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Keeping Your Eyes and Ears Open: A Diplomatic Counsel for an Anglo-Aragonese Alliance at the Outbreak of the Hundred Years War* [AQ1](#)

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Abstract

Late medieval diplomacy relied on informal networks to remedy administrative and governmental deficiencies in the management of international affairs. This article examines the case of the Aragonese merchant Peter Seseres and his associates, who acted as informal diplomatic agents, and possibly spies, in England between 1333 and 1339, and especially in plans for an Anglo-Aragonese alliance soon after the outbreak of the Hundred Years War. Significantly, Seseres's activity in England appears from the counsel (*consilium*) he presented to Edward III and his council between March and May 1338, recorded in an unedited and hitherto overlooked document preserved at The National Archives. Putting himself forward as an international negotiator, in his counsel Seseres shows how, alongside his mercantile business on the south-east coast of England, he had gathered confidential information and rumours, and exploited them to build political arguments in favour of an Anglo-Aragonese alliance. In particular, Seseres focuses on the importance for the English of forging international alliances, especially on the Franco-Iberian borders, which would allow them to surround the French kingdom and reconquer the duchy of Aquitaine. Seseres also addresses the importance for the English of exploiting the presence of Robert of Artois in England and using his French connections to establish new continental alliances. Finally, the last section of the counsel sheds new light on how unofficial diplomatic missions were organised, highlighting aspects of fourteenth-century diplomatic and administrative practices which have been overlooked because of lack of surviving evidence. The conclusion engages with established scholarly debates on the international dimension of the Hundred Years War and the formation of diplomatic and administrative practices in the late medieval period.

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In my recent monograph on Anglo-papal relations during the first phase of the Hundred Years War (1305–60), I maintained that late medieval diplomacy intrinsically relied on informal and unofficial contacts—alongside formal diplomatic missions—which arguably helped to remedy administrative and governmental deficiencies in the management of international affairs. There, I defined as mostly ‘unofficial’ those missions undertaken by envoys who performed diplomatic services without receiving a formal credence or procuration, as well as those diplomatic negotiations that were secret or not disclosed through established diplomatic channels.¹ This unofficial diplomacy built on an extensive web of contacts at different levels, from connections with rulers, their households and close advisers, to the freelancers, lobbyists, merchants and spies who facilitated diplomatic negotiations and information gathering.² Significantly, the allegiance of informal networks of individuals was secured in different ways, for instance through payments in kind and other sorts of favours. In this respect, the employment of informal contacts in fourteenth-century diplomacy reveals the extent to which administrative and diplomatic practices were still underdeveloped and their deficiencies in the management of international relations were supplemented through alternative means.

This was, as Stéphane Péquignot has pointed out, the case with merchants acting as secret agents of the Aragonese Crown during the reign of James II (1291–1327), who dispatched secret

missions to the kingdom of Granada, southern Italy and the court of Charles IV of France.³ After the outbreak of the Hundred Years War in 1337, merchants again played an important part in the unofficial diplomacy that went hand in glove with the management of cross-Channel transportation, trade and the cash flow needed to pay for war expenditures. An illuminating case-study of this set of activities is represented by the role of an Aragonese merchant, Peter Seseres, and his associates—merchants who acted as informal diplomatic envoys, and possibly even spies, in England between 1333 and 1339—in negotiating an Anglo-Aragonese alliance soon after the outbreak of the Hundred Years War.⁴ Seseres's activity in England is recorded in an unedited document preserved at The National Archives (C 47/32/23), which is the focus of this article.⁵ The text, recorded in a short parchment roll, contains Seseres's written counsel presented to Edward III, king of England, and his council, probably at some point between March and May 1338 when Seseres produced his counsel. This report is exceptional in the history of diplomacy in the early fourteenth century in revealing that a merchant had seized the initiative and elevated himself to the rank of international negotiator. There is no evidence that Seseres had been officially appointed by either the King of England or the King of Aragon to draw up a plan for the negotiations before he offered his counsel. Yet, as emerges from the document, Seseres had gathered information on international affairs and the Anglo-French war through informal channels, probably exploiting the connections available to him through his mercantile business on the south-east coast of England which had allowed him to become acquainted with members of the King's inner circle and with the papal legates dispatched to England in late 1337.

This article therefore investigates Peter Seseres's activities and connections, before moving on to an examination of his counsel and its terms. The counsel sheds new light not only on unofficial diplomatic and administrative practices in late medieval diplomatic activity, but also, more significantly, on the complex set of international political alliances that contributed to English military successes in the Hundred Years War in 1337 and 1338.⁶

I

The origins of Peter Seseres remain quite obscure. Peter was originally from the Iberian

Peninsula, possibly from Catalonia, Valencia or Majorca.⁷ The name *Seseres* (*Sans Eres*) is documented in Valencia, Catalonia and Majorca in the territories where Catalan was spoken, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸ These associations demonstrate that Peter was a subject of the Aragonese Crown. Catalan and Aragonese merchants are known to have been engaged in international trade from the late thirteenth century onwards, when the sea route between the Bay of Biscay and northern Europe, especially England and Flanders, was increasingly used to avoid the dangerous road journey through France, providing a link for trade between North Africa and northern Europe.⁹

Seseres's activity as a merchant and ship owner, trading cloth, wine and other goods between the Continent and England, is well recorded between 1336 and 1339. The first occurrence of Peter Seseres's business found in English records dates from 1336. On 13 October 1336, while sailing off the coast of Kent, a Majorcan ship, the *Saint Louis*, whose master was the Spaniard Bernard Bador, was attacked by the English ship *La Godbiete* and taken to Sandwich where its merchandise was stolen.¹⁰ Soon after the incident, Peter denounced it in a petition to parliament, asking for the mayor of Sandwich to investigate the case and arrest *La Godbiete's* master, Elias Condy and his associates from Sandwich.¹¹ Despite this misfortune, Peter's merchandise was still being shipped across the Channel from Sandwich in January 1337 when—alongside James Skamilica and two Lombard merchants, Ubertinus Manchesole of Piacenza and Conrad de Walescario of Asti—he obtained permission to cross to Brabant with money, hides and merchandise on board one or two Spanish and Zeeland ships.¹² Peter and his associates had imported goods for sale in Sandwich, but some remained unsold, so they were now planning to take that merchandise (including 75 tuns of honey and 3,000 ox-hides) to Brabant. Permission was granted on condition they would pay the tolls due in Sandwich and also remit letters from the Duke of Brabant certifying that they had unloaded the goods at a port within his authority.¹³ A few months later, in April 1337, Peter was permitted to export six barrels of wine—which had been taken from him at sea by certain subjects of the King of England and recovered in London—from London to Middelburg in Brabant, on condition that he would not take the wine elsewhere.¹⁴

