A MEDITERRANEAN EMPORIUM

The Catalan kingdom of Majorca

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CHAPTER I

The Balearic setting

I

Mallorca, Menorca and Ibiza (or Eivissa) are now quite prosperous islands whose income is largely derived from the vast number of summer visitors who flock to the Mediterranean in search of the sun and the sea. Yet the islands have attracted visitors and settlers dating back millennia; visible reminders of the links between the Balearic islands and the world beyond include the talayot and other prehistoric remains of Menorca, the fine Gothic churches of Palma de Mallorca, and the stately city of Maó or Mahón in Menorca, situated alongside what is said to be the world's largest natural harbour after Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. In fact, the Balearic islands have long functioned as a crossroads on the trade routes linking Africa to continental Europe, and, in the later Middle Ages, linking the Mediterranean to the Atlantic: for Mallorca lies 175 kilometres off the coast of Spain, and the distance between the Balearics and Algeria is not much greater.[1] Between 1276 and 1343 the most important of the islands gave its name to a small but wealthy kingdom, that of Majorca, which remains perhaps the most neglected of all the medieval Spanish kingdoms.

The battle for control of the Balearic islands epitomises the struggle between Islam and Christianity for domination in the western

[1] The surface area of Mallorca is 3,640 square kilometres; the island is about 100 kilometres broad at its greatest width, from east to west, and its dimensions north to south reach a maximum of about 75 kilometres. Menorca is half the width and less than one fifth of the area of Mallorca (700 square kilometres); it is much flatter and more barren. Ibiza, on the other hand, is quite rocky and has sheer coasts. Its measurements are a greatest length of 30 kilometres and an area of 575 square kilometres. It lies twice the distance of Menorca from Mallorca – 70 kilometres, in the case of Ibiza. The fourth island, 5 kilometres off Ibiza, is Formentera, of about 100 square kilometres; it is quite low-lying, and, like Ibiza, has good natural salt-pans.

Mediterranean; possession of the islands meant control of an advance position from which it was possible to patrol the seas between what are now southern France, eastern Spain and Algeria.[2] Following the Moorish invasion of Spain, in 711, the Balearic islands remained loosely attached to the Byzantine world, along with Sardinia; but the inability of the Byzantines to protect Roman citizens in the western Mediterranean stimulated contact with the new Roman Empire of the Franks.[3] In 798–9 it was Charlemagne's ships that defeated Moorish pirates who were raiding the Balearic islands. The battle standards of the Muslim foe were brought to Aachen as a present for the Frankish king. Only in 813 did the Moors again dare to attack the islands, and only in 902 did they finally conquer them. Mallorca was thus the last part of Spain to fall to the Moors.[4] A recent reassessment of Frankish naval power points out that 'possession of the Balearics gave the Frankish defence important strategic benefits as they lay across the sea routes from Spain to Corsica, Sardinia, Italy and Provence, providing a base from which Muslim shipping could be harassed, so limiting the freedom of movement of pirates operating in the western Mediterranean'.[5] This was as true in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as in the eighth. Even before their belated Muslim conquest, the islands were raided by the Vikings (859), who returned as late as 1110 when King Sigurð Jorsalafari raided Formentera on his way by sea from Norway through Gibraltar to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Raider or crusader, Sigurð recognised the strategic position of the Balearic islands on the route from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean.

In the early eleventh century, they were a Moorish base with a predominantly Muslim population from which the corsair Mujahid, who also controlled Denia on the Spanish coast opposite Ibiza, could raid into Christian territory. His attacks on Sardinia in the years up to 1016 elicited a decisive response from the Pisans and the Genoese, whose victory over Mujahid marks the start of their own naval duopoly in the seas either side of Sardinia. A century later, in 1113–15, the Pisan navy joined the count of Barcelona, the most powerful Christian warlord on the Spanish coast, in a successful

[2] J. Haywood, *Dark Age naval power* (London, 1991), 113.
[3] For the early medieval history of the Balearics, see now Josep Amengual i Batle, *Els orígens del Cristianisme a les Balears*, 2 vols. (Palma de Mallorca, 1991–2).
[4] Haywood, *Dark Age naval power*, 113–14, 196.
[5] Haywood, *Dark Age naval power*, 113.

