

According to Petkov, Cambiano's dialogue had two aims. First, it sought to inform the Venetian public about the institutional nature of the order, its financial organization, its role in capturing and ransoming slaves, the workings of land revenues, and the importance of nobility for the order, the definition of which was not always in tune with Venice's understanding. Second, it tried to provide Giustiniano Giustiniani, trusted man of the order and of Venice, with a guide about the Venetian-Hospitaller case, and therefore a toolkit for being a brilliant Hospitaller official within the Venetian diplomatic and political framework. Furthermore, the dialogue is rooted in a particular and complex phase of the order's institutional transformation following the loss of Rhodes (1522) and the move to Malta (1530). It was a time when the order was trying to construct a new identity and enhance its territorial stability, a key point emerging in Cambiano's conversation about the debate as to whether the order should focus its resources on Malta or on Tripoli. At stake was the need to assert a new role in the eyes of the world as the last outpost of Christendom, but also the pressing need to maintain centuries-old traditions while changing enough to ensure its continuing attraction to recruit new members.

The first part of the book includes short notes by Petkov about various exemplars of Cambiano's work held in different repositories, and transcription and translation criteria. The second part of the book includes a full transcription in the original language (Italian), while the third part is an English translation. This is followed by the bibliography and the index. Petkov's work sheds light on an unpublished and little-known source that adds another piece of the complex mosaic of the order's story and archival trail across Europe. This book is a toolkit through which its readers can better understand the history of the Order of Saint John, but it also has a wider appeal. This is because Cambiano's text offers intimate insight into sixteenth-century state formation processes, religious issues, and maritime affairs across the Mediterranean.

Valeria Vanesio, *University of Malta*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.361

Victory's Shadow: Conquest and Governance in Medieval Catalonia.

Thomas W. Barton.

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019. xviii + 412 pp. \$49.95.

In his first monograph, *Contested Treasure*, Thomas W. Barton examined relations between monarchy and aristocracy through the contest for jurisdiction over the Jewish communities of Tortosa. *Victory's Shadow* continues this examination, but instead of using Christian-Jewish relations as his prism, Barton looks through the Crown of Aragon's territorial expansion into the Ebro valley—namely, the Andalusí cities of Tortosa and Lleida (New Catalonia), and the kingdom of Valencia, between the

eleventh and fourteenth centuries. Together *Contested Treasure*, *Victory's Shadow*, and Barton's upcoming *From the Hands of Infidels: The Christianization of Islamic Landscapes in Europe* provide an in-depth study of the changes Catalonian government and society underwent as it conquered and integrated its Muslim frontier. Barton designed *Victory's Shadow* as a sort of prologue to contextualize his other monographs within Catalonia's administrative trends.

Aside from fulfilling its role in the trilogy, *Victory's Shadow* stands alone as an impressive political history. Barton persuasively argues that the count-kings of Barcelona expanded their federative principalities through a variety of political, cultural, and economic practices and institutions distinct for each region. This heterogeneity, moreover, gradually enhanced comital-royal authority, and altered the conqueror's society. These arguments build on and challenge the work of Robert Bartlett, who described medieval expansion as a more homogenous colonization process, often led by knights, clerics, and merchants, in which core kingdoms replicated themselves on Latin Christendom's frontiers.

Over eight thematic chapters, divided into three chronological parts, Barton illustrates that the Crown of Aragon's expansion did not follow a standard "blueprint" (7). As part 1 shows, the counts of Barcelona struggled in the eleventh century to compete with other Christian kingdoms, as well as their own nobles and castellans, for tribute (*parias*) and territory from the Upper Frontier of al-Andalus (*Thaghr al-'Aqsa*). The kings of Aragon were more successful, but by the 1130s, they too had overextended themselves. Only the unification of Aragon and Catalonia after the death of Alfonso I provided the resources, and quelled the competition, necessary for Ramon Berenguer IV to conquer Lleida and Tortosa in the mid-twelfth century.

Yet even with a unified kingdom, the count-kings could not assume complete control of their conquests, as Barton describes in part 2. Ramon Berenguer IV had to alienate much of the conquest to preconquest pledges, most notably the Templars, who aided in the acquisition of New Catalonia. He did manage to keep the choicest lordships, mainly in the urban districts, despite suits from influential nobles like the Montcadas. Nevertheless, these territories required time to become profitable, and his successors, Alfons I and Pere I, became increasingly short of money in their quests for legitimacy among Aragonese nobles and more land in northern Valencia and Languedoc. Consequently, the two count-kings loaned out or completely alienated most of their control in Tortosa. Ironically, at the same time, they espoused a heightened sense of sovereignty over rival lords—namely, the counts of Urgel who also had a controlling stake in Lleida.

Part 3 thus begins with Pere's son and heir, Jaume I, inheriting a severely depleted and impoverished patrimony. As the section progresses, though, three main factors lead to a change in the count-kings' fortunes. First, Jaume I's conquests of the Balearic Islands and Valencia allowed him to exchange lordships in the new kingdoms for older ones in New Catalonia. Second, the need to attract and retain peasants restricted

seignorial power, especially the *mals usos* (bad customs) that tied peasants to the land. Finally, boundary disputes between Aragon and Old Catalonia over New Catalonia led to the erosion of many customary laws that disadvantaged the monarchy. By the book's end, then, Jaume I and his successors, mainly Pere II and Jaume II, have gained direct rule over Lleida and Tortosa, though nobles retained power outside the cities.

Victory's Shadow has much to commend it for an upper-level history course and scholars interested in Catalonian society, lordship, or royal power. Barton does a masterful job interpreting a wide variety of published and unpublished charters, coins, court cases, and law codes from well-known archives, like the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, as well as less commonly utilized institutions in Lleida and Tortosa. Surprisingly, Barton does not discuss the foundation of those archives, which occurred under Jaume I. Indeed, Robert I. Burns, whose 1985 introductory volume to the *Diplomatarium of the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia* remains the standard English history of the Crown's archives, claimed, "An array of lawyers and scribes was more vital to [Jaume's] achievement than were the contingents of crossbowmen and knights" (9).

Barton does much to support Burns's assertion, particularly in the twelfth century. Charters of settlement, surveys by Bertran de Castellet and Ponç the Scribe, the *Usatges de Barcelona*, *Liber feudorum maior*, and other documents enhanced the count-kings' fiscal efficiency and accountability over their aristocracy and allowed them to maintain their conquests. Yet Barton does not trace how these initial "rudimentary and unsystematic" parchments evolved into one of Europe's best kept archival systems, a key factor in comital-royal authority from the thirteenth century onward (96). In other words, the Crown of Aragon's victory over New Catalonia might have cast an even longer shadow than Barton suggests.

Michael J. Sanders, *Fordham University*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.362

Life in a Time of Pestilence: The Great Castilian Plague of 1596–1601.

Ruth MacKay.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. xiv + 276 pp. \$39.99.

It is something to be writing this review in March 2020, as COVID-19 spiderwebs its way across the globe. Historians and journalists are dining out on op-eds and book reviews drawing comparisons with social and political responses to the Black Death and later plague cycles. We are enthusiastic about the opportunity to make our work immediately meaningful for the broad public. Hannah Marcus reminds us in the *New York Times* not to give in to xenophobia and fear mongering (*New York Times*, 1 March 2020) and Erin Maglaque takes us into the empty streets of Florence in 1630 in the *London Review of Books* (42.4, 20 February 2020). In these pieces we