Despite the outbreak of the Hundred Years War, which made trading across the Channel a risky business, in the later months of 1337 and into 1338 Peter's business was still based between Sandwich and London. Proceedings over the raid on the *Saint Louis* continued. The Aragonese merchants agreed to accept a lump sum of £330 from the men of Sandwich as compensation—as of November 1337 it remained unpaid. On Peter's petition, William Clinton, earl of Huntingdon, as constable of Dover and warden of the Cinque Ports, was ordered to enforce payment of the £330 against the men of Sandwich and those guilty of the raid. On 9 January 1338, Peter appeared in the Court of Chancery in London as attorney for the Aragonese merchants to confirm they released all claims with respect to the ship and its cargo against Elias Condy, his named associates, and all other men of Sandwich.¹⁵ Meanwhile, together with another Spanish merchant, Benedict Ferrandes, Peter appears as the owner of eighty-seven cloths in the cargo of a Spanish carrack which was attacked at sea. The stolen goods were taken to London and there seized by the authorities; Peter and Benedict petitioned the Crown for restoration of their cloth. On 20 January 1338, Edward III ordered the mayor and sheriffs of London to restore the cloth to Peter and Benedict because the King and council had agreed that all the goods of the merchants from the duchy of Aquitaine, Spain, Portugal and Lombardy and other friendly lands should be restored to them.¹⁶

In March 1338, Peter Seseres appears in the records as a member of the entourage of the cardinal of S. Prassede, Pedro Gomez de Barroso.¹⁷ The latter, together with Bertrand of Montfavès, cardinal of S. Maria in Aquiro, had been dispatched by Pope Benedict XII to England in November 1337 as papal legates to foster mediation between England and France.¹⁸ Cardinal Pedro Gomez was originally from Toledo in Castile; he had been bishop of Cartagena, was a former councillor of King Alfonso XI of Castile, and had served as papal legate in Castile in 1336.¹⁹ His appointment as legate to mediate in the Anglo-French conflict probably reflected the Pope's trust in his diplomatic skills and arguably complemented the personal profile of the other legate, Bertrand of Montfavès, who was a Frenchman from Quercy, as was Benedict XII's predecessor,

John XXII.²⁰

In March 1338, along with Peter Seseres, the cardinal legates' party comprised at least nineteen people.²¹ Some were connected to Pedro Gomez de Barroso and, like him, were from the Iberian Peninsula, including Pedro Lopez de Frias, James of Castile and Peter Seseres.²² Others were from southern France, for instance: Peter Meruli, a Benedictine monk from the priory of Saint-Denis at Menda in Lozère; Guillelmus de Curte, chamberlain of the French cardinal of S. Quattro Coronati;²³ Peter Johannis and Peter Johannis Trigintilibrarum, possibly connected to the cathedral in Avignon;²⁴ John Audini, clerk of Béziers;²⁵ Durand de Garsia, a monk of the Cluniac order, and Peter Garsie, both probably from Aquitaine.²⁶ Notably, the party also included William Montagu, earl of Salisbury, admiral of the English western fleet since 1337, who was an experienced diplomat and had been dispatched for important negotiations to the papal curia and France during the reigns of Edward II and Edward III.²⁷

The presence of Peter Seseres in the embassy of the papal legates and his connections with the King and his council in 1338 were remarkably timely. The two papal legates arrived in England on 29 November 1337 and began negotiating with Edward III, trying to delay the departure of his campaign to the Continent until the parliament summoned for February 1338,²⁸ and to sway the King's council to support an Anglo-French truce. Their diplomatic activity, however, clashed with Edward III's ongoing secret preparations for war, his successful engagements with the English subjects in Guyenne, and the establishment of international alliances with Genoa and Castile, and with Robert, king of Sicily and Naples.²⁹ On 14 February 1338, parliament approved Edward III's new set of demands to be put forward to Philip VI of France, which should have delayed the King's crossing to the Continent until late June. At this point, Benedict XII ordered the cardinals to continue negotiations with Philip VI in France. Thus, on 11 March 1338, Pedro Gomez's entourage, including Peter Seseres, was granted a safe-conduct to cross to the Continent. Despite the French attacks against Portsmouth and Jersey on 24 and 26 March 1338, on 7 April 1338 the Pope ordered the two legates themselves to travel to France to speak with Philip VI.³⁰

On 21 April, Philip VI's envoys arrived at the papal curia for further negotiations.³¹ The papal legates were in England on 1 May 1338, in a last attempt to prevent Edward III's summer campaign to France.³² Their journey to France was hindered because of the risks involved in crossing the Channel and, on 18 May 1338, Edward III granted safe conduct for the shipping of eighty sacks of wool from England to Brabant for their benefit.³³

Thanks to his trading business and his ability to keep his eyes and ears wide open, in March 1338, Peter Seseres thus found himself in a perfect position to gather useful and confidential information and rumours on the international political situation soon after the outbreak of the Hundred Years War and throughout the convoluted preparations for Edward III's campaign to the Continent. Meanwhile, Seseres's acquaintance with the cardinals and their entourage seems to have further enabled him to gain personal favours from the Crown. On 12 March 1338, the day after receiving the safe-conduct to cross to the Continent with the cardinals' entourage, Peter Seseres and his fellow merchant Benedict Ferrandes were granted licence to ship the eighty-seven cloths that had been stolen in the raid on the Spanish carrack from Southampton to Aragon, free of customs dues. The same favour was granted to their fellow merchants from Aragon, Majorca, 'Spain' and Lombardy, on the grounds of the English king's affection for the 'King of Spain'.³⁴

The ultimate failure of papal mediation in May 1338 and Edward III's crossing to the Continent on 16 July proved very challenging for Peter Seseres's business. Before 5 August 1338, he petitioned parliament and obtained the king's general protection for himself and his merchandise.³⁵ Yet royal protection did not prevent Peter from having a cargo of wares and goods stolen in Southampton, probably between 5 October, when the French raided the town, and 22 November 1338, when the king ordered the restitution of the stolen goods to Peter, Nicholas Fylet, William Pierehugh and their associates from Aragon and Catalonia.³⁶ The last piece of evidence found in the English records for Peter Seseres's activity is a writ close dated 10 February 1339. This ordered Nicholas de la Beche, constable of the Tower of London, to release Peter and William Perruk, Catalan merchants, who had been imprisoned because of 'suspicion' against them. They

were to be freed because certain earls and magnates had testified that the two merchants were guiltless and of good conduct.³⁷ The writ close does not explain the nature of the suspicion against Peter and William, but circumstantial evidence investigated below suggests that they were suspected of being foreign spies.³⁸

II

Peter Seseres's activity and his involvement in unofficial diplomacy as negotiator and information gatherer is evidenced in the overlooked diplomatic account preserved at TNA in the diplomatic miscellanea series as C 47/32/23. The roll, consisting of three membranes sewn together, authored by Seseres himself, records the counsel that Seseres sought to convey before the king and his council. It makes the case for an Anglo-Aragonese alliance and rests on information seemingly gathered by Peter through his contacts in England, France and the Iberian Peninsula.

Internal evidence suggests that Seseres's counsel was written between March and May 1338.

