

THE CATALAN-ARAGONESE EXPEDITION TO TOULOUSE AND THE SUBMISSION OF NICE AND FORCAQUIER (1175-1177): A BEFORE AND AN AFTER IN THE COURSE OF THE GREAT OCCITAN WAR

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ABSTRACT

The paper offers a historiographical revision of one of the less known episodes of the Great Occitan War: the expedition led by Alfonso the Cast in 1175 against the county of Toulouse. This action took place before a huge military campaign finished in 1177 with the submission of Niza and the county of Forcaquier, and it was a turning point in the Great Occitan War according its characteristics, duration and geographical extension (which was similar to the entity and duration of the campaigns that James I held in Mallorca and Valence in 13th century), as well as its territorial and politico-administrative incidence in the Crown of Aragon¹.

KEYWORDS

Great Occitan War, Alfonso the Cast, Crown of Aragon, Toulouse, Nice, Forcaquier.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Magnum Bellum Occitanum, Ildephonsus Castus, Corona Aragonum, Tolosa, Nicaea, Fourcaquier.

*Faray chanzo ans que veinha-l laig tems,
 pus en Tolsa nos n'anam tuit essem.*
*A Deu coman tot cant reman de zay:
 ploran m'en part, car las domnas am nems.*
*Tot lo país, de Salsas tro a Trems,
 salv Deus, e plus cel on midons estai.*
Ponç de la Guàrdia, cansó IV²

1. The Great Occitan War

By Great Occitan War I understand the conflict from 1112 to 1198 between the county seats of Barcelona and Toulouse for political and economic hegemony over some of the most prosperous territories and lordships of Languedoc and the coastal areas of Provence. This phrase, used in Catalan historiography since the 1960s,³ is not completely unknown in French historiography,⁴ which prefers however the name *Grande Guerre Méridionale*, coined by Charles Higounet in 1951, in an article that first recognised the historiographic entity of this war, and later spread by Pierre Bonnassie.⁵ With somewhat less success, French historiography has also used the terms *Guerre de Cent Ans Méridionale* and *Guerre de Cent Ans du XII^e siècle*.⁶

1. Used abbreviations: ACA, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón; ADBR: Archives Départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône; ADPO, Archives Départementales des Pyrénées-Orientales.

2. "I will do a song before the bad times arrive, as we are all on our way to the country of Toulouse. Those who stay here, I entrust you to God. I leave with tears in my eyes, because I love the ladies deeply. God save all the country [Catalonia], from Salses to Tremp, and especially the land where my lady lives." Frank, István. "Pons de la Guardia, troubadour catalan du XII^e siècle". *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 22 (1949): 296-297.

3. In a more restricted chronological sense, it was first used by Jordi Ventura: Ventura, Jordi. *Alfons el Cast. Barcelona: el primer comte rei*. Barcelona: Aedos, 1961: 201-205.

4. Lafont, Robert. *Trobar: XII^e, XIII^e siècles, soixante chansons de troubadours*. Montpellier: Université de Montpellier III, Centre d'études occitanes, 1972: 148 and 203. Cassard, Jean-Christophe. "L'affaire de paix et de foi vue de Bretagne Armorique. Quelques notes d'hérésologie virtuelle", *Religion et société urbaine au Moyen Âge: études offertes à Jean-Louis Biget par ses anciens élèves*, Patrick Boucheron, Jacques Chiffolleau, dirs. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2000: 160.

5. Higounet, Charles. "Un grand chapitre de l'histoire du XII^e siècle. La rivalité des maisons de Toulouse et de Barcelone pour la prépondérance méridionale", *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen âge, dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1951: 313-322. About « la Grande Guerre Méridionale », see also Abadal, Ramon d'. "À propos de la domination de la maison comtale de Barcelone sur le Midi français". *Annales du Midi*, 76 (1964): 315-346; Bonnassie, Pierre. "L'Occitanie un État manqué?". *L'Histoire*, 14 (1979): 31-40; Bonnassie, Pierre. "Le comté de Toulouse et le comté de Barcelone du début du IX^e au début du XIII^e siècle (801-1213): esquisse d'une histoire comparée", *Actes del Vuitè Col·loqui Internacional de llengua i literatura catalanes. Tolosa de Llenguadoc, 12-17 de setembre de 1988*. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1989: I, 41-43; Macé, Laurent. *Les comtes de Toulouse et leur entourage: XII^e-XIII^e siècles: rivalités, alliances et jeux de pouvoir*. Toulouse: Privat, 2003: 23, 98.

6. Débax, Hélène. *La féodalité languedocienne, XI^e-XII^e siècles. Serments, hommages et fiefs dans le Languedoc des Trencavel*. Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2003: 72.



From its origins, the Great Occitan War was a complex supra-regional conflict between the counts of Barcelona and kings of Aragon, and the Counts of Toulouse for a whole swathe of territory including sovereignty over the viscounties of Trencavel (Carcassonne, Razès, Agde and Béziers), the County of Melgueil (nowadays Mauguio) with its rights to mint coinage, the lordship of the city of Montpellier, and sovereignty over Provence Maritime and the accompanying heritage (the viscounties of Millau, Gévaudan and Carladez) and the county of Forcalquier.

The roots of the struggle dated back to the agreements of 1067-1071 under which the Counts of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer I and Almodis, acquired the counties of Carcassonne-Razès. This complex operation laid the foundations for the so-called Catalan expansion in Occitania and led to the rupture of the traditionally friendly relations between Toulouse and Barcelona.⁷

The marriage of the Count of Barcelona Ramon Berenguer III and Countess Douce, heiress to Provence Maritime and the viscounties of Millau, Gévaudan and Carladez, and the resulting incorporation of these territories into the domains of the House of Barcelona in 1112, sparked off the almost permanent war between Barcelona and Toulouse that lasted until 1198. This Catalan diplomatic success unleashed the wrath of Alphonse Jordan who, as Count of Saint-Gilles, claimed sovereignty over all historical Provence (Maritime Provence, the county of Forcalquier and the Marquisate or inland Provence). The 1125 treaty of division of Provence, that recognised his sovereignty over the lands west of the Durance, did not appease the aspirations of the Count of Toulouse to seize the coastal part of the county.⁸

From the start of the conflict, the Counts of Barcelona enjoyed the unconditional support of the viscounts of Narbonne and the Guilhems, lords of Montpellier, while the Count of Toulouse controlled the counts of Melgueil and the viscounts de Nîmes and had two important external allies: the powerful lineage of the Baux who, since the incorporation of maritime Provence into the county of Barcelona, had been struggling for their rights of succession over the county of Provence to be recognised; and the city of Genoa, in open war with Pisa and Barcelona for control over the Provençal coast since 1160. The Trencavels, Viscounts of Carcassonne-Razès and Agde-Béziers, and the Counts of Foix swung between submission to Toulouse and recognition of the sovereignty of Barcelona, depending on the circumstances and

7. Débax, Hélène. *La féodalité Languedocienne...*: 71. About the purchasing of Carcassonne-Razès, see: Cheyette, Fredric L. "The Sale of Carcassonne to the Counts of Barcelona (1067-1070) and the Rise of the Trencavels". *Speculum*, 63 (1988): 826-864; Débax, Hélène. *La féodalité Languedocienne...*: 58-71; Ammannati, Giulia. "Saint-Victor di Marsiglia e la sua espansione nell'area pirenaica. Tre lettere della seconda metà del sec. XI". *Studi Medievali*, 48 (2007): 3ª serie, fasc. I: 55-59; Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial ultrapirinèica de Barcelona i de la Corona d'Aragó: guerra, política i diplomàcia (1067-1213)", *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques de Catalunya i de la Corona catalanoaragonesa*, Manuel Riu, Maria Teresa Ferrer, dirs. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2009: 20-28.