attack on Mallorca and Ibiza. The presence in the fleet of prominent Sards confirms the supposition that Muslim control of the Balearics endangered Sardinia; while the presence on the international slave markets of Sard slaves may indicate what effect Muslim raiding parties could have on Mallorca's nearest neighbours. The pope, Paschal II, appears to have blessed the Pisan campaign of 1113, and almost certainly offered participants crusade privileges; this may be the first occasion on which the pope extended privileges devised for the First Crusade, and rapidly offered to the Catalan defenders of *Hispania Tarraconensis* (the ancient ecclesiastical province of Tarragona), to cover the conquest of an area away from the current Spanish land frontier.[6] However, the Pisans and Catalans proved unable to hold the islands, even though they returned home covered in glory; the Pisans commissioned a lengthy neo-classical victory poem, the *Liber Maiolichinus*, to remind the world of their heroism.

The Muslim rulers of the Balearics, for their part, became increasingly isolated even from the Muslim world. They were Almoravids, supporters of a popular Islamic movement that had swept out of west Africa into Spain during the late eleventh century; but by the mid-twelfth century a powerful new fundamentalist force, the Almohad movement, had established itself in north Africa and southern Spain. By the 1180s, the Balearics constituted the tiny rump of a once great Almoravid empire.[7] The islands were more than ever exposed to the danger of conquest. In 1162 the Genoese agreed to aid the German Emperor Frederick I should he attack the Balearics, a project which must reflect Genoese ambitions rather than imperial ones. Indeed, the context in which this promise is made is revealing: the Genoese had just been lured into a treaty with Barbarossa against their erstwhile friend King William I of Sicily, and were already bound by a short-term truce to the emir of Mallorca. While they were prepared summarily to break their agreement with the Norman king of Sicily, they were careful to stipulate that no action would be taken against Mallorca until the

[6] *Liber Maiolichinus de gestis Pisanorum illustribus*, ed. C. Calisse (Fonti per la Storia d'Italia, Rome, 1904), 9, lines 74–5. There is some difficulty knowing exactly what this passage signifies: *Pontifex tribuendo crucem, romanaque signa militi ducibusque*... For a fuller analysis of these events, see G. B. Doxey, 'Christian attempts to reconquer the Balearic islands before 1229' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1991), which is being prepared for publication.

[7] A. Bel, *Les Benou Ghânya, derniers représentants de l'empire almoravide et leur lutte contre l'empire almohade* (Paris/Algiers, 1903), which is, however, no longer satisfactory.

truce had expired; the reason was that trade through Mallorca to north Africa could only gain in importance once trade to Sicily and beyond was rendered dangerous by their new alliance.[8] To lose the trade of one island was a misfortune; to lose that of both would be carelessness. Later, it was the Sicilians themselves who saw the Balearics as an easy target: King William II of Sicily harboured ambitious plans which culminated in a naval assault in 1181; the campaign was a disaster, not least because the Genoese refused to join in; but Christian schemes to capture the islands were not abandoned.[9]

By the late twelfth century the Italians had realised the advantages of trade via the Balearics. Access to the port of what is now called Palma, and was then called Madina Mayurqa, was valuable not so much for the produce of the Balearics, which was mainly insignificant, but for the strategic position en route to north Africa. Rather than join the Sicilian expedition of 1181, the Genoese had actually chosen to enter into a closer alliance with the emir of Mallorca, and for a time trade by way of the Balearics experienced an upsurge.[10] Along the coast of the Muslim Maghrib, the Genoese and Pisans sought wool, leather and also gold, which arrived by caravan from the southern Sahara, and could be ferried via Mallorca to Europe. Ibiza itself was a good source of salt, and probably grew substantially in importance over time. As the shippers of Catalonia broke into the trade of the western Mediterranean around 1200, they too, not surprisingly, saw that access to Mallorca would provide a jumping-off point into Africa. Unfortunately, the finer details of the early commercial history of Barcelona are hard to see clearly. Links with southern France, especially the Aragonese lordship of Montpellier and the Aragonese county of Provence, brought northern cloths to Catalonia for redistribution towards Sicily, the Maghrib and al-Andalus. Balearic pirates could impede the trade routes linking Barcelona to its Mediterranean markets.[11]

[8] David Abulafia, *The two Italies. Economic relations between the Norman kingdom of Sicily and the northern communes* (Cambridge, 1977), 129.

[9] David Abulafia, 'The Norman kingdom of Africa and the Norman expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 7 (1985), 44–5, repr. with additional note in David Abulafia, *Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean, 1100–1400* (London, 1987).

[10] Abulafia, *Two Italies*, 156–8.

[11] David Abulafia, 'Catalan merchants and the western Mediterranean, 1236–1300: studies in the notarial acts of Barcelona and Sicily', *Viator*, 16 (1985), 209–42, repr. in David Abulafia, *Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean, 1100–1400* (London, 1987), essay VIII.

Whether it was the Catalan merchants or their rulers, the kings of Aragon and counts of Barcelona, who initiated schemes to reconquer the Balearics in the early thirteenth century has been much debated.[12] Around 1204 Peter II of Aragon, who was shortly to become embroiled in the Albigensian crusade, conceived a plan to attack Mallorca with papal approval. For his son, James I (1213–76), a Catalan assault on Mallorca would not just be a holy war, but also an opportunity to show his unruly vassals in Catalonia that he was a decisive and capable war-leader. Yet he appears to have taken advice from a prominent Barcelona merchant, Pere Martell, when planning his war. According to his own account, reported in what is generally regarded as James' autobiography, James raised the topic of the conquest of Mallorca at a dinner party in Tarragona late in 1228, though other evidence suggests that the project was already in his mind beforehand.[13] This in itself would hardly occasion surprise, because the idea of attacking Mallorca was so well established as a long-term policy aim of the counts of Barcelona.

In 1229 the Catalan fleet, strongly backed by allied fleets from southern France and Provence, where Aragonese influence and lordship was extensive, swooped on the island; troops advanced to Madina Mayurqa and, after a short siege, captured the city.[14] Although Muslim irredentists held out for a time in the mountains, James the Conqueror had little difficulty in asserting his authority throughout the lowlands of Mallorca. Madina Mayurqa became Ciutat de Mallorca; the lands on the island were divided up among the conquering armies, and groups that had given significant help, such as the merchants of Marseilles and Montpellier, were amply rewarded with houses in the city and lands outside. Even the Italian merchants, who were strongly suspected of plotting with the Muslim ruler to keep the Catalans out, were wisely given lands and privileges. According to the late thirteenth century chronicler Bernat Desclot:

> these men of Genoa and Pisa gave to the [Muslim] king of Mallorca evil counsel for their own ends. And they did this with no other purpose than

[12] J. N. Hillgarth, *The Problem of a Catalan Mediterranean Empire, 1229–1323* (English Historical Review, supplement no. 8, London, 1975), is the best introduction to the issue. Catalan edn: *El problema d'un imperi català* (Palma de Mallorca, 1984).

[13] James I, *Crònica o Llibre des Feits*, in *Les quatre grans cròniques*, ed. F. Soldevila (Barcelona, 1971), cap. 47.

[14] A useful account of the conquest of Mallorca is that of F. Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus. Exploration and colonisation from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229–1492* (London, 1987), 13–22.

that they might the better buy and sell and barter their wares and that the Catalans should not dare venture on the sea.[15]

The Catalans, as yet a naval power of quite limited capacity, were not in a position to challenge the Genoese and Pisans, and the Aragonese king was afraid that the Italians would ally with the irredentists if he did not treat them well. It must be stressed that the conquest was as much Provençal and Languedocien work as it was Catalan; a romantic tradition even staffs James' army with refugee Cathar noblemen from southern French lands now permeated by the oppressive atmosphere of the Inquisition.

The fate of Mallorca's Muslim population is not entirely clear, and is discussed at greater length in a later chapter. There were many enslaved, and some free, Muslims on the island in the late thirteenth century, though some of these Muslims were brought from the mainland by landlords such as the Knights of the Temple to till the soil. It has to be presumed that a large number were sold into slavery in 1229–31. If the Muslim population assimilated into the Christian settler population, it did so almost noiselessly.[16] The nearest parallel is perhaps Sicily, where Islam was almost completely eroded over a period of about 150 years, rather than Valencia, James' other great conquest, where it was still publicly avowed by large communities as late as 1525.[17] On the other hand, James I gave some encouragement to the Jews, who comprised an indigenous population as well as new migrants from Catalonia, Provence and north Africa. The monarchy saw the Jews as politically less troublesome than the Muslims, since they were unable to look across the sea to Africa to powerful rulers who might come and redeem them. The change in royal mood, pushing the Jews from privileged status to marginalisation and persecution, is documented elsewhere in this book.[18]

The conquest of Mallorca left the lesser islands untouched. James I waited till a second visit before he tackled the problem of Menorca, a windswept island mainly famous for its livestock and dairy goods, then as now. In 1231 he deceived the Muslims of Menorca into believing they were facing a massive invasion; the distant sight of the fires burning at the easternmost tip of Mallorca, at Capdepera, was

[15] Bernat Desclot, *Llibre del rey en Pere* in *Les quatre grans cròniques*, ed. F. Soldevila (Barcelona, 1971), cap. 14.

[16] See chapter 4.

[17] David Abulafia, 'The end of Muslim Sicily' and R.I. Burns, 'Muslims in the thirteenth-century realms of Aragon: interaction and reaction', in *Muslims under Latin rule, 1100–1300*, ed. J.M. Powell (Princeton, NJ, 1990), 103–33 and 57–102.

[18] See chapter 5.

thought by the Menorcans to herald an attack by a vast army.[19] To escape their supposed fate, the Menorcans entered into a treaty of submission that preserved their autonomy as a Muslim society, but that also obliged them to recognise the overlordship of the king of Aragon. They were obliged to pay a handsome tribute, partly in livestock, but they were also guaranteed the free practice of Islam. Menorca became a Muslim enclave in Catalan waters.

In 1235 it was the turn of Ibiza. The assault on the island has been described as 'the last private act of reconquista' in Spain. It was the work of the sacristan of Girona cathedral, Guillem de Montgrí, working under the patronage of the archbishop of Tarragona.[20] The king of Aragon insisted on his ultimate sovereignty, but was content to leave the island, and its neighbour Formentera, under the administration of its conquerors. In fact, the monarchy made little attempt at first to capitalise on its conquests. The grants of land to soldiers and other supporters, tax exemptions for foreign merchants and other privileges meant that the conquest of the Balearics brought the crown glory rather than substantial financial rewards. The government of Mallorca was actually ceded in 1231 to an Iberian condottiere, Prince Pedro of Portugal, who himself spent rather little time on the island, and there were other powerful interests, notably the count of Roussillon, Nunyo Sanç, who had been a supporter of James I back in Catalonia.[21]

It was in the 1250s and 1260s that James I began to formulate a distinctive policy in the Balearics. His concern lay in providing for his sons, of whom, by 1262, two legitimate ones remained, Peter and James. At this stage, James the Conqueror ruled four major entities, each technically distinct from one another: highland Aragon, as king, Catalonia, as count of Barcelona, newly conquered Valencia, as king, and the Balearics, as king of Majorca. Like many Spanish rulers before him, he decided to divide his lands between his children, offering Peter Aragon, Valencia and those parts of Catalonia that lay to the west of the Pyrenees. James would have the Balearics, the lordship of Montpellier, a prized possession in Languedoc, and those parts of the Catalan lands that lay mainly to the east of the Pyrenees: Roussillon, earlier held by one of the conquerors of Mallorca,

[19] James I, *Crònica*, caps. 119–24.
[20] James I, *Crònica*, caps. 124–5; Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus*, 31–3.
[21] Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus*, 29–30. See chapter 6 for the lands of Nunyo Sanç in the Mallorcan capital.

Cerdagne and adjacent lands. These territories were to constitute a separate realm after James I's death; the king of Majorca, count of Roussillon and lord of Montpellier was to hold none of his territories from his elder brother, but was to be fully independent of him.[22] James I even hoped to add Sardinia to the kingdom of Majorca, expressing confidence (in 1267) that the pope was about to grant him the troubled island. But in fact Aragonese interest in Sardinia only precipitated an attempt by the king of Sicily and count of Provence, Charles of Anjou, an inveterate rival of James I, to intrude his own son as king of Sardinia.[23]