This dating is based on five pieces of information. Firstly, the counsel mentions that William Clinton, earl of Huntingdon, may have been dispatched to campaign in Gascony. This suggests that it was written at the time of Clinton's appointment as commander to Gascony between March and June 1338, before he assumed the regency for the Black Prince in England after Edward III went on campaign to the Continent in July 1338.³⁹ Secondly, it mentions the knight ('chivaler') Berenger de Saint-Jean as the second negotiator to be involved in the proposed mission. Berenger received payment for his service from the constable of Bordeaux on the king's order of 18 May 1338—this date could be considered as the *terminus ante quem* for the compilation of Seseres's counsel.⁴⁰ Thirdly, it maintains that Robert of Artois was also planning to cross to the Continent, as he eventually did in the summer of 1338, following Edward III in his first continental campaign.⁴¹ Fourthly, it reports that Philip VI of Valois was concerned with the possible involvement of the Empire in the Anglo-French conflict and even an Anglo-imperial invasion of France, without referring to Edward III as imperial vicar (a title he assumed from November 1338). The report was therefore probably written between late March 1338, when the Anglo-imperial

invasion of France was threatened, and before November 1338, when Edward III accepted the imperial vicarage.⁴² Fifthly, at the end of his account, Seseres displays some insight into papal plans to organise a new crusade, information which he must have gathered during the journey undertaken across the Channel with the papal legates' entourage in March 1338.⁴³

The dating of Peter Seseres's counsel between March and May 1338 is most significant, considering his activity and connections in those months. As mentioned above, since January 1338 Peter had, through his business, established relations with the inner circles of London's mercantile classes and with the royal administration—petitioning parliament, the king and his council on a few occasions and attending the Court of Chancery. During this period, he was probably acquainted with William Clinton, who as constable of Dover and warden of the Cinque Ports was responsible for the execution of royal orders in favour of Seseres and his fellow merchants.⁴⁴ Indeed, in his counsel, Peter Seseres claims some familiarity with William Clinton and has warm words for him, remarking on his chivalric values, loyalty and many virtues, and the esteem in which Clinton was held among the community of Aragonese and Castilian merchants.⁴⁵ Peter was also acquainted with the papal legates Bertrand of Montfavès and Pedro Gomez de Barroso who, on their arrival in England on 29 November 1337, were escorted from Dover to London by the same William Clinton.⁴⁶ In January 1338, while waiting in London for the deliberations of the Westminster parliament (summoned for 3 February 1338), the cardinals pursued both diplomatic activity and their own personal affairs, sending wine and other goods to the Continent. On 4 and 10 January 1338, Edward III granted royal protection to the cardinals' messengers and servants when shipping wine and sending letters between England, Gascony and the papal curia.⁴⁷ It is therefore tempting to speculate that this sort of business allowed Peter Seseres and his associates to network with the cardinals' entourage, given that their business, based mostly in London and Sandwich, specialised in trading goods and probably provided occasional transportation of individuals across the Channel.

During the first half of 1338, in preparation for his first continental campaign in the Hundred Years War, Edward III focused on the international dimension of the conflict, extending his diplomatic

efforts beyond France and the Low Countries. In this context, the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula had a special role to play because of their contribution to international trade across the Channel as well as their feudal connections with the south of France.⁴⁸ As Déprez has pointed out, in January 1338, while the cardinals were waiting for the summoning of parliament in England, Edward III moved secretly and decisively to strengthen his alliances with Genoa, Castile and Naples. While concluding his alliances in Flanders, on 28 August 1337, Edward III announced the dispatch of an embassy to Aragon to secure Peter IV's support.⁴⁹ According to the sixteenth-century historian Jerónimo Zurita, at Christmas 1338 the Dominican envoys from England, Guillelmo de Orgolio and Bertran de Perraleuada, arrived at the Aragonese court in Valencia and conveyed the advantages of an Anglo-Aragonese alliance to King Peter IV, but the king's advisers steered the young king away from this idea, suggesting instead that he should ally with France.⁵⁰ Between 1337 and the early months of 1338, Edward III had also undertaken diplomatic relations with Castile. Between May and June 1337, he issued letters of protection to merchants trading with Brabant, Castile and Aragon.⁵¹ On 4 January 1338, at the request of the King of Castile, Edward III endorsed the complaint of some Castilian merchants who had been robbed in English waters off Southampton, while, on 8 January, the king granted protection to the Castilian merchants trading between England and the Low Countries.⁵² Most importantly, two writs close, dated 7 and 8 January 1338 and addressed to Queen Maria and King Alfonso XI of Castile, show Edward III's intention to focus on Anglo-Castilian diplomacy, negotiating an alliance with Castile that had been delayed because of the King of Castile's war in Portugal.⁵³ Meanwhile, on 8 January 1338, Edward III commended the dispatch of his envoy *Arnald de Duro Forti* to Robert, king of Naples, who was at this point an important diplomatic player and facilitated the diplomatic communications between Benedict XII and Peter IV, king of Aragon, in February 1338.⁵⁴

Between March and May 1338, in very complex and rapidly changing political circumstances, Peter Seseres was therefore in a good position not only to gather information and rumours that could be conveyed to the English and Aragonese Crowns, but above all to try to advance himself from merchant to international negotiator, providing advice to Edward III and his council. Yet, most

importantly, beyond the speculations on the international political milieu, Seseres's counsel does not shy away from its true agenda, namely facilitating the business of Aragonese and Castilian merchants across the Channel after the outbreak of the Anglo-French conflict.

III

The three membranes of the manuscript roughly correspond to three distinct sections of Seseres's counsel. The first section makes the case for an Anglo-Aragonese alliance,⁵⁵ the second contains the forms of documents that the English Crown should dispatch as part of the diplomatic mission, the negotiator's opinions and conclusions,⁵⁶ the third sets out the practical arrangements regarding the diplomatic envoys to be dispatched on the diplomatic mission and their faculties. A fourth section and membrane, as stated in a now-faint note added to the document, could have been detached or torn away, as happened for documents recording confidential and sensitive information.⁵⁷ The structure of Seseres's counsel follows the formulaic pattern of Aragonese secret diplomatic reports, which, as Péquignot pointed out, were generally presented in the form of an inquiry, namely a methodical evaluation of potential scenarios to support or reject a course of action.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, throughout the document, Peter Seseres maintained two distinct, but often intertwined, main lines of argument. Firstly, he supported the case for an alliance between Aragon and the Anglo-Flemish coalition against France, established in August 1337, to advance successfully English military gains and conquest of the duchy of Aquitaine and territories on the French–Iberian border. Secondly, he showed the economic advantages that success against France, achieved through an Anglo-Aragonese alliance, would have brought to both the English and Aragonese Crowns, their subjects and, above all, to merchants and their businesses.

In the first membrane, at the beginning of his counsel, Peter Seseres clearly positioned himself before Edward III and his council as negotiator and political adviser, able to demonstrate how the proposed Anglo-Aragonese alliance would benefit both parties in military and economic respects. Initially, Seseres set out to secure the attention and interest of his audience by disclosing that Peter IV of Aragon had recently undertaken diplomatic negotiations ('par treyter et determiner')

with Philip VI of Valois.⁵⁹ These negotiations concerned three specific issues: firstly, the grant of the county of Toulouse in southern France to the Aragonese Crown; secondly, the reciprocal right of reprisal ('marke'), from which both Aragonese and French merchants would be protected; and thirdly, the return to the Aragonese Crown of the county of Comminges, which Philip VI had unlawfully taken from James, count of Urgell, the brother of Peter IV of Aragon.⁶⁰ With regard to this last issue, Seseres maintained that Peter IV had unsuccessfully complained to Philip VI that he had suffered great harm as a result. Seseres claimed to have good inside knowledge on this matter, which he would share orally with Edward III and his council ('plus plenment dire de buche').⁶¹ Seseres was clearly trying to draw the attention of his audience with compelling rumours about the ongoing Franco-Aragonese negotiations, yet there can be no doubt that he was well informed. The county of Toulouse had come under the control of the French Crown in 1283, after Alphonse of Poitiers, brother of Louis IX, king of France, died without heirs, having acquired the county in 1249 from his deceased wife Joanna, who had herself inherited it from her mother Sancha of Aragon.⁶² Likewise, the recovery of the county of Comminges had been at the core of failed Franco-Aragonese diplomatic negotiations between 1312 and 1325.⁶³ Concluding the introductory part of his counsel, Seseres therefore suggested that Edward III could exploit the disagreement between the French and Aragonese kings on the possession of the county of Comminges to his advantage, as he could have done for the disagreement between Philip VI and the King of Majorca, concluding that there were counts and barons in the kingdoms of Aragon, Majorca and Castile, whom the French had dispossessed and who may have been keen to help the English against Philip VI.⁶⁴

Securing the trust of his audience through displaying insider political knowledge, Seseres set himself up as a prospective diplomatic envoy, who should be dispatched to the court of Peter IV of Aragon to negotiate the Anglo-Aragonese alliance and its provisions on behalf of Edward III and his council.⁶⁵ Seseres introduced this section making clear that he was seizing the initiative in the diplomatic negotiations ('finelement m'est avys solom mon petite sen que bon serroit'), as he did in other passages throughout the counsel.⁶⁶ Seseres proposed that the English should make five

covenants with Peter IV of Aragon, namely: that the King of Aragon would receive the counties of Toulouse and Comminges; that the campaign ('a guerreier et chivacher') would take place in those territories when both kings were ready and before the harvest season; that the King of England would retain the same rights in those counties as the King of France had held; that no peace or truce should be agreed without the mutual consent of the King of England and the King of Aragon; and, finally, that the King of Aragon would defend the King of England against fleets that might come to support the King of France. Seseres further maintained that, once the counties of Toulouse and Comminges were conquered, the administration of them should be given to another count previously chosen, if the King of Aragon were to be absent during a war against Philip VI. Finally, according to Seseres, the King of Aragon should be allowed to retain and dispose as he wished of conquered territories up to fifty square leagues (about 2,500 square kilometres) in extent. This would be subject to three conditions: that the counts and barons of these territories would defend them as they did for the French Crown; that the conquered towns, cities, castles and other places should pay two years of due rent (to the English), starting one year after the conquest, and could redeem them in five years; and that the King of Aragon would leave it to the English to acquire the town of Montpellier.⁶⁷ Montpellier had been part of the kingdom of Majorca and disputed with the French Crown since 1258, when the Treaty of Corbeil between Louis IX, king of France, and James I, king of Aragon, had failed to address its status.⁶⁸

These were high-stakes political dealings. Arguably, what Seseres was suggesting was that Edward III's offer to Peter IV should match the covenants made to him by Philip VI, in terms of territorial acquisitions for the Aragonese Crown in the counties of Toulouse and Comminges and reciprocal military aid, save for one important issue, namely the military support of the Aragonese vassals in the region against the French. This request was crucial, given the political and military importance of the counties of Toulouse and Comminges in the Anglo-French conflict—as Seseres himself argued later in his counsel. Furthering this line of argument, Seseres added a list of six concessions which the King of England would grant to the King of Aragon in return for his continuous support and assistance against the French.⁶⁹ These terms were: the acquittal of people and properties of the French Crown for up to 5,000 florins of Florence; the pledge of up to

5,000 florins of Florence payable in three or four years over French people and properties; the pledge of up to 5,000 florins of Florence over outsiders ('gentz estranngers') in France; the payment of the *census* and other dues of the people of three 'foreign' towns in France ('citees estranges de France');⁷⁰ the grant of protection to take money outside France freely; and the proclamation of five jurisdictions (*banys*) in the French kingdom. These further concessions arguably made the English propositions quite attractive for the Aragonese Crown, especially regarding the size of the territorial gains and their taxable income.

At the end of the first section of his counsel, Seseres further set these covenants in the broad political picture, expressing once more his own assessments. While maintaining the need to dispatch diplomatic envoys to Castile in order to resolve promptly the ongoing war there, with a convoluted and rhetorical turn of phrase Seseres dared to state openly his own support for the dispatch of Robert of Artois and the Earl of Huntingdon (William Clinton) to fight in Gascony, since, along with the King of Aragon, they would represent as much of a challenge for Philip VI as that he faced in the Empire—where Edward III had gathered an anti-French coalition in the summer of 1337.⁷¹ Seseres also requested safe-conducts and protection for the messengers and the merchants from England and Flanders involved in this mission, once more indulging in rhetorical flourishes to express how these arrangements would favour the trade of English wool and Flemish cloth and be financially advantageous for the English Crown.⁷² Meanwhile, probably owing to his past experiences, wary of attacks against the ships and their merchandise during their journeys off the English coasts, Seseres asked that any dispute between the messengers and English merchants or subjects should be arbitrated before the King.

In the second section, Seseres's requests for protection for the negotiators are followed by arrangements for the dispatch of letters of credence for the envoys and Seseres's conclusions, all of which are recorded on the second membrane of the roll. Here, Seseres first provides letters of credence for the envoys sent by the English Crown to the King of Aragon and the King of Castile and safe-conducts for the Aragonese and Castilian merchants who would be dispatched along with the messengers. Interestingly, while the letter of credence addressed to Peter IV of Aragon

was to be issued unsealed, possibly to preserve the confidentiality of the mission, and refers to the envoys' faculties of negotiation in general terms, the letter of credence for the King of Castile refers to the need to make peace and agreement between the two kingdoms.⁷³

These letters of credence are followed by Seseres's concluding remarks, which convey four main points. Firstly, Seseres suggested that the alliance between England and Aragon, as well as providing a solution to the war in Castile, would favour the organisation of a great military expedition to advance well into the kingdom of France. This military endeavour would also take advantage of the concrete threat of an Anglo-imperial invasion of France, which was seen as likely by March 1338, and would offer the English a successful outcome similar to that in autumn 1325 at the end of the War of Saint-Sardos, when Edward, then prince of Wales, went to France.⁷⁴

Secondly, Seseres maintained that it was likely that Peter IV of Aragon would recover the counties of Toulouse and Comminges without facing any opposition from the population of Navarre. This had been confirmed by some English envoys dispatched to Navarre after the coronation of Philip of Evreux as king of Navarre in March 1328.⁷⁵ Arguably, Seseres built here on the information provided by reliable insiders at court and was well informed on the broader international political implications of his plan, especially when mentioning the involvement of the Navarrese Crown and the embassy of Master Reymond Durant who had been dispatched to Navarre on 28 March 1328.

⁷⁶ Yet, as a neighbour of the count of Comminges, the king of Navarre was involved in the politics of the county, especially during the rule of Philip of Evreux. Philip was a cousin of Philip VI of Valois and promised his daughter Maria in marriage to Peter IV of Aragon in 1336, exchanging some castles on the border between the two kingdoms as a guarantee for the marriage agreement.
⁷⁷

Reverting here to a point he had already made, Seseres once more argued for the dispatch of Robert of Artois and William Clinton to Gascony. Alluding to the disagreement between Philip VI and his cousin Robert over the inheritance of the county of Artois, Seseres emphasised that Philip VI had great obligations towards Robert of Artois, who enjoyed strong support in France and Gascony.⁷⁸ Here, Robert could count on the friendship of the Count of Foix and could have

shifted his supporters' allegiance to the English. Seseres's mention of the count of Foix, Gaston II (1315–43), and his relation to the counts of Artois is significant and reveals Seseres's clear understanding of the complex set of political allegiances in the duchy. Gaston II's mother, Joan of Artois, was Robert's sister and had been actively involved in Foix's decision to side with the French against the English in Aquitaine since her marriage to Gaston I of Foix in 1301, bringing a strong influence to bear on her son Gaston II's rule. In this respect, it was plausible that Robert of Artois could be considered a means to shift the position of the counts of Foix towards the English. However, this may have been difficult in practice, since Joan had been a notorious supporter of the French at the time of the Marsan war in Gascony in 1323 and during the War of Saint-Sardos.

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Furthermore, in Seseres's opinion, Robert of Artois enjoyed the backing of the kings of Castile, Aragon, Majorca and Portugal and of the duke of Brittany. Yet again, Seseres's speculations on the connections of Robert of Artois were here broadly plausible: John III, duke of Brittany, had been the only one to vote against the banishment of Robert of Artois from France in 1332, and was himself distantly related to the crowns of Castile and Portugal through his wife, Isabelle of Castile.⁸⁰ Finally, while Seseres considered Robert of Artois as pivotal to English plans for a great anti-French alliance in the Iberian Peninsula, he once more praised William Clinton, as one held in great esteem among the Castilian and Aragonese merchants, now demanding his return to France.⁸¹ In conclusion, Seseres maintained that, if such a great anti-French coalition, held together by the proposed Anglo-Aragonese alliance, were to embark on a military expedition ('chyvacher') in France, then the English Crown would reconquer the whole of the duchy of Aquitaine, while the Aragonese Crown would secure the counties of Toulouse and Comminges.⁸² Obviously, what Seseres was thinking of here was a joint attack against the French, directed by the Anglo-Flemish and Anglo-German alliances at the northern borders of France and the Channel and by the Aragonese Crown at the Iberian-French borders.

To fulfil this plan, in the third and final section of his counsel Seseres therefore moves to the practical arrangements for the proposed diplomatic mission, focusing on the envoys and their

commissions. Significantly, Seseres put himself forward as chief negotiator along with the *chivaler* Berenger de Saint-Jean. Both Berenger and Peter Seseres should receive written letters of credence for their mission listing their faculties.⁸³ Indeed, further detailing the practical arrangements needed to fulfil the mission ('ces sont les choses que les dites messages ont busoigne'), Seseres requested a 'dual appointment' ('double commission') for the envoys, who would have the faculty of negotiating before the kings of both England and Aragon.⁸⁴ The latter was a crucial and quite perceptive request on Seseres's part, since, as I have argued elsewhere, dual appointments were meant to reduce possible friction among the parties during diplomatic negotiations, although they occasionally created confusion and conflicts of interest.⁸⁵ Seseres also asked that the diplomatic envoys be escorted by armed men under the command of Bartholomew de Bochon and that the envoys be allowed to find their own passage and ships, being funded directly over two, three or four years up to a total of 50,000 marks sterling. Furthermore, pending the permission of the King of Aragon, Seseres proposed that the diplomatic envoys could employ six trusted armed men ('honourables hommes'), each of whom would receive a pension of £20 or £30 sterling. The latter were to answer to the English king and would have played an important role in the mission.⁸⁶ Next, Seseres significantly tried to further his own interests and those of his fellow merchants, creating a special status for one hundred merchants, who would swear allegiance to the English Crown and receive an indenture as evidence of their status, while Seseres and Saint-Jean, as messengers, would receive the faculty of freeing those merchants from duties owed on merchandise exported outside England. Furthermore, Seseres asked that the messengers be given the faculty to arbitrate in the case of robberies committed by English merchants against merchants of Aragon and Majorca, securing that such English merchants should be prosecuted by the English Crown and that merchants of Aragon and Majorca should pay their dues to the English Crown.

Finally, on a smaller strip of parchment stitched to the bottom of the enrolment, using a different thread and pattern from that employed to attach membranes 1 and 2, Seseres listed the capabilities needed by the negotiators to confirm and warrant the territories that would be

granted to the King of Aragon by conquest.⁸⁷ As proposed in the earlier part of his counsel, the envoys were to be given powers to agree with the King of Aragon on the size of the conquered territories (up to fifty square leagues) as well as their shape (triangular, square or circular) and boundaries, while the administration of those territories was to be given, in agreement with 'the King of Aragon and Majorca', to the lords who contributed to the military conquest. If it were not possible to divide the conquered territories into portions of fifty square leagues, then the King of Aragon could negotiate their division into smaller portions of twenty leagues. Finally, Seseres maintained that the King of Aragon would welcome the English offer of enfranchising the conquered territories to him in return for a monetary loan. Once more Seseres here seems intentionally to outbid the French offers made to the Aragonese Crown, while playing on the English need for cash to fund the Anglo-French war.⁸⁸ Seseres concluded his counsel by reflecting rhetorically on the great cost needed to acquire a great advantage and on the necessity of securing great allies to conquer large territories and defeat the enemy. Here, disguised as an afterthought, Seseres provided confidential information about papal plans for a crusade. Admitting that the organisation of a crusade risked jeopardising the proposed Anglo-Aragonese alliance, Seseres reassured Edward III that the Pope could not launch a crusade without the consent of four kings, namely the kings of England and France, who were at war with each other, and the kings of Aragon and Castile.⁸⁹ Convinced that there was no appetite among Christians for a crusade at that moment, Seseres therefore recommended that Edward III write to the Pope, asking him to halt his crusading plans and conscientiously support the party that was in the right, namely the Anglo-Flemish alliance, against the one that was in the wrong, namely the French. Edward III should further confirm that he would be willing to take the cross in the future. Once more, here Seseres seems to have built on rumours that he had probably gathered from his acquaintance with the papal legates Pedro Gomez and Bertrand of Montfavés and their entourage in March 1338.⁹⁰ Yet, Seseres's information was overall correct. As Housley pointed out, after 1336 Aragon and Castile lost interest in both the crusade to the Holy Land and the *Reconquista*, which were draining their kingdoms' finances. In March 1338 Edward

III dreaded the threat of Pope Benedict XII's crusading plans, after Philip VI had been allowed to use the two-years' tenth, collected for the cancelled crusade in the Holy Land, to fund the defence of the kingdom of France against Emperor Lewis of Bavaria and his Anglo-Flemish supporters.⁹¹

IV

The activity of Peter Seseres is significant in several different respects. On the one hand, his career shows how a merchant from the Iberian Peninsula, whose business consisted in trading goods between England, the Low Countries and the Iberian Peninsula, enduring the relentless danger of robbery and piracy in English and French waters, could profit from the uncertainties and risks that arose after the outbreak of the Hundred Years War in 1337. In those exceptional circumstances, Seseres and his associates were able to take advantage of their expertise and connections in England, France and the Iberian Peninsula, diversifying their activities from trading to unofficial diplomatic negotiations and representation. Merchants were, at least theoretically, protected by rights of safe passage. They could exploit special protection in different countries and were in an ideal position to play unofficial diplomatic roles.⁹² Unlike official diplomatic envoys and embassies, their activities could be easily disguised, covering the gathering of sensitive information, rumours and espionage. This was, however, a risky business, as Seseres's arrest and imprisonment in the Tower of London in 1339 on the grounds of suspected espionage clearly shows.⁹³

The examination of Peter Seseres's career and his counsel displays a degree of sophistication and cunning in his understanding of the international political and diplomatic milieu, in his capacity to pivot effortlessly between Edward's geopolitical interests and his own as a merchant trader. If anything, the counsel bears witness to Seseres's detailed investigation of both sides of the argument. At the beginning, Seseres astutely sets the proposed Anglo-Aragonese alliance against the plans for a Franco-Aragonese alliance, positioning Edward III and his council in competition with the French enemy. He then moves on to the advantages of an Anglo-Aragonese alliance, demonstrating how it would be convenient for Edward III to ally with Peter IV of Aragon on the

basis of territorial and regional considerations concerning the politics of the Iberian Peninsula, where the King of Aragon was pursuing a plan of expansion across the Mediterranean Sea.⁹⁴ Indeed, Seseres draws heavily on the idea that Edward III would gain the support not only of the Aragonese Crown in the war against France, but also that of those owing it feudal allegiance in southern France. In return, Peter IV could exploit the outbreak of the Anglo-French conflict to gain control over strategic territories adjacent to his kingdom, namely the counties of Toulouse and Comminges in southern France, where the English covenants offered to the King of Aragon would generously outbid the French ones. Arguably, Seseres demonstrated competence in grasping the complex set of allegiances on the Iberian-French border, sensitively aware that the Aragonese Crown had lost control of the counties of Toulouse and Comminges due to inheritance rules.⁹⁵ In this respect, a sticking point in the negotiations could have been control over Roussillon and Montpellier, which, in Abulafia's opinion, represented a very desirable acquisition for Peter IV because of their importance as centres for trade and financial transactions, while Seseres suggested that Roussillon and Montpellier should be left to the English after the conquest.⁹⁶

Seseres built on his in-depth knowledge of English policy in the Iberian Peninsula between January and February 1338, when Edward III had undertaken secret negotiations for an Anglo-Castilian alliance, while dispatching his envoys to Aragon, where in December 1337 the diplomatic mission of England's Dominican envoys, Guillelmo de Orgolio and Bertran de Perraleuada, had failed to set up an Anglo-Aragonese alliance, as mentioned above.⁹⁷ We can read in this optic the emphasis of Seseres's counsel on the importance of pursuing negotiations with the kingdom of Castile, implicitly hinting at the Castilian need for Aragonese support. Such was the case given the war between Castile and Portugal,⁹⁸ where peace negotiations, between July and December 1338, were entrusted to Bernard of Albi, bishop of Rodez, upon the request of Peter IV of Aragon.⁹⁸ Finally, Seseres included in his assessment of the geo-political situation in the Iberian Peninsula the case of the kingdom of Navarre. In this respect, the English alliance with the Aragonese Crown could have exploited Peter IV's marriage to Maria of Navarre in July 1337 and consolidated the English stand in the region vis-à-vis Philip VI of Valois, who was related to the Navarrese bloodline

through his cousin the king of Navarre, Philip of Evreux.⁹⁹

Seseres also demonstrated insider knowledge of the established territorial allegiances in the kingdom of France and the duchy of Aquitaine and how they intertwined with the politics of the territories on the Franco-Iberian border. The latter is evidenced in the careful assessment of how the Aragonese military engagement in France could offer a great advantage for the Anglo-Flemish alliance against the French both in the duchy and in the kingdom of France. In so doing, Seseres focused on the pivotal role that Robert of Artois could play to secure a pro-English consensus in the duchy thanks to Artois's connections with the Count of Foix as well as in Castile, Portugal and Brittany, where Robert enjoyed the support of Duke John III. Arguably, the involvement of Robert of Artois in Seseres's plan may have represented something of a gamble on his part, since Philip VI had used Edward III's protection of Robert of Artois as an excuse to confiscate the duchy of Aquitaine in May 1337, an action that Froissart suggested may have prompted the outbreak of the Hundred Years War.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, even Benedict XII was concerned by the English protection of Robert of Artois, which was considered risky and dangerous, as the Pope wrote to his legate Bertrand of Montfavés on 24 July 1338.¹⁰¹ Yet, it seems very likely that Seseres's speculations on Robert's possible role in English military operations in Gascony may have built on rumours and information gathered not only through his contacts at the English court, but also through his acquaintance with the entourage of the papal legates in March 1338. Likewise, Seseres's personal acquaintance with William Clinton, earl of Huntingdon, further prompted his advice to Edward III of dispatching Clinton to Gascony, where his popularity among the Aragonese and Castilian merchant community made him a good candidate to liaise and fight along with the Aragonese allies.

Overall, Seseres's plan was quite straightforward: he proposed that Edward III should expand his international alliances to the Iberian Peninsula, creating a great anti-French coalition and aggravating the international isolation endured by the French between March and July 1338. The only limitation to this plan was, by Seseres's own admission, Benedict XII's project for a new crusade in the Holy Land, which was coupled, in March 1338, with the Pope's concession to

Philip VI of employing the crusading tenth to defend his borders against the threat of an imperial invasion.¹⁰² Yet again, Seseres's assessment here was sound and probably informed by his familiarity with the papal legates in England. Seseres built on papal peace-making narratives, which were focused in 1337–38 on the re-launch of the crusade after its cancellation in 1336, and seen as a means to delay the beginning of the Anglo-French hostilities. However, Seseres correctly assessed the illusory nature of this papal project.¹⁰³

Along with Seseres's original contribution to our understanding of the complex geo-political domestic, regional and international milieu at the outbreak of the Hundred Years War, his counsel uniquely sheds new light on how unofficial diplomatic missions were managed on a practical level in the fourteenth century. In this respect, some remarkable administrative and diplomatic practices stand out. First, Seseres was not chosen as a diplomatic envoy, but set himself up as a negotiator together with Berenger de Saint-Jean, who had men-at-arms and was fighting in Gascony on behalf of the English Crown in March 1338.¹⁰⁴ Equally, the two messengers demanded a 'dual appointment' ('double commission') to negotiate between England and Aragon and were clearly planning to act as a team, with duties and tasks determined by their individual backgrounds. Berenger, along with another knight, Bartholomew de Bochon, who led six armed men, was to be responsible for the protection of the party during the journeys by land and sea, potentially imperilled by warfare and privateers. Meanwhile, Seseres was to act as the negotiator, exploiting his merchant skills and networks as well as his connections in England, on the Continent and in Aragon, and as a broker for transportation and practical arrangements. Counting on mercantile networks, Seseres could further guarantee a degree of secrecy for the operation, disguising it behind ordinary trading activities. Last but not least, in his counsel, Seseres carefully addressed the issue of sensitive and confidential information that should be conveyed only verbally or should be detached and disposed of, as is suggested by the strip of parchment sewn at the end of the enrolment, recording more confidential details on the management of the mission.¹⁰⁵

Despite its great risks and unofficial nature, the proposed diplomatic mission potentially held great advantages for those participating in it. On the one hand, the English Crown was to finance the

mission in full, budgeting for transportation, the payment of informers and tips, the armed protection of the messengers, and other expenses. On the other hand, Seseres and his fellow merchants would have profited from the mission, gaining protection for trade in the conquered territories on the French-Iberian border and across the Channel.¹⁰⁶ Although this secondary and more self-serving agenda of Seseres's mission is not openly discussed, it emerges in the request to Edward III to set up a special status for one hundred Aragonese and Majorcan merchants, who were to swear allegiance to the English Crown in return for favourable conditions on their exports and the promise of due process in the case of robbery in English waters. Significantly, this was probably the only part of Seseres's plan that was ever implemented to any extent. Between March and April 1338 exports of wool and goods abroad were banned to support the preparation for the English continental campaign, but on 20 August 1338 royal protection was granted to merchants from Aragon, parts of Castile and Majorca trading in the Low Countries, Ireland and other regions allied with the English Crown.¹⁰⁷

We can speculate that Seseres's proposed mission led to his arrest on suspicion of espionage in late 1338/early 1339, and whether his counsel was found or used as evidence on that occasion, though such speculation is tempting. Although some suggestions in Seseres's counsel, such as the deployment of Robert of Artois in Gascony, may have been somewhat politically controversial, on close examination the document does not seem to contain any information gained illicitly, but simply builds on rumours and news that Seseres had gathered while keeping his ears wide open alongside his business activities. If anything, someone at court, who had Seseres imprisoned in 1339, resented him stepping forward as an international negotiator before Edward III and his council, and it is quite understandable why Edward III eventually let him off.

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Footnotes

¹ *I am very grateful to the anonymous readers and the editors of *The English Historical Review* for their advice on this article.

B. Bombi, *Anglo-Papal Relations in the Early Fourteenth Century. A Study in Medieval Diplomacy* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 53–66.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 83–91, 100–101. See also J.R. Alban and C.T. Allmand, ‘Spies and Spying in the Fourteenth Century’, in C.T. Allmand, ed., *War, Literature and Politics in the Late Middle Ages*; ed. C.T. Allmand (Liverpool, 1976), pp. 74–9; A. Reitermeier, *Außenpolitik im Spätmittelalter. Die diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen dem Reich und England, 1377-1422* (Paderborn, 1999), pp. 399–408; J.M. Moeglin and S. Péquignot, *Diplomatie et ‘relations internationales’ au Moyen Age (IXe–XVe siècle)* (Paris, 2017), pp. 645–70. More recently, both Aude Cirier and Edward Loss have pointed out how intelligence services first emerged in the Italian communes from the thirteenth century onwards and how, especially in Loss’s opinion, they were associated with the formation of ‘popular’ forms of government: A. Cirier, ‘Diplomazia e retorica comunale: la comunicazione attraverso lo spionaggio politico nell’Italia medievale (secc. XII–XIII)’, in R. Castano, F. Latella and T. Sorrenti, eds, *Comunicazione e propaganda nei secoli XII e XIII* (Rome, 2005), pp. 199–216, at 212–13; E. Loss, *Officium Spiarum. Spionaggio e gestione delle informazioni a Bologna (secoli XIII–XIV)* (Rome, 2020), pp. 35–70. For specific references to the Aragonese Crown and the use of its subjects, especially merchants, as diplomatic envoys, see S. Péquignot, *Au nom du roi: Pratique diplomatique et pouvoir durant le règne de Jacques II d’Aragon (1291–1327)* (Madrid, 2009), pp. 110, 118.

3 M.T. Ferrer i Mallol, *Organització i defensa d’un territori fronterer. La governació d’Oriola en el segle XIV* (Barcelona, 1990), pp. 285–96; Péquignot, *Au nom du roi*, pp. 109–10.

4 On relations between England and the Iberian kingdoms in the fourteenth century, see G.F. Ordovás, *Amistad, alianza y traición. Inglaterra, Castilla y Aragón en el siglo XIV* (Seville, 2018), pp. 47–86.

5 Kew, The National Archives [hereafter TNA], C 47/32/23. To the best of my knowledge, this document has been overlooked by scholars.

6 See A.L.J. Villalon and Donald J. Kagay, eds, *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus* (Leiden,

2005).

7 In most of the sources, Peter Seseres is described as ‘of Aragon’ (e.g., TNA, SC 8/74/3672). However, in his 1338 petition for royal protection, he is styled ‘of Catalonia’: TNA, SC 8/156/7793, and see n. 37 below.

8 Bartomeu and Bernat Seseres were involved in the dissolution of the Templar estate of the commandery of Temple de Castelló d’Empúries in Catalonia in 1309: M. Pujol i Canelles, ‘Els Templers a l’Empordà. La comanda del Temple de Castelló d’Empúries’, *Annals de l’Institut d’Estudis Empordanesos*, xvii (1984), pp. 31–94, at 87 n. 20. A merchant named Bartolomeus Seseres is documented in the proceedings of a trial in Majorca in 1347: G. Llompарт, ‘La “vilania” de la “Festa de la Caritat” en 1347’, *Bolletí de la Societat Arqueològica Lulliana*, xviii (1992), pp. 51–66. I am most grateful to the anonymous referee of this article for their help with the identification of Seseres’s origins and these bibliographical references.

9 T.H. Lloyd, *Alien Merchants in England in the High Middle Ages* (New York, 1982), pp. 159–65; O.R. Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain 900–1500* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 243–7; D. Coulon, ‘The Commercial Influence of the Crown of Aragon in the Eastern Mediterranean: Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries’, pp. 279–308, and A. Riera, ‘The Beginning of Urban Manufacturing and Long Distance Trade’, pp. 201–36, both in F. Sabaté, ed., *The Crown of Aragon. A Singular Mediterranean Empire* (Leiden and Boston, 2017).

10 *Calendar of Close Rolls Edward III: Volume 4, 1337–1339*, ed. H.C. Maxwell Lyte (London, 1900) [hereafter *CCR, 1337–39*], pp. 214, 284. On the importance of the Kentish coast in the Channel trade during the first phase of the Hundred Years War, see A. Ayton and C. Lambert, ‘A Maritime Community in War and Peace: Kentish Ports, Ships and Mariners, 1320–1400’, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxxxiv (2014), pp. 67–80; Ordovás, *Amistad*, pp. 21–45.

11 TNA, SC 8/74/3672; *CCR, 1337–39*, pp. 214, 284.

12 On business partnerships between Lombards and Catalans in the southern Mediterranean and England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see T.H. Lloyd, *Alien Merchants in*

England in the High Middle Ages (New York, 1982), pp. 159, 168–73; Constable, *Trade and Traders*, pp. 249–50.

13 *Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III: Volume 3, 1333–1337*, ed. H.C. Maxwell Lyte (London, 1898), pp. 643–4. On the importance of Italian merchants from Piacenza and Asti and their activities, see Y. Renouard, *Les hommes d'affaires italiens du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1949), pp. 65–9.

14 *CCR, 1337–39*, p. 39.

15 *CCR, 1337–39*, pp. 214, 284. Seseres's action here was not unusual and, as Lloyd pointed out, a similar appeal to the Court of Chancery was launched by Aragonese and Majorcan merchants in 1323–25: Lloyd, *Alien Merchants*, p. 163.

16 *CCR, 1337–39*, p. 236.

17 *CCR, 1337–39*, p. 391.

18 *Benoît XII (1334–1342). Lettres closes, patentes et curiales se rapportant à la France 1334–1342*, ed. G. Daumet (3 vols, Paris, 1899–1920), i, no. 376, col. 237; *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Cuiuscunque Generis Acta Publica*, ed. T. Rymer and R. Sanderson (3 vols, London, 1816–30), ii pt 2, p. 1006.

19 H. Hofmann, *Kardinalat und kuriale Politik in der ersten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1935), p. 73; D. Emeis, 'Peter IV., Johann I. und Martin von Aragon und ihre Kardinäle', *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens*, xvii (1961), pp. 72–233, at 107; P. Linehan, 'Castile, Navarre and Portugal', in M. Jones, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, VI, c.1300–c.1415* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 619–50, at 630.

20 B. Bombi, 'Benedict XII and the Outbreak of the Hundred Years' War', in I. Bueno, ed., *Benedict XII (1334–1342). The Guardian of Orthodoxy* (Amsterdam, 2018), pp. 191–216, at 204–10.

21 *CCR*, 1337–39, p. 391. The cardinals' entourage is listed here as: Didatus Martin (styled squire ['donsel'] to the Pope and to Cardinal Pedro Gomez), Peter Johannis, Peter Johannis Tringintalibrarum, Pedro Lopez de Frias, Peter Seseres, William Montagu, James Silvester, James Castelli, James de Botrou, Giles de Vascers, Bernard de Pontils, Peter Garsie, John de Ama, Durand de Garsia (a monk of the Cluniac order), Peter Meruli, Bertrand the clerk, John Audini, Reimund Armandeti, Augerius Mosengue and Conrad de Urmo.

22 *Benoît XII (1334–1342). Lettres communes analysées d'après les registres dits d'Avignon et du Vatican*, ed. J.-M. Vidal (3 vols, Paris, 1903–11), ii, no. 7772, p. 249; i, no. 897, p. 88.

23 *Ibid.*, i, no. 4278, p. 402; ii, no. 5523, p. 33; ii, no. 7789, p. 250.

24 A canon of Avignon Cathedral appears with the name 'Trigintalibrarum': *ibid.*, i, no. 511, p. 59.

25 *Ibid.*, i, no. 1230, p. 416.

26 *Ibid.*, i, no. 512, p. 59.

27 W.M. Ormrod, 'Montagu, William [William de Montacute], First Earl of Salisbury (1301–1344)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available at www.oxforddnb.com [hereafter *ODNB*] (accessed 26 Mar. 2025).

28 *Benoît XII (1334–1342). Lettres closes*, no. 389, cols 246–7; *Foedera*, ii pt 2, p. 1007; E. Déprez, *Les préliminaires de la Guerre de Cent Ans. La papauté, la France et l'Angleterre (1328–1342)* (Paris, 1902), pp. 180–81.

29 *Foedera*, ii pt 2, pp. 1010–12; Déprez, *Les préliminaires*, pp. 181–2; Bombi, 'Benedict XII', pp. 210–11. On Anglo-Castilian relations, see P.E. Russell, *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 1–11. On the international policy of the kingdom of Castile, see R. Averkorn, 'Kastilien als europäische Großmacht im Spätmittelalter. Grundprobleme der auswärtigen Beziehungen der kastilischen Könige vom 13. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert', in D. Berg, M. Kintzinger and P. Monnet, eds, *Auswärtige Politik und internationale Beziehungen im Mittelalter (13. bis 16. Jahrhundert)*, (Bochum, 2002), pp. 315–46,

at 326–9, 343–6.

30 See also *Benoît XII (1334–1342). Lettres closes*, no. 427, cols 269–70; Bombi, ‘Benedict XII’, p. 212.

31 *Benoît XII (1334–1342). Lettres closes*, no. 433, col. 273; Bombi, ‘Benedict XII’, p. 212.

32 *Foedera*, ii, pt 2, p. 1033; *CCR 1337–39*, p. 409. See Déprez, *Les préliminaires*, p. 185; Bombi, ‘Benedict XII’, pp. 211–12; Bombi, *Anglo-Papal Relations*, pp. 189–90, where these events are discussed and explained.

33 *Foedera*, ii, pt 2, p. 1038; *CPR, 1338–40*, p. 86.

34 *CCR, 1337–39*, p. 236. On the role of Iberian merchants as information gatherers and informal diplomatic agents, see S. Péquignot, ‘Les marchands dans la diplomatie des rois d’Aragon’, in L. Tanzini and S. Tognetti, eds, *Il governo dell’economia. Italia e penisola iberica nel basso medioevo* (Rome, 2014), pp. 179–204; M. Farelo, ‘La représentation de la Couronne portugaise à Avignon et ses agents (1305–1377)’, *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, xl (2010), pp. 723–63.

35 TNA, SC 8/156/7793.

36 *CPR, 1338–40*, p. 183, where Peter, Nicholas and William are said to be ‘merchants of the realm of Aragon and the parts of Catalonia’.

37 *Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III: Volume 5, 1339–1341*, ed. H.C. Maxwell Lyte (London, 1901), pp. 11–12. ‘William Perruk’ may be ‘William Pierehugh’ (n. 36 above). See also n. 93 below.

38 On the Latin and Anglo-Norman terminology employed to address the activities of information gathering and spying, see Moeglin and Péquignot, *Diplomatie*, pp. 645–70. See also ~~J.R.~~ Alban and ~~C.T.~~ Allmand, ‘Spies and Spying in the Fourteenth Century’, in ~~C.T. Allmand, ed., War, Literature and Politics in the Late Middle Ages~~ (Liverpool, 1976), pp. 73–101, at 74–9; Cirier, ‘Diplomazia e retorica’, pp. 212–13.

39 W.M. Ormrod, 'Clinton, William, Earl of Huntingdon (d. 1354)', in *ODNB* (accessed 26 Mar. 2025).

40 The knight named by Seseres can be identified with the Berenger de Saint-Jean who received payment of 204l 2s 10½d for his wages from the constable of Bordeaux, on the king's order dated 18 May 1338: TNA, C 61/50, Gascon Roll for the twelfth year of the reign of Edward III, available at *The Gascon Rolls Project (1317–1468)*: www.gasconrolls.org/edition/calendars/C61_50/document.html#it050_12_05f_120; and see www.gasconrolls.org/indexes/entity-015007.html (both accessed 26 Mar. 2025).

41 In the Amiens recension of Froissart's chronicle, the claim that Robert of Artois was fighting in Gascony in 1337 has to be dismissed as inaccurate, according to G.T. Diller, 'Robert d'Artois et l'historicité des Chroniques de Froissart', *Moyen Age*, lxxxvi (1980), pp. 217–31, at 217–18. In Diller's opinion, as Froissart pointed out, Robert followed Edward III in his continental campaign between July 1338 and February 1340. Conversely, Favier placed Robert of Artois's journey to the Continent in February 1339, when he landed secretly in the Low Countries: J. Favier, *La Guerre de Cent Ans* (Paris, 1980), pp. 42–7. See also D.L. Sample, 'Philip's Mortal Enemy: Robert of Artois and the Beginning of the Hundred Years War', in L.J.A. Villalon and D.J. Kagay, eds, *The Hundred Years War. Different Vistas* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 261–84; S. Boffa, 'The Duchy of Brabant Caught between France and England: Geopolitics and Diplomacy during the First Half of the Hundred Years War', in Villalon and Kagay, eds, *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus*, pp. 211–40, at 211–30.

42 W.M. Ormrod, *Edward III* (New Haven, 2013), pp. 200–206.

43 See n. 17 above.

44 *CCR*, 1337–39, p. 214.

45 See n. 81 below.

46 See n. 28 above.

47 *Foedera*, ii, pt 2, pp. 1008, 1012; Déprez, