas vos saber seyer que per les desmesure que vos fets als rics homens de Cataluia et per so com nos trencatas nostres costums et nomenadament al comte Durgel*” (know lord that because of the excesses you have committed against the nobility of Catalonia, especially against the count of Urgell, and for violating our customs). But he does not specify what these offenses are. In addition, the viscount resents the king for prohibiting him from using a *fundibul* (a type of small catapult), and closing off an entrance to the castle of Montblanc that Ramon and his servants used. Finally, Ramon includes a complaint about a loan the that king had not repaid and other unnamed crimes as justifications for his drastic actions. After repeating that the king was in violation of the Usatges, Ramon declares war on him with the common linguistic trope used by contemporaries

where one disassociates one's self from another and forgoes responsibility for attacks against the other's person, vassals, and land: "desisc de vos, que de mal que yo faza als vostre homens ne a la vostra terra tenguts nous en sia" (I excuse myself from you, and from the harm that I will inflict on your men and your land). Berenguer's letter is briefer, only listing one reason for his rebellion: his feudal obligations to the count of Urgell.²⁰⁰

On November 26, 1259, Ramon Folc's brother-in-law and Berenguer's feudal overlord, Àlvar Cabrera (count of Urgell), sent the king his defiance, also composed in Catalan.²⁰¹ Àlvar, however, recorded the opening formula of his letter in Latin.²⁰² The letter then proceeds with the count's grievances and threats in the vernacular, which clarify Ramon's earlier complaint:

Ben sabetz vos senyer que vos nos demanas la postat dagramunt et de Balaguer et de linerola et duliàna simplement et que nos laus donima benignantment et simpla axi com vos les nos demans, et a cap dels X dies que redre les, nos degesem eus tramesem Bernat R. de ribelles quis prega eus dix de part de nos que vos nos reedesets les postats dels dits locs on donades les nos aviem axi com dret et costum es de barchinona, et vos sobre aso no les nos avets volgudes redre ans les vos tenits de nos forzades et sobre perferta de dret.....et com nos siam tal hom que no degam soferre tan gran deszeret ni tan gran tort greu et mal que nos es com fer o avem desexim nos de vos eus accuydam que de mal que façam a vostres homens ne a vostra terran ne a res deç vostre que tengut en re nous en siam.

Lord, you know very well that you demanded simple possession of Agramont, Balaguer, Línlerola, and Uliàna castles from us, which we handed benignly and simply, just as you asked. And after 10 days had passed, we sent you a message through Bernat Ramon de Ribelles, who pleaded with you to return to us those castles as required by the Usatges of Barcelona. And you have not wanted to return them to us and continue to hold on to them forcefully and illegally.....And since a man of my stature can not endure such a great

²⁰⁰ "Ab tot honrament fas vos saber seyer que pel Comte durgel que o vol, a qui yo son tan tengut que falir no lin puix, mal et greu que mes queus acuydem, em desisc de vos, que de mal que yo faça als vostre homens ne en la vostra terra tengut nous en sia." (With all due honor, we let you know lord that because of the count of Urgell, who wishes so, and who I am so attached to and cannot fail, and [because of] the harm and wrongdoing that you have done, we defy you, and I excuse myself from you, and from the harm that I will inflict on your men and your land.)

²⁰¹ Rebellió, doc. 7, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 243r.

²⁰² "Illustrissimo domino Jacobo dei gratia regi Aragoni, Maioricarum, Comiti barchinone, ac domino Montipesulani. Alvarus per eadem Comes urgellensis. Salutem et reverenciam cum honore." (To the illustrious lord James, by the grace of God king of Aragon, Majorca, count of Barcelona, and lord of Montpellier. Alvar, by the same grace count of Urgell. Greetings and reverence with honor.)

violation of his rights nor such a grave offense, I defy you and excuse myself from the harm that we will inflict on your men and your land and anything belonging to you.

Àlvar's chief grievance is the king's refusal to return Agramunt, Balaguer, Oliana, and Liñola castles to him, as required by the Usatges. In his letter, Àlvar complains "that a man of his stature could not endure such an offense," and severs his ties of vassalage. James I's decision not to return the castles in fact proved to be the straw that broke the camel's back and initiated a rebellion that some historians have termed the "Urgell War."²⁰³

Many other nobles, outraged at the king's actions and worried about the increasing influence and power of the crown, joined the rebellion. On the same day and from the same location, Castelló de Farfanya, that Àlvar sent his defiance to the king, his brother Guerau de Cabrera, Bernat Ramon de Ribelles, Bernat de Capdella, and Dalmau de Beliana sent their defiance letters as well.²⁰⁴ Àlvar's and Guerau's letters are very similar. They both include the opening salutation and ending formula in Latin. Guerau also lists the four castles the king is refusing to return to Àlvar as his chief grievance. Both letters also stress the illegality of the king's actions, which violated the customs of Barcelona. The other three nobles did not compose the entire opening salutation in Latin, like Àlvar and his brother, but did not bypass it entirely. Instead, they blended the two, beginning their letters "al molt amat et honrat seyor," and then continuing with the king's name and titles in the high-prestige language, "Jacobus dei gratia etc." Each of the three listed the same reasons for rebelling against the king, their loyalty to the count of Urgell. But, aside from attributing his vassalage to Àlvar as a reason for his defiance, "me

²⁰³ Ferran Soldevila, *Pere el Gran: Primera Part: L'Infant* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1995), 109.

²⁰⁴ Guerau: Rebelió, doc. 8, and M. Cubells, "Documentos Diplomaticos Aragoneses, 1259-1284," *Revue Hispanique* 37 (1916), doc. 10 [Hereafter Cubells], citing ACA, r. 11 f. 243r; Bernat Ramon: Rebelió, doc. 9, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 243r; Bernat de Capdella: Rebelió, doc. 10, and Cubells, doc. 12, citing ACA, r. 10 f. 243v; and Dalmau: Rebelió, doc. 11, and Cubells, doc. 13, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 243v.

desisc devos puz comte durgel qui o vol quez mon seyor” (I excuse myself from you because the count of Urgell, who is my lord, wishes me to), Dalmau also complained over a debt of 8 animals the king owed him. The three nobles recorded the entire ending clause of their letters, including the place and date of their composition, in Latin.

The King Responds in Catalan

The king received all of these defiance letters on or before December 1. That day, from the city of Lleida (Lérida in Spanish), James responded to the seven nobles with his own invective letters in Catalan. All seven letters follow a similar pattern. The letters’ opening formula, where the king lists his titles and addresses the recipient, is written in Latin: e.g., in the case of Ramon Folc, “Jacobus dei graita Rex Aragonum Maioricarum et Valencia Comes barchinone et urgelli et dominus Montipesulani, viro nobili R. de Cardona” (James by the grace of God King of Aragon, Majorca, and Valencia, count of Barcelona and Urgell, and lord of Montpellier, to you nobleman Ramon de Cardona). Following this identical opening formula, the king’s scribes switch over to the vernacular for the body of the letters. They begin, as was the custom at the time, by addressing the contents of the message received. This first line in Catalan usually starts with the phrases “vim vostra carta” (we saw your letter), “en les letres les quals trameses a nos era contengut” (the letters which you sent to us contained), or “vim vostra letra” (we saw your letter). After summarizing the message received, the royal scribes recorded the king’s response to the nobles’ accusations. James’s message in the seven letters is similar: the king is surprised to learn of their defiance, and their justification for it, stating “de la qual cosa nos molt maravelam” (we were greatly marveled by that). This was a linguistic trope often used by contemporaries when responding to an antagonistic message. Its equivalent in Latin

documents was “non possumus credere” (we cannot believe). James then adamantly denies all of their accusations, and reminds them that he has offered to choose a group of individuals acceptable to both parties to arbitrate the dispute in court and avoid a war. But if they do not, and continue with their war and attack the king’s lands or his men, which the king values equally, James threatens to retaliate in kind:

E si aso no volets fer e ens peyorats, ens fayets mal a nostres homens et a nostra terra, car aytant es laun com laltre, desexim nos de vos de mal que a vos fessesim ni a vostres homens ni a vostra terra.²⁰⁵

And if you do not want to do that and you sabotage the process, or harm our men or our land, which we value equally, we excuse ourselves from you, from the harm that we shall inflict on you and your men and your land.

Finally, after refuting the nobles’ accusations and warning them to avoid a conflict the scribes switch back to Latin in the documents’ formulaic ending, where they record the place and date of its redaction, e.g., “Datum Illerde Kalendas december Anno domini MCCLIX” (Presented in Lleida on the calends of December in the year of our Lord 1259), and occasionally the king’s signature (recorded by the scribe).

The decision by James I always to begin and end letters in Latin further highlights the royal chancery’s linguistic conservatism, which prevented royal scribes from composing a charter entirely in the vernacular. This linguistic conservatism is nowhere more manifest than in the internal notes in the royal registers. In the case of the defiance letters Ramon Folch and Berenguer Arnau d’Anglesola sent to the king, the register introduces them with a brief summary in Latin: “die sabbati XIII idus december fuerunt oblata domino Regi diffidamenta R. de cardona et berenguer Arnau de angularia sub hic forma apud Oscam” (on Saturday the 13th ides of December [December 1] the king received in Huesca the defiance of Ramon de Cardona and

²⁰⁵ Rebelió 12, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 246v.

Berenguer Arnau de Anglesola in this form).²⁰⁶ Similarly, the registers introduce Berenguer de Ponç's, Guerau de Cervelló's, and Pere de Berga's defiance letters to the king in the high-prestige register: "kalendas november dominis Rex recipit litteras acuyndamentarum de berengario de podio et Geraldo de Cervilione" (on the calends of November [November 1], the lord king received letters of defiance from Berenguer de Ponç and Gerald de Cervelló); and "nonas november Gerunda Receptit dominis Rex litteram aciyundamentorum P. de Berga sub hac forma" (on the nones of November [November 5], in Girona, the lord king received Pere de Berga's defiance letter in this form) respectively.²⁰⁷ Latin clearly functioned as the royal chancery's primary administrative language, both in internal and external communications throughout this entire period.

Aside from the similarities in these response letters, the king refutes each noble's accusations and renunciations specifically. James, for example, reminds Àlvar that he has offered to pick three independent and impartial judges to solve their dispute.²⁰⁸ He also complains about a certain fugitive who "harmed" the king and Àlvar continues to harbor in his lands. James offers Àlvar the opportunity to hand over the fugitive and submit to the ruling of the impartial judges. Otherwise, "si asso no volets pendre, acuyndam vos e desexim nos de vos de tot mal e de tot dan que fassam a vos ni a vostres homens, ni a vostra terra" (if you refuse to do this, we defy you and excuse ourselves from you and from all the harm and all the damage that we will inflict on your men and your land).

²⁰⁶ ACA, r. 11 f. 244r, published in *Rebelió*, doc. 4.

²⁰⁷ ACA, r. 22 f. 20r and f. 20v.

²⁰⁸ *Rebelió*, doc. 13, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 246r.

Seven days later, December 7, the king composed a second response to Ramon Folc.²⁰⁹ The document is much longer than any of the king's previous responses to a defiance letter. This is not surprising considering Ramon Folc's role as one of the principal instigators of the rebellion. The king denies Ramon's accusations, and resents them, since he is the most generous prince in the world, as everyone from his realms and many other realms know.²¹⁰ James then defends his prohibition of Ramon's use of the *fundibul*, stating that only a king had the right to use such a weapon in his realms. As far as the gate of Montblanc, the king dismisses Ramon's complaint, saying that if it did not bother those who reside there, it should not bother him. Furthermore, the king reminds Ramon that the rebellion he was waging was a much greater offense than any of his petty grievances: "mas maior tort nos tenits vos et pus vertader que car la guerra que vos aviets comensada" (you have inflicted a much greater offence against us and more truly with the war that you have started). James also demands that Ramon return the castle of Tagamanent, which the viscount is retaining illegally. Finally, James reminds Ramon that he swore allegiance to the king and his heir, Alfonso, to defend them against any enemy. If Ramon does not respond positively to these royal demands, James again threatens to sever his ties to him and declare war.

From Catalan Defiance to Latin Reconciliation

In the following weeks James received more defiance letters from several other powerful magnates who joined the rebellion. These included Jaume de Cervera (Àlvar's tutor), Ramon de

²⁰⁹ Rebellió, doc. 20, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 247r.

²¹⁰ "On vos responem et deim axi a vos que no va axi com vos deitz... que ben creem, com sabers vos, et saben ho tots los homens de nostra tera et daltres terres moltes, quel mon no a negun princep qui tan poc tort fassa a sos homen com nos als nostres." (We respond that what you say did not happen as you say it did... we believe, as you and many men from our realms and many other realms know, that no prince commits fewer offenses against his men as us.)

Cervera (Jaume's brother), Guillem Ramon de Jossa, Pere de Puigvert, Guillem Torroella, Bernat de Capdeles, Guillem de Cervelló, and Hug de Cervelló. Jaume and his brother Ramon, from the powerful Cervera clan, wrote their letters on the same day in Castelló de Farfanya. Both letters begin with the salutations and end with the date in Latin, like some of the examples listed above. They also both cite the illegal retention of Àlvar's castles as the primary reason for their defiance.²¹¹ Guillem de Cervelló's defiance letter contains the honorary salutations and date in Latin, but does not include its place of production.²¹² Unlike Guillem, his brother Hug de Cervelló composed his feudal rupture entirely in Catalan.²¹³ Guillem Ramon de Jossa, Pere de Puigvert, Guillem Torroella, and Bernat de Capdeles also bypass the formalities and produce their entire messages in the vernacular.²¹⁴ None of the register copies of these last five nobles' letters includes the customary ending formula with the date and place of composition, perhaps explaining why they are entirely in the vernacular. Curiously, these five nobles also neglect to mention the Usatges in their protests, unlike the previous three (the Cervera brothers and Guillem de Cervelló). Pere, Bernat, and Hug cite the count of Urgell, their feudal lord, as their primary reason for rebelling, while Guillem Ramon and Guillem mention their feudal overlord, Ramon Folc.²¹⁵ Guillem Ramon's letter is especially interesting because he appears surprised to learn that the king denied that he had severed their vassalage ties: "fas vos saber seyer que he oyt que vos deys que yo nous he accuydat, de la qual cosam maravel fort" (we let you know lord

²¹¹ Jaume: Rebellió, doc. 23, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 244v; Ramon: Rebellió, doc. 24, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 244v.

²¹² Rebellió, doc. 27, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 244v.

²¹³ Rebellió, doc. 29, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 245r.

²¹⁴ Guillem Ramon: Rebellió, doc. 21, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 245r; Pere: Rebellió, doc. 22, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 245r; Guillem: Rebellió, doc. 26, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 245r; Bernat: Cubells, doc. 12, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 243v.

²¹⁵ In addition to the count of Urgell, Hug cites the wishes of his brother and overlord, Guillem de Cervelló as a motive for his defiance.

that we have heard that you said that I have not defied you, which surprises me greatly). But in case there was any confusion, Guillem Ramon continues: “et ara avreus accuydat dues vegades, mal et greu que mes per en R de cardona qui ho vol, a quin son tengu que fallir no li pusc” (and now I have defied you two times, because of the harm and offense against Ramon de Cardona, who wishes to defy you, and who I am obliged to and cannot fail).

The rebellion continued in full force through February of 1260, when the king and representatives of the rebels met in Cervera to work out a peace accord. In the end, James essentially bought the rebels off, giving Ramon Folc, for example, the royal rents of Llagostera and Caldes for six years in return for two years of military service. The document recording James’s payment to Ramon Folc was composed entirely in Latin.²¹⁶ During this lull in the fighting, the king also sent a letter in Latin to the count of Urgell, Àlvar, asking him to travel to Barcelona to conclude a truce.²¹⁷ The king’s eventual pardon of the rebels, composed on January 25, 1263, is likewise redacted in the customary language of record, Latin.²¹⁸ The king therefore only switches back to communicating with the rebels in Latin when their conflict diminishes.

Even when tensions rose between the king and the former rebels, they signaled their commitment to their truce by continuing to write to each other in Latin. This is the case in the Spring of 1263 when James chastised Ramon Folc and Jaume Cervera about the threatening actions of their respective vassals, which violated the terms of peace agreed upon.²¹⁹ In the letter

²¹⁶ Rebellió, doc. 40, citing ACA, r 10. f. 129v.

²¹⁷ Rebellió, doc. 54, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 278r.

²¹⁸ Rebellió, doc. 61, citing ACA, r. 12 f. 7r. Proceeding this document in the register, a note informs us that similar pardons were extended to Guerau Cabrera, Guillem Ramon de Cervelló, Jaume Cervera, Hug de Cervelló, Bernat Ramon de Ribelles, and Berenguer Arnau. The register also includes the king’s pardoning of Guillem Ramon de Josa, Ponç Guillem de Torroella, Guillem de Odena, and Ramon d’Odena.

²¹⁹ Ramon: Rebellió, doc. 57, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 250v; Jaume: Rebellió, doc. 58, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 254 [correct citation 255r].

to Ramon Folc, for instance, James begins by reminding the viscount about the terms of the truce: “bene scitis nos dedisse vobis Treugas per nobis et valitoribus nostris et recepisse a vobis et a valitoribus vestris et sic dare et concessa fuerunt ad invicem inter nos” (you know very well that we granted you and your vassals a truce from us and our vassals and they in turn were given and agreed upon between us). He then orders Ramon Folc to discipline Guillem de Torroella, one of the viscount’s vassals, for attacking Guillem de Castellnou, the king’s friend and vassal.

Once the peace falters and armed conflicts resume, however, the nobles and the king return to interchanging messages in the vernacular. Shortly after the king and the rebels agreed upon a peace accord in February of 1260, for instance, Ramon Folc informed the king that he rejected it in a letter written almost entirely in Catalan. The opening clause in Ramon’s correspondence is in the romance, as is most of the ending clause, which only contains one word in Latin: “*Datum* lo primer die de Cuaresma a fluvia” (Dated on the first day of Lent in Fluvia). The king’s response to this letter, which either does not survive or I have not located, was almost certainly redacted in Catalan. That was the case with the king’s response to Guillem Rajadell’s defiance letter on April 9, 1260.²²⁰ In another similar case, the king responded in Catalan to Berenguer Arnau d’Anglesola’s complaints, also in the vernacular, about the king’s seizure of Botçenit and Exafaba castles.²²¹ Finally, it is interesting to note that while the rebellion was under a fragile peace treaty in 1264, the king, worried about Ramon Folc’s intentions, warns him and his brother not to sabotage the peace with messages composed in Catalan.

The fear of Ramon Folc reinitiating the rebellion was more threatening to the king than the actions of the viscount’s vassal Guillem de Torroella in 1263, since the king felt it necessary

²²⁰ Rebellió, doc. 49, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 250r.

²²¹ See Rebellió, doc. 19, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 247v, doc. 46, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 245v, and doc. 47, citing ACA r. 11 f. 249v. The king had seized these places because of an accusation levied against Berenguer for using false coinage.

to switch to the vernacular to increase the impact of his threat. By switching to Catalan, the king was signaling in an unmistakable manner his willingness to act decisively against the viscount if the latter abandoned the truce. The king was of course capitalizing on the nobles' innovative use of the vernacular to transmit their antagonism clearly and provocatively. This is in fact the first, but certainly not the last, example of the king initiating an antagonistic exchange in the vernacular with a dissident noble, as we shall see in the section below and in the following chapter.

Before Catalan acquired a negative index associated with disrespect and defiance in antagonistic exchanges between the king and his vassals, royal scribes delivered even the sternest warning in the high-prestige language. Only days before Ramon Cardona declared war on the king in 1259, for instance, James firmly warned Ramon not to defy him in messages transmitted in Latin.²²² Yet once the precedent for using the vernacular in antagonistic messages set in, royal scribes did not merely respond to antagonistic messages in the romance; they initiated them. Not just any antagonistic message warranted royal scribes to switch over to the low-prestige code, however. Royal scribes only resorted to composing antagonistic messages in the vernacular when they felt royal authority most seriously threatened.

The communications between the king and his allies during the conflict, be it nobles, royal officials, or villages and cities, meanwhile, always remained in Latin, regardless of the message. On December 6, 1259, for instance, the king ordered all his officials and subjects in Catalonia to meet him prepared for war on the following feast of St. Michael in messages transmitted in Latin.²²³ James also warned the peasants of the Baix de Llobregat about eminent

²²² Rebelió, doc. 2, and doc. 3. citing ACA, r. 11 f. 262r.

²²³ ACA, r. 10 f. 124v. For more letters from the king to his subjects regarding the rebellion see ACA r. 10 fs. 123r-130v.

attacks by the rebels, and ordered them to evacuate their homes with their animals in Latin.²²⁴ In June of 1260, James ordered the bailiff and *prohoms* of Perpignan not to assist the rebels by selling them bread, wine, or arms in the high-prestige language.²²⁵ The debts the king acquired because of the war, which were not insignificant, were recorded in Latin.²²⁶ These debts were of course passed down to the cities and villages. When the king ordered the cities of Tarragona and Tortosa to contribute to the costs of war, he did so in Latin.²²⁷ James also ordered several locations, including Barbastro, to make an inventory of the damages they suffered from the war in documents composed in Latin.²²⁸ Finally, when the king reconciled with the rebels, he informed his vassals in the high-prestige language.²²⁹

²²⁴ Rebellió, doc. 35. Carreras i Candi does not provide a citation for this document, and I have not found it in the registers.