8. Aurell, Martin. "L'expansion catalane en Provence...": 175-195; Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial...": 40-44.



the varying correlation of forces, in what Ramon d'Abadal and H el ene D ebax have called a selfish policy of equidistance.⁹

From the mid 12th century, the Great Occitan War spread and became more intense. In 1152, the marriage between Henry II Plantagenet and Eleanor of Poitou, cousin of Queen Petronilla and heiress of Aquitaine, set the bases for the alliance that Ramon Berenguer IV and Henry II Plantagenet sealed six years later with the marriage of their children, Eleanor and Richard the Lionheart.¹⁰ The Crown of Aragon and the Kingdom of England then began a long period of friendship and alliance that, with ups and downs, lasted until the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic.¹¹ Raymond V of Toulouse responded to the Anglo-Aragonese coalition in 1154 by sealing an alliance with the House of Capet through his marriage to Constance, sister to Louis VII of France.¹² Then, as an extension of the Great Occitan War, a forty-year war (from 1156 to 1196) began between the Plantagenet and the Counts of Toulouse and their respective allies in two different scenarios: Aquitaine and Limousin.¹³ If that were not enough, from 1143, Genoa entered into the scene, initially privateering against Provenal and Catalan interests and signing treaties of alliance in 1171 and 1174 with Toulouse to make war against Barcelona with the aim of taking over the Provenal littoral.¹⁴

Thus, this second phase of the Great Occitan War saw two large blocks of alliances. On one hand, there was the Crown of Aragon and Angevin Empire and on the other, the County of Toulouse, France, the Republic of Genoa and the Empire —after the fall of Milan in 1162 Frederick Barbarossa intervened in Provence and, from 1174 onwards, supported the Baux.¹⁵

The end of the Great Occitan War came in the context of the new order that arose from the Treaty of Louviers (14th July 1196) under which Phillip II of France and Richard I of England divided their respective spheres of expansion, leaving the domains of the Count of Toulouse under French influence.¹⁶

9. Abadal, Ramon d'. "La dominaci  de la casa comtal de Barcelona sobre el Migdia de Frana", *Dels visigots als catalans*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1970: II, 301; D ebax, H el ene. *La f eodalit  languedocienne...*: 86-97; Benito, Pere. "L'expansi  territorial...": 1-I, 57.

10. Warren, Wilfred Lewis. *Henry II*. New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1973: 85; Aurell, Martin. *L'Empire des Plantagen t. 1154-1224*. Paris: Perrin, 2003: 25-27.

11. Soldevila, Ferran. *Ramon Berenguer IV el Sant*. Barcelona: Barcino, 1955: 14.

12. D ebax, H el ene. "Strat gies matrimoniales des comtes de Toulouse (850-1270)". *Annales du Midi*, 182 (1988): 142-143; Mac , Laurent. *Les comtes de Toulouse...*: 29.

13. Benjamin, Richard. "A Forty Years War". *Historical Research*, 61 (1988): 270; Martindale, Jane. "An Unfinished Business. Angevin Politics and the Siege of Toulouse, 1159". *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 23 (2000): 115-154; Benito, Pere. "L'expansi  territorial...": 58-59.

14. Pistorino, Geo. "Genova e l'Occitania nel secolo XII", *Attes du 1er Congr s historique Provence-Ligurie. 2-5 octobre 1964*. Aix-Marseille: Federation Historique de Provence-Institut International d' tudes Ligures, 1966: 112-116; Benito, Pere. "L'expansi  territorial...": 65-72.

15. Benito, Pere. "L'expansi  territorial...": 60-62, 79-80.

16. Alvara, Mart n. *El Jueves de Muret: 12 de Septiembre de 1213*. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2002: 86-87.



The basis for the alliance between Toulouse and Barcelona that put an end to almost 90 years of armed confrontation were set out at the conference in Perpignan in February 1198 between Raymond VI of Toulouse, Count Bernard IV of Comminges and Peter the Catholic.¹⁷ According to Higounet, the wedding, held in 1204, of Peter the Catholic to Marie of Montpellier, who had married Bernard IV of Comminges two months before, was the main question agreed at this interview.¹⁸ On the other hand, an agreement signed in September 1198 between the city of Genoa and Peter the Catholic ended the confrontation between the Ligurian republic and Barcelona for hegemony over the Occitan coast.¹⁹ In another meeting in Perpignan in November 1202,²⁰ Raymond VI of Toulouse, widower of Joan of England, promised to marry the young Eleanor, Peter the Catholic's sister,²¹ an alliance that the historians of the Albigensian Crusade would not hesitate to present as a stratagem by the Count of Toulouse to place his domains under the protection of the King of Aragon.²²

Up to here is a necessarily brief introduction to a long and complex conflict, which, beyond the strict limits of historiography about Catalan expansion in Occitania²³ and southern French historiography,²⁴ still lacks general recognition in proportion to the historical importance of the war. The lack of an overall perspective of the conflict, a consequence of the fragmented Occitan historiography, and the dominant tendency to structure the discourse on the construction of the kingdom of France around the concentric process of unification led by the Capets, explains why, unlike the Hundred Years' War, the *Grande Guerre Méridionale* has yet to find its place in the general political histories of France.²⁵

17. ADPO Serie B, 8.

18. Higounet, Charles. *Le comté de Comminges. De ses origines à son annexion à la couronne*. Toulouse: Private, 1949: 79-82 and 85.

19. *I Libri Iurium della Repubblica di Genova*. Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, 1992-2002: I/2, 71-74 (doc. No. 299); Riu, Manuel; Ferrer, Maria Teresa. *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques...*: I/1, 449-452 (doc. No. 140); Pistarino, Geo. "Genova e l'Occitania nel secolo XII"...: 129; Ferrer, Maria Teresa. "Les relations del comtat de Barcelona i de la Corona catalanoaragonesa amb els estats italians en els segles XI-XII", *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques...*: I/1, 220-223.

20. Laborie, Florent. *Les itinéraires du roi Pierre II d'Aragon (1196-1213): tentative d'approche cartographique. Mémoire de maîtrise*, Laurent Macé, dir. Toulouse: Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 2005: I, 63-64.

21. According to Guilhem of Puylorens, in Perpignan, the widowed count Raimon VI of Toulouse agreed to marry Eleanor, Peter the Catholic's sister. As the princess was still young, the marriage did not take place until January 1204 (Devic, Claude; Vaissete, Joseph. *Histoire Générale de Languedoc*. Toulouse: Privat, 1872-1904: VI, 190).

22. Aurell, Martin. *Les noces du comte. Mariage et pouvoir en Catalogne (785-1213)*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1995: 385.

23. For the historiography of the expansion, see: Aurell, Martin. "Autour d'un débat historiographique: l'expansion catalane dans les pays de langue d'oc au Moyen Âge", *Montpellier, la Couronne d'Aragon et les pays de langue d'Oc (1204-1349). Actes du XII^e Congrès d'histoire de la Couronne d'Aragon. Montpellier, 26-29 septembre 1985*. Montpellier: Société Archéologique de Montpellier, 1987: 9-41.

24. See the bibliography cited in the footnote 4.

25. See, for example: *Histoire de la France politique, Le Moyen Age: le roi, l'Église, les grands, le peuple, 481-1514*, Philippe Contamine, ed. Paris: Seuil, 2002: I.



The aim of my contribution is not so much to rectify this lack, as to draw attention to the importance for the development of this conflict of a little-known episode: the expedition that Alfonso the Chaste personally led against the capital of the County of Toulouse in 1175. This event (the prelude to a wider military campaign that ended in 1177 with the incorporation of Nice and the county of Forcauquier) was a turning point in the course of the Great Occitan War and, by extension, of the expansion of the Crown of Aragon beyond the Pyrenees, both for its characteristics, duration and geographic scope (of a size and duration similar to the James I's campaigns in Majorca and Valencia) and its territorial and political-administrative consequences inside the Crown of Aragon. Despite its importance, the Occitan campaign of 1175-1177 has remained practically unnoticed by the historiography for two fundamental reasons: one of a heuristic nature (the shortage and dispersion of sources) and another historiographic, the lack of an overall perspective of the course of the Great Occitan War mentioned above.

2. The Catalan-Aragonese expedition against Toulouse

The Catalan-Aragonese military expedition against Toulouse in 1175 is, in fact, one of the darkest episodes of the Great Occitan War due to the scarcity of sources, the difficulties of coupling the information from the narrative sources with the available documentary sources and the problems of dating documents from the Occitan area, especially the uncertainties about the style of counting the year of the Incarnation used by the authors.²⁶ This latter problem is not, as it might seem, a scholarly or trivial question as it has a direct effect on the reconstruction of the sequence of events and, thus, on their interpretation.²⁷

The three versions of the *Gesta Comitum Barchinonensium* mention a military expedition by Alfonso the Chaste that, on its way to meet the king of England, camped near Toulouse and caused widespread damage within the frontiers of the enemy county.²⁸

26. The so-called Florentine style, mainly used in Catalan documents dated by the year of the Incarnation prior to 1349, coexists with the Pisan style, widespread in the Occitan area: Garrigues, Damien. "Les styles du commencement de l'année dans le Midi. L'emploi de l'année pisane en pays toulousain et en Languedoc". *Annales du Midi*, 53 (1941): 237-270 and 337-362; Higounet, Charles. "Le style pisan. Son emploi. Sa diffusion géographique". *Le Moyen Âge*, 58 (1952): 31-42; Rouillan-Castex, Sylvie. "De nouvelles datations languedociennes en style pisan". *Annales du Midi*, 81 (1969): 313-319.

27. The uncertainty about the dating systems and styles used by the scribes, patent in the set of documents that make up the operation to purchase Carcassonne and Rasès (Cheyette, Fredric L. "The Sale of Carcassonne...": 826-864; Débax, Hélène. *La féodalité languedocienne...*: 58-71), generally affects the documents produced in the Occitan area during the Great Occitan War (Benito, Pere. *L'expansió territorial...*: 21, 66).

28. *Cum Raimundo iam dicto comite Tolose quamplures seditiones semper dum visit habuit; et cum magnis exercitibus ante Tolosam hospitatus est, et multa ibi devastavit, transiens potenter per fines illos dum ad visendum regem Anglie perrexit, et ipse Raimundus comes nunquam ausus fuit per totam terram suam illum expugnare. Gesta comitum Barchinonensium*, eds. Lluís Barrau, Jaime Massó. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1925: 13-14;



The identification of this episode in the sequence of events known about the Great Occitan War is problematic. Following Zurita, Devic and Vaissete suggested that the meeting between Alfonso and the English king would have occurred in 1181.²⁹ After comparing the different versions of the *Gesta Comitum*, Martí de Riquer rejected this hypothesis and proposed an alternative meeting in Najac, in Rouergue, in April 1185 between Alfonso the Chaste and Richard the Lionheart. According to Riquer, this gathering was where the decision was adopted to launch a campaign against Toulouse, which Richard carried out in early 1186.³⁰ Recently, in his edition of the Catalan version of the *Gesta*, Stefano Cingolani placed the campaign against Toulouse between the end of 1182 and beginning of 1183.³¹

In any case, we can accept as plausible a wide dating between 1180 and early 1186, a period when Alfonso the Chaste met the king of England or one of his sons, offered them help and intervened militarily in Aquitaine on at least three occasions. In 1181, he offered Henry II Plantagenet and his sons aid in their fight against the rebel Aquitanian nobility. Alfonso the Chaste and Viscountess of Narbonne met Prince Richard in Perigueux and, at the end of June, they joined forces to besiege the castle of Saint-Front. Shortly after, at the end of 1182, there was a split between the three Angevin princes. Henry the Young and Geoffrey Duke of Brittany allied with the two counts of Angoulême, the Viscount of Limoges and the Viscount of Turenna against their brother, Richard Duke of Aquitaine. Henry II of England went to Limoges to make peace between his sons. However, Henry the Young rebelled with the backing of the Count of Toulouse, the Duke of Burgundy and King Phillip Augustus of France. To punish him, the English king again requested the help of Alfonso the Chaste and other allied princes who aided him in the siege of the Limoges, which surrendered on 24th June, and the castle of Hautefort, that capitulated on 1st July.³² Finally, in April 1185 or 1186,³³ King Alfonso and Count Richard of Poitou met in Najac, in Rouergue, and signed an alliance against Toulouse. They both agreed to gather 200 armed knights to attack Raymond V. Count Richard renounced all his rights and pretensions over the domains of Roger and his brother Trecavel in favour of the king of Aragon and promised to return various castles held by the

Les "*Gesta Comitum Barchinonensium*" (versió primitiva), la "*Brevis historia*" i altres textos de Ripoll, Stefano Cingolani, ed. València: Universitat de València, 2012: XIII, 7, 147.

29. Devic, Claude; Vaissette, Joseph. *Histoire Générale de Languedoc...*: VI, 94; Zurita, Jerónimo. *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*. Zaragoza: Diego Dormer, 1669: I, lib. II, cap. XXXIX, f. 84r.

30. Riquer, Martín de. "En torno a Arondeta de ton chantar m'azir". *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 22 (1949): 218-228.

31. *Gestes dels Comtes de Barcelona i Reis d'Aragó*, Stefano Cingolani, ed. València: Universitat de València, 2008: 120.

32. Devic, Claude; Vaissette, Joseph. *Histoire Générale de Languedoc...*: VI, 99-104; Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial ultrapirinenca...": 88. In April 1183, Alfonso I signed a document recognising the debt with the royal bailley in Perpignan, Bernat Sanç, in Béziers, "quando ego tendebam ad colloquium regis Anglie" (ACA. Cancillería, Alfonso I, perg. n° 340).