The later kings of Aragon had a different view of the kingdom of Majorca. Peter of Aragon sought almost immediately to cajole James II of Majorca (as his brother is usually called) into accepting Aragonese overlordship. He was even to attend meetings of the Catalan *Corts*, an obligation that points to the heart of the paradox: the king of Majorca was to attend the parliaments of the count of Barcelona, while he was also a vassal of the king of Aragon. Now, the fact that the king of Aragon was exactly the same person as the count of Barcelona did not resolve the confusion. Was the Majorcan state a dependency of Catalonia or of Aragon? The question does not admit of an answer. The constitutional picture, as will be seen, was confused and contradictory. In addition, the Majorcan king also engaged not to mint his own money in Roussillon, though he was free to do so in the Balearics (in fact, he refrained from so doing till 1300). Within three years of James I's death, Peter had his way; and, at a meeting in Perpignan in 1279, James II of Majorca accepted that he was little more than a great baron who possessed a very grand title, and extensive rights of jurisdiction within his lands.

Dependence on Aragon remained, nonetheless, a live issue. Peter's humiliation of the king of Majorca, in 1279, backfired; when in 1285 the king of France launched an attack on Aragon, as vengeance for the seizure of Sicily by Peter the Great of Aragon, the Majorcan ruler gave his support to France against his own bullying brother. James' decision was crucial, since he thus permitted the French armies eventually to march through his own county of Roussillon on their way into Catalonia proper. His mainland capital at Perpignan (where a handsome Palace of the Kings of Majorca can still be seen) was attacked by Peter; James only evaded Peter's clutches by

[22] The constitutional position is analysed in chapter 3.

[23] See appendix 1.

feigning illness and refusing to emerge from his bedchamber to meet his brother, while his men heaved aside the flagstones in the room and opened up a drainage channel through which he escaped into open country.[24]

James was quite incapable of defending the Balearics from Peter. Indeed, it is generally thought doubtful whether the inhabitants of the islands had much sense of loyalty to the Majorcan kingdom, (though Jocelyn Hillgarth has argued for greater reserves of loyalty to James II than others have supposed). The Catalan population may well have seen the links with Catalonia as a secure means to prosperity: at the height of the quarrel with Peter, in 1284, trade out of Mallorca hardly touched the Catalan coast, and had to be directed mainly to north Africa; this may have caused some inconvenience.[25] But Mallorca flourished most successfully if lines of communication to all neighbouring coasts were kept open. In any case, the government of the kingdom was mainly based in Perpignan, and Mallorca was governed by a royal lieutenant. Ciutat de Mallorca was a ceremonial capital above all.

Aragonese wrath at Majorcan treachery knew no bounds. Peter's son Alfonso III recaptured Mallorca for Aragon in 1285, at the time of his father's death; and it was made plain that the islands were henceforth to be treated as an integral part of the Aragonese king's realms.[26] James II was to be dispossessed for all time. The king of Aragon resumed the use of the additional title *rex Maioricarum* in his acts. In 1287, Alfonso returned to Mallorca to launch a further attack on Menorca, which had continued to pay tribute to the rulers of Majorca, but which was suspected of attempting to betray Aragonese war plans to the Muslims of north Africa. The seizure of this island was also justified by the fear that the French and their allies might use its excellent harbour facilities as a base from which to raid Catalonia. What was striking was the severity with which the Aragonese treated the indigenous population. Perhaps as many as 40,000 Menorcan Muslims were taken into slavery and sold, though a chance was

[24] Bernat Desclot, *Crònica*, caps. 134–6.

[25] See chapter 7 for links to north Africa. On the loyalty of the Mallorcans to James II, see J.N. Hillgarth, 'Un nuevo documento sobre la resistencia de los mallorquines a la ocupación de Mallorca por Alfonso III de Aragón (1285–91)', *Estudios en honor de A. Mut i Calafell* (Palma de Mallorca, 1993).

[26] Ramón Muntaner, *Crònica*, caps. 141–51. But Muntaner tried to paper over the differences between the Aragonese and the Majorcans, even indicating that the invasion of the Balearics in 1285 formed part of a wider scheme to outwit the French king, to which James II of Majorca was supposedly a willing party: see chapter 4.

offered to pay the king a ransom instead. A few Muslims were left behind to cultivate the soil, but in effect the island was totally depopulated. Its relatively bleak conditions never made it an attractive place for new Christian colonists.[27]

It was only in 1298, when terms for a regional settlement of the conflict in the western Mediterranean were being pressed by the papacy, that James II of Majorca won back his kingdom, though he remained a vassal of the king of Aragon (also, confusingly, by now called James II). However, other means were at his disposal to disentangle him from Aragonese control. A vigorous economic policy was initiated, with attempts to impose tariff barriers against merchants from Catalonia who traded through the ports of the kingdom of Majorca, such as Ciutat de Mallorca and Collioure in Roussillon. A fine Balearic coinage was at last initiated. Autonomous consulates, offering protection and warehouse facilities to Mallorcan merchants, were established in major north African ports such as Bougie, which has been described as a virtual protectorate of Majorca. The Catalans, who had earlier provided consular facilities for Majorcan as well as Catalan merchants, were strongly opposed, since revenues from consulates were a substantial source of income to the tax farmers who ran them and above all to the Aragonese crown.[28] In Mallorca and Menorca there were quite successful attempts to create a series of small, well-planned agricultural towns that would increase efficiency of production; the surviving square street plan of Felanitx, Sa Pobla and Petra is testimony to James II's efforts.[29] A later ruler, Sanç or Sancho (1311–24) also had grandiose plans for the creation of a galley fleet able to rival those of Genoa and Venice; this idea came to nothing, but the special expertise of the Mallorcans as cartographers and as mariners was widely recognised. Jewish map-makers on the island had access to the geographical knowledge both of the west and of the Islamic world.[30]

[27] Ramón Muntaner, *Crònica* 172; C. Parpal, *La conquista de Menorca en 1287 por Alfonso III de Aragón* (Barcelona, 1901; Catalan edn, Barcelona, 1964); M. Mata, *Conquests and reconquests of Menorca* (Barcelona, 1984), 9–62. For the fate of the Muslims, see chapter 4.

[28] See A. Riera Melis, *La Corona de Aragón y el reino de Mallorca en el primer cuarto del siglo XIV*, vol. 1, *Las repercussiones arancelarias de la autonomía balear (1298–1311)* (Barcelona, 1986), and chapter 8.

[29] G. Alomar, *Urbanismo regional en la edad media: las 'Ordinacions' de Jaime II (1300) en el reino de Mallorca* (Barcelona, 1976), and chapter 8.

[30] For the cartographers, see chapter 10.

II

As a cultural centre, Mallorca did not compare with contemporary Toledo or Barcelona; this was perhaps because the major source of patronage, the monarchy, was based in the mainland possessions, at Perpignan. Setting aside the cartographers, by far the most important cultural figure in Mallorca's history was the mystic and missionary Ramón Llull, who was born on the island in 1232 to a prosperous family of new Catalan settlers and who claimed to have experienced a vision on Mallorca which revealed to him a complex algebra for the description of the universe and for the demonstration of the truth of Christianity:

> After this, Ramón went up a certain mountain not far from his home, in order to contemplate God in greater tranquillity. When he had been there scarcely a full week, it happened that one day while he was gazing intently heavenward the Lord suddenly illuminated his mind giving him the form and method for writing the aforementioned book against the errors of the unbelievers.[31]

From the 1270s to his death in about 1316 he tried hard to interest the kings of Majorca, France, Naples, Cyprus and the papacy in his schemes to combat Islam by persuasion rather than by war. He himself went to preach the faith in Africa. He had a good understanding of Arabic and probably of Hebrew as well, and aimed to meet his opponents on their own ground: he was well read in Islamic and Jewish theology. Although much of his work was conducted outside the Balearics, he did attempt to make Mallorca into a base for the training of missionaries, by founding the convent at Miramar which lasted for a few years under royal patronage. In his novel *Blanquerna* he described Miramar this way:

> That king [James II of Majorca] is a man of noble customs, and has much devotion as to the manner wherein Jesus Christ may be honoured by preaching among the unbelievers; and to this end he has ordained that thirteen friars minor shall study Arabic in a monastery called Miramar, established and set apart in a fitting place, and he himself has provided for their needs; and when they have learned the Arabic tongue they will be able

[31] Life of Ramón Llull, iii. section 14, from the translation by A. Bonner, *Selected Works of Ramon Llull (1232–1316)*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ, 1985), the introduction to which constitutes a very good survey of Llull's life. See also J. Hillgarth, *Ramon Lull and Lullism in fourteenth-century France* (Oxford, 1971).

to go, by leave of their General, to honour the Fruit of Our Lady, and in his honour suffer hunger and thirst, heat and cold, fears and torture and death.[32]

It is, however, debatable whether Llull was a real pioneer in these attempts to convert non-Christians. In some respects he lagged behind the ideas of the Catalan friars at the court of James I in Barcelona, and his algebraic method, or 'Art', owed much to early medieval writers.[33] Llull's career, already much-studied, is not a theme of this book, but his early career in Mallorca and his obsession with the souls of Jews and Muslims are important reminders that the newly created kingdom was a gateway not merely for merchants but for missionaries entering Africa.

III

The Llulls were prominent merchants, and in the early fourteenth century Ciutat de Mallorca continued to grow in importance as a safe haven from which western merchants could venture into the less safe ports of north Africa. Soon after the Catalan conquest of Mallorca, Popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV stated that it was permissible for the Christian merchants of Mallorca to trade with the infidel in north Africa, in order to provide a livelihood for the island's inhabitants and to encourage settlement there.[34] The island could not survive without trade; by the start of the fourteenth century perhaps half the population lived in the capital, and agricultural resources were insufficient to feed everyone.[35] Imports of Sicilian grain and other basic produce became more and more vital. Not surprisingly, Mallorca benefited from its position as a major Christian possession facing the Muslim world by becoming an important centre of the international slave trade. There were many Muslim domestic slaves on the island, in Christian or Jewish households, but most of the slaves who passed through Mallorca were in transit to mainland Spain, Italy or north Africa. Both Christians and Jews were active in

[32] Ramón Llull, *Blanquerna*, transl. E. A. Peers and ed. R. Irwin (London, 1987), cap. 65, 256–7.

[33] On the 'art' see F. Yates, 'Ramon Lull and John Scotus Erigena', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 17 (1954), 1–44. On the friars, see J. Cohen, *The friars and the Jews* (Ithaca, NY, 1982) and R. Chazan, *Daggers of faith. Thirteenth-century Christian missionizing and Jewish response* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1989).

[34] See chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of the papal privileges.

[35] See Alomar, *Urbanismo*, for population estimates.

handling this traffic.[36] Regional sources of supply varied from the mountains of Cyrenaica in modern Libya to Black Africa, but the Balearics were well placed to act as a clearing house for this trade and for the accompanying and lucrative business of ransoming captives.

Mallorca also increased in importance as a way-station along a fragile and extenuated sea-route from Italy through the Straits of Gibraltar to Seville, northern Spain, Gascony, England and Flanders. Since about 1280 Mallorcan ships had been sailing alongside those of Genoa as far as London, thus making possible the transfer of high or medium quality English wool to the Florentines and other Mediterranean cloth producers.[37] A Mallorcan woollen cloth industry began to develop in the early fourteenth century, really taking off around 1350, and remaining quite successful until the fifteenth century, by when exports of Mallorcan and Menorcan raw wool had also become a major feature of the islands' economy. In addition, the Mallorcans built up a lucrative trade in Moorish Granada and Atlantic Morocco.[38] Mallorcan Jews were able to exploit family ties with north African Jews, and were heavily engaged in commerce. At this period, too, the monarchy appears to have begun to draw a handsome income from trade taxes, after a slow start, and lavish building programmes, including the magnificent round Bellver Castle on the western edge of Ciutat de Mallorca and the refurbished Almudaina Palace in the old city, testify to the monarchy's prosperity.[39]

IV

At the same time, the capacity of the Majorcan rulers to resist Aragonese pretensions was constantly being weakened. The Majorcans made a substantial contribution, as vassals of Aragon–Catalonia, to the fleet that invaded Sardinia in 1323–4, and Mallorcan merchants were rewarded with trade privileges in Sardinia as a result.[40] Technically, under the terms of King James I's will, the kingdom of Majorca should have reverted to the Aragonese when King Sanç died without an heir in 1324. But the Aragonese

[36] Larry Simon is proposing to publish further studies of the Mallorcan slave trade in the thirteenth century, originally prepared under the direction of Fr R. I. Burns.

[37] See chapter 10.

[38] On the Mallorcan presence in Almeria, Granada's outport, see chapter 9.

[39] M. Durliat, *L'art dans le royaume de Majorque* (Toulouse, 1962). See chapter 8 for further details concerning royal revenues from trade in the early fourteenth century.

[40] See appendix 1.