²²⁵ ACA, r. 11 f. 177v: “Mandamus vobis...non donetis vel vendatis vel mutetis aliquibus nobilibus militibus vel aliis hominibus qui [nobiscum hoc] anno guerram habuerint in Catalonia. Bladum aliquod nec vinum nec aliqua victualia nec pannos vel arma aut aliquas alias res; et persona illis qui contra fecerit et [eram] bona sua capiatis et emperetis et ea nobis servetis ad faciendum inde nostras proprias voluntates.” (We order you not to give or sell or exchange anything with the nobles, knights, or any other man who has waged war with us this year in Catalonia. Neither wheat nor wine nor any provisions nor clothes nor weapons nor any other thing; and the person who goes against this order will have his possessions confiscated and will have to serve us and from this moment onwards act upon our wishes.)

²²⁶ For example, see Rebellió, doc. 42, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 249r.

²²⁷ Rebellió, doc. 55, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 251v, and Rebellió, doc. 56, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 251v.

²²⁸ Rebellió, doc. 53, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 171v-172r.

²²⁹ For example, he lets the inhabitants of Ça Reyat, Cabra, and Forès know that he has signed a peace accord with the rebels in a letter composed in Latin: Rebellió, doc. 41, citing ACA, r. 10 f. 130r. Similarly, James ordered his lieutenant in Pujalt to suspend the invasion of Berenguer Arnau d’Anglesola’s and Arnau de Llers’s lands, because he had reached an accord with them: Rebellió, doc. 34, citing ACA, r. 10 f. 128v. The king also ordered the vicar of Girona to return the castles of Rocacorba and Puigdàlber to the viscount of Castellnou via a Latin message: Rebellió, doc. 38, citing ACA, r. 11 f. 249r.

The Pattern Continues...

James's warning to Ramon Folc, as well as the other incidents that threatened the peace, reveal that the rebellion remained largely unresolved. The death of Count Àlvar of Urgell represented the final blow to the tenuous peace established in 1263. With Àlvar out of the picture, the king saw an opportunity to realize his claim over or at least strengthen his position in the county of Urgell via his niece, Constança of Montcada, Àlvar's first, and arguably, legitimate wife. Ramon Folc and Roger Bernat moved quickly to protect their interests and the rights of their kinsmen, Ermengol and Àlvar, Àlvar's children with Cecilia of Foix.

At the height of the feud between the king and these two noble clans, both parties returned to communicating in the vernacular. This time the king initiated the exchange. On October 5, 1268, the king wrote hostile letters in Catalan to Roger Bernat (count of Foix) and Ramon Folc.²³⁰ The king informed Roger that he knew the count had invaded his territory and illegally confiscated several castles. For that reason, he ordered Roger to turn over all of the castles he held in fief from the king, including Sono and Queragut, to the royal vicar Bernat Fareix. James again shows concern for the unauthorized use of a military weapon. He had confronted Ramon Folc earlier over the use of a *fundibul*, and now objected to Roger's building of a *bastida* (military tower used to reach over walls), which according to the Usatges was an exclusive royal right.²³¹ James's letter to Ramon was very similar. The king also accused Ramon of illegally occupying royal lands, and ordered him to hand over the fiefs he had in the king's name to the bailiff of Montblanc, Joan Pérez Sabata.

²³⁰ Charles Baudon de Mony, *Relations Politiques des Comtes de Foix avec la Catalogne jusque' au commencement du XIVe Siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1896), 2: doc. 51 n. 4 and n. 7 respectively [Hereafter Baudon de Mony].

²³¹ Usatge 73, "Et ex magnatibus," clearly forbids the use of siege weapons for everybody except the king.

Roger and Ramon responded to the king's demands and accusations in the vernacular immediately.²³² In his letter, Roger denies having invaded the king's land or castles. In fact he is prepared to litigate the matter with the king: "apareyllatz quens en fazatz dret a coneguda" (I am prepared to have you litigate the dispute as is the custom). The matter at hand is the king's demand for their service outside of Catalonia, which they felt was an abuse of power in clear violation of the Usatges. Interestingly, Roger affixed Ramon Folc's seal to his letter because he did not have access to his in Ager: "et car no ic avem lo nostre segel, avem les feites segelar ab los segel d'en R. de Cardona" (and because we do not have our seal here, we have sealed the letter with the seal of Ramon de Cardona). Ramon's letter, sent to the king on the same day from the same place, begins in Latin, unlike Roger's, which begins in Catalan; otherwise, both letters are nearly identical. Both nobles deny that they failed to fulfill their feudal obligations by illegally seizing castles that did not belong to them, and are prepared to defend their rights before the king; they are also willing to hand over temporary jurisdiction over the properties they held in fief, but only because it was stipulated by the Usatges, not as a penalty for violating their vassalage.

James, in much longer and specific letters composed in Catalan, dismisses both Roger's and Ramon's responses as false, "amb tota cataluyna o sab" (like all of Catalonia knows).²³³ He also rejects the nobles' plea to settle the matter through litigation, reminding them that he already had sent safe conducts for them to meet him in Çes Avelanes: "ben sabetz vos [Ramon Folc] que vos donam carta de guiatge nostra a vos et al comte de Foix que viugueretz salus et segurs tro a Çes Avelanes" (you well know that I gave you and the count of Foix a letter of safe conduct to

²³² Baudon de Mony, doc. 51 n. 5 and 8.

²³³ Baudon de Mony, doc. 51 n. 9 and 6; also published in Huici, docs. 1596 and 1597, citing ACA, Jaime I, Cartas Reales, no. 47.

come safe and secure to Çes Avelanes). Instead, according to the king, they defied him by occupying Ager and attacking his men.²³⁴

Ramon in a lengthy reply in the vernacular to the king's letter rejects the latter's accusations, claiming that he never failed to serve the king and that he prevented his men from harming the king's possessions in Ager.²³⁵ Furthermore, Ramon is "shocked" to learn that the king has ordered his agents to attack him, since the Usatges require a 30-day waiting period before engaging in a feudal war.²³⁶ Ramon informs the king that he was abiding by this law, but since the king was not, he is forced to respond in kind.

James replied the next day with an even longer and more detailed response in Catalan.²³⁷ In the letter, James reminds Ramon that he confiscated his fiefs because of the viscount's lack of service. But Ramon had also committed other offenses, which the king claims are too long to cite in a letter: "les coses serien longues de dir, mas direm vos enades algues les quals manifestament vos avetz trechts los usatges" (it would take too long to state these reasons, but we include some of them which demonstrate that you have violated the Usatges). Among those offenses the king does cite, he includes Ramon's usurpation of royal rights, like interfering in judicial cases and ordering corporal punishments. He also condemns Ramon's collection of tithes and his violation of royal safe conducts. James, moreover, reminds Ramon that he failed to get together with him and find a diplomatic solution, and warns of a wider war if the viscount does not meet the king's demands. Indeed he ends the letters: "et por aço que vos no volgues fer, desafiam vos" (and because of that which you refuse to do, we defy you).

²³⁴ James cites two Usatges in both letters to substantiate his demands. The two Usatges are Usatge 64, "Princeps namque quolibet," and Usatge 39, "Potestatem."

²³⁵ Baudon de Mony, doc. 51 n. 10.

²³⁶ Ramon cites Usatge 99, "Omnes hominess."

²³⁷ Baudon de Mony, doc. 51 n. 11.

The mutual accusations between the rebels and the king continued through the Fall of 1268. Soon, the rebellion's leaders, Ramon and Roger, were redacting their demands, defenses, and threats to the king together. These appear to have become frustratingly irritating to the king's scribes, who responded annoyed to one of the nobles' claims: "Ja sie ço que la resposta quel seynor rey sia soficient et abastament" (The king's response was already sufficient and enough).²³⁸

The king and the nobles reached a tentative agreement with the help of James's eldest, surviving son, Peter, in early 1269. In the initial truce, redacted in Latin, the nobles promised to defend the prince and his wife's inheritance.²³⁹ This inheritance was of course Sicily, and the future king would need the nobility's help to conquer the prized possession. In return, Peter promises to abide by the customs of Barcelona, finish mediating the dispute between the king and the nobles, and defend the count of Foix against the king of France. The final arbitration which both parties endorsed unfortunately has not survived. This truce, nevertheless, lasted several years, and was almost certainly recorded in Latin, the realm's high-prestige language.

...With the Princes

Not long after James reconciled with the Catalan rebels, he experienced a falling out with his heir, Peter. The tension revolved around Peter's hostile relationship with his illegitimate half-brother, Ferrán Sánchez de Castro. While Peter and Ferrán never enjoyed a close relationship, or even appear to have ever had much personal contact, it had not always been tumultuous. Ferrán was the chief negotiator in his brother's engagement to Constance of Sicily.

²³⁸ Baudon de Mony, doc. 51 n. 14; also published in Huici, doc. 1599, citing ACA, Jaime I, Cartas Reales, no. 47.

²³⁹ The accord was reached on January 27, 1269, see Baudon de Mony, doc. 53, citing ACA, Jaime I, Carta Reales, no. 1959.

Both men also fought side-by-side in at least one of their father's military campaigns. But by the early 1270s, the brothers deeply distrusted each other. Peter felt Ferrán was conspiring with his most dangerous enemy, Charles of Anjou, while Ferrán feared Peter was undermining his interests.²⁴⁰ James felt obliged to finally interfere in his sons' feud after Peter attempted to murder Ferrán. Ferrán's letter notifying the king of Peter's actions arrived at the royal court on February 20, 1272.²⁴¹ In the letter, written in Latin, the usual means of communication between James and all of his children, Ferrán informs his father that Peter tried to kill him and his wife in their private chamber at Burriana:

Noscat Magestas Regia quod Infans Petrus venit ad Borgamanum ut me interficeret, fecitque me queri inter manipulos canabi que erant in domo mea et sub lectis, cum ensibus, ut vita me privaret.

Know your great highness that Prince Peter came to Borga to kill me, and forced soldiers to search for me between the sheets and under the bed that were in my house, with swords, to kill me.

The same day Ferrán's letter arrived, James sent Peter a brief, but firm message in Latin: because of his behavior towards his brother, the king ordered Peter to come before him ten days after receiving the message.²⁴² Peter apparently ignored his father's request, because on March 20, James composed a more forceful letter to his son, complaining that the latter had not showed up or responded to his previous two messages:

²⁴⁰ Both of these fears might have been justified; Soldevila cites evidence of Ferrán's meeting with Charles of Anjou on his return from Crusading in the East, Soldevila, *Pere el Gran: Primera Part*, 316; Peter's irritable personality, in turn, made Ferrán weary of his safety, especially after their father's death.

²⁴¹ Fernando Fondevilla, "La nobleza catalanoaragonesa capitaneada por Ferrán Sánchez de Castro en 1274," in *Congrés d'Història de la Corona d'Aragó* 2 vols. (Barcelona: Stampa d'en F. Altès, 1909-1913), II, 1103 [Hereafter Fondevilla], citing ACA, r. 18 f. 90r.

²⁴² Fondevilla, 1103, citing ACA, r. 18 f. 90r. The king requests that all Catalan nobles attend the Court with letters sent to them in Latin. See Fondevilla, 1103-04, citing ACA, r. 18 f. 89v and ACA, r. 19 f. 92v, 111r, 119r, and 121r.

Bene scitis Nos misisse vobis litteras nostras de partibus Valentie et alias de villa Turolli, ut ante Nos venire debeatis, racione facti quod inceperatis contra Ferrandum Sancii, et postmodum misisse vobis alias nostras litteras de Exea per Fortunium de Ilerida, portarium nostrum, quod veniretis ante Nos paratus respondere super predictis quod inceperatis facere contra Ferrandum Sancii memoratum, supra quibus nullum habuimus responsum vestrum.²⁴³

You know well that we sent you our letters from Valencia and Teurel, stating that you need to come to us because of your actions against Ferrán Sánchez, and later we sent other letters from Exea through Fortun of Lleida, our porter, that request you to come before us prepared to respond to the aforementioned actions that you inflicted against Ferrán Sánchez, of which we have not received any response from you.

The king is noticeably upset at Peter; but unlike his exchange with the rebels discussed above or with Ferrán discussed below, he does not switch over from Latin to the vernacular.

According to the *Llibre dels Fets*, Peter attended a general court meeting in mid-Lent, held to mediate his dispute with Ferrán, and denied any wrongdoing.²⁴⁴ The king, infuriated by his son's actions and refutations, dispossessed Peter from the office of Procurator General (the king's representative or chief officer) and deprived him of his rents and incomes, essentially cutting him off from the realms' governance and revenues:

emparavit dominus Rex Infanti P fillio suo omnes procuraciones Aragonum et Catalonie ac Valenciae et prohibuit eidem ne cenas reciperet in terra sua.²⁴⁵

The lord King dispossesses the Prince Peter, his son, all the procurements in Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia, and prohibits him from receiving any profits from his [the king's] lands.

Relations between James and Peter remained strained for over a year. But by late 1273, it was clear that neither side benefited from the quarrel. Via the mediation of several clerics, including the bishop of Valencia, James and Peter reconciled. The king narrates the reconciliation sentimentally in his *Llibre*. Curiously, James records Peter's dramatic plea in Aragonese. The great Catalan historian Ferran Soldevila doubts Peter would have addressed his

²⁴³ Fondevilla, 1106-7, citing ACA, r. 18 f. 90r.

²⁴⁴ *Llibre dels fets*, ch. 509.

²⁴⁵ Fondevilla, 1107, citing ACA, r. 18 f. 81r.

father in Aragonese. He points out correctly that James and Peter were in all likelihood native Catalan speakers, as were most of those gathered at the king's residence in Xàtiva when Peter performed his apology. I do not employ the term performance lightly. This is exactly what the *Llibre* describes: (Peter's words in Aragonese italicized)

E [Peter] venc al dia ab tota sa companya, e entrà a nós en les nostres cases de Xàtiva. E nós llevam-nos per ell, e acullim-lo bé e alegrament quam vim que ell tan humilment venia a nós; e dixem-li que es n'anàs posar, e que al matí ell parlaria ab nos. E ell dix-nos que no iria a posada ni en lloc del món, mas quens pregava e ens clamava mercè que nós enviàssem per nostres cavallers, e per dels bons hòmens de la vila: e nós faem-ho. E quan tots foren venguts llevà's en peus, e dix: *Senyor, lo que yo feito he me pesa muito; e muito gran dolor n'he e mon coraçon quant yo feito he neguna cosa que a vos pesa: e viengo aquí a vostra mercé, e fets de mi e de les mies coses lo que vos queredes.* E anà's gitar als nostres peus, e besà'ls-nós e pregà'ns per Déu que li perdonàssem. E nos fom tot remogut, e pres nos dolor d'ell, e no poguem estar que els ulls no ens vinguessen en llàgremes, e vim la gran devoció sua, e perdonam-l'hi.²⁴⁶

And Peter arrived on time with all of is host and entered our houses in Xàtiva: and we stood up to receive him well and joyfully, when we saw how humbly he came to us. And we told him to go lay down and rest until the next morning when we would speak. And he said he would not go and rest for anything in this world, and requested and begged us to summon our knights and the good men of the town: and we did so. And when all had arrived, Peter stood up and said: *Lord, what I have done weighs heavily on me; and my heart endures great pain when my acts offend you. And I come here at your mercy, for you to do with me, with my possessions, and my vassals whatever you wish.* And we stood up and kissed him, and he begged in God's name that we forgive him. And we were so touched by his pain that tears came to our eyes; and seeing his great devotion, we forgave him.

Soldevila dismisses the legitimacy of Peter's Aragonese apology by noting that the oldest extant version of the *Llibre*, Marsili's early-fourteenth-century Latin translation, does not specifically state that Peter's apology was pronounced in Aragonese, as it does when James introduces Occitan into the text, which Marsili terms "gallice."²⁴⁷ While Soldevila is correct in observing that Aragonese was not the usual or even practical language for the prince to make his plea, his argument is tenuous at best. There is no evidence whatsoever that the original text, the source of the oldest surviving Catalan copies, included Peter's apology in Catalan, or that as Soldevila

²⁴⁶ *Llibre dels fets*, ch. 520.

²⁴⁷ Soldevila, *Pere el Gran: Primera Part*, 336.

speculates, one of the *Llibre*'s redactors inserted the Aragonese words from a lost Aragonese text because he felt they belonged there.²⁴⁸ Indeed, Soldevila's preoccupation with demonstrating that Peter did not speak Aragonese prevents him from appreciating the symbolic significance of Peter's performance in that language.

Two non-mutually exclusive motives explain why Peter performed his apology in Aragonese. First, addressing the king in Aragonese served as an act of humility: What better way for Peter to symbolically humble himself in front of the king and all those gathered in the king's house at the time than by appropriating Ferrán's native language when asking for forgiveness and promising not to hurt Ferrán? As the king states in his *Llibre*, Peter insisted in apologizing to his father in front of Xàtiva's knights and good men, ensuring that his dramatic plea reach the broadest audience possible. Second, Peter, the future heir of Aragon, was asserting his authority over Aragon by demonstrating to his father and those present that he could function in that realm's language. Even though written communications were primarily conducted in Latin, Peter would still have to communicate orally with his Aragonese subjects.²⁴⁹ Peter, moreover, had been the sole heir to Catalonia his whole life; he had only gained rights to Aragon after the death of his older half-brother, Alfonso, in 1260. But he had just lost them for nearly a year after his rift with the king over Ferrán, one of the most powerful magnates in Aragon, as well as Peter's half-brother. Peter was therefore utilizing language as one of several means of asserting his authority over an essential portion, symbolically the most important one because of the royal title, of his future realms. Another means by which Peter sought to enforce and display his authority in Aragon was through violence. Peter, after all, made sure to lead the

²⁴⁸ Soldevila, *Pere el Gran: Primera Part*, 336.

²⁴⁹ According to Peter's own household ordinances, the king had to spend three months of the year within the boundaries of the kingdom of Aragon. For more information on this ordinance, that was composed in Catalan, see below, 189-93.

Aragonese front of the civil war that plagued Aragon and Catalonia in the second half of the 1270s, discussed in the following chapter, while his father directed the Catalan campaign.

The survival of Peter's promise to his father not to harm Ferrán, redacted in Aragonese shortly after their reconciliation, reinforces my belief that Peter utilized these documents to humble himself before the king and display proficiency in Aragon's romance.²⁵⁰ The register's introduction to the letter, as always in Latin, informs us that Peter is assuring Ferrán and his vassals' safety at the behest of his father: "in xativa dominus infans Petrus assecuravit Fferrandum Sancii et eius vassallos ad mandatum domini Regis in hunc modum" (In Xatíva the lord prince Peter assures [the safety] of Ferrán Sánchez and this vassals at the command of the lord King in this manner). The document itself was composed entirely in Aragonese:

Nos infant don Pedro prometemos a vos, seynnor don Jayme, por la gracia de Dios Rey d' Arago, padre nuestro, que a Fferran Sanxiz ni a sus vassallos ne a lures averes no fagamos mal nos ni nostros vassallos, ne tractaremos ne percazaremos que alcun les faga mal. Et esto prometemos a buena fe e senes engan.²⁵¹

I, Prince Peter, promise you, lord James, by the grace of God king of Aragon, that I and my vassals shall not do any harm to Ferrán Sánchez and his vassals or his possessions, nor shall we try or allow anyone to do them harm. And this I promise you with good faith and without deceit

Soldevila's conclusion that the letter's subject, Ferrán, explains its redaction in Aragonese is unconvincing. If that were the case, then James and Peter's correspondence about Ferrán in Latin, cited above, would have been redacted in Aragonese as well.²⁵² As with the king's responses to defiance letters in the vernacular, the letters' message and intended audience determined its composition in the low-prestige language more than its subject. It is no coincidence that both statements, integral parts of the father and son's reconciliation process, are recorded in Aragonese. Peter's promise, like his apology, was a public act, performed in front of

²⁵⁰ Cubells, doc. 42, citing ACA, r. 15 f. 108v.

²⁵¹ Cubells, doc. 80, citing ACA, r. 18 f. 74v.

²⁵² See above, 113-5.

a number of both Catalan and Aragonese-speaking individuals. The fact that Ferrán's Aragonese, half-brothers from his mother's side were present and acted as witnesses to the act suggests that Peter's message was also directed to Ferrán, and possibly other Aragonese magnates, indirectly via the brothers. Peter is once again taking the opportunity of his reconciliation process with the king to exert his authority over Aragon by demonstrating proficiency in its vernacular language.

While unable to question the validity of Peter's promise, it survives recorded in a royal register, Soldevila dismisses the possibility that Peter actually pronounced it in Aragonese:

El fet que aquesta declaració de l'infant estigui en aragonès en el document no implica forçosament que l'hagués feta en aquest idioma: vol dir, simplement, que l'escrivà que va redactar-la era aragonès...o un de català que s'esforcés a traduir a l'aragonès. Observem, encara, com sembla rastrejar-se un text o versió precedent en català en mots com "Aragó," "percazaremos," "bisbe," "Oscha."²⁵³

The fact that the prince's declaration appears in Aragonese in the document does not necessarily imply that he made it in that language: that is, simply that the scribe that redacted it was Aragonese...or Catalan struggling to translate the passage into Aragonese. In fact, let us note how the text seems to derive from a previous version in Catalan with words like "Aragó," "percazaremos," "bisbe," "Oscha."

Soldevila's evidence is unpersuasive. To begin with, Catalan at times infiltrated Aragonese documents and vice versa in linguistic frontier zones, which included towns like Lleida, Montson, and to a lesser extent, Xàtiva, where this document was composed. Thus, using words like "Arago" instead of "Aragon," "bispe" instead of "obispo," and "Deu" instead of "Dios" was not that rare. Secondly, it is not unusual to find Aragonese documents that spell "Arago" instead of "Aragon" and "Osca" instead of "Huesca." Finally, even in places like Barcelona, where Aragonese influence was minimal-to-nonexistent, Aragonese words sometimes seeped into Catalan texts. The mutual influence of these languages, especially in the king's court, which often included members of both linguistic communities, partly explains the intermingling of

²⁵³ Soldevila, *Pere el Gran: Primera Part*, 338.

languages in royal documents. The fact that these languages were also in their literary infancies, and not yet standardized, also help explain their linguistic “impurities.” But in the majority of cases, even when documents contain foreign influences, like Peter’s promise to his father above, and his father’s own *Llibre dels Feits*, they are clearly written in a distinguishable vernacular: Catalan in the *Llibre*, and Aragonese in Peter’s declarations to the king. Yet Soldevila, preoccupied with dismissing Peter’s ability to speak Aragonese, again neglects the importance of recording this performance in that romance. If Peter actually recited the promise, or his apology to his father narrated in the *Llibre*, in Aragonese is immaterial, even though there is no reason to believe he did not, as Soldevila would like us to think. What matters is that either Peter did recite both documents publically in Aragonese or, equally significant, he and the king wanted it to appear as if he did for specific, political motives.

Chapter 5: The Height and End of Defiance Letters in the Vernacular

In the previous chapter I traced the rise of defiance letters in the vernacular during the 1250s and 1260s in Catalonia. I now turn our attention to the continuation of defiance letters during the final years of James I's reign and that of his son, Peter III (II of Catalonia). Defiance letters evolve in two major ways during these years. First, the pattern spreads to Aragon in the mid 1270s. Second, besides signaling an end to conflicts after mutual communications degenerated into the vernacular, Latin becomes a means by which the hostile parties indicated an interest in reconciliation. Otherwise the pattern remains the same: the nobles and the kings continue to utilize the vernacular in communicating invective messages during periods of hostility, while switching back to Latin when ending their conflict. Defiance letters in the vernacular languages, however, come to an abrupt end with the collapse of noble rebellions in 1280. Once Peter subdued the nobility and enforced the superiority of the crown, defiance letters ceased to exist.

The Spread of the Rebellion

The nobility's fear of the king's rapidly-expanding powers and their attempts to counter them guaranteed that the 1269 truce would not last long.²⁵⁴ In the Spring of 1274, the king's insistence that the nobility, both Aragonese and Catalan, take part in military campaigns outside of their respective realms provoked a larger rebellion that engulfed Catalonia and Aragon. While the king argued fervently that it was the nobles' duty to serve him, their feudal overlord,

²⁵⁴ See above, 113.

wherever he needed and whenever he ordered, the nobles argued that they had no legal obligation to serve beyond their realm's respective borders.²⁵⁵ The problem had already plagued James during his campaign to conquer Murcia a decade earlier. James had organized two general Courts in the Fall of 1264, one in Aragon and one in Catalonia, to persuade his vassals to help his son-in-law, King Alfonso X of Castile, conquer the Kingdom of Murcia. The first meeting was in Barcelona, where the Catalan nobility initially resisted the king's demands. Yet in the end, the nobles broke down and authorized the king to collect the *bovatge*, an accession tax levied during extraordinary circumstances, in return for a number of unspecified concessions. In Aragon, the king failed to convince his magnates to participate or contribute in any way to the campaign. Even a Franciscan friar's description of a miraculous vision dramatically stressing the need for James to defend "Spain" against the Muslim threat did not persuade the Aragonese to join the effort. Rather, the nobles urged James to remand Alfonso X of Castile for his past military excursions into the kingdoms of Aragon and Valencia some years earlier.

In 1274, Alfonso X again requested the help of his father-in-law, James, who gladly volunteered to help defend Castile against an imminent attack from the king of Granada and his Moroccan allies. But this time around, several Catalan nobles, headed by the ever-rebellious Ramon Folc, who once again emerged as the lead instigator of uprisings against the king, refused to accede to royal demands. The king responded by confiscating the titles and fiefs, if only nominally, of the nobles who refused to participate in the campaign. The king's actions and those of his heir, Peter, only fanned the flames of dissent still brewing among major segments of the Catalan nobility, provoking the latter to rebel. In addition to the nobility's fear of the

²⁵⁵ Both sides justified their position via the Usatges. But their interpretations of the realm's laws differed markedly: the nobles supported a more traditional feudal interpretation, while the king and his jurists interpreted the laws to empower royal authority at the expense of the nobility.

monarchy's expanding powers, other interests drove some of the rebels to revolt. Most of the Aragonese nobles who joined the rebellion, for example, joined hoping to extract privileges from the crown. Ferran Sánchez de Castro's involvement in the rebellion was somewhat different. The personal animosity between Ferran, James I's illegitimate son, and his half-brother and successor to the crown, Peter, convinced the former to join the rebellion. These particular motives for rebelling, however, be it material gain or personal rivalries, were themselves related to the overarching power struggles between the ambitions of the crown and the nobility. It was precisely this conflict of interests that laid at the heart of royal—noble clashes during the thirteenth century.

The King Antagonizes in Catalan

The pattern of communications between the king and the rebels in this new, larger revolt largely mirrors those discussed in the previous chapter. The king, following the lead of the rebel nobles, appropriated the vernacular when composing invective letters to his enemies in times of heightened hostilities, while switching back to Latin when the conflict lapsed. But as the use of the vernacular to augment the impact of hostile messages gained traction, contesting parties began to use Latin to signal a desire for reconciliation during their violent conflicts. The king and his scribes also began to initiate their own antagonistic exchanges in the low-prestige language, instead of merely responding to them. On March 9, 1274, James composed one of these letters to Ramon Folc in Catalan. The king's letter begins and ends, like all of James's letters, in Latin, while the body of the message is in the vernacular.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Cubells, doc. 49, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 3r-v; also published by Fondevilla, 1112-13.

James reproaches Ramon in the letter for not obeying his orders to join the campaign against the Muslim threat. James also informs Ramon that he cannot “fail” the king of Castile or allow the disintegration of his realms, “car nostres netz la deven heretar” (because our grandsons will inherit it). The king, of course, is referring to the children of his daughter, Violante, who married Alfonso X of Castile. James justifies his demands by arguing that according to the Usatges of Barcelona every noble who holds a fief from the king must serve him in battle and attend court anywhere the king requires, as Ramon’s predecessors had done: “per l’usatge de Barcelona maiorment, quens sotz tengutz de fer ostz e cortz e seguimentz en tot loc on fessem, la qual cosa avetz feita totz temps vostres antecessors” (mainly by the Usatges of Barcelona, which state that you are required to follow our host and hold court wherever we deem necessary, just as your ancestors always did).²⁵⁷ James is especially concerned that his vassals refused to serve him in a campaign that endangered his life: “majorment encara com aquel viatge a peril de nostra persona, car esperavem daver bataylla” (especially considering that voyage poses a danger to our person, since we expect to engage in battle). He dismisses Ramon’s excuses, offhandedly, as vain, and makes a point to remind Ramon that he has already sent him two or three letters about the matter: “jasia que daço vos tramesesen II o III pareyls de leters” (we have already sent you two or three pairs of letters about that). Noticeably frustrated and upset, the king informs Ramon that his lordship could not endure such offenses: “hon quom nos aquestes coses no puscam passar ni sufrir sens dan e sens preiduiçi de nostra seynuria” (we can not endure or suffer these things without harm and damage to our lordship). As a result, the king confiscates all of Ramon’s fiefs, and orders him to turn them over to the vicars of Barcelona, Girona, and Cerdanya:

²⁵⁷ Of course, the king here is rewriting history to his benefit.

emparam vos la honor que tenitz per nos, e aitambe emparam vos los feus que tenit per nos per raho de falliment de servii. E manam vos quens donetz potestat de totz los castells e locs que tenitz per nos per raho del dit falliment de servii, e en loc vostre quen G. Durforte, vege de Barcelona, de totz los castels e locs que tenitz per nos en la batlia de Barcelona, e an G. de Castelnou, vege de Gerona, e an R. Fort, vege de Cerdanya e de conflent, e aço per re no mudetz.

we confiscate the honor which you have from us, and we also confiscate the fiefs that you possess through us for failure of service. And we order you to hand over possession of all the castles and places you have because of said failure of service, and in our place, hand over to G. Duforte, vicar of Barcelona, all of the castles you have in the balliwick of Barcelona, and to G. Castelnou, vicar of Girona, those you have in Girona, and to R. Fort, the vicar of Cerdanya and Conflent, those you have in Cerdanya, and for no reason alter this.

Directly following the king's letter to Ramon, the royal register in which these documents survive informs us that similar letters were sent to various nobles, including Berenguer de Cardona (Ramon's brother) and Pere de Berga.

Only Pere de Berga's and Ramon Folc's responses survive in the register. Members of the chancery must have felt that copying each response was unnecessary and settled for transcribing those of the two most important nobles. Pere composed his letter on March 15, in Berga, while Ramon composed his three days later in Sabadell.²⁵⁸ Pere begins his letter by addressing the king in Latin ("Illustrissimo domino Jacobo"), unlike Ramon, who drops the formality of Latin in the opening formula and begins his letter in Catalan ("Al molt alt e noble senyor en Jacme"). Both nobles recorded the place and date of their letters' redaction in Latin.

Ramon and Pere inform the king that they read (surely heard) the king's letters in which he confiscated all of the rents they hold as fiefs: "Fem vos saber, senyer, que vim vostra carta que vos nos emparavetz totes les rendes que tenim de vos per honor e per feu" (We inform you, lord, that we saw your letter in which you confiscate all of the rents that we possess from you by

²⁵⁸ Pere: Cubells, doc. 50, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 5r-r; also published by Fondevilla, 1113-14; Ramon: Cubells, doc. 51, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 5v; also published by Fondevilla, 1114-15.

honor and fief).²⁵⁹ But they contend that they were not obliged to turn them over since they did not fail to serve the king. Both nobles point out that they are only obliged to join the king's hosts within Catalonia, and the current campaign against the Muslims was not; it was not even inside James's realms. After defending his actions in the face of royal accusations, Ramon informs the king that he does not intend to hand over complete possession of those lands he held from the king directly; rather, he is willing to hand over simple possession. Pere does not discuss handing over any kind of possession of his fiefs, but does request that the king assign judges to mediate their feud: "E demanavem vos senyer, si beus member, quens en dessets judges axi com era costum de Cathaluya, la qual cos vos senyer fer no volgues" (And we demand you lord to assign judges [to mediate our dispute], as the custom of Catalonia requires, if you well remember, which you refuse to do). Interestingly, Pere ends by apologizing to the king for the length of his letter. He explains that it needed to be that long because he had to respond to the king's numerous accusations:

E per so, senyer, can tan longues letres vos trametem, sius plau a vos no sia greu, que per so son tan longues can en les vostres letres havie moltes rahons a que haviem a respondre.

And lord the long letters we send you, which we hope do not cause you grief, are so long because there were so many items in your letters for which we had to respond.

Via careful diplomacy, analyzed in further detail below, the tense relationship between the king and the nobles refrained from leading into a full-blown civil war during the summer of 1274. The situation kept deteriorating nonetheless, reaching a boiling point when the heir to the throne, Peter, tried to appropriate a fief from Bernat d'Orriols.²⁶⁰ Not long after, a torrent of

²⁵⁹ This quote is from Ramon's letter.

²⁶⁰ Bernat claimed the fief through the surviving daughter of the deceased noble, Ponç Guillem de Torroella. But Peter maintained that inheritances could not pass down through the female line, and thus the inheritance should resort back to him as procurator general of Catalonia. The prince's rejection of female inheritance did not just trouble the rebels. The king himself rejected

defiance letters reached the king from various powerful nobles in Catalonia. On September 25, for example, six Catalan magnates gathered in Ager sent the king their defiance letters in the vernacular. These six great barons were Ramon Folc (viscount of Cardona), Hug (count of Empúries), Àlvar Cabrera (count of Urgell), Arnau Roger (count of Pallars), Berenguer de Puigvert, and Guerau de Cervelló.²⁶¹

Rupture letters continued trickling into the chancery until the end of November. Pere de Berga's defiance letter reached the king, while in Girona, on November 7. Pere composed his letter in Vic only a few days before, since it is dated: "Die martis post festum omnium sanctorum [November 1]" (On the Tuesday after All Saints' Day).²⁶² In it, Pere assures the king that he never intended to rebel, but he was left with no choice because of the king's egregious actions, which included the violation of the Usatges and offenses against his own person. He does not mention Ramon Folc or any other nobles aside from himself in his complaint. Two days later, "Die Jeunis post festum omnium sanctorum" (On the Thursday after All Saints' Day), Guillem de Calders composed his defiance letter, which reached the king on November 12.²⁶³ Guillem de Calders credits the king's violations of the Usatges and his actions against the Catalan nobility, especially Ramon Folc, as his motives for breaking his vassalage ties.²⁶⁴ Berenguer Cardona's defiance letter, which arrived at the royal court on November 22, also blamed the king's actions against his brother, Ramon Folc, and the king's violation of the Usatges, as well as other

Peter's contention; see *Llibre dels fets*, ch. 543. But the damage had been done and the nobles capitalized on this to initiate their rebellion.

²⁶¹ Ramon Folc: Cubells, doc. 61, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 16v; also published by Fondevilla, 1141; Hug of Empúries: ACA, r. 22 f. 16v; also published by Fondevilla, 1141; Àlvar Cabrera: ACA, r. 22 f. 16v; Arnau Roger: ACA, r. 22 f. 17r; Berenguer: ACA, r. 22 f. 20r; Guerau: ACA, r. 22 f. 20v.

²⁶² ACA, r. 22 f. 20v.

²⁶³ ACA, r. 22 f. 20v.

²⁶⁴ ACA, r. 22 f. 20v.

unnamed offenses as justifications for his declaration of war.²⁶⁵ The ending formulas of these final three defiance letters all appear in Latin.

The king responds to each of these defiance letters individually from Barcelona with identical messages. James begins the opening formulas in Latin, as he always did, and then switches over to Catalan. The king claims to be marveled at all of their actions, because, according to James, nobles could not break their vassalage: “car negun rich hom de Cataluyinna no deu nes pot desexir de nos de naturalea ni de fe” (because no Catalan noble should nor can break their vassalage ties to us either naturally or by faith). The king then denies their accusations and urges them to allow the legal procedure to conclude. But if they do not, then they should wait the 30 days before beginning a feudal war as stated in the Usatges.²⁶⁶

Regardless, the king, accusing the nobles of an illegal and unwarranted insubordination, declares war:

E axi desexim nos de vos, que de mal queus fazam nos nils nostres nous siam tengutz, e pus nostre dret no vullats pendre ni fer nos dret, et vega Deus e homnes que a tort nos acuyndatz e sobre per forcam de dret nos voletz fer mal eus levatz contra vostre seynnor natural a tort e sens rao.²⁶⁷

And we excuse ourselves from you, from the harm that we and our men shall inflict on you, because you chose not to follow our orders nor pay us our due rights, and let God and men see that you defied us unjustly and did not follow the law and caused us harm and turned against your natural lord unfairly and without reason.

The quotes above are from James’s letter to Ramon, which is followed by a note in the register stating that an identical letter was sent to Hug (count of Empúries): “Item eodem die et anno fuit missa similis litera verbo ad verbum Huguoni Comiti Impuriarum” (On the same day and year, similar letters were sent word for word to Hugh count of Empuriés).²⁶⁸ Below this note, we find

²⁶⁵ ACA, r. 22 f. 22v, published in Fondevilla, 1140.

²⁶⁶ The king is referring to Usatge 99.

²⁶⁷ This quote and the one preceding it come from Cubells, doc. 62, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 17v-18r.

²⁶⁸ ACA, r. 22 f. 18r.

James's response to Àlvar Cabrera (count of Urgell), written on the same day in Barcelona, transcribed in its entirety. The message was almost identical to Ramon's: the king denies violating the Usatges or harming any Catalan noble, and states that he was prepared to resolve the matter diplomatically, but the nobles refused. As a result, he breaks his feudal ties to Àlvar and declares war, but warns him to abide by the 30-day waiting period vassals needed to wait before attacking the king. The register also notes that letters identical to Àlvar's, which itself was nearly indistinguishable from Ramon's, were sent to Arnau de Corsaví, Guillem Galceran de Cartellà, and Ponç Saguàrdia.²⁶⁹ The king's responses to Dalmau de Rocabertí, Galceran de Sales, and Arnau Roger's rupture letters are recorded in their entirety in the register. As in all of the previous cases, the king composed his replies to these three nobles in Catalan, but with the introduction and ending formulas in Latin.²⁷⁰

Aragonese Defiances

On November 23, several Aragonese nobles, influenced by their Catalan counterparts, composed defiance letters to the king in the vernacular. Interestingly, the royal register identifies these Aragonese nobles as Catalans: "VIII kalendas Decembris dominus Rex recepit litteras diffidamentorum a richis homnibus Catalonie inferius nominatis sub hac forma" (On the 9th calends of December the lord king received defiance letters from Catalan nobles named below in this form).²⁷¹ The scribe might have mistaken the Aragonese rebels for Catalan nobles precisely because their defiances were composed in the vernacular. No Aragonese noble had utilized the vernacular to defy the king until they joined forces with the Catalan rebels, who had already

²⁶⁹ ACA, r. 22 f. 18r-v.

²⁷⁰ ACA, r. 22 f. 19r-20r. For more rupture letters by other nobles and the king's responses to them see ACA, r. 22 f. 20r-22r.

²⁷¹ Cubells, doc. 64, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 23r; also published by Fondevilla, 1142-43.

appropriated the vernacular for that purpose over a decade earlier. The Aragonese documents, moreover, reveal the connections between the Aragonese rebellion and the Catalan one, strengthening my belief that the Aragonese were following the lead of the Catalan nobles by defying the king in the vernacular.

The first Aragonese defiance to reach the king was from Ferrán Sánchez de Castro, James's illegitimate son with Blanca de Antillón. Ferrán's letter begins in Aragonese and, not surprisingly, includes more praises and loving statements directed at the king than usual in a declaration of war:

Al muyt noble e muyt alto padre e senyor don Jaime, por la gracia de Deus rey d' Aragon, de Maiorca, e de Valencia, comte de Barcelona, e d' Urgell, e senyor de Montpesler. Yo Fferran Sanchez, vuestro fillo, beso vestros pedes e vuestras manos e comendo me en la vestra gracia como senyor del qual atiendo be e merce mas que de todos los del mundo, e al qual e talent e coraço de fer servicio sobre todos los del mundo e al qual de Deus vida on hondra de como sabe que a mi es mester.²⁷²

To the very noble and very high father and lord, James, by the grace of God king of Aragon, Majorca, Valencia, count of Barcelona and Urgell, and lord of Montpellier. I, Ferrán Sánchez, your son, kiss your hands and feet and I entrust myself to your grace as lord that I adhere to well and with pleasure more than any other, and who with ability and affection I serve over all others in the world, and who God grants life and honor, and who knows that this is pleasing to me.

Following the long-winded introduction, Ferrán recounts the various crimes committed against him by his half-brother and heir to the crown, Peter. These consisted of accusations against Peter's vassals, including the theft of cattle, the kidnapping of several men from Castro by Pere de Meyat, the illegal confiscation of Sobrarbe, and the attack against Johan de Rodellar's castle, "killing innocent women and children." Ferrán also complains that Peter's men burned down and destroyed the village of Boltaynna, and killed one of Ferrán's squires in the process. For these reasons, in unusually harsh and intimate language, Ferrán breaks his vassalage ties with his father and declares his rebellion:

²⁷² Cubells, doc. 64, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 23r; also published by Fondevilla, 1142-43.

E por todas las razones sobre dictas...me despido de vos e ne so vestro vasllo e desyesco me de vos, e a vos ho qui ere que fuessedes cataria yo como a padre e a senyor, mas a vostra gentes e a vestra terra e a los que mal me an feito ni fazen deffender me les e quanto yo pueda, e desto no vos en seria tenuto daqui adallant de mal de que les fizes, e clamamos vos merce que creades est Caverro portador desta letra de lo que vos diar de nuestra part.

And for all of these stated reasons...I break my vassalage ties to you and I am no longer your vassal and I disavow you, who I would sooner remove as father and lord, moreover I will defend myself as best I can from your people and your lands and from those who have harmed me or intend to, and I am not responsible from this moment on for the harm that we shall inflict on them, and we implore that you believe the knight carrier of this letter and what he will tell you on our behalf.

Ferrán's letter does not include an ending formula with the date and place of its publication; the entire text was composed in Aragonese.

Ferrán's half brothers, Marco Fferiç and Jordan de Peña, followed suit and sent the king their defiance. Their joint letter in Aragonese includes the ending formula in a mix of Latin and Aragonese (Latin italicized): "*Datum en Pomar el jueves ante de Sant Martin. Anno Domini M CC LXX quarto*" (Dated in Pomar on the Thursday after St. Martin's 1274).²⁷³ Marco and Jordan cite a variety of reasons for rebelling against the king, beginning with the king's continuous injustice towards them: "porque nunca nos quisiestes fer bien ni merce, demandando vos lo muytas veçes" (because you never wanted to do right by us or were merciful, even though we requested this many times). But their primary motive was the disinheritance of their brother Ferrán and the crimes committed against their uncles, the Catalan nobles Ramon Folc and Pere de Berga:

et por que tenedes desheredado a Fferran Sanchez, nuestro hermano, el qual tenemos en comta de padre, et otrossi porque tenedes desheredados en R de Cardona et a don Pere de Berga, los quales son nuestros tiyos.

and because you have disinherited Ferran Sanchez, our brother, who we consider a father, and also because you have disinherited Ramon Cardona and Pere de Berga, who are our uncles.

²⁷³ Cubells, doc. 65, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 23v; also published by Fondevilla, 1142-43.

Finally, they cite the *Fueros* (laws) of Aragon to further justify their defiance:

por lo que no es fuero ni uso dAragon de desfyar nenguno a su senyor natural deseximos nos de vos et de mal que nos fiçiessemos e vestras gentes ni a vestra tierra, no vos end seriamos tenudos, et desnaturamos nos end de vos quanto a esta raçon.

Because it is not the law or custom of Aragon to defy your natural lord [here referring to Ferran], we excuse ourselves from you and from the harm the we shall inflict on your men and your land, which we are not responsible for, and we break our vassalage from you for this reason.

Examen d'Orreya, Artal de Luna, and Pedro Cornell joined Ferrán, Marco, and Jordan, and sent the king defiance messages in Aragonese via their representative Ramon Andreu. These nobles chose to transmit their defiances solely in oral form, even though they felt it necessary to legitimize them with credential letters. These letters do not include the actual defiance. Written entirely in Aragonese (none of them include an ending formula), they merely state that they are sending Ramon Andreu to address their complaints:

Sapades que por querellas que avemos jo e otros richs homnes dAragon e de Catalluyna, enviamos vos a don Ramon Andreu, provençal, con mandado nostro. Ont vos pido merced que vos que lo creades de lo que vos dira de nostra parte, asi como fariades a mi mismo.²⁷⁴

Know that because of the complaint that we and other Aragonese and Catalan nobles have, we send you Ramon Andreu, a provençal, on our behalf. Where we implore you to believe what he says on our behalf, as you would if it came from us.

Fortunately, royal scribes recorded the defiance messages into a register following the nobles' credential letters vouching for Ramon Andreu. These records are transcriptions of the oral messages transmitted by Ramon Andreu. It is very unlikely that they were transcribed from a text. Even if Ramon Andreu possessed written instructions from the nobles, they would have been internal documents, not intended for the king. The contents of these letters, which contained declarations of war from important Aragonese lords, prompted royal scribes to transcribe these orally-transmitted messages into written form. The supremacy of the written

²⁷⁴ Cubells, doc. 66, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 23v-24r; also published by Fondevilla, 1144.

record in the chancery and the latter's access to paper also help explain their survival in the royal registers. Cheap paper afforded the chancery the ability to keep copies of its incoming and outgoing correspondence, unusual at the time in other realms. Yet the increasing importance of writing was not limited to the crown; by this period it had penetrated most, if not all, sectors of society.²⁷⁵ Society's dependence on the written word in fact explicates the nobles' need to legitimize their representative with credential letters.

The record of the messages delivered by Ramon Andreu were recorded entirely in Aragonese. The texts begin with identical introductory phrases signaling the oral nature of their transmission: e.g., "Esto es lo que diç don Artallo de Luna" (This is what Artal de Luna says).²⁷⁶ They then state the nobles' individual complaints against the king. Examen d'Orreya is upset that the king did not grant him Filera, even though he and his son had asked for it and they held substantial lands in that territory. Artal de Luna objects to the king's sentence against him and his vassals regarding an altercation between the latter and a host from Çuera in Erlla. Pedro Cornell is upset in general at the king's failure to reward him with land, which a man of his stature required. Aside from these personal grievances, each of the three rebels lists Ferrán Sánchez, Ramon Folc, Pere de Berga "et otros catalanos amigos nostros" (and other Catalan friends of ours) as the reasons for their defiance. Each of them, moreover, cite the Fueros of Aragon and the customs of Catalonia in their letters.

The Aragonese nobles' justifications for war demonstrate the ties between the Aragonese and Catalan sides of the rebellion. These ties lend added weight to my contention, noted earlier, that the Aragonese nobles copied the technique of composing defiance letters to the king in the vernacular from their Catalan counterparts. As the examples above illustrate, the Aragonese cite

²⁷⁵ See my discussion of Brian Stock's "textual communities," above, 8-10.

²⁷⁶ Cubells, doc. 67, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 24r; also published by Fondevilla, 1144.

the Catalan rebels in their rupture letters. Examen d'Orreya, Artal de Luna, and Pedro Cornell describe them as “our friends,” while Ferrán’s half brothers reveal that Ramon Folc and Pere de Berga were their uncles. The Aragonese rebels may have likely learned of the Catalan nobility’s vernacular strategy in one of their several meetings with the latter.

In addition to demonstrating the political and familial links between segments of the Catalan and Aragonese nobility, these rupture letters reveal a diglossic dynamic in Aragon similar, albeit not identical, to the one in Catalonia. Like in Catalonia, the low-prestige status of the vernacular allowed the rebels to utilize it to augment the impact of their defiance.

On November 26, James replied to each of these great Aragonese nobles’ declarations of war in Aragonese, as he does with his Catalan nobles in Catalan. The beginning and ending formulas in the letters, as always, appear in Latin. The register unsurprisingly contains James’s letter to his son Ferrán first. The king tells his son that he is prepared to give him an opportunity to repent, abide by the Fueros of Aragon, and remain obedient to his brother Peter. If Ferrán refuses, the king is prepared to confront him like any other defiant vassal: “auremos nos end a deffender et a enantar contra vos assi como conta aquell qui dreito de so seynnor no quere prender” (we shall defend ourselves and move against you like we would with any other vassal who turns on his lord.). The king then breaks his feudal bond to his son, while emphasizing that it was the prince who ruptured their vassalage ties first and chose to rebel rather than mediate the conflict via litigation:

Deseximos nos end de vos que de mal que fagamos a vos ni a vostra cosas nia rien de lo vostro no vos den seamos tenudos, e veyan Dios et homnes que a tuerto vos desexides de nos et que nos queredes fer mal sobre perferiment de dreito e vos levades contra vostrs seinnor natural a tuerto e sense razon.²⁷⁷

We excuse ourselves from you and of the damage that we shall inflict on you and your things and nothing of yours that we destroy shall be our responsibility, and let God and

²⁷⁷ Cubells, doc. 68, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 25r; also published by Fondevilla, 1145.

men see the crime you committed against us and that you want to do us harm instead of pursuing litigation, and you rose up against your natural lord unjustly and without reason.

Following James's response to Ferrán, the register records the king's responses to Artal de Luna, Examen d'Orreya, Pedro Cornell, Marco Fferiç, and Jordan de Peña.²⁷⁸ In these letters, James rebukes each of the nobles' individual reproaches, and reminds them that he has offered to assign judges to hear their complaints as well as those of Ferrán Sánchez, Ramon Folc, and Pere de Berga, as required by the laws of Aragon and Catalonia. But instead of agreeing to these terms, they chose, like their Catalan friends and relatives, to mount a rebellion, forcing the king to declare war on them. The nobles, on the one hand, refused to litigate their accusations until Ferrán's fiefs were restored. The king, on the other hand, asserted that he was not bound to make any restitutions since Ferrán and the other Aragonese rebels had attacked Peter without warning, and Ferrán had illegally occupied Alcazar and Nabal. King James now faced a major rebellion in each of his realms.

Latin Mediation

As using the vernacular to communicate antagonistic messages evolved in the second-half of the thirteenth century, Latin acquired a new symbolic role in diplomatic communications between the crown and the rebels. In the previous chapter, I argued that during the feudal rebellions of the 1260s, when the vernacular was first used as an instrument of war, switching back to Latin signaled an end to the conflict, a return to normality. In the revolt of the 1270s, the feuding parties also began to switch back to Latin from the vernacular to signal an interest in diffusing or mediating their conflict. These messages sometimes specifically indicated the

²⁷⁸ Artal de Luna: Cubells, doc. 69, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 25v; Examen d'Orreya: ACA, r. 22 f. 25v-26r; Pedro Cornell: ACA, r. 22 f. 26r-v; and Marco Fferiç and Jordan de Pena: ACA, r. 22 f. 26v.

author's interests in avoiding war or establishing a truce while the parties negotiated a permanent peace, corroborating Latin's traditional status as a conciliatory symbol. But other times, the messages mirrored the antagonism of invective letters in the vernacular. In these latter cases, I believe the switch back to Latin alone signaled the author's intentions to diffuse the conflict by returning to the normal means of communication, even if the Latin letters contained an almost identical message to previous reproaches in the vernacular. A more in-depth examination of the antagonistic exchanges between Ramon Folc, Pere de Berga, and James I in the Spring of 1274, and those between James I and Ferrán Sánchez in the Fall of that same year, illustrates Latin's new conciliatory function in diplomatic communications between the king and rebellious nobles.

Above we read how the king initiated an antagonistic exchange with Ramon Folc and Pere de Berga in Catalan on March 9, 1274.²⁷⁹ The nobles replied to the king with their own invective messages in Catalan on March 15. Three days later, Ramon Folc and Pere de Berga composed another set of letters to the king. These new letters contained similar messages to the former, but were composed in Latin instead of Catalan.²⁸⁰ Why compose almost identical letters in Latin to ones written in Catalan only three days earlier? I believe both nobles switch back to Latin to diffuse the situation without giving in to the king's demands. They state almost the same defense as in the vernacular letters, but instead of projecting their message, their voice, in a low-prestige language already marked with an invective symbolism in this context, they returned to the standard means of communication, Latin. Latin in this hostile setting alone signified the redactor's interests in mitigating the confrontation. The king follows suite and responds to both

²⁷⁹ See above, 123-6.

²⁸⁰ Fondevilla, 1115, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 6r.

nobles in the high-prestige language on March 21.²⁸¹ James, by replying in Latin, was signaling to Ramon that he too was open to preventing a larger and more violent confrontation, which is not surprising. James had a history of pursuing diplomatic measures over war.

The two nobles also composed Latin messages to Guillem Durfort, the king's vicar in Barcelona, informing him that they had no intention of handing over any possessions held as an alod.²⁸² Ramon and Pere proceeded to assure Guillem Durfort that they had sent representatives to the king so that they could mediate their differences diplomatically.

On the same day that Pere wrote to Guillem Durfort, March 27, he composed an additional letter to the king, also in Latin, but longer and more detailed than Ramon's.²⁸³ Aside from claiming that he did not fail to serve the king and is therefore not required to hand over his fiefs entirely, Pere informs James that he patiently waited all day for Guillem Durfort to come to Berga so that he could hand over simple possession of his fiefs, but the vicar never showed up:

Sic vobis respondemus, quod die sabbati ante festum Ramispalmarum, que fuit X dies a recepcione prime littere vestre, per totam illam diem sumus parati tradere potestates prout per nostras litteras vobis scripsimus Dufortis nomine vestri cui mandaveratis eas tradim; et ipsum racione predicta expectavimus per totam diem in villa Berge qui non venit, et ideo si non tradidimus non fuimus in culpa, cum non fuerit qui recipirit.

We respond to you, that on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, which was 10 days after we received your first letter, we spent the entire day prepared to hand over jurisdiction to Durfort in your name just as we said we would do in our letters to you, who ordered that we hand it over; and for that same reason we waited all day in the village of Berga, but he did not arrive, and therefore if we did not hand over anything it was not our fault, since there was no one to receive it.

²⁸¹ Fondevilla, 1115, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 6r.; An almost identical letter was sent to Pere Berga, ACA, r. 22 f. 6v.

²⁸² Fondevilla, 1115-16, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 7r and Fondevilla, 1116-17, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 7v. Alod is land owned freely.

²⁸³ Fondevilla, 1116, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 7v.

Interestingly, Pere's letter to Guillem Durfort does not mention this incident. After informing the king of Guillem Durfort's failure to make it to Berga, Pere again swears he did not defy the king and is prepared to litigate the matter

James responds to Ramon and Pere on April 2 incensed, which explains his shift back to Catalan. He writes almost identical letters to both magnates, in which he is especially surprised to learn that these two nobles, more than any other, would ignore his orders, and not hand over their fiefs to the vicar of Barcelona.²⁸⁴ He also cites the Usatge the barons are violating, and lets them know that he does not need to give them any more warnings, since he has already sent them two letters demanding they hand over their fiefs:

*aïam demanat a vos poztat daquelles feus per fadiga de servii, segons lusatge escrit de Barcelona qui comenza "Si quis" etc; on con nos daqui avant no fossem tengutz de demanar vos les dites poztatz, pus, pus dues vegades les vos avem demanades, vos reebe sobraço nostres cartas e nostres missatges, e pogessem levantar contra vos segons lusatge de Barcelona.*²⁸⁵

we demand from you jurisdiction over those fiefs for failure of service, according to the Usatge of Barcelona that begins 'Si quis' etc.; where we from here on do not have to demand from you said jurisdiction, for, for we have already demanded them twice, and you have received our letters and messages concerning this, and we can move against you according to the Usatge of Barcelona.

James is especially "marveled" by their complaint that they could not hand over their fiefs because Guillem Durfort did not show up within the ten days specified: "Esters fem vos saber que avem oyda una cosa de quens maravella de gran maravella e encara que no podem creure que vos o aiatz dit" (We inform you that we have heard something that marvels us with great surprise and which we cannot believe that you have said).

Why did James also attribute Pere's complaint about Guillem Durfort to Ramon? Did Ramon compose another letter to James that has not survived including a complaint similar to

²⁸⁴ For Ramon Cubells, doc 52, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 8r-v; also published by Fondevilla, 1118-19. The register states in Latin that king composed similar letter to Pere de Berga, ACA, r. 22 f. 8v.

²⁸⁵ The king is citing Usatge 26.

Pere's? Perhaps; but it is equally likely that James attributed Pere's complaint to Ramon, because the latter had a predilection for instigating rebellions; or maybe the king's anger at Pere's excuse was so great that it seeped into Ramon's letter. Regardless, James informs both nobles that they knew very well that no one could cover such large distances in that time span and confiscate all of their castles at once.²⁸⁶

James also responded to these nobles' letters to the vicar of Barcelona, Guillem Durfort.²⁸⁷ The king, notably exhausted by the current impasse, vividly tells Ramon and Pere in Catalan that the wax on the letters, which both nobles composed via their scribes and sealed with their personal seals promising to hand over their fiefs at any time to the king, was still warm:

que encara la cera no es freda que si ben member a vos...nos fees carta per ma de vostre escriba e sobre aquells castells e quens prometietz de donar la poztat daquels castells totes hores que nos la vos demanassem et daço nos fees homenatge e sacrament.

the wax, however, is still warm [on the letter], if you remember ... that you wrote to us by your scribe's hand promising to give us jurisdiction over those castles whenever we demanded it from you, and regarding that, you paid us homage and sacrament.

The king then assures them he is happy to show them the letters. While we do not find a response from Pere in the registers, Ramon Folc replies to the king, in Catalan, that he never intends to hand over Cardona, which he considers an allod: "per queus responem aixi que nos de la poztat de Cardona nous darem gens" (we respond to you that we shall never surrender jurisdiction over Cardona).²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ "E ben sabetz vos quels nostre vegers ne porters ne altres missatges nostres non poden anar cent lengues el dia, ne poden pendre totes les poztaz en un colp, que primerament han a pendre poztat dun castell e pus daltre." (And you well know that our vicars and porters and other messengers cannot travel one-hundred leagues a day, nor can they take all of the jurisdictions at once, that first they have to take jurisdiction over one castle and then another.)

²⁸⁷ Quote from Ramon's letter, Cubells, doc 53, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 8v. For Pere's letter see ACA, r. 22 f. 8v-9r.

²⁸⁸ Cubells, doc 54, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 9v; also published by Fondevilla, 1123.

During the next few months, communications between the king and Ramon Folc remained heated, switching back and forth between Latin and vernacular depending on the author's diplomatic intentions. For example, a few months later, James, still hoping to avoid a larger conflict, switched back to Latin in a letter to Ramon Folc. In the letter, the king orders Ramon or his representative to appear before his court in Barcelona 10 days after the feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24), and surrender jurisdiction of Cardona castle or provide evidence that he holds it freely as an alod.²⁸⁹ The king also orders Ramon to hand over Bertran de Canellas and other outlaws the viscount is harboring in his lands to royal officials. Lastly, the king reproaches Ramon for his illegal manufacturing of *furchas* (*furas* in Catalan). Eight days later, James sent Ramon a second letter, also in Latin, postponing their meeting an additional 10 days. In this second letter, James repeats his demands: jurisdiction over Cardona and the surrender of certain criminals under Ramon's protection.²⁹⁰

Two days before the scheduled meeting, July 11, Ramon Folc replied to the king's previous letter with a long-winded letter also in Latin.²⁹¹ Ramon reasserted his objection to the king's demands. He continued to argue that he held Cardona as an alod, like his ancestors had for 300 years: "respondemus quod nos tenimus castrum Cardone inter nos et predecessores nostros per CCC. annos et amplius per franchum alodium" (we respond that we hold Cardona castle as a free alod just as our predecessors have for 300 years). Furthermore, he affirmed his right to harbor any one he liked in his lands, as his ancestors had traditionally done. Ramon also argued that he only built *furas* in places where he had the right to. Finally, since Cardona had

²⁸⁹ Fondevilla, 1125, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 10r.

²⁹⁰ Fondevilla, 1126, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 10r.

²⁹¹ Fondevilla, 1127, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 10v.

been a free alod since “any one alive could remember,” Ramon rejected having to appear before the king.

Ramon’s refusal to appear before the king provoked James’s ire, who displayed it by replying to Ramon Folc in a long and wordy Catalan letter.²⁹² The king angrily informs Ramon that he should not take his demands as a joke, considering the harsh penalties reserved for those who do not comply with the Usatges: “e tan gran pena hi posa lusatge a cels qui dar no la volen, que no devietz creure que nos per joc la demanassem” (and since the Usatges impose such a great penalty on those who refuse to hand over [their fiefs when required], you should not consider our demand of it a joke). James also rejects Ramon’s assertion that he and his ancestors ever had the right of harboring criminals, since the Usatges endowed the crown with jurisdiction over justice in the realm. Furthermore, James insists that Ramon live up to his promise of destroying his illicit *furcas*. Finally, if Ramon does not appear before the king 8 days after he received this letter and hands over jurisdiction of his fiefs, the king threatens reprisal: “E azo no mudets, en altra manera sapietz que enentarem contra axi vos qom dret sia” (And do not alter that in any way, otherwise know that we shall move against you as the Usatges permit). James’s patience with Ramon Folc had run out. He did not threaten the viscount vacuously. On the same day he sent Ramon the letter cited above, he convoked his vassals and royal officials to meet him prepared for war against Ramon and the other rebels.²⁹³ James’s orders to his loyal vassals were composed, as always, in Latin.

Ramon Folc again failed to appear before the king. Instead, he sent James a letter in Catalan, which continued to reject the king’s accusations, and requested the assignment of judges

²⁹² Fondevilla, 1127-29, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 12v.

²⁹³ Fondevilla, 1129-30, citing ACA, r. 18 f. 56v., r. 22 f. 13r., and r. 23 f. 3r-8r.

to mediate their dispute.²⁹⁴ There is no evidence of James responding to Ramon's petition. Either it has not survived or the king, fed up with Ramon, did not respond. The latter explanation carries more weight, since we know the king spent the summer preparing for battle. The next record we have of communications between the two parties is Ramon Folc's defiance letter two months later, on September 25, examined above.²⁹⁵

The king engaged in this same strategy of code switching with his illegitimate son, Ferrán Sánchez. On September 10, 1274, after learning that Ferrán had made a pact with the Catalan rebels against his half-brother, Peter, but nearly two months before Ferrán composed his defiance letter, James composed a hostile message to his son in Aragonese. In the letter, James reproaches Ferrán for conspiring against Peter with his enemies, which the king considers an act of treason. Indeed, the king stresses that Peter is his heir and their interests are one and the same:

vos sedes judrado contra el, e tenemos lo por tanto como si vos fuessedes jurado contra nos, porque la sua fazenda e la nostra toda es una, e sera e deve regnar, e axit feytes traycion de jurar vos contra el quomo si vos juravedes contra Nos, e avendo tanto con nos quomo vos avedes.²⁹⁶

you have made a pact against him, which we consider equal to having made a pact against us, because his affairs and ours are one and the same, and he shall reign, and thus the treasonous act of swearing against him is like swearing against us, and having so much from us as you have.

James was obviously angered and offended by Ferrán's behavior; after all, the king had disciplined Peter for continued attacks against Ferrán a few years earlier, seriously damaging James's relationship, and almost provoking an all out war, with his eldest, legitimate son and heir.²⁹⁷ The king, moreover, insisted that Peter agree not to move against Ferrán as a condition of their reconciliation. The gravity of Ferrán's actions therefore explain why the king decided to

²⁹⁴ Fondevilla, 1131, citing ACA, r. 22 f. 14r.

²⁹⁵ See above, 138.

²⁹⁶ Fondevilla, 1136, citing ACA, r. 23 f. 95v.

²⁹⁷ For more information on James and Peter's conflict, see above, 112-5. Essentially, James and Peter had a falling out because of the latter's continued attacks against Ferrán.

transmit his message to Ferrán in the vernacular: to provide an additional assault and convey a clear and effective message of disapproval.

Despite James's anger at Ferrán, he continued to hope for a diplomatic solution and avoid a war with his son. This explains why James reverted back to Latin when sending Ferrán a letter on September 26. In the letter, James again reminded Ferrán that conspiring against the king's heir constituted a direct attack on the king, and warns him of the damage headed his way if he continues on his current path:

Vidimus litteras vestras quas nobis misistis inter cetera continentes quod vos non juravistis vos contra nos, set contra infantem Petrus, filium nostrum. Et bene scitis vos quod qui jurat se contra dictum filium nostrum, contra nos se jurat. Et custodiatis vos a nobis et a dicto filio nostro quare male fecistis et malum veniet vobis.²⁹⁸

We saw the letters you sent us that claim that you did not conspire against us, but against the infate Peter, our son. And you know well that who conspires against our son, conspires against us. And protect yourself from us and our son and the harm that we shall inflict on you.

The language of the letter is still harsh and threatening, but direct accusations of treason and ingratitude are nowhere to be found, like in the king's previous Aragonese letter to Ferrán. The king sent Ferrán another Latin letter a few days later, letting him know he was not pleased with Ferrán's response, but hopes that they can resolve the problem in a Court he intended to convene.²⁹⁹ James's redaction of these letters in Latin alone signals a pause in both parties' verbal assault in the vernacular, and hint at the king's optimism that a military conflict could be avoided. Unfortunately, either Ferrán's letters were not copied into the registers or have been lost; but some of the king's letters clearly suggest that he is responding to messages from Ferrán, most likely also composed in Latin.

²⁹⁸ Fondevilla, 1133, citing ACA, r. 23 f. 96v.

²⁹⁹ Fondevilla, 1138, citing ACA, r. 23 f. 91r.

The contents of some of the king's messages to Ferrán corroborate the optimism the king felt at the chances of reaching a diplomatic solution. For example, James sent Ferrán a message in Latin on October 10, saying how pleased he was that Ferrán was willing to come to him and find a diplomatic solution to their conflict:

Sciatis quod placet nobis quod veniatis ad nos, et nos guidamus vos et illos qui vobiscum venient in veniendo ad nos, stando et redeundo; vobis tamen faciente ius nobis et infante P., filio nostro, ac aliis conquerentibus de vobis et recipiente ius a nobis et eiusdem.³⁰⁰

Know that it pleases us that you will come to us, and we shall safeguard you and those who come with you and all of your goods while you come to us, meet with us, and return; nevertheless, you must pay homage to us and the infante Peter, our son, and receive justice from us and the same infante for other complaints against you.

Three days later, James again writes to Ferrán delighted that the latter intends to meet with him in an almost identical message, and guarantees his safety for the meeting: “sciatis quod si vultis venire ad Nos, nos guidamus et assecuramos vos et illos qui vobiscum venient et omnia bona vestra in veniendo ad Nos, stando, et redeundo” (know that if you want to come to us, we shall guide and guarantee your safety and those travelling with you and all your possessions on your trip to us, while you remain with us, and on your return). The meeting between James and Ferrán, which the king hoped would dissuade his son from rebelling, however, never took place. Instead, Ferrán cast his lot with the Catalan rebels and the king's enemies in Aragon.³⁰¹

The Pattern Remains the Same Under King Peter III

On July 27, 1276, James died on his way to the monastery of Poblet after having resigned the crown because of illness and taken the Cistercian habit. James's eldest, surviving son, Peter, inherited most of his father's realms, including the kingdoms of Aragon, Valencia, and the county of Catalonia. Peter's younger brother, Jaume, inherited the Kingdom of Majorca,

³⁰⁰ Fondevilla, 1134, citing ACA, r. 23 f. 91r.

³⁰¹ For more on Ferran's defiance letter, see above, 129-31.

consisting of the Balearic Islands, the county of Rosellon, and Perpignan. James's death came at a troubled time. The Catalan rebellion had not entirely been subdued, and the king's Muslim subjects in Valencia had started a general revolt. This Muslim threat was serious enough to force Peter to remain in Valencia Kingdom suppressing the rebellion for some time, leaving him unable to confront the problems he inherited in Catalonia.

Count Roger Bernat of Foix capitalized on Peter's absence due to the Muslim rebellion in the south to invade the Bishopric of Urgell in the Spring of 1277.³⁰² The bishop of Urgell, overwhelmed by Roger's forces, requested assistance from Peter; but the latter was unable to abandon Valencia. Instead, Peter wrote to the seneschals of Miralpeix, Carcasonne, and Toulouse on April 3, 1277 with orders not to assist Roger.³⁰³ Peter's letters were composed in Latin, as were all his letters to royal officials throughout Catalonia asking them to defend the bishop against Roger's attacks.³⁰⁴ On the same day that Peter wrote to these royal officials, April 3, he also composed Latin letters to a number of Catalan magnates, including Arnau Roger (count of Pallars) Dalmau de Rocabertí, Pons de Guarda, and Galceran de Pinos, asking them not to join Roger's campaign in Urgell.³⁰⁵

Meanwhile, Roger Bernat of Foix, Arnau de Corçay, and Ramon Folc VI viscount of Cardona, the son of the late Ramon Folc V, who had died a year earlier protecting one of his castles from the king's men, sent their defiance letters to the king. Roger Bernat and Ermengol of Urgell assumed the leadership of the rebellion after Ramon Folc V's death. The royal register introduces each of the letters in Latin. Roger's defiance letter, composed entirely in Catalan,

³⁰² The count of Foix's ambitions in the bishopric was nothing new; his predecessors had a long history of involvement in the bishopric.

³⁰³ ACA, r. 39 f. 190v; published by Baudon de Mony doc. 68.

³⁰⁴ ACA, r. 39 f. 191r. These included the vicars of Urgell, Cervera, and Manresa, the bailiffs of Rigarzoza and Pallars, and Ramon de Montcada.

³⁰⁵ ACA, r. 39 f. 191r.

except for the part in the ending formula that recorded the year of its production, states that Roger had met with Ferriz de Lizana, the king's representative, who transmitted Peter's intention to find a diplomatic solution.³⁰⁶ But Roger protests that Peter was sabotaging the peace process by ordering his followers to attack him and his men. Directly following his accusation, Roger states that he is prepared to meet the king and resolve the conflict judicially, but if the king or his men attack the count, he intends to break all of his ties to the king and threatens violence: “e si fer no a volem, e mal e greu quens fara, desexim nos de vos, que de mal queus fazam daqui enant nous en siam tenguts” (and if you do not, and harm and injure us, we excuse ourselves from you, and we are not responsible for the harm that we shall inflict on you). Arnau de Corçay cites Roger Bernat and Ramon Folc, who he cannot fail, as the reasons for his defiance.³⁰⁷ According to Arnau, the king refused to mediate the conflict legally, and thus faced the threat of war. Like Roger's letter, which was written on the same day and from the same place, Arnau records the ending formula in a mix of Latin and Catalan.³⁰⁸ Finally, Ramon Folc is amazed at Peter's accusations that he is threatening royal lands, which he denies. He is equally “marveled” that the king decided to attack him and his men. For that reason, and because the count of Foix requested his help, which he cannot deny, Ramon also breaks his ties with the king and declares war:

E nos senyor som tan tenguts al comte de foix que degem feyt noli podem fallir ni dar de nos, perque senyor mal e greu que fossam a vostra terra ne a vostres Jous ne a [] de lur tenguts non siam.³⁰⁹

And lord we are so obliged to the count of Foix that we cannot fail him or abandon him, because lord we are not responsible for the harm and damage that we inflict on your land and your Jews [].

³⁰⁶ ACA, r. 40 f. 122r-v., “Datum a Solsona en lendema de lo asenso Anno Domini M CC LXX octavo” (Dated in Solsona on the day after the feast of the Ascension 1278).

³⁰⁷ ACA, r. 40 f. 121v.

³⁰⁸ “Datum apud Solsona lendema dasensio Anno Domini M CC LXX octavo.” (Dated in Solsona on the day after the feast of the Ascension 1278).

³⁰⁹ ACA, r. 40 f. 124r-v.

Interestingly, Ramon infuses a threat against the king's Jewish subjects into the traditional formula for declaring war. This should not surprise us since Jews officially belonged to the king.³¹⁰ But Ramon's threat, the first of its kind to my knowledge, is innovative nonetheless, and revealing regarding inter-religious relations. Ramon, unlike Roger and Arnau, records the entire ending formula of his letter in Latin.

The king waists no time in responding to each of these letters.³¹¹ Like his father before him, Peter begins his antagonistic letters in Latin: "P. etc. viro nobile e dilecto Rogerio Bernardus comit fuxien e vicecomite castri bonis salutem e dilectionem" (Peter etc., to you noble and beloved Roger Bernat count of Foix and viscount of castellbo, greetings and love). He then switches over to Catalan to deny the nobles' accusations and stress that he has offered them time and again the option of assigning judges to litigate the matter. In fact, he informs Arnau de Corçay that he is still prepared to find a legal, non-violent means of ending the conflict, which he has never taken off the table, as he, Roger, and Ramon claim: "nos reponem que salva honor dels [Roger and Ramon Folc] e de vos no es aixi el fiet, ans tota via som apareyllatz estatz e som encara de perdre dels dret e de fer dret encara a els e a vos" (we respond that with respect to their honor [Roger and Ramon Folc] and yours that which you say is not true, and yet we are prepared to mediate the matter via litigation).³¹² Furthermore, it was Roger and Ramon who broke the peace and started the violence according to the king: "que proposam de demandar per nostre offici contra els [Roger and Ramon Folc] per rao de trencament de pau e de treves" (we propose to act against them through our office because of their violation of the Peace and Truce of God).

³¹⁰ See David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

³¹¹ He composes them on June 13 (Ides of June). Roger: ACA, r. 40 f. 122v; Arnau: ACA, r. 40 f. 121v. and Ramon: ACA, r.40 f. 124r-v.

³¹² ACA, r. 40 f. 121v.

Peter also reminds the nobles that if they plan on waging war on him, his men, or his land, they needed to wait the 30 days stipulated by the Usatges: “deym vos que sobre presenta de dret nos fassats mal ne a nostros homes ne a nostre tierra ne a nostres dins aquels dits que usatge de Barcelona vol” (we say to you as required by the law not to harm us or our lands or our men within those days forbidden by the Usatges of Barcelona).³¹³ After Peter sent out his responses to the rebels on July 22, he convened all of his vassals, royal officials, and cities in Catalonia to meet him prepared for war the following March in letters composed, as expected, in Latin.

Meanwhile, a number of Catalan nobles upset at Peter joined forces with Roger in rebelling against the king. These nobles were especially upset that even though Peter had travelled to Zaragoza soon after his father’s death to be crowned king, he had refused to hold court in Barcelona and swear to uphold the customs of Catalonia.³¹⁴ They included Ermengol (count of Urgell) and his brother Alvar de Cabrera, Arnau Roger (count of Pallars) and his brother Ramon Roger, Ramon de Anglesola, Ramon de Josa, Ramon of Vilamur, Pere Montcada, Berenguer de Puigvert, Gerard Alamany de Cervello, and his brother Pons de Ribelles. Ermengol and Alvar most likely also joined the rebellion to support their uncle, Roger Bernat, and claim their inheritance over the county of Urgell, which James I had confiscated after their father’s death in 1268. Many of the other nobles also had unresolved issues with the king, which were only heightened by his refusal to swear fealty to the Usatges.

The rebels attacked the king’s lands once the allotted wait time required by the Usatges expired. Roger Bernat had already conquered most of Urgell and its vicinities when he joined Arnau Roger in attacking the city of Lleida, while Ramon Folc mounted a siege offensive outside

³¹³ ACA, r. 40 f. 124r-v. Example from letter to Ramon.

³¹⁴ Peter temporarily left the campaign in Valencia Kingdom to travel to Zaragoza. He was crowned on November 16, 1276.

the walls of Barcelona. Both cities were able to hold the nobles back until the king arrived in the Spring of 1278. Peter, together with a large cavalcade, which included some former rebels from previous rebellions like the count of Empúries and Dalmau de Rocabertí, drove the nobles backwards and captured the young Ermengol Cabrera. The king's continuing victories over the rebels forced the former to seek refuge in the castle of Balaguer. On the feast of St. John (June 24), Peter set siege to the castle together with a large host of nobles and knights. Realizing their doomed prospects, the nobles soon surrendered to Peter, who imprisoned them and confiscated their fiefs. The peace treaties were mostly composed, as we would expect, in Latin.

The End of Defiance Letters in Vernacular

The king released many of the rebels from prison and returned their fiefs not long after they were released from jail, but kept Roger Bernat and Ermengol de Cabrera imprisoned longer as an additional punishment for leading the rebellion. The penalty does not appear to have deterred them from rebelling once again. Soon after his release from prison in 1279, Roger Bernat began to conspire against the king. At least nine great barons joined Roger and sent the king rupture letters in early 1280. Unfortunately, copies of these rupture letters do not survive, even though most of an entire register and part of another contain copies of thousands of documents pertaining to the 1280 rebellion.³¹⁵ The majority of this documentation consists of orders to royal officials, cities, clerics, and villages demanding financial or military assistance against the rebels. As expected, they are all recorded in Latin.

³¹⁵ See ACA, registers 42 and 45.

We know the nobles composed these rupture letters and sent them to the king because the king's responses to them survive in the registers.³¹⁶ According to the king, he received the defiance letters sent to him by the nobles via the scribe Dau Angles. Unlike any other royal letter before, the king begins all four letters with the opening formula in the vernacular. The letter to the count of Foix, the first one recorded, for example, begins simply "Al comte de foix." The same goes for the other three letters.³¹⁷ This represents a seismic development in the royal chancery's use of vernacular writing, even though it might seem inconsequential. Royal scribes for the first time freed themselves of their dependence on Latin in the opening formulas of letters and began outgoing messages in the vernacular. The vernacular languages did not replace Latin in all of the introductory formulas in royal letters from this moment onwards, but it set a precedent that was gradually followed in subsequent decades. Indeed by the mid fourteenth century, vernacular letters composed in the chancery bypassed Latin altogether, like some of the noble defiance letters we have come across in this chapter and the previous one.

In the letter to Roger Bernat, the king adamantly denies the former's accusations: "les quals segons que vos e nos sabem no son vers" (which you and us know are not true). Then the king offers him the opportunity to litigate the matter. The messages to the other nobles are similar, although they are even shorter. Peter offers them an opportunity to resolve their conflict peacefully via litigation, while simultaneously denying their accusations as false. Yet he forgoes an official declaration of war in all of these letters. It is peculiar that Peter did not include declarations of war, especially considering the king was in the midst of preparing for the

³¹⁶ ACA, r. 42 f. 225r.

³¹⁷ "Al comte de paillars," "an Ramon Folc," and "an G. de Bollera." Following these letters, the names of six other nobles appears, most likely indicating that similar letters were sent to them. These nobles are R. Roger, Bernat Roger d'Arill, R. de Anglesola, Bernat ça Portella, Ponç de Cubelles, and G R. de Josa.

upcoming conflict. In fact, less than a month after these letters were sent, the nobles and the king were already engaged in military scrimmages. Perhaps the king felt that the letter's transmission in Catalan provided enough of a threat; or Peter and his royal councilors did not feel it necessary to warn the nobles or justify their actions. We do not know.

We do know that the rebellion was short lived. Before long, the rebels once again retreated to the castle of Balaguer, where they sought refuge from royal forces. The siege of Balaguer did not last long. Seeing their untenable position, the rebels surrendered to the king. The quickness of the campaign was in part due to the attrition of several more former rebels who refused to join the revolt this time around, like Pere de Berga. Once victorious, Peter proved less sympathetic to the rebels. The king imposed severe penalties on them before they could regain large portions of their fiefs, and confiscated some permanently. Defeated and humiliated, the Catalan nobility abandoned their hopes of limiting royal influence and accepted the empowered position of the crown vis-à-vis their own. Much like the Battle of Bouvines in 1214 France, the king's conquest of Balaguer ended the period of aristocratic domination in the county of Barcelona, or as we now know it, Catalonia. The crown had subdued the Aragonese nobility several years earlier with the victory over Ferrán Sánchez and his associates. Nevertheless, the kings paid a high price for their pacification of Aragon: their reluctant acceptance of the Union of Aragon.³¹⁸

With the end of major noble rebellions in the 1280s, defiance letters came to an abrupt end in the Crown of Aragon. As quickly as they appeared, defiance letters in the vernacular disappeared from the record. Without major rebellions, neither nobles nor the crown had use for

³¹⁸ Unlike in Catalonia where the cities and villages loyally followed the crown for the most part, in Aragon they jealously guarded their freedoms and acted as a buffer between the crown and the nobility, thus playing an important role in the creation of the Union.

defiance letters, let alone ones composed in the vernacular. Furthermore, by the time the crown faced serious opposition from their nobles in the following centuries, the dynamic of vernacular writing had evolved to a point where vernacular defiances were ineffectual. As vernacular writing increased dramatically in the chanceries of James II and Peter III, emitting any antagonistic message in the vernacular proved useless. Vernacular languages could not augment the delivery of an invective message, if regular exchanges were commonly conducted in the vernacular as well. Indeed, the diglossic situation in the crown evolved to the point of making vernacular defiances obsolete in the fourteenth century.

Conclusion

Defiance letters during their short, but prolific life span shed bright light on the evolution of vernacular writing in the Crown of Aragon's royal chancery. Aside from encompassing one of the largest categories of vernacular documents produced by the kings, they reveal major writing innovations in the chancery. During the three decades that the crown engaged in this practice, vernacular writing increased and evolved. One of the causes of this increase was defiance letters themselves. As I document in this chapter and the previous one, the diglossic situation in the Crown of Aragon allowed the nobility and the kings to utilize the vernacular languages to augment the impact of invective messages during times of great hostilities. Tracing these same defiance letters, we can observe how nobles gradually abandoned Latin in their defiance letters sooner than the king. By 1280, however, the royal chancery, more comfortable with vernacular writing, lessened their dependence on Latin, venturing to begin outgoing communications in the romance. While this might seem like a modest change, it proved an important step in the development of vernacular writing in the royal chancery, a step that

eventually led royal scribes in the following century to discard Latin altogether in their outgoing, vernacular letters.

The lifespan of defiance letters also documents shifts in the way contemporaries utilized codeswitching strategies. Originally utilized only to declare war, codeswitching from Latin to the vernacular evolved to include threats and other invective messages during times of heightened hostilities and minor armed conflicts between the king and the nobility. The role of Latin in written communications between the hostile parties also changed. Initially, a return to communicating in the high-prestige language signified the resolution of a feudal conflict. But, as I document above, the king and the nobles adopted it to signal an interest in reconciliation in the midst of their violent confrontations. These ongoing developments in the use of codeswitching illustrate the complexities of language ideologies and their indexicality during the second half of the thirteenth century. Finally, the symbolic use of codeswitching that emerged from the antagonistic communications between the nobles and the king during their feudal conflicts influenced the adoption of other symbolic uses of vernacular writing in the royal chancery, which I document in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Transmitting Emphasis and Urgency in the Vernacular

In the previous two chapters, I argued that the Catalan nobility's symbolic use of vernacular writing in their defiance letters changed how the kings and their scribes approached language choice. Before then, royal scribes very rarely composed a text on behalf of the king in the romance; and when they did, practical concerns, specifically outside demand, seem to have guided their choice.³¹⁹ The nobles capitalized on the royal chancery's Latinity and augmented the impact of their defiance letters by breaking established protocol and writing them in a low-prestige code. Their strategy depended on two factors: the king's ability to identify the breach in decorum; and a shared interpretation of what the breach signified. The kings' embrace of the nobles' tactic reveals they understood the meaning behind the codeswitch and considered it effective enough to replicate.

I contend in the following pages that James I and his thirteenth-century successors appropriated a similar literary strategy when seeking to emphasize certain orders they considered important to their authority. By forgoing established protocol and choosing to write these commands in the "marked" or less commonly used codes (romances) rather than the "unmarked" register (Latin), the kings underscored the magnitude of their requests.

³¹⁹ In these cases, members of the royal chancery recorded certain texts in the romance either at the request of their recipient(s) or to guarantee that the latter understood the contents of the message. For more on the practical motives for the king's decision to compose a text in the vernacular, see above, chapter 3.

The royal chancery's strong Latinity, central to the success of this type of codeswitching, ironically impeded the kings from applying it regularly. Writing on behalf of the kings carried a sense of formality and precise expectations that encouraged royal scribes to redact certain portions, usually the opening (protocol) and/or closing (eschatol) formulas, of all outgoing letters in Latin. It also accounts for why nearly all internal royal records, ranging from document descriptions in the registers to the king's household expenditures, survive in the high-prestige language. A penchant for ceremony, formality, and self-promotion as well as a commitment to an established notarial culture common throughout the Western Mediterranean encouraged their reliance on the high-prestige language.³²⁰ Latin's place as the standard register of writing in the royal chancery meant the kings had few practical needs for composing a text in the vernacular. In fact, it seems the kings only resorted to writing in the vernacular in a few specific occasions when obliging an outside recipient or when they felt their authority threatened and were firmly certain that the addressees of their orders would understand the significance of bypassing the formalities of Latin.

Even though the royal registers contain more copies of defiance letters than royal orders in the vernacular, entities outside of the chancery (nobles) produced approximately half of the former. Royal scribes, by contrast, composed all of the orders that survive in a romance language, making it the largest single category of texts composed by the kings of the Crown of Aragon in the vernacular during the thirteenth century. Peter III's (II of Catalonia) military instructions following the French invasion of 1285, which constitute the majority of extant orders in a romance language, exemplify the crown's adoption of codeswitching to consign a sense of emphasis and urgency onto their orders. Before the French army entered Catalonia, the king

³²⁰ For more information on the crown's Latinity, see above, 3-4, 69-72.

dispensed preparations for the imminent war to his subjects, as he and his predecessors had always done, in Latin. But an unexpectedly early incursion by the French army forced Peter to gather his host sooner than anticipated. When Peter informed his subjects of the invasion and ordered them to prepare for war, he switched from Latin to the vernacular to transmit the importance of his instructions as well as the urgency of the situation. Peter's pattern of symbolic codeswitching during the French invasion, in turn, helps us interpret why he composed other military orders in romance languages. In all of these cases, the king, confronted by an immediate threat, broke linguistic protocol and accentuated the importance of their military orders by redacting them in a low-prestige code.

Examining Peter's military orders also shed light on the motivations that prompted the thirteenth-century kings of the Crown of Aragon to emit non-military orders in the vernacular. The contents of these non-military directives and the circumstances surrounding their production suggest that royal scribes recorded them in the romance to accentuate their significance, similarly to military orders. James I composed the earliest directives in the vernacular, but the practice did not catch on in the royal chancery until his son Peter ascended to the throne in 1276.

Codeswitching offered the kings of the Crown of Aragon an easy and convenient means of emphasizing orders they sought to highlight. By doing so, the ambitious, albeit weak kings enhanced their administrative efficiency, improving how they exerted authority over their realms. They utilized this strategy cautiously, however, and only when deemed important enough to break the chancery's established protocol of writing in Latin. Language use, including codeswitching tactics, therefore represent a facet of the administrative reforms enacted by the crown to strengthen and centralize its authority. These reforms, which included the creation of a royal chancery, archive, and comprehensive registers, in turn signaled the crown's increasing

reliance on the written word, arguably the most powerful weapon in the arsenal of late-medieval European monarchs.

Emphasizing Military Orders

The French Crusade

Peter III earned the animosity of the French monarchy and its papal allies after he claimed Sicily on behalf of his wife, Constance. Constance's father, Manfred, had lost the island and his life to Charles of Anjou, the brother of King Louis IX (r. 1226-70) of France, at the battle of Benevento on February 26, 1266. Following the Sicilian Vespers (a revolt in Sicily against Charles), Peter led an armada that conquered the island in 1282 from the Angevins. In response, Pope Martin IV (r. 1281-85) excommunicated Peter and laid an interdict on his lands. Then on March 21, 1283, the pope raised the stakes by calling a crusade against the Crown of Aragon to overthrow Peter and replace him with a French prince. The ensuing danger forced Peter to depart from Sicily before the campaign's completion and return home to prepare for the largest threat the Crown of Aragon had ever faced.³²¹

After returning to the Iberian peninsula, Peter convened general courts in Tarrazona (September 1283) and Barcelona (October 1283) to convince his Aragonese and Catalan subjects, respectively, to help militarily and financially against the French.³²² While Peter

³²¹ For more information on the French Crusade against the Crown of Aragon, see Thomas Bisson, *The Medieval Crown of Aragon: A Short History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 86-94; Ferran Soldevila, *Història de Catalunya*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: Editorial Alpha, 19663), 334-76; and Stefano Maria Cingolani, *Pere el Gran: vida, actes i paraula* (Barcelona: Editorial Base, 2010), 171-332.

³²² The records of these general courts, as all court records in the Crown of Aragon until the mid-fourteenth century, survive in Latin.

convinced the Catalans to participate and contribute to the campaign by guaranteeing them a number of additional rights, the Aragonese held out even after the king confirmed their privileges and accepted the creation of their Union, a coalition of nobles, cities, and prelates that successfully curtailed royal power in the kingdom of Aragon until the next century.³²³

The preparations for war against the French were conducted, as expected, in Latin. On November 9, 1283, the royal chancery emitted several hundred military orders in the high-prestige language to the king's subjects in Catalonia, Aragon, and Valencia. For instance, Peter commanded the viscount of Bearn, an important Catalan magnate, to join him in Lleida on January 1 prepared for war:

Rogamos et dicimus vobis quod prima die mensis Januari proximo [per] sitis nobiscum Ilerida cum militibus, armis, aliis apparatibus vestris [] servir nobis feuda que a noblis tenetis. Datum Valencia V idus Novembri Anno Domini MCCLXXX tercio.

We plead and ask that you come and meet us in Lledia on the first day of the following January with you knights, weapons, and other supplies to serve us for the fiefs that you hold from us. Drafted in Valencia on the fifth ides of November (November 9) 1283.³²⁴

Similarly, when Peter demanded the military assistance of the inhabitants of Barcelona, he did so in Latin.³²⁵

His son, Prince Alfonse, also utilized Latin to organize the resistance against the French and their Iberian allies, the Navarrese. While Peter was still in Sicily, on April 27, 1283, Alfonse notified the nobleman Ramon Folc that the French intended to invade his father's lands and ordered Ramon to gather an army in defense of the realm, as requested by the Usatge *Princeps namque*.³²⁶ According to the register, Alfonse sent out similar letters to dozens of Catalan nobles, abbots, and bishops. The prince also sent pleas for assistance to his father's Aragonese

³²³ For more on the Aragonese Union, see Gonzalez, *Las uniones aragonesas*.

³²⁴ ACA, r. 47 f. 117r-118r.

³²⁵ ACA, r. 43 f. 105r.

³²⁶ ACA, r. 61 f. 107v-108r.

subjects in Latin. In early August, for example, Alfonse ordered thirteen Aragonese nobles to meet him in Exea prepared for war.³²⁷

Preparations for the imminent invasion continued throughout 1284 and early 1285. On the day Peter entered the city of Figueres in northern Catalonia to manage the military campaign against the French army, April 22, 1285, he emitted hundreds of more letters in Latin with instructions regarding the upcoming war to his subjects. They were all written in Latin and organized in the registers by estate and office. Cities and villages received one version, while royal officials, nobles, knights, and the clergy all received their own messages.³²⁸ The military commands to the Valencians mirrored those to the Catalans, while those sent to the Aragonese contained disparate orders. Instead of requiring them to meet him in Figueres to confront the bulk of the crusading forces under the leadership of King Phillip III of France (1270-85), Peter commanded the Aragonese to assist his son, Alfonse, in patrolling the border between Navarre and Aragon.³²⁹ Peter feared an eminent Navarese invasion of the kingdom of Aragon led by Phillip III's son, the future Phillip IV (r. 1285-1314) of France. Even though the Navarese did wage a series of raids against Aragon, the French prince along with his father and the entire crusading army marched together into Catalonia.

When the French army entered Catalonia sooner than expected, however, Peter and his scribes bypassed standard linguistic protocol and sent urgent notices in the vernacular to his subjects alerting them that the French had invaded. In the letters, drafted on July 28, 1285, Peter frantically ordered its recipients to meet him armed and prepared for war ten days before

³²⁷ ACA, r. 61 f. 191r.

³²⁸ For the letters to Valencian cities, see ACA, r. 56 f. 81r-v; to Valencian knights and nobles, see ACA, r. 56 f. 81v-82r.

³²⁹ For the letters to Valencian cities, see ACA, r. 56 f. 82v-83v; royal officials, see ACA, r. 56 f. 84r-88v and f. 90r-91v; to nobles and knights, see ACA, r. 56 f. 89v-90r.

September 1. The first sample in the register, written in Catalan, is addressed to the inhabitants of Lleida: (Latin italicized)

Vicariis, Probis hominibus, et universitati Ileride. Fem vos saber que con lo Rey de França ab ses osts entra en nostra terra...On com lamerce de deu els se sien molt minuats e minuen tots dies si per molt de [malauties] si ab armas; fiant en nostre senyor e en la bontat de nostres gens, es acort e voluntat nostra e qules donen batala ala qual avem assignat dia lo primer dia del mes de Setembre primer vinent...e de emprar vos que siats ab nos en aquela batayla ab vostres aperalaments e ab vostres armes al milo que pustats segons que a aytal fet se procuray...E perço ab vostre conseyl e deles altres feels nostros puscam ordenat en aquel fet ço ab melor sia ab la ajuda de deu pregam nos eus requerim que siats ab nos X dies abans del dit primer dia de setebre. *Datum Barchinone V Augusti.*³³⁰

To the vicars, honored citizens, and university of Lleida. We inform you that the King of France has entered our land with his hosts... Where with God's mercy they will be diminished and diminishing ever day either through sickness or arms; having faith in our lord and in the goodness of our people, it is our consent and will to wage battle against them, which we have assigned for the first day of the coming month of September... And we demand you with us in battle prepared with all your weapons and supplies as best you can with diligence... And so we can establish the best way to attack the enemy with your counsel and that of our other faithful subjects, we ask and require you to come to us 10 days before September 1. Drafted in Barcelona on July 28.

Identical messages were sent to 181 other localities throughout the Crown of Aragon according to the register: “sub simili forma scripsimus omnibus locis Infra scriptis” (we wrote to all of the below mentioned places in this same form). Of the 181 cities and villages, 95 were in Catalonia, 65 in Aragon, and 21 in Valencia. While it is very likely that most of the letters sent to Valencian cities were also composed in Catalan, it is doubtful that was the case with the ones sent to Aragon.³³¹ They were probably composed in Aragonese, but royal scribes neglected to copy a draft of the Aragonese version into the registers. The state of panic and haste at the royal court and chancery during this period may explain why royal scribes overlooked recording a separate example of the message sent to Aragonese cities.

That same neglect was avoided with nobles, signaling the importance of status and class in the thirteenth century. Directly following the king's cry for help to the cities, royal scribes

³³⁰ ACA, r. 57 f. 167r-v.

³³¹ ACA, r. 57 f. 168r-v.

registered the orders they sent to nobles in the vernacular. The first set, represented by a copy of the king's letter to Ponç de Ribelles, survives in its entirety in the register.³³² Below the transcription of the text, the register notes in Latin that similar letters were sent to seven other Catalan and Valencian nobles: "sub simil forma scripsimus infra scriptis Richis hominibus et militibus" (we wrote similar to the nobles and knights listed below). The registers also contain drafts of the orders sent to the Aragonese nobility in Valencia and Aragon. The king's order to Jimeno de Luna, the procurator general (king's representative) in the kingdom of Valencia, requesting military aid appears first in the register. It is similar to the commands sent to the Catalan cities and nobility, except it is in Aragonese: (Latin italicized)

*Roderico Eximeni de Luna. Sepades que quando el Rey de Francçia con sus huestes entro en nostra tierra...Ond como ellos loado dios sean muy menguados e mengum todos dias si por muertos denfermedat si com armas; fiando en dios e en la bontat de las nostras gentes es acuerdo e voluntat nostra de dar les batayla ala qual assignamos dia el primer dia desti mes de setembre primero vinient...E si oviendes de venir, seades de nos 10 dias ante del dito primero dia de setembre por que podamos con vuestro consello e de los otro ricos homnes, ordenar lo mello dios quereudo. Datum apud Barchinone.*³³³

To Roger Jimeno de Luna. We inform you that when the King of France entered our land with his hosts...Where with God's mercy they will be diminished and diminishing every day either through sickness or violence; having faith in our lord and in the goodness of our people, that it is our consent and will to wage battle against them, which we have assigned for the first day of the coming month of September...And should you agree to come, you will meet us 10 days before the coming September, so that with your advise and that of the other nobles, God willing, we can produce the best plan. Drafted in Barcelona.

Identical notices were sent to four other Aragonese nobles in Valencia, according to the register.

The king's directives to the Aragonese nobility within Aragon proper also appear separate in the

³³² ACA, r. 57 f. 169r. "Fem vos saber que can lo Rey de frança ab sos osts entra en nostra terra, per ço com nos ladoncs no teniem justades nostras gens, presem atort que pus segura cosa era destablir los locs et de menar lo fet per guea e etre que nostres gens agessem justades e [] veriem mals traiso cars de lur poder e de lur estament...per ço...pregame vos eus requirir que seriats ab nos x dies abans del dit primer dia de setembre. Datum Barchinone V kalendas Augusti."

(We inform you that the king of France has entered our land with his hosts, and because we still did not have our people prepared, we have decided that it would be more secure to establish the places, and we can note their power and estate. Because of this...we ask you and we require you to be with us 10 days before September 1. Drafted in Barcelona on July 28.)

³³³ ACA, r. 57 f. 171r-v.

register, even though they are identical in language, format, and contents to the ones sent to the Aragonese-speaking nobles in Valencia. Peter's letter to Pedro Cornell, for example, was copied into the register in its entirety, with a note below it explaining that similar letters went out to 40 other nobles in Aragon.³³⁴

Peter's decision to compose these orders in a low-prestige code provide the clearest examples of codeswitching strategies to emphasize pressing military commands and transmit a sense of exigency. Peter as well as his son, Alfonse, communicated preparations for the war with their subjects in Latin. Yet, when the French invaded sooner than expected, the king bypassed Latin and turned to Catalan and Aragonese to drive home the magnitude of the situation as well as the urgency and importance of his requests. Faced with an extremely perilous threat, the king mobilized and employed all of his resources, including writing in the low-prestige languages. Regardless if the king's linguistic strategy proved successful or not, at the very least it gave him and his agents a sense of empowerment in an uncertain and bleak time.

Military Orders

Peter's military orders during the French invasion of Catalonia represent the culmination of a pattern of codeswitching in the royal chancery that began in the second half of the century. Inspired by the nobility's appropriation of vernacular writing to augment the impact of their antagonistic messages, members of the royal chancery began to experiment with switching from Latin to the romance when transmitting exigency in addition to enmity and disfavor. Military orders do not constitute the first directives emitted in the vernacular by the king, but they comprise the majority of those that have survived. It seems the kings considered the strategy

³³⁴ ACA, r. 57 f. 171v.

most useful when issuing military commands. The urgency and peril Peter faced during these challenges led him to employ all the tools at his disposal to rally the troops, including calling attention to his orders by composing them in the romance languages.

The earliest example of a military or military-related order produced by the kings in a vernacular language for emphatic purposes dates to July 6, 1278. In the letter, written in the midst of the siege of Castellciutat, Peter commanded the inhabitants of the Valley of Noguera to bring him as much foodstuffs as they could to sell to his host.³³⁵ The order begins and ends in Latin, while the body of the message appears in Catalan: “Deym e manam vos que aportets a vendre a nos e a nostra host vianda, salvus e segurs, aytanta com pugats, so es a saber: pan, vin, carn, e civada. E en aço no aya faila” (We say and order you to come to us safe and secure, and sell us and our troops as much food as you can: that is, bread, wine, meat, and barley. And do not fail in this).³³⁶ If the inhabitants of Noguera refuse, the king warns them that he would not be able to prevent his men from taking the food without restitution: “nos no puriem tenir ni capdelar nostres osts que no sen prengessen” (we will not be able to stop our troops or prevent them from taking [the food]). Peter surely sought to avoid any additional violence, while simultaneously guaranteeing that his troops obtain the necessary provisions to wage a successful siege against the count of Foix and the other rebels taking refuge inside Castellciutat’s fortifications. Writing the order in the vernacular or “marked” code offered the king an opportunity to transmit a heightened sense of emphasis and urgency to the inhabitants of Noguera. The king seems to

³³⁵ Ferran Soldevila, *Pere el Gran: Segona Part: El regnat fins a l’any 1282* (Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Catalans, 1995), 217 (doc. 61), citing ACA, r. 40 f. 133r.

³³⁶ The name of the city Castellciutat is not translated fully into Latin in the letter’s eschatacol. Rather than the Latin term *Civitate*, the scribe noted *Ciutat* when describing Castellciutat.

have reinforced the urgency of the order several days afterward by sending the inhabitants of Noguera a safe conduct to bring him the provisions of food also composed in Catalan.³³⁷

Two years later (1280) we find Peter emitting another set of military orders in the vernacular during the siege of Balaguer.³³⁸ In the preparations for the siege against a band of rebel nobles harbored in the city, Peter directed his royal officials, cities, nobles, and church leaders to appear ready for war in messages transmitted in Latin. On January 9, 1280, for instance, Peter ordered the inhabitants of Lleida to appear before him prepared for war on May 1.³³⁹ Beneath the record, the register notes that identical messages were sent to dozens of communities throughout Aragon, Valencia, and Catalonia.³⁴⁰ The places are divided by the messenger charged with their delivery: for example, “hac tulit P de Sancta Oliva” (this was delivered by P. de Sancta Oliva). Below the orders to the cities in the register, we find the king’s military commands to nobles throughout his realms.³⁴¹ Periodic requests for military aid, also written in Latin, continue to trickle out of the royal chancery until the siege of Balaguer began on May 27.

Almost a month into the siege, on June 23, the king sent out another set of calls to arm to several nobles, the military orders, a handful of cities (Barcelona, Tarragona, Monson, and Lleida), royal officials in those cities, and a dozen ecclesiastical leaders.³⁴² Most of these messages were also written in Latin. But the king’s order commanding the inhabitants of Lleida

³³⁷ Soldevila, *Pere el Gran: Segona Part*, 220 (doc. 69), citing ACA, r. 40 f. 136r. Except for the eschatacol, the king recorded the rest of the safe conduct, including the beginning, in the vernacular: “De nos En Pere per la gracia de Deu rey darago...Datum ante Castrum de Ciutat III idus iulii anno predicto” (From us Peter by the grace of God king of Aragon...Given before Castelleciutat July 12 of the aforementioned year).

³³⁸ For more on the 1280 siege of Balaguer, see above, 151.

³³⁹ ACA, r. 42 f. 206v.

³⁴⁰ ACA, r. 42 f. 206v-207r.

³⁴¹ ACA, r. 42 f. 207r-208v.

³⁴² ACA, r. 51v-52r, 55r..

to send him as many adult men as they could survives in Catalan.³⁴³ Two days afterwards, the king ordered the bailiff of Lleida to send him immediately the materials necessary to build a siege weapon in a letter also written in Catalan.³⁴⁴ I believe the king composed these two orders in the vernacular to convey an increased sense of urgency among his officials and subjects in Lleida. Some thirty kilometers south-west of Balaguer, Lleida offered the king the fastest possible relief after a host of rebels breached the siege and entered the city with arms and supplies to replenish the enemy.³⁴⁵ Peter himself notes the urgency of his command in the letter (italicized below) and emphasized it with a dire threat: if they failed to show up, they risked loosing everything they own:

e si negu falra a ell ajuda que en aço a el fer pora perdre deu per tots temps totes coses que per aquel ha...*perço que negu no deu falir al princep a tan gran obra o tan gran necessitat*, deim et manam a vos e a cadaun de vos, sots la pena en lustage contenguda, que segons la tenor del dit usatge, vistés les presents, vingats a nos en ajuda de nos e de nostra terra ab caualesr e ab homens vostres de les vostres locs e ab tot vostra poder.

And if anyone fails to help he may loose all of his possessions for all time...*because no one should fail the prince in such a serious and necessary event*, we tell and order each of you, under the penalty recommended by the Usatges, to come to us and assist us and our land with the knights and men of your locale and all under your authority immediately after you receive this message.

As in the case of most other vernacular orders analyzed in this chapter, the messages' opening and closing formulas remain in Latin.

The king's correspondence with his subjects in the vernacular regarding the siege of Albarracín demonstrates that the kings switched from Latin to Aragonese as well as Catalan when emphasizing the urgency of military orders prior to the French invasion of 1285.

Preparations for the siege of Albarracín were conducted in Latin. For instance, when Peter

³⁴³ Cubells, "Documentos Diplomaticos Aragoneses, 1259-1284," *Revue Hispanique* 37 (1916), doc. 148 [Hereafter Cubells], citing ACA, r. 48 f. 52v.

³⁴⁴ Cubells, doc. 150, citing ACA, r. 48 f. 75r.

³⁴⁵ For more information on the breach of Balaguer's walls during the 1280 siege, see Cingolani, *Pere el Gran*, 131-4.

initially ordered the inhabitants of Calatayud to send him military assistance on May 4, 1284, he did so in Latin.³⁴⁶ According to the register in which the record was copied, the king sent similar letters to several other Aragonese cities. The king also composed requests for military aid from the Aragonese and Catalan nobility in Latin.³⁴⁷

In the middle of the siege (August 30, 1284), however, Peter bypassed Latin and ordered the inhabitants of Teruel to send him as many armed men as they could in a notice composed in Aragonese:

dezimos e nos mandamus que luego vista la carta todas [otras] cosas deyades vengades con vostras armas a la dita [corral] de alvarrazin per acceder el dia del plazo en que aviemos aquell logar de albarrazin e antes daquel plazo dios querendo.³⁴⁸

We tell and order that after seeing this letter cease doing anything else and come with your arms to the said siege of Albarracín to agree on the day of the siege that we will set up in that place of Albarracín or before that date God willing.

The king's need to replenish his host after four months of setting siege to Albarracín offers the most likely explanation of why he turned to the vernacular to emphasize his order. At the time, the king may have also feared the return of Juan Núñez de Lara, the lord of Albarracín, who had breached the siege, with reinforcements from Navarre, further necessitating the accumulation of provisions.³⁴⁹ Teruel, some forty kilometers east of Albarracín, was the closest city with available troops. Much like the royal orders to the inhabitants of Lleida from the siege of Balaguer in Catalan, Peter wrote to the residents of Teruel in Aragonese to signal the urgency of his command. Yet, Juan Nuñez and his reinforcements never made it, and the castle fell to Peter on September 29, 1284. Aside from appropriating the lordship into the royal domain, a feat that

³⁴⁶ ACA, r. 51 f. 1r-v.

³⁴⁷ For the letter to the Aragonese nobility, see Anton, *Las uniones aragonesas*, 2: 160 (doc. 62), citing ACA, r. 46 f. 199r; for the letter to the Catalan nobility, see Gonzalez, *Las uniones aragonesas*, 2: 161-2 (doc. 63).

³⁴⁸ ACA, r. 45 f. 22r.

³⁴⁹ Soldevila, *Història de Catalunya*, 366; Cingolani, *Pere el Gran*, 319-332.

had escaped his father, James I, Peter neutralized a dangerous French ally within his realms, which was crucial considering the animosity between the pro-Ghibelline kings of the Crown of Aragon and the pro-Guelph French Angevins.

Peter's military orders during the sieges of Castellciutat, Balaguer, and Albarracín by themselves only offer circumstantial evidence that the king composed them in the romance to emphasize the magnitude of his requests. But when analyzed collectively and compared to the king's orders following the French invasion of 1285, significant situational and contextual similarities between them surface that can not be ignored. In each of these cases, royal agents shifted from Latin to the vernacular during a military confrontation to emphasize urgent orders. In light of these similarities, we can conclude with some confidence that military orders produced during these three sieges in the vernacular represent initial or experimental phases of a diplomatic tactic implemented in widespread fashion when the French Crusaders invaded.

Emphasizing Non-Military Orders and Decrees

Understanding why Peter composed surviving military orders in the vernacular assists us in deciphering the reasons that drove the thirteenth-century kings to write non-military directives in a low-prestige register. Since so few of these documents survive, a conclusive answer proves difficult. That being said, like the military orders examined above, practicality does not appear to have influenced their redaction in the romance. All of its intended recipients either read Latin or had access to someone that did. Composing these directives in a vernacular language more likely served a symbolic measure used to transmit a specific message. The circumstances surrounding the production of these vernacular orders lead me to conclude that, similar to Peter's

military orders, James I and his successors bypassed the standard practice of writing in Latin and appropriated the marked codes when they felt like emphasizing specific commands more strongly than usual. My suspicion strengthens when we consider that these orders promulgated in the romance only surface after the crown had co-opted the nobles' strategy of using codeswitching symbolically in their defiance letters.

In the following pages, I describe the most notable examples of orders emitted by the kings of the Crown of Aragon during the thirteenth century in the vernacular that do not contain military commands. All of these directives include measures to solidify royal power and prestige, either through the demand for homage, the collection of financial revenue, and/or bureaucratic reforms.

Homage and Taxes

The first royal orders that appear to have been written in the vernacular for symbolic purposes surface soon after the crown adopted Catalan in their antagonistic exchanges with the rebel nobles. In an order decreed in Barcelona on September 29, 1262, only three years after the chancery first drafted defiance letters in the vernacular, James I directed his subjects in the counties of Rosellón, Cerdanya, Conflent, Vallespir, and Prats, that is, the Crown of Aragon's territories north of the Pyrenees, to recognize Prince Jaume (the future Jaume II of Majorca) as their heir and pay homage to him via a letter written in Catalan.³⁵⁰ Less than a month later (October 26), James similarly ordered the inhabitants of Valencia to swear homage to his eldest son, Peter, and recognize him as their heir.³⁵¹ James had just drafted his sixth and final testament

³⁵⁰ Huici, 4: doc. 1290, citing ACA, r. 12 f. 70r.

³⁵¹ Huici, 1298 (no citation provided).

earlier that year (in Latin).³⁵² Marital changes as well as the birth and death of male sons had forced James to revise his will on five occasions. After the king's eldest son, Alfonso, died, James divided his realms one final time among his two surviving, lay sons. He granted Peter the peninsular realms (comprising the kingdoms of Aragon and Valencia and the county of Catalonia) and Jaume the kingdom of Majorca and the territories north of the Pyrenees. James's interests in guaranteeing smooth transitions of power for both of his sons and in turn prevent any further fratricidal conflicts explain his desire to emphasize these orders. Conflicts between the two brothers had already surfaced by then over the partition of the realms and would only heighten after their father's death.³⁵³ It is plausible that inspired by their antagonistic exchanges with rebel nobles a few years earlier, James and his scribes decided to augment the severity of these orders by writing them in the vernacular.

Evidence also points to James using the romance languages to impart instructions more forcefully to his tax collectors. In a letter emitted primarily in Latin sometime between 1269-70, for example, the king commands several individuals to examine the records of taxable properties in Xatíva.³⁵⁴ At the end of the text, James switches to Catalan to reiterate to his collectors the importance of verifying all receipts or other written proof of ownership. James also informs them that if any discrepancies or disputes arose during their collection, they should consult the official partition records of Xatíva kept by the wife of a certain Bernat Sicart:

³⁵² For a published version of James's six testaments, see Antonio M. Udina i Abelló, *Els testaments dels comtes de Barcelona i dels reis de la Corona d'Aragó: de Guifre Borrel a Joan II* (Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 2001).

³⁵³ For more information on the feud between Peter and his brother Jaume over the partition of their father's realms, see Cingolani, *Pere el Gran*, 123-30. After Jaume sided with the French during their attempt to dethrone Peter, the latter confiscated the former's territories. Peter died shortly before reincorporating the kingdom of Majorca into the Crown of Aragon, a task left to his son, Alfonse III.

³⁵⁴ ACA, r. 16 f. 192r.

Remembranza que aquels que an comprat deven mostra a aquils quil rey a enviat veedors en lo regne les casrtes de la compra...Item aquels, qui no han comprat, deven mostrar les cartes de donacio que han del senyor rey...E es a saber que la mulyer den Bernat Sicart de Zative ten tres libres de la particio de Xativa

Memo that those who have purchased [property] must show the receipt of sale to the reviewers that the king has sent to the kingdom... Also, those who have not purchased [the property] must show their donation letters from the king...And it should be known that the wife of Bernat Sicart of Xativa has three books on the partition of Xativa

Royal scribes did not include this final section in the vernacular accidentally or for the practical benefit of its recipients. To begin with, the individuals chosen to embark on this undertaking presumably read Latin, since the records they were entrusted to examine in Xativa would have been written in the high-prestige language.³⁵⁵ The details concerning the appointment and duties of the collectors, moreover, remained in Latin. A more likely motivation for the king's decision to write these instructions in the vernacular rests with their contents. The thirteenth-century kings' incessant demands that officials verify and collect written records of all transactions, especially financial ones, underscores James's decision to highlight the importance of verifying receipts in his instructions to Xativa's tax collectors.

Peter's non-military orders promulgated in a romance language also included reminders for officials to collect receipts, strengthening my resolve that a common symbolic motivation guided the redaction of these commands in the vernacular. For instance, Peter reiterated to the vicar of Barcelona, Bernat de Parellada, in a note written in Catalan, the need for the latter and his officials to save receipts of all purchases made in his jurisdiction.³⁵⁶ In addition, Peter expanded the practice of emphasizing financial directives in the vernacular when pressuring lords to abide by his orders. Peter, for example, instructed the nobleman Jimeno de Urrea to collect all of the taxes owed by the villages of Aragon under his jurisdiction just like in the reign

³⁵⁵ Xativa's partition records were most likely written in Latin like those of the kingdoms of Valencia and Majorca.

³⁵⁶ ACA, r. 39 f. 110v-111r.

of James I, which the king argued did not contradict the General Privilege he had conceded to Aragon the previous year.³⁵⁷ Jimeno, one of the leaders of the Aragonese Union, objected to perceived abuses of royal authority, including illegitimate taxes like this one. By switching from Latin to the romance, the king emphasized his resolve to collect the tax, and perhaps even transmit a sense of displeasure at the noble's intransigence.

Notarial Orders

Catalonia's strong notarial culture encouraged scribes to continue using Latin when authenticating public documents.³⁵⁸ As a result, public notaries in Catalonia were required to read and write in Latin. Not surprisingly, nearly all royal documents involving public notaries and scriptoria in Catalonia survive in Latin. Yet, Peter III promulgated a set of orders for public notaries in the city of Lleida in Catalan. Although the extraordinariness of these two documents, the only of their kind in a romance language, prevent us from concluding with certainty that emphasis or any other symbolic motivation drove their production in the vernacular, it does offer a plausible explanation, and one that fits in with a larger, identifiable pattern of codewitching in the royal chancery.

A note, as always written in Latin, introduces these documents in the royal register:

“*Ordenatio super scribanariis Ilerida facta iiii nonas marci e lecta tabellionibus inferius nominates*” (Order regarding scriptoria in Lleida, promulgated on March 5 and read to the

³⁵⁷ Cubells, doc. 111, citing ACA, r. 43 f. 53v. Unlike the Catalan order sent to Alamado, the letter to Jimeno begins in the vernacular: “Al noble e amado varon don Examen dUrreya” (To the noble and loved noble don Jimeno de Urrea). The ending formula, nonetheless, remains in Latin: “Datum Cesarauguste II idus Novembris” (Drafted in Zaragoza on November 12).

³⁵⁸ For more on Catalonia's notarial culture, see above, 20-25.

scribes named below).³⁵⁹ The first document begins in Catalan with the oath the city's scribes must take, in which they swear to exercise their office honestly without any price fixing, charge reasonable rates for their services, only charge for authenticated documents, and pay the appropriate taxes to the crown, which, as we shall see, amounted to a punitive two-thirds of their earnings:

Los escrivans juren que be e lealment se hagen en lur offici e que no facen negu empeniment entre si del preu de les cartes, mas quen prenen preu covinent tro quell seynor Rey y haia ordenat e feta taxacio, e que tantost la nota presa se facen pagar.

The notaries swear to exercise their office honestly and not to make any agreements among themselves concerning the cost of a document, set a reasonable price approved by the king, and only sell the published act.

The oath is followed by a list of the royal mandates the scribes swore to uphold. Public notaries, that is, the city's scribes, were ordered to meet with a royal official every Sunday to review their weekly profits and pay two-thirds of their net income to the crown. The record notes that the king, always mentioned in the third person, paid for the notaries' workstation and the materials they used to exercise their office. Finally, the king orders the city's public notaries to keep a register of all their work and explicates the formula with which they must authenticate an act:

(Latin italicized)

Encara, vol e mana lo seynor Rey que escriba faça capbreu o memorial de les notes de totes les cartes que en son posder se faran; e lo kalendar sia aital: *tali die et anno Incarnationis regnante rege Petro*; et la subscriptio del notaria sia aital: *Signum tali auctoritate domini Regis notarii publici Ileride, qui hoc scripsit vel scribi fecit die et anno prefixis*.

Furthermore, the lord King wishes and orders that scribes make a register or memo of the notes and letters that are made under their authority; and the date should be [recorded] as follows: day and year of the incarnation in the reign of Peter; and the subscription of authentication should be as follows: Sign of such and such by authority of the lord King public notary of Lleida, who wrote this or will write this in the day and year aforementioned.

Directly following this record, the register notes the names of the scribes licensed to work in Lleida and the neighborhood to which they were assigned: for instance, (Latin italicized)

³⁵⁹ Cubells, doc. 152, citing ACA, r. 49 f. 46v.

“*Ordinatio qui et ubi debeant scribere tabellionis*: Bertran Uguet, Michael Gaçol, R. Colom, et R. de Balaguer—al cap del pont” (Ordination of who and where [a notary] could write public documents: Bertran Huguet, Michael Gaçol, R. Colom, and R. De Balaguer—al Cap del Pont).³⁶⁰

A second document containing additional instructions with a note identifying its author in Latin follows the list of scribes: “Et in continenti fuit facta hoc [] que seguntur per Balagarium protonotari publice per Ilerdam.” (And this [] that follows was made securely by Balaguer, proto-notary in Lleida). The order, written entirely in Catalan, mandates that only royally approved scribes in their assigned neighborhoods authenticate documents. Those authenticating documents without permission were subject to a 100 morabetin (approximately 610 sous) fine, or if they could not afford that, the cost of re-authenticating all of their invalidated acts.³⁶¹

If public notaries in the Crown of Aragon, especially within Catalonia, were required to work in Latin, why did the kings compose these decrees in the vernacular? I believe that emphasis on the part of the royal agents in charge of transmitting the orders best explains their production in the romance. A message from a primarily Latin-based institution, the royal chancery, to parishioners of a Latin-dominated profession, the scribes, sent a powerful message, which may even have intended to enforce a prior dispute between the scribes and the crown and/or among scribes, most likely revolving around money.

Household Ordinances

Peter and Alfonse promulgated the first five extant ordinances for the organization of the royal household in the Crown of Aragon. That Peter and Alfonse chose to compose these

³⁶⁰ ACA, r. 49 f. 46v-47r. Four notaries were assigned to each of the four neighborhoods in the city, for a total of sixteen scribes.

³⁶¹ Cubells, doc. 153, citing ACA, r. 49 f. 47r.

household ordinances in Catalan is revealing. For starters, it suggests that Catalan was the primary language spoken in the royal court and household. Even when promulgated in the Aragonese city of Huesca, royal scribes recorded these ordinances in Catalan. Perhaps guided by convenience and practicality, the kings wrote these ordinances in the vernacular to make sure that their officials understood them clearly. But I do not subscribe to this position. The principal audience of these ordinances, that is, the high officials of the royal household, either read Latin or had ready access to other officials that did. Royal treasurers and bailiffs like Arnau çà Bastida and G. Durfort, for example, tended to be trained in Latin. I suspect that like royal orders emitted to outside parties in the vernacular, emphasis drove the king to record these ordinances in Catalan more than ensuring that its recipients understood the message directly when read aloud.

The first ordinance, most likely promulgated in 1276, the year Peter III ascended to the throne, comes down to us as a fourteenth-century copy mistakenly attributed to Peter IV.³⁶² In it, Peter III enumerates the organization of his household. The king begins the ordinance in the vernacular by granting the majordomo authority over the royal household while the king is away: “Ordena lo senyor rey primerament quell majordom sia obeyt de ço que manara en Casa” (The lord king orders firstly that the majordomo’s orders be obeyed in the royal household). He then lists the principle duties of each household official, including the majordomo (*majordom*), head chef (*sobrecoch*), butler (*museu* and *reboster*), kitchen assistants (*argentera de la cuyna*), bakers (*paniçers*), officials in charge of wine (*botillers*), porters (*porters*), messengers (*posader*),

³⁶² Published by Prospero de Bofarull i Mascaró, *Colección de documentos inéditos del archivo general de la corona de Aragón*, 41 vols., ed. Manuel de Bofarull y de Sartorio (Barcelona: J. E. Montfort, 1847-1910), VI: 5-16 [Hereafter CODIN]; and Francesc Carreras i Candi, “Redreç de la Reyal Casa: Ordenaments de Pere ‘lo Gran’ e Anfós ‘lo Liberal’ (Segle XIII),” *Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 35 (1909), (doc. 1) 99-104, citing a fourteenth-century copy found in ACA r. 1529 (1) fols. 1r-6v.

stablemen (*cavalleriç*), constable (*algutzir*), clerks (*scriva de racio*), and hunters (*munters*). The king meant these instructions for their high court officers, not these individual officials. Rather than detailed instructions on how to perform their duties, these directives summarized the chief responsibility of each official. They were thus more likely meant as guidelines for high officers of the royal household, who likely read Latin, rather than direct instructions to the individual officials, like the bakers, who probably lacked Latin training.

In April of 1277, Peter decreed an additional set of household ordinances focusing on the king's annual travel itinerary, which he divided equally between his three principal realms, Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia:

Ordena lo senyor Rey que compartesca son estage per tots temps en aquesta forma: que estia en los Regnes de Valencia et de Murcia IIII meses del ayn, ço es noembere, deembre, janer, et feber. Item en aragon alters IIII meses: març, abril, mayg, et juyn. Item en Cathalunya los remanens IIII meses, ço es juyol, agost, septembere, et vuytubri.³⁶³

The lord king orders that his stay be divided for all time in this form: that he stay in the kingdoms of Valencia and Murcia four months of the year, that is, November, December, January, and February. Also [that he stay] in Aragon another four months: March, April, May, and June. Also[that he stay] in Catalonia the remaining four months, that is, July, August, September, and October.

In this second ordinance, Peter also orders knights belonging to his household to stay in their respective realms when the king travels abroad to avoid unnecessary skirmishes in the royal court: for example, “lo senyor Rey ordena que daquiavant per tots temps tots los Cavallers et fils de Cavallers de Casa sua com el entrara en arago et exira de Cathalunya, romanguen en Cathalunya aquels quin son” (the lord king orders that from this day forth all the knights and sons of knights in his household accompanying the king that are Catalan must remain in Catalonia when the king enters Aragon).

³⁶³ Carreras, “Redreç de la Reyal Casa,” 104 (doc. II).

According to the nineteenth-century Catalan historian Francesc Carreras i Candi, Peter's ordinances merely recorded regulations already established by practice in the royal household during the course of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³⁶⁴ While true, the king's need to immortalize them in writing proves significant, and further attests to the crown's reliance on the written record and a finely-tuned bureaucracy to administer their limited power as effective as possible. It also served as the model for the ensuing future ordinances promulgated in the vernacular by the kings of the Crown of Aragon in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³⁶⁵

Peter's heir, Alfonso III, followed in his father's footsteps and published three additional ordinances, all written in Catalan. The three serve as addendums to Peter's original 1276(7) ordinance. In fact, Alfonso's first decree specifically states that "the ordinance of the lord King Peter's household be followed."³⁶⁶ Promulgated on March 1, 1286, the year Alfonso ascended to the throne, the ordinance also regulates the procedures for the king and his officers to administer justice and conduct royal business in the Aragonese city of Huesca. The king's requirement that city councilmen and judges meet every day with royal officials, that the majordomo and the court clerk (*escriva de racio*) account for the daily expenditures of the household, that every month these accounts be revised by the royal treasurer in the presence of the majordomo and the court clerk, that the treasurer not receive or distribute anything without the necessary paperwork, and

³⁶⁴ Carreras, "Redreç de la Reyal Casa," 97.

³⁶⁵ For example, see Jaume III of Majorca's *Leges Palatinae*, ed. by Joan Domenge i Mesquida (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) and Peter IV's *Ordinacions de la casa i cort de Pere el Cerimoniós*, ed. by Francisco M. Gimeno, Daniel Gozalbo i Josep, and Josep Trenchs (Valencia: Fonts històriques valencianes, 2009); also published as *Ordenacions reges per lo molt alt senyor en Pere terc rey d'Aragò sobre lo regiment de tots los oficials de la sua cort*, by Bofarull in CODIN, vol. 5.

³⁶⁶ ACA, r. 64 fol. 181v-2v; also published by Carreras, "Redreç de la Reyal Casa," (doc. III) 105: "Item que la ordinacio de la casa la qual feu lo senyor Rey en P. sia seguida."

that the treasurer record all transactions in the royal register figure among the most important petitions of the ordinance:

Item quells jutges cada mati oien plets en casa del senyor. Item que los conseyllers sien cada dia una vegada en conseyl en casa del senyor Rey. Item que cada dia redeem comte los officials de casa sobre la messio davant lo maiordom et ab lescriva de racio, e cada mes reta Comte lo despenser ho tresorer daquella messio et que hi sia lo maiordom el lescriva de racio. Item quell terorer no don res sens carta del senyor Rey. Item quell tresorer no reeba res sens carta del senyor Rey tro sia registrar en lo register del senyor Rey.

Also that judges hear cases every morning in the lord's chamber. Also that the [city] councilmen meet once a day in the lord's chamber. Also that every day royal officials present their expenses in the presence of the court clerk and the majordomo, and that every month the royal treasurer balance the household expenses in the presence of the majordomo and the court clerk. Also that the treasure not emit anything without a letter from the king. Also that the treasurer not receive anything without a receipt and it should be registered in the lord king's register.

Alfonse's second ordinance appeared one year later. It mandates treasurers and officials who collect royal taxes to keep meticulous records of royal incomes.³⁶⁷ The king also prohibits officials from holding more than one royal office simultaneously and places the *mester racional* under the jurisdiction of the bailiff general.³⁶⁸ As with Alfonse's other two ordinances, only the date of their redaction appears in Latin: "En Barcelona *V Idus marcii anno predicto*. Aquestes son les ordenations daval escrites que vol e mana el senor rey que sien observades" ([Drafted] In Barcelona on March 11 of the year previously stated. Written below are the commands that the lord king orders be observed).

The king's final household ordinance, promulgated in 1291, also contains orders directed at the royal officials in charge of keeping financial records in the king's court.³⁶⁹ The king mandates that Guillem Durfort and Arnau ça Bastida receive all of the royal incomes and place them in a trunk inside the royal chamber. He also orders two copies of keys for the trunk, which should be kept by Guillem Durfort and Arnau ça Bastida respectively. Furthermore, Alfonso

³⁶⁷ ACA, r. 7v fols. 93v-94r.

³⁶⁸ Instituted in 1283 by Peter III, the Mestre Racional was the highest financial office in the royal court, in charge of all the royal treasures and their lieutenants.

³⁶⁹ ACA, r. 73 fs. 102v-103r.

orders that three books be kept containing the king's income; one should be kept by Guillem Durfort, the other by Arnau çà Bastida, and a third by the king's scribe, Bertran Delsvall. In addition, only the treasurer with the permission of the king can remove money from the king's treasure trunk. Finally, all of the records should be registered and the receipts sealed by Bertran with the king's seal. None of these three individuals lacked training in Latin. As members of Barcelona's patriciate and high-ranking royal officials, Guillem Durfort and Arnau çà Bastida were surely fluent in Latin; and if not, they were surrounded by those who were. As a royal scribe, Bertran Delsvall surely read, wrote, and spoke Latin. Thus, even though practical concerns for the linguistic abilities of the recipients may have played a factor, they did not drive the king's decision to compose these texts in the vernacular. Symbolism instead more likely served as a greater motive for their redaction in the vernacular.

Alfonse's Codeswitching Practices

Royal orders, like all types of writing, in the vernacular decrease dramatically in the chancery of Alfonse III. The fact that Alfonse did not face large-scale noble rebellions or a full-fledged invasion from France certainly contributed to the lack of military orders in the vernacular among his surviving documentation. Alfonse's major campaigns, be it against the Aragonese Union, Jaume II of Majorca, or the Muslim ruler of Menorca, were well organized in advance and executed without much difficulty.

An attempt to emphasize a royal directive, nonetheless, appears to have motivated Alfonse's scribes to promulgate a few orders in Catalan besides the household ordinances examined above. For instance, Alfonse adopted Catalan when naming Arnau çà Bastida royal

treasurer.³⁷⁰ Along with the order of appointment, the king included a set of specific mandates for his treasurer regarding financial record keeping:

Narnau çà bastida sia tresorer del dels senyor Rey e reeba tots los diners quel Seynor Rey aia ne deïa aver de qual que part. On axi que totes les reebutdes que faria sien escrites en lo register de la cambra del Senyor Rey e en lo register de la escrivania; et no faça neguna data a nuyll hom sens albara del Senyor Rey ho descriua de racio.

Arnau çà Bastida is named treasurer of the lord king and receives all the money that the lord king has and will receive from all of his realms. All the income he receives should be recorded in the register of the chamber of the lord king and another in the register of the scriptorium [chancery]; and that he not release any money without a receipt from the lord king or the scribe of ratio.

As we can see, the treasurer was responsible for registering all royal incomes and providing receipts for all expenses. The format of the document indicates that it was an internal mandate, not an externally emitted letter. Yet, the internal nature of the order does not explain its composition in the vernacular. As I have noted throughout this study, internal documents in the royal chancery survive predominately in Latin, as do all notes in the registers. Instead, the low-prestige language offered the kings a useful vehicle to emphasize the importance of recordkeeping to their officials. Indeed, the crown's attempts to improve the governance of their realms through bureaucratic means like recordkeeping and the efficient collection of revenue surface in most of the few non-military orders and decrees promulgated in the vernacular by the thirteenth-century kings of the Crown of Aragon.

Most of Alfonse's orders in the romance, like the directives to Arnau çà Bastida, were produced by royal agents on behalf of the king, but not under his name; that is, they were second-hand orders. While approximately half of these documents were internal, the other half were sent to an outside recipient. For instance, in the closest thing to a military order emitted in the vernacular during Alfonse's reign, the king's agents published an embargo against Jaume II

³⁷⁰ ACA, r. 64 f. 190v.

of Majorca's territories in Catalan to emphasize its gravity when pronounced in public.³⁷¹ The opening line of the document, which begins in Catalan, indicates the oral and public nature of its delivery:

Ara oiats, per manament del Senyer Rey que nul hom estrany ne prevat no port ne aport te traça ne meta negunes mercadereis de la tierra del senyor Rey damontdit en la terra o en la senyoria que te en Jacme, avoncle seu, ne daquella terra o senyoria que ten en Jacme en la terra o en la senyoria del senyer Rey...mentra la casa quell dit en Jacme contra deu e dret e Iusticia en preiudici de la tierra del Senyoar Rey per tera ha messa duran.

Now listen, by order of the lord king, no foreigners can export merchandise from the land of the said lord king into the land or lordship of Jaume, his uncle, or import from the lordship and land of Jaume to the land or the lordship of the lord king...as long as the house of the said Jaume remains in violation of God, the law, and justice by defying the lands of the lord king.

Similarly to his household ordinances and the orders to his treasurer, declaring the embargo in the low-prestige code signaled the sternness of the king's order. Alfonse had recently completed the reconquest of Majorca begun by his father, Peter III, who sought retaliation for his brother's (Jaume II of Majorca) alliance with the French crusaders. It also offered Peter the opportunity to reincorporate Majorca into the Crown of Aragon. Unfortunately for Peter, he died shortly before the campaign's end, leaving Alfonse to complete the affair. After quickly capturing the island with his first-rate naval fleet, Alfonse sought to punish his uncle, harbored in his trans-Pyrenean possessions under the protection of the French king, by imposing an economic embargo against his lands.

³⁷¹ ACA, r. 70 f. 95v-96r.

Conclusion

The kings' interest in emphasizing the urgency of certain orders served as the greatest impetus for writing in the vernacular in the royal chancery. By forgoing established protocol and choosing to write these commands in the "marked" or less commonly used codes (romances) rather than the "unmarked" register (Latin), the kings underscored the magnitude of their requests. This type of codeswitching only took off in the royal chancery after the rebellious Catalan nobility introduced symbolic codeswitching as an instrument of power in their defiance letters. Influenced by the nobility's tactic, the kings of the Crown of Aragon began to apply it, albeit cautiously, in the governance of their realm.

Peter III's military instructions following the French invasion of 1285, which constitute the majority of extant orders in a romance language, exemplify the crown's adoption of codeswitching to consign a sense of emphasis and urgency onto their orders. Before the French army entered Catalonia, the king dispensed preparations for the imminent war to his subjects, as he and his predecessors had always done, in Latin. But an unexpectedly early incursion by the French army forced Peter to gather his host sooner than anticipated in the vernacular. Peter's pattern of symbolic codeswitching during the French invasion, in turn, helps us interpret why he composed other military orders in romance languages. In each of these cases, the king, confronted by an immediate threat, broke linguistic protocol and accentuated the importance of their military orders by redacting them in a low-prestige code. I have argued in this chapter that examining Peter's military orders also helps us understand the motivations that prompted the thirteenth-century kings of the Crown of Aragon to emit non-military orders in the vernacular. The contents of these non-military directives and the circumstances surrounding their production

suggest that royal scribes recorded them in the romance to accentuate their significance, similarly to their military orders, regardless if they also served a practical purpose.

Codeswitching offered the kings of the Crown of Aragon an easy and convenient means of emphasizing orders they sought to highlight. By doing so, the ambitious, albeit weak kings enhanced their administrative efficiency, improving how they exerted authority over their realms. They utilized this strategy cautiously, however, and only when deemed important enough to break the chancery's established protocol of writing in Latin. Language use, including codeswitching tactics, therefore represent a facet of the administrative reforms enacted by the crown to strengthen and centralize its authority.

Conclusion

Latin remained the dominant language of the Crown of Aragon's royal chancery throughout the entire Middle Ages. Yet, the kings' decision to bypass Latin and start writing in the romance languages in a limited basis during the thirteenth century signals an important moment in the evolution of these languages and the monarchy. It also reflects broader changes taking place in the late medieval world, specifically within the lands of the Crown of Aragon. While literary critics and philologists have explored the grammar of royal texts and its impact on their standardization, especially on Catalan during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, no one has systematically analyzed the kings' motivations to begin writing in the vernacular, the meaning of their codeswitching practices, and the implications and consequences of their decisions. My study aims to answer these questions and place them within their larger historical context.

A multi-disciplinary approach that combines historical methodologies with theoretical frameworks from linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and literary criticism to examine surviving royal and non-royal texts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries provides the best method to uncover the kings' motives for codeswitching. Sociolinguists, linguistic anthropologists, and literary critics offer historians a wide range of attractive theoretical frameworks with which to study communication in the widest sense of the term. Linguistic anthropological theory proves particularly useful when investigating the inferential applications of language use. Even though these theories were created essentially for oral exchanges, they

can be adapted to medieval texts. That is because medieval communication, even when conveyed by writing, was transmitted by speech. As a result, surviving medieval correspondence offers valuable clues into the motivations, expectations, and reactions of codeswitching without the luxury and convenience of experiencing the actual exchange.

Using this multidisciplinary approach, I conclude that a combination of practical and symbolic motives led the kings to begin writing in their realms' romance languages. The practical impulse to reach a larger, Latin-illiterate audience influenced all vernacular writing at some level during the Middle Ages, including within the royal chancery. In a few cases, practicality primarily drove the kings to compose documents in a romance language. Royal scribes, for example conceded recording debt recognitions in the vernacular at the request of small lenders in Valencia and Aragon. Obliging small lenders with receipts in their native language proved an easy and cost-free method of accommodating minor financiers in Aragon and Valencia, where vernacular writing had made more inroads in the public sphere than in Catalonia. Yet, the kings appropriated writing in the romance primarily and strategically as a symbolic instrument. In these cases, the switch from Latin to a vernacular language alone signaled a change in tone, usually denoting displeasure or urgency.

Defiance letters constitute the first instance in which the kings adopted vernacular writing for symbolic purposes. Beginning in the second half of the thirteenth century, the king and rebel nobles started composing defiance letters to each other in the romance to augment the impact of their antagonistic messages. Transmitting these declarations of war in the spoken, low-prestige register amplified their effect in two ways. First, it provided an unexpected break in protocol. By replacing the standard language of communication with a low-prestige code, the parties inflicted a blow in decorum alongside their declarations of war. Second, using the vernacular

allowed the nobles and the king to communicate their antagonistic messages clearly and evocatively to an audience that included individuals unlearned in Latin, including the kings and the nobles themselves. Both parties switched back to Latin once their conflict ended, signaling a return to normality. As using the vernacular to communicate antagonistic messages evolved, Latin acquired a new symbolic role in diplomatic communications between the crown and the rebels. Besides signaling an end to conflicts after mutual communications degenerated into the vernacular, Latin became a means by which the hostile parties indicated an interest in reconciliation.

Influenced by these antagonistic exchanges, the kings found a new symbolic use for codeswitching. James I and his immediate successors began to bypass Latin in favor of the romance when seeking to transmit the urgency of an order and/or emphasize its importance. By forgoing established protocol and choosing to write these commands in the “marked” or less commonly used codes (that is, the romances) rather than the “unmarked” register (Latin), the kings underscored the magnitude of their requests. Peter III’s (II of Catalonia) demands for aid following the French invasion of 1285 exemplify the crown’s adoption of codeswitching to consign a sense of emphasis and urgency onto their orders. Before the French army entered Catalonia, the king dispensed preparations for the imminent war to his subjects, as he and his predecessors had always done, in Latin. But an unexpectedly early incursion by the French army forced Peter to gather his host sooner than anticipated. When Peter ordered his subjects to meet him prepared for war after the French invaded, he switched from Latin to the vernacular to transmit the importance of his instructions as well as the urgency of the situation.

My findings and conclusions shed light on the relationship between language and power during a period when a series of institutions, ideas, and practices surfaced that transformed

European society and significantly altered the manner in which rulers governed. As in other realms throughout western Europe, the kings of the Crown of Aragon effectively and increasingly utilized writing and recordkeeping as weapons in their pursuit for and exercise of power. By 1250, precisely around the time that the kings of the Crown of Aragon began composing texts in the vernacular, writing had become one of the primary weapons in the royal arsenal. Every aspect of royal governance was documented. Countless writs in the surviving royal registers contain orders from the kings to their officials mandating that they keep written records of all transactions, financial, judicial, and administrative. In fact, the two most important developments concerning the kings' use of writing as a source of power in the Middle Ages occurred during the thirteenth century. First, a chancery independent of the royal court emerged fully formed by mid century. Charged with managing all of the king's correspondence, the chancery played a fundamental role in the exercise of royal power. The formation of a chancery in the Crown of Aragon parallels similar innovations in writing and recordkeeping in royal courts throughout Europe.³⁷² Second, the kings and their agents created a sophisticated system of registration. With access to Muslim paper mills in Xatíva after the conquest of Valencia in 1238 and armed with the institutional support of a formal chancery, royal scribes copied a large portion of the outgoing, and some incoming, correspondence of most interest to the kings.

The abundance of documentation copied into the registers provides an unrivaled fountain of information for historians of all stripes. Among its benefits, these records offer valuable clues into the modes of reception of texts within the royal chancery and throughout thirteenth-century Europe. We know that orality exerted tremendous influence at every level of textual production during this period. Scribes transcribed oral exchanges, which were read back to the person(s) or

³⁷² Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 71.

institution(s) commissioning the document, and finally recited aloud to its intended recipients. Royal texts thus maintained a strong interdependence with their oral performance. The most fertile area of research regarding the performance of texts surrounds the production of written vernaculars. Once again the registers provide us with a far more detailed trajectory of vernacular writing in the mechanisms of princely power during the high-to-late Middle Ages than we have for any other western European monarchy. In fact, most vernacular texts survive only as copies in the registers; they have not come down to us in their original parchment form.

A close reading of the surviving evidence in the registers reveals that symbolism primarily motivated the kings and their scribes to compose administrative texts in the romance. Royal scribes did not initiate these symbolic uses of codeswitching. Members of the high nobility adopted vernacular writing first to defy the king in their declarations of war, a practice likely influenced by a tradition of politically-driven troubadour poetry in Provençal (*sirventès*).³⁷³ The kings and their agents appreciated the effectiveness of this strategy and appropriated it from the nobles. They even modified the practice to highlight urgent messages during times of peril. This strategy of symbolic codeswitching worked only because the recipients of these texts understood its meaning. That is, they appreciated the shift in tone resulting from the codeswitch because of the royal chancery's otherwise strict Latinity.

In a minority of cases, however, practicality served as the primary, if not the sole, reason why royal scribes composed texts in the romance. The practical decision to bypass Latin in some limited cases coincides with broader changes taking place in the lands of the Crown of Aragon and throughout western Europe. As the vernacular languages evolved with increasingly standardized spelling, syntax, and grammar, they began to compete with Latin in the written

³⁷³ For more on *sirventès*, see above, 50-2.

realm. But these vernacular languages did not share the same prestige everywhere. In areas where a culture of writing penetrated the laity after this initial period of linguistic standardization, like the thirteenth-century kingdom of Aragon, the vernacular languages competed more earnestly with Latin as a language of public record. By the end of the century, nearly all public records in the realm of Aragon, as well as the areas under the lordship of Aragonese lords in the kingdom of Valencia, survive in the romance. In Catalonia, by contrast, where a culture of lay literacy preceded the initial standardization of Catalan, Latin remained the dominant language of public record. That does not mean that vernacular literature did not thrive in Catalonia. On the contrary, the demand for vernacular literature in Catalonia exceeded that of any other realm of the Crown of Aragon during the thirteenth century. But it did not infiltrate notarial documentation, that is, routine legal transactions (the public sphere), which remained in Latin.

The Catalan-dominant regions of the kingdom of Valencia offered a middle ground between Catalonia's linguistic conservatism and Aragon's embrace of vernacular writing in the public record. Latin remained the dominant language of record in most of Valencia, where Catalan migrants brought with them Catalan traditions and practices, including a dependence on Latin. But the lack of an established notarial monopoly over the office of public notary in the new, frontier realm allowed scribes in Valencia to experiment more freely with producing legal and administrative texts in the vernacular, especially in certain document types of particular importance to lay individuals, like financial and judicial records.

A common theme in the literature on the rise of vernacular languages, already mentioned above, is the secularization or laicization of literacy. The argument is well known: a rise in lay literacy created a demand for vernacular literature. It is largely right, as the demand by

Aragonese and Valencian laymen for records of their financial transactions and judicial cases demonstrate. But it is also not that clear cut. On the one hand, clerics created vernacular writing and forged a path for it out of the wilderness. On the other hand, they did so in large part to reach a lay audience that did not understand Latin. Furthermore, my evidence in the preceding chapters demonstrates that while the laicization of reading and writing contributed to the spread of vernacular writing, we must not fall into the trap of associating vernacular literature with the laity and Latin with the clergy. After all, it was laymen, not clerics, that guaranteed Catalonia's strong Latinity; it was the kings and their lay officials who enveloped royal authority with the language of high prestige.

The crown's political aspirations during this period epitomize the conflicts brewing between lay and ecclesiastical interests in society. With the intellectual guidance of lay jurists, the kings advocated sole jurisdiction over the *fides publica* in their realms, including the authentication of documents. James I and his successors attempted repeatedly to ban clerics from exercising the office of public notary. Even though they were not very successful—clerics continued to exercise the office of notary throughout the realms of the Crown of Aragon—their efforts were not utterly in vain. Gradually the crown shipped away at the power of the feudal nobility, including ecclesiastical institutions.

The story of codeswitching in the royal chancery, like that of writing and recordkeeping, forms part of a larger narrative about efforts to centralize, consolidate, and expand royal authority. Access to writing and recordkeeping proved an integral instrument in the crown's campaign to enforce its fragile authority. Indeed, the kings' attempts to increase its relatively weak hold over its subjects lay at the heart of the crown's codeswitching policies during this period. Most surviving cases of codeswitching in the royal chancery share a common

denominator: they served royal interests. The kings' recourse to vernacular writing chiefly as a diplomatic strategy when facing eminent danger, however, betrays their relative political weakness and financial struggles. If they had not faced these difficulties or had a stronger hold over their subjects either through political control or financial incentives, they would not have had to resort to codeswitching tactics to communicate with them more forcefully. In the few cases where practicality drove the royal scribes to compose a text in the romance, the codeswitch also served the interests of the crown.

While the use of the written word to consolidate power was a European-wide phenomenon in this period, political weakness did not serve as a universal trigger for codeswitching in the royal chanceries of western Christendom. That was certainly not the case in Castile, where the royal chancery adopted Castilian rapidly as a moderately high-prestige language during the course of the thirteenth century, able to compete with Latin. The picture is murkier elsewhere. In France, the French historian Serge Lusignan believes that the type of law adhered to in a locale influenced the language utilized by the inhabitants and royal officials in that area. Where Roman law took hold, like in Provence, Latin continued to serve as the primary choice of writing, while areas with stronger traditions of customary law proved more open to writing in French. In the Italian communes and city states, by contrast, Latin maintained a monopoly on the public record throughout the entire medieval period. Different dialects of Italian, most notably, Tuscan, flowered during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Yet, like in Catalonia, a class of literate laymen had forged a relationship to Latin before the emergence of vernacular writing. These literate laymen, in turn, adhered to a strict Latinity in the public sphere.

The evolution of vernacular writing in the medieval west, while possessing common features and trends, differed by locale. That is why it is crucial that we study and compare the peculiarities of vernacular writing throughout western Europe in the twelfth through fifteenth centuries, when some of these vernaculars obtained official status and codified rules. Language choice in the Crown of Aragon, a three-legged stool of sorts, with one leg firmly planted in the Iberian world, another in continental Europe, and a third in the Mediterranean, provides a particularly fertile ground to study the process by which institutions of power in Europe adopted vernacular writing as well as the relationship between this process and state building.

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Abbreviations:

Actes I: Actes del I Congrés d'Història del Notariat Català

Actes II: Actes del II Congrés d'Història del Notariat Català

AEM: Anuario de Estudios Medievales

BQH: Barcelona - quaderns d'història

BRAB: Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona

CODIN: Colección de documentos inéditos del archivo general de la corona de Aragón

CSIC: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas

ELLC: Estudis de llengua i literatura catalanes

EUC: Estudis Universtaris Catalans

IJSL: International Journal of the Sociology of Language

JE: Jaime I y su época. 10 Congreso de Historia de la Corona de Aragón

LL: Llengua & Literatura

MM: Miscel·lània de textos medievals

PP: Past and Present

RABC: Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona

RC: Revista de Catalunya

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