33. According to Benjamin, Richard. "A Forty Years War". *Historical Research*, 61 (1988): 279.



kings of Castile and Navarre. With the support of the Catalan-Aragonese troops, Richard invaded the lands of Albigeois and Agenois and seized numerous castles.³⁴

It is more problematic to link the episode narrated in the *Gesta Comitum* with the expedition the Alfonso the Chaste launched against Toulouse in September 1175, as on that occasion, as we shall see, there was no prior meeting or collaboration with the English king. The existence of this military campaign was first suggested by Charles Higounet,³⁵ but the merit of having proved the hypothesis of this French historian corresponds to Agustí Altisent, who drew up a reliable proposal for dating from the scarce documentary sources that refer to it.³⁶

According to Altisent, during the spring or summer of 1175, preparations were made for a large military expedition of Catalans and Aragonese and led personally by King Alfonso the Chaste. This set off at the end of September or the first days of October "towards Toulouse" (*apud Tolosam*).³⁷ In October 1175, the royal army was in Savès, in Comenge, when Alfonso agreed to cede the fief over the Arán Valley to Count Centule III of Bigorre and to this wife, Mathilde of Baux, widow of the Viscount Peter II of Béarn. In exchange for this concession, the Count of Bigorre and his successors committed themselves to pay homage to the king of Aragon for their domains.³⁸ Altisent's interpretation of this pact is difficult to refute; on the way to Toulouse at the head of his army, Alfonso procured an ally in his rearguard and turned the county of Bigorre into a kind of defensive march against Raymond V.³⁹

There is an undeniable link between the military expedition of 1175 *apud Tolosam* by Alfonso the Chaste and the aggressive military alliance that Count Raymond V had signed with the Republic of Genoa in 1174 with the purpose of taking over the

34. ACA. Cancillería, Alfonso I, perg. n° 387; Riu, Manuel; Ferrer, Maria Teresa. *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques...*: I-I, 417-418, doc. No. 121. For the context and contents of the treaty, see Devic, Fredic; Vaissete, Joseph. *Histoire Générale de Languedoc...*: VI, 114; Benjamin, Richard. "A Forty Years War...": 277-285.

35. Higounet, Charles. *Le comté de Comminges...*: 175-178.

36. Altisent, Agustí. "Poblet, Bernat d'Anglesola i dues expedicions militars d'Alfons el Cast", *Miscellanea Populetana*. Poblet: Abadia de Poblet, 1966: 175-178. Altisent, Agustí. "À propos de l'expédition d'Alphonse le Chaste à Toulouse en 1175". *Annales du Midi*, 79 (1967): 429-436.

37. Altisent, Agustí. "À propos de l'expédition...": 430, cites the wills of Guerau, Pere Rocaverd's father, *volens ire in exercitu Tolose cum rege Aragonensis*, on the 6th of September 1175 (ACA. Cancillería, Alfonso I, perg. n° 184), and Bernat d'Anglesola, who on the 24th of September, *mandato regis, domini mei*, prepared to follow him *in exercitum ipsius, apud Tolosam* (Santacana, Jaime. *El monasterio de Poblet (1151-1181)*. Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1974: 617, doc. No. 159), as well as a later document, April 1180, in which the same Bernat d'Anglesola acknowledged having received two mules *in exercitu Tolose* from the monks of Poblet. To these, we must add the will of Hug, Viscount of Bas, *volens pergere in hoste ac persequi inimicos domini nostri regis*, written on the 28th of September of the same year (Montsalvatje, Francisco. *Noticias Históricas*. Olot: Imprenta de L. Bonet, 1889-1919: XI, 503-505, doc. No. 560).

38. Ravier, Xavier. *Le cartulaire de Bigorre: XI^e-XIII^e siècle*. Paris: Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 2005: 45-46, doc. No. 26; *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques...*: I-1, 377-378, doc. No. 92. About the scope of this enfeoffment, see: Reglá, Joan. *Francia, la Corona de Aragón y la frontera pirenaica. La lucha por el Valle de Arán (siglos XIII-XIV)*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1951: I, 38 and II, 206, doc. No. 120.

39. Altisent, Agustí. "À propos de l'expédition...": 431-432.



County of Provence.⁴⁰ However, it is probable that the decision to attack Toulouse in September 1175 responded to more direct and immediate reasons. The Second Chronicle of Béziers contains the news from some old annals from Toulouse according to which, in September 1176, the count of Toulouse led his army to tallar (lay waste) the city of Montpellier. This episode fits badly into the context after the Treaty of Jarnègues in April 1176. In contrast, it would have been coherent at two previous moments. The first of these was June 1172, when Raymond V, with the support of the Genoese fleet, besieged the city of Montpellier by land and sea, forcing Guilhem VII of Montpellier to recognise him as Count of Melgueil and pay homage to him for the profits he obtained from the coinage of Melgueil.⁴¹

The second possibility is September 1175.⁴² If, after the death of Guilhem VII in 1172 and with the support of Genoa under the treaty of 1174, Raymond V again led his army towards Montpellier to besiege the city and obtain the vassalage for the fief of Melgueil for his successor, Guilhem VIII, Alfonso the Chaste's expedition *apud Tolosam* would be the reply to this act.

If Montpellier was again the spark that revived the discord between Toulouse and Barcelona, what were Alfonso's reasons for leading his army against the former? Was it to besiege the capital of the county until it fell or as a show of force to oblige Raymond V to negotiate a lasting peace and thus to distance him from the Genoese alliance and his interests over Melgueil and Montpellier? The first objective, conquering the city and its county, was little short of a chimera, bearing in mind the balance of forces between the two sides during the second phase of the Great Occitan War. In view of later events, it seems more reasonable that Alfonso was pursuing the second aim, in other words, to create the conditions required for a new scenario of peace and stability in the region.

Alfonso's plans would also include attacking the domains of the Viscount Roger II Trencavel, Raymond V's ally, as punishment for his betrayal. Roger Trencavel's active participation on the side of the Count Raymond V of Toulouse against Alfonso is fully illustrated by both the homages various nobles of the region paid to him between 1173 y 1175⁴³ and by the fortification of his domains from Carcassès and Minervoais after July 1174/1175.⁴⁴ This support may have been decisive for holding back the advance of the royal army if we take into account that the forces of Toulouse had gone to Montpellier.

Regarding the course of events, the documentary sources only show that between the end of October and early December 1175, the royal army had travelled between

40. *I Libri Iurium della Repubblica di Genova*: I/2, 231-244, docs. 362-363; Pistarino, Geo. "Genova e l'Occitania nel secolo XII": 114-116; Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial ultrapirinenca...": 70-72.

41. Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial ultrapirinenca...": 66-67.

42. "El An. M C LXXVI, v dias a la issida de setembre, anec la ost de Tolosa, am lo comte, talar Monpeslier". ("Seconde chronique". *Bulletin de la Société archéologique de Béziers*, 3 [1839]: 85).

43. Dovetto, Joseph. *Cartulaire des Trencavel. Analyse détaillée des 617 actes (957-1214)*. Carcassonne: Centre de recherches et d'information historiques des conférenciers de la Cité, 1997: 199-200.

44. Mahul, Alphonse. *Cartulaire et archives des communes de l'ancien diocèse et de l'arrondissement administratif de Carcassonne*. Paris: Didron, 1857-1882: V, 277.



Comminges and Limoux, where the king signed a document, writing according to the style and forms of the Aragonese chancellery, that confirms the Aragonese participation in his army.⁴⁵

3. The Treaty of Tarascon (February 1176)

Between December 1175 and February 1176, the date of the Treaty of Tarascon between Alfonso the Chaste and Raymond V of Toulouse, we lose track of the royal army in Languedoc. A document dated in Perpignan in November in the year 1174 of the Incarnation, which states that King Alfonso came from Aragon to meet the Count of Toulouse,⁴⁶ would be the key for interpreting the documentary silence about the campaign if, instead of a Pisan (1173) or Florentine (1174) dating, we suppose it to have been written in November 1175 in the modern style. The meeting the document refers to would be the summit held in Mézous, near Montpellier, at which Count Raymond V of Toulouse swore an oath of protection to Guilhem VIII of Montpellier, before Alfonso the Chaste, the Archbishop of Narbonne, the Bishop of Maguelone and the Abbot of Aniane, among other relevant figures.⁴⁷ According to Devic and Vaissete, under pressure from the king of England and behind the backs of the Genoese, at this summit the preparations and conditions were decided for the signing of a stable peace between Toulouse and Barcelona that put a definitive end to the alliance between Toulouse and Genoa of April 1174 and thus, the aspirations of that naval power to win control of the Provençal coast.⁴⁸

There is no doubt that the peace agreed on 18th April 1176 was not the result of improvisation. In a scenario chosen for its symbolism, the island in the Rhône called Jarnègues, in the lower part of the town of Tarascon, and before a large political, noble and ecclesiastic representation from Catalonia, Aragon and Provence, King Alfonso and Count Raymond V of Toulouse swore an agreement reached previously thanks to the good offices of the Templar master Hugues Geoffroi, who had been helped by Ramon de Montcada, son of the deceased Great Seneschal, Guiu Guerrejat of Montpellier and Arnau de Vilademuls, on the Aragonese king's side, and the Viscountess Ermengarde of Narbonne, Ismidon of Paute and constable Guilhem of Sabran, for the count of Toulouse.

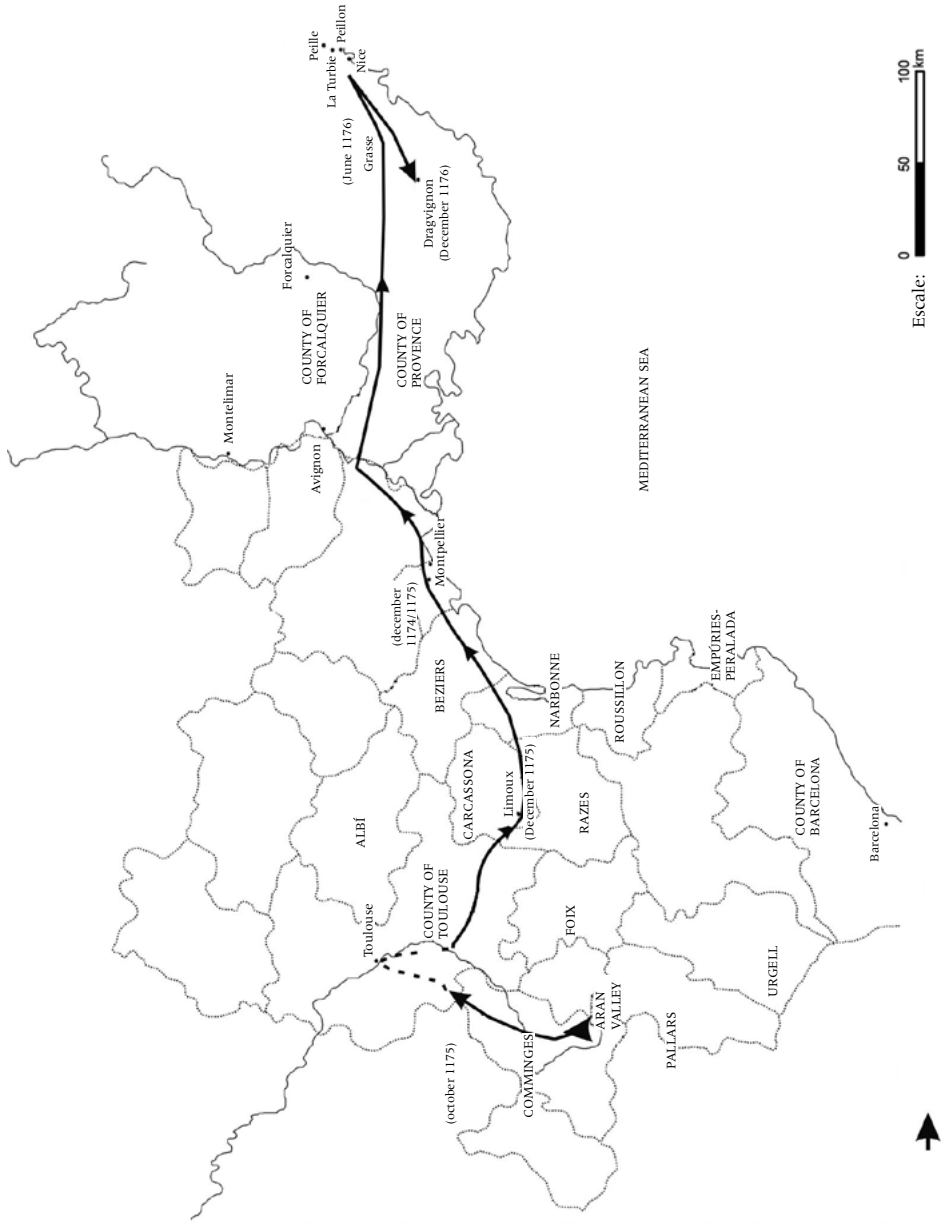
45. ACA. Cancillería, Alfonso I, perg. n° 187.

46. In November 1174, in Perpignan, Alfonso II ceded the hospital of Larsac situated in the viscounty of Millau (Rouergue) to the priory of Santa Maria de Cassià (Béziers): "*Actum est hoc apud Perpinianum, mense novembris, anno Dominice Incarnationis MCLXXIII, cum scilicet dominus rex, veniens de partibus Aragonie, ad colloquium comitis Raimundi tendebat*" (Devic Claude; Vaissete, Joseph. *Histoire Générale de Languedoc...*: VIII, cols. 286-287, doc. No. 13.-XIII, II).

47. Archives Municipales de Montpellier. AA 1. *Liber instrumentorum memorialium*, f. 35v; *Liber instrumentorum memorialium*, ed. Alexandre Germain. Montpellier : Société archéologique de Montpellier « Jean Martel », 1884-1886: 153-154, doc. No. 81.

48. Devic, Claude; Vaissete, Joseph. *Histoire Générale de Languedoc...*: VI, 62.





MAPE 1: CAMPAIGN ITINERARY OF ALPHONSE THE CHASTE IN LANGUEDOC AND PROVENCE (1175/1176)



Under this treaty,⁴⁹ Raymond V renounced all the rights that he could claim over the County of Provence and the Viscounties of Millau, Gévaudan and Carladéz. In exchange, Alfonso II agreed to compensate him with 3,100 silver marks, and to do so, pawned the castle of Albaron—in Raymond V's power since before 1167—and the islands of the Camargue and Loubières in front of Tarascon.⁵⁰

In second place, the parties confirmed and ratified the 1125 division of Provence between Ramon Berenguer III and Alphonse Jordan, except that the King and the Count reciprocally swore to maintain the status quo in the territories under dispute, namely, the Viscounty of Gévaudan, held by the former, and the County of Melgueil and the castle of Albaron, under the control of the latter, so that each would possess what he already had and, in the future, any differences over these territories would be solved peacefully by arbitration and written agreements.

In summary Alfonso tacitly renounced all rights over Languedoc derived from its purchase by Ramon Berenguer I, in other words, the domains of the Trencavels (Carcassonne, Razès, Béziers, Agde and Nîmes) and the County of Melgueil, effectively under the sovereignty of Toulouse since 1172,⁵¹ and, in contrast, he strengthened his domain over the County of Provence and the Viscounties of Millau, Carladéz and Gévaudan.

4. The submission of Nice and Forcauquier (1176-1177)

Apparently, the expedition of autumn 1175 had reached its objectives; however, after the signing of the peace treaty in Tarascon in February 1176, the royal army did not return to the Crown's territories south of the Pyrenees. Alfonso II had decided to make the most out of that costly military campaign and, together with his brothers, Ramon Berenguer and Sanç, and the great

49. Riu, Manuel; Ferrer, Maria Teresa. *Tractats i negociacions...*: 1-I, 378-380, doc. No. 93. Commented by Devic, Claude; Vaissete, Joseph. *Histoire Générale de Languedoc...*: VI, 68 and VII, 10-11; Ventura, Jordi. *Alfons el Cast...*: 167-168; Abadal, Ramon d'. "La dominació de la casa comtal de Barcelona...": 302.

50. Territories that Bourrilly and Busquet suggest were in the power of Raymond V; Bourrilly, Victor-Louis; Busquet, Raoul. *La Provence au Moyen Age. Histoire Politique. L'Église. Les Institutions (1112-1481)*. Marseille: Barlatier, 1924: 25.

51. The Treaty of Tarascon annulled Bertran Pelet's donation of the County of Melgueil to the King of Aragon. In September 1176 (1175 in the Pisan style), shortly before her death, Ermessende of Melgueil bequeathed the county to her husband Raymond V and his sons, confirming the donation on the 12th of December 1172 (1171 in the Pisan style). (Devic, Claude; Vaissete, Joseph. *Histoire Générale de Languedoc...*: VI, 69). Although Melgueil remained under the effective control of Toulouse between 1172 and 1211 (Germain, Alexandre. *Étude historique sur les comtés de Maguelone, de Substantion et de Melgueil*. Montpellier: Société archéologique de Montpellier, 1854: 62-63), the dispute over this territory, one of the main battlegrounds in the Great Occitan War between Toulouse and Barcelona, continued throughout the 1180s.



master of the Temple Hugues Geoffroi, he headed for eastern Provence, with the aim of taking Nice, the rebel city where Count Ramon Berenguer III of Provence had been killed in 1166.⁵²

To ensure the success of the operation, in April of that year, he signed an alliance with Manfredo, Marquis of Busca, to whom he granted the fief over Drola (a valley of Aosta), on the edge of Lombardy,⁵³ and gathered the support of some places that were Nice's enemies, including Peille, Peillon and Turbie.⁵⁴ In June 1176, he confirmed the consular privileges of Grasse and the rights of the Bishop of Antibes, his great ally in the fight against the lords of that town.⁵⁵ From there, he rode at the head of his forces to the mouth of the Var, camping barely two miles from the city walls. This was where the consuls of Nice came with a proposal for an agreement that essentially meant recognising the sovereignty of the Counts of Provence over the city in exchange for confirming the consular institutions of Nice.

The result was far from being the treaty between equals that the historiography of Nice has wished to portray this agreement of 1176 as.⁵⁶ With the definition of *querimonias*, the king fined the consuls 25,000 Genoese *solidi* and the obligation to pay him another 10,000 *solidi* a year as *alberga*. Moreover, to avoid future revolts, the city militia was integrated into the royal forces to serve the Catalan-Aragonese interests in Provence, the city had to contribute 100 horsemen to the cavalry raid that the king undertook from the Var to the Siagne, and 50 men to his cavalcade to the Rhône.⁵⁷ The document was ratified by the king's two brothers, the Catalan and Aragonese nobles who accompanied them, the masters of the Temple and the Hospital of Nice, the city's consuls and the Lords of Castellane and Grasse, two towns that depended economically on both trade with Nice and the Italian cities and with Sant-Honorat de Lérins, a friendly monastery protected by the counts of Barcelona, to which Jordi Ventura attributes an decisive influence in the signing of this agreement.⁵⁸

Once Nice had been integrated into the Crown and with the royal army still in Provence, Alfonso II considered it the ideal moment to annex the County of

52. Pistarino, Geo. "Genova e l'Occitania nel secolo XII": 104-111; Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial ultrapiirinca...": 62.

53. ACA. Cancillería, *Liber Feudorum Maior*, f. 87d-88a. Riu, Manuel; Ferrer, Maria Teresa. *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques...*: 1-I, 380-381, doc. No. 94. Zurita, Jerónimo. *Anales de la historia...*: I, lib. II, cap. 34.

54. Who were later compensated with the confirmation of their consular institutions. Gioffredo, Pietro. *Storia delle Alpi Marittime, Monumenta Historiae Patriae*. Turin: Augusta Taurinorum, 1839: 26, col. 454.

55. ADBR, Trésor de chartes des comtes de Provence, B 288, YYY; Aurell, Martin. "L'expansion catalane en Provence...": 181.

56. Jean-Pierre Papon. *Histoire Générale de Provence*. Paris: Moutard, 1778: IV, II, 252-253. Toselli, Jean Baptiste. *Précis historique de Nice depuis sa fondation jusqu'en 1860*. Nice: 1867: I, 35.

57. Archives Municipales de Nice. AA, 1/01; ADBR. Trésor de chartes des comtes de Provence. B, 287, 10 A. Gioffredo, Pietro. *Storia delle Alpi Marittime*: 26, col. 451-452; Riu, Manuel; Ferrer, Maria Teresa. *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques...*: 1-I, 381-382, doc. No. 95.

58. Ventura, Jordi. *Alfons el Cast...*: 168-169.





MAP 2: CAMPAIGN ITINERARY OF ALPHONSE THE CHASTE IN FORCAUQUIER (1177/1178).



Forcaquier. His sovereignty over this area was recognised in theory by an imperial privilege awarded to the Count of Provence, Ramon Berenguer III in 1162 by Frederick Barbarossa.⁵⁹ However, this had not only no practical consequences but rather a later imperial investiture awarded by the Emperor Barbarossa to Count Guilhem IV in 1174 had annulled this right.⁶⁰

Having decided to recover the lost sovereignty, in 1177, Alfonso II sent Hugues de Baux and Raimon de Vilanova to demand that Count Guilhem IV of Forcaquier pay him homage reminding him about the emperor's enfeoffment of the county to Count Ramon Berenguer III of Provence. As could be expected, the Count rejected the ambassadors declaring that he owed allegiance only to the emperor's jurisdiction in virtue of the imperial precept of 1174 that revoked the investiture of 1162.

On Guilhem IV's refusal to recognise Provençal sovereignty over Forcaquier, Alfonso the Chaste responded by organising a large army that crossed the Durance and seized Pertús, then advanced through the interior of the county and took various strongholds near the capital.⁶¹ The King's rapid intervention divided the county nobility, and the prelate and nobles who remained loyal to the Count advised him to abandon the fight and recognise Provençal sovereignty. The mediation of the ecclesiastical hierarchies of the bishopric was the key to reaching an agreement on principles that put an end to the hostilities and to avoid more than likely defeat of the garrison that had remained loyal to the count. Guilhem IV agreed to submit to the count of Provence, swear allegiance and loyalty to him and to be his friend and ally. Meanwhile, Alfonso I relinquished any reprisals against the lords who had taken the side of the Count of Forcaquier. The two rulers agreed to avoid provoking any war in the future and accorded a meeting in a city on the edge of the counties of Provence and Forcaquier to confirm the agreement on pacification and to set the form of homage and the amount of the damage caused by the King's troops on the lands of Guilhem IV.

The place chosen for the summit was the castle of Sault. There, in September 1177/1178, Alfonso the Chaste and Guilhem IV ended reducing the conditions of the concord: the king agreed that the count of Forcaquier could pay him homage by proxy, while the later condoned the sovereign for the losses suffered during the war. Shortly after, Guilhem IV sent a procurator to Alfonso the Chaste who, in a solemn ceremony presided over by Hugues de Baux and his son Raymond, paid

59. Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial ultrapirinena...": 61-62.

60. ADBR. Trésor de chartes des comtes de Provence. B 287, R7. Tournadre, Guy de. *Histoire du comté de Forcalquier (XII^e siècle)*. Paris: August Picard, 1930: 78-79. Fournier, Paul. *Le royaume d'Arles et de Vienne (1138-1378). Étude sur la formation territoriale de la France dans l'est et le sud-est*. Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1891: 59. Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial ultrapirinena...": 77-78.

61. According to Nostradamus, Columbi and Ruffi, the expedition was in 1178 (which could correspond to 1177 according to the Pisan calculation). Nostradamus, Caesar de. *Histoire et chronique de Provence*. Lyon: Sim. Rigaud, 1614: 146-147; Columbi, Giovanni. *Opera Varia: Guillelmus Junior, comes Forcalquerii*. Lyon: Canier, 1662; Ruffi, Antoine de. *Histoire des comtés de Provence*. Aix: Chez Jean Roize, 1655: 79. Bourrilly, Victor-Louis; Busquet, Raoul. *La Provence au Moyen Age...*: 26, they put the campaign of Forcaquier before the spring of 1177.



him homage and declared that the county of Forcauquier depended on the county of Provence.⁶²

5. Final reflections: The Crown of Aragon after the campaigns of 1175-1177

Although a wide survey of the political and administrative consequences of the campaigns of 1175-1177 on either side of the Pyrenees would be necessary, we can present two of the most evident and immediate ones, namely the reinforcing of the king's personal power over the ultra-Pyrenean domains, especially in the case of Provence, and the zenith reached in the ultra-Pyrenean territorial expansion of the Crown of Aragon.

After the successful campaigns of Nice and Forcauquier, in December 1178 Alfonso the Chaste entrusted the counties of Provence, Gévaudan and Rouergue to his brother Ramon Berenguer IV, while keeping direct domain over the strategic castles of Tarascon and Albaron, half the seigneurie of Provence, the town of Millau, and the power of absolute rule when he was in person in Provence, Rodez and Gévaudan. Count Ramon Berenguer IV agreed not to do or sell anything without the advice and consent of the king and renounced what he had inherited from his father (in other words, the Counties of Carcassonne, Rasez and Cerdanya (1162)) while he was entrusted with the county of Provence.⁶³

This delegation of political power over Provence was complemented with a delegation of Provençal economic affairs through the figure of the royal procurator Guiu Guerrejat, brother of Guilhem VII of Montpellier, the appointment of local bailiffs and the transfer of the capital from Arles to Aix⁶⁴. Situated at a crossroads, this little town was a strategic point from where the king could carry out his policy of expansion into coastal and eastern Provence, crush the revolts of the Alpine nobles and neutralise the growing power of the coastal cities. The proximity of Aix to Marseille further allowed Alfonso I and his brothers to keep a close watch on the latter and keep its patriciate, hostile to county power, under control.⁶⁵

At the end of 1178, Alfonso II personally ruled a vast conglomerate of territories that, to paraphrase Roger of Hoveden, extended on the coast from the Montsià

62. Tournadre. Guy de. *Histoire du comté de Forcalquier (XII^e siècle)...*; Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial ultrapirinenca...": 78-79.

63. Riu, Manuel; Ferrer, Maria Teresa. *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques...*: 1-I, doc. No. 97; Bourrilly, Victor-Louis; Busquet, Raoul. *La Provence au Moyen Âge...*: 27.

64. Ripart, Laurent. "Les bayles de Provence: genèse d'une institution princière", *De part et d'autre des Alpes. Les châtelains des princes à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Guido Castelnuovo, Olivier Mattéoni, dirs. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2006: 71.

65. Aurell, Martin. "L'expansion catalane en Provence...": 186-187; Aurell, Martin. "Els fonaments socials de la dominació catalana a Provença sota Alfons el Cast (1166-1196)". *Acta Historica et Archaeologica Mediaevalia*, 5-6 (1984): 104-106.



mountains, south of Tortosa, to Nice.⁶⁶ The project to conquer Provence defined by the 1125 treaty of division had concluded with the submission of Nice and Forcauquier. Guilhem of Montpellier and the Viscountess of Narbonne remained vassals and loyal allies of Alfonso II. The Viscounts Roger of Béziers and Bernard Ato of Nîmes continued in the orbit of Toulouse, but the circumstances soon swayed them temporarily to submit to Barcelona (1179).⁶⁷

The Kingdom of Aragon was extended inland to the frontiers with Navarre, and on the other side of the Pyrenees included Béarn (under Aragonese tutelage since 1154), Bigorre, Comminges and the Aran valley as feudatory territories, while Roussillon (1172) and the Pallars Jussà (1177) had been added as direct domains of the counts of Barcelona. Inside Occitania, the Provençal inheritance included the Viscounties of Millau and Gévaudan, Rouergue and half of Carladez, territories for which count Hugh of Rodez had been declared feudatory of the Count King (1167).⁶⁸

In the south, Alfonso the Chaste's campaign against Valencia and Murcia in 1172 had ensured the continuity of the payment of *parias* (tributes) from these two kingdoms, now under Almohad rule.⁶⁹ Later, the Occitan campaigns of 1175-1177 did not mean, as could have been expected, relinquishing temporarily expansion in the Peninsula and Mediterranean nor an interruption of the expeditions. It was rather the opposite; they seem to have stimulated them.⁷⁰ It is known, for example, that around February 1176, the King proposed conquering the Puig de Santa Maria and envisaged taking the city of Valencia.⁷¹ In June 1178, after the submission of Forcauquier, he revived the old project of conquering the Balearic Islands by agreeing with the Sicilian Count Alfonso to cede half of the isle of Majorca in compensation for his participation in the squadron of King William II of Sicily.⁷² In August 1177, he helped Alfonso VIII of Castile in the siege of Cuenca and in early 1179, after leading an expedition against Valencia and Murcia, he signed the Treaty

66. "Et in Hispania illa saracenicam sunt quatuor reges principales: quorum unus dicitur rex de Cordres, id est Corduba.[...] Alter rex dicitur Gant; tertius dicitur rex de Murcia; quartus dicitur rex de Valencia. Et terra illius protenditur usque ad montem qui dicitur Muncian; et mons ille dividit terram paganorum a terra Christianorum, sicut terra regis Arragoniae; et terra regis Arragoniae incipit a monte illo qui dicitur Muncian, et protenditur ultra civitatem Nice. Et a civitate de Nice incipit terra imperatoris Romanorum..." (Hoveden, Roger of. "Chronica", *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. William Stubbs. London: Longmans, 1868-1871: 52, 4 vols.).

67. Benito, Pere. "L'expansió territorial ultrapirinèica...": 82-86.

68. Riu, Manuel; Ferrer, Maria Teresa. *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques...*: 1-I, doc. No. 86; Saige, Gustave; Dienne, Louis de. *Documents historiques relatifs à la vicomté de Carlat*. Monaco: Imprimerie de Monaco, 1900: II, 7-9, doc. No. 5; 22-23, doc. No. 10.

69. Ventura, Jordi. *Alfons el Cast...*: 132.

70. I agree with Martín Alvira about the Occitanian, Peninsular and Mediterranean expansions of Alfonso the Chaste and his successor Peter the Catholic can't be considered as excluding disjunctives because they were developed simultaneously. (Alvira, Martín. *El jueves de Muret...*: 578-579).

71. Ventura, Jordi. *Alfons el Cast...*: 133.

72. Zurita, Jerónimo de. *Anales...*: lib. II, cap. 36; Miret, Joaquín. "Itinerario del rey Alfonso I de Cataluña, II en Aragón". *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 2 (1903-1904): 404, that gives the reference "Varia 2 de Alfonso I, f. 66".



of Cazola with the Castilian monarch to divide the respective areas of expansion in the Iberian Peninsula.⁷³

Although some of these objectives were not reached or were sidelined, there is no doubt that around 1180, Alfonso el Chaste was at the head of one of the most powerful armies in the West, a force capable of moving rapidly hundreds of kilometres in any direction, to serve the aims and interests of the Crown and, at the same time, to help allied monarchs in their own wars. This army, which helped the Plantagenet in Aquitaine in the 1180s, was a key piece of both the territorial expansion of the Crown on both sides of the Pyrenees and the strengthening of royal authority and power that is so clearly visible after 1178.

Currently, the name “Emperor of the Pyrenees” that Antoni Rovira i Virgili attributed to the figure of Alfonso the Chaste at the height of his reign,⁷⁴ has acquired unexpected historiographic relevance. It has been argued whether the Crown of Aragon was an empire at the high points of its territorial expansion or not.⁷⁵ Given the above, there is no problem in accepting that around 1180, the area governed by the first monarch who simultaneously held the titles of King of Aragon, Count of Barcelona and Marquis of Provence, was a political structure similar to the so-called Plantagenet Empire: a construction made up of an amalgam of principalities and lordships, some of which, although theoretically within the frontiers of the kingdom of France and German Empire, acted with political independence and, willingly or by force, had accepted the sovereignty of the King of Aragon during the Great Occitan War in the legal framework of feudal relations.⁷⁶ Around 1180, patrimonial domains governed directly by the king or, by delegation, one or other of his brothers, and vassal states were juxtaposed in a territorial mosaic that covered the north-western Mediterranean, from the Montsià (range) to Nice. The prestigious arms of the king of Aragon began to tinge the ensigns of his patrimonial domains with gold and gules⁷⁷ and to be adopted,

73. Ventura, Jordi. *Alfons el Cast...: 179-182, 192-195.*

74. Rovira, Antoni. *Historia Nacional de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Edicions Pàtria, 1922-1934: IV, 426 (7 vols); Sobrequés, Santiago. *Els grans comtes de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Vicens Vives, 1961: 90; Ventura, Jordi. *Alfons el Cast...: 270-271.*

75. For this question, see: Hillgarth, Jocelyn N. “El problema del imperio catalano-aragonés, 1229-1327”. *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 10 (1980): 145-159; Aurell, Martin. “Autour du débat historiographique...”: 33; Alvira, Martín. *El jueves de Muret...: 72-73, 166-169.*

76. The parallels with the empire of the Plantagenet are evident. For the use of the term empire in reference to the domains of the Plantagenet and the historiographic debate it has provoked, see: Gilissen, John. “La notion d’empire dans l’histoire universelle”, *Les grandes Empires (Recueils de la société Jean Bodin)*. Brussels: Encyclopédique, 1973: XXXI, 808; Aurell, Martin. *L’Empire des Plantagenêt. 1154-1224...: 9-12 and 290.*

77. One of the oldest and best documented examples is that of Millau, in Rouergue. In 1187, Alfonso the Chaste granted the consuls of the city a privilege over the use of the royal subscription and arms in the municipal seal: “*Concedimus namque sigillum commune consulibus et communi cum subscriptione nostra et sua, et eciam vexillum nostrum*” (Figeac, Champollion. *Collection des documents inédits sur l’Histoire de France*. Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1843: II). For the seal of Millau, see Framond, Martin de. “Aux origines du sceau de ville et de juridiction: les premiers sceaux de la ville de Millau”. *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes*, 147 (1989): 87-122.



by imitation, by some of the vassal territories,⁷⁸ instilling a symbolic unity over all this vast political space.

The campaigns of 1175-1177 were the climax of the expansion of the Catalan-Aragonese Crown north of the Pyrenees and the start of a stage of consolidation of unprecedented royal power over all his domains. The expedition to Toulouse and the submission of Nice and Forcauquier made Alfonso the Chaste one of the most powerful rulers in the West. After his army's stunning victories, the king exploited the prestige and fame he had earned to consolidate his power over the local aristocracy, resuscitate old projects of territorial expansion, lend help to his allies, challenge the German emperor,⁷⁹ and break with the Frankish legitimacy scrupulously maintained for over three hundred years.⁸⁰

78. The county of Foix, for example. See Calicó, Francesc Xavier. "En torno al origen del escudo de armas de los palos llamados comúnmente barras". *Gaceta Numismática*, 61 (1981); Menéndez, Faustino. "Palos de oro y gules". *Studia in Honorem Prof. M. de Riquer*. Barcelona: Jaume Vallcorba (Quaderns Crema), 1991: IV, 669-704.

79. By not attending the coronation of Frederick Barbarossa as king of Burgundy, officiated over by the Archbishop of Arles in the church of Saint-Trophime on 30th July 1178. Fournier, Paul. *Le royaume d'Arles...*: 62-63; Bourrilly, Victor-Louis; Busquet, Raoul. *La Provence au Moyen Age...*: 26-27; Aurell, Martin. "L'expansion catalane en Provence...": 181.

80. Shortly after the death of Louis VII of France (18th September 1180), a provincial council of bishops meeting in Tarragona following a plenary court presided over by the king, decided to change the official chronographic system of Catalan documents, until then based on the calculation of the years of the reigns of the Frankish kings, for the system of the years since the Incarnation of Jesus, adopting what was known as the Florentine style. For the political connotations of this decision, see Zimmerman, Michel. "Les rapports de la France et de la Catalogne du X^e au XII^e siècle", *Mélanges de la Bibliothèque Espagnole. Paris 1977-1978*. Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1982: 81-99; Zimmerman, Michel. "La datation des documents catalans du IX^e au XII^e siècle: un itinéraire politique". *Annales du Midi*, 93 (1981): 345-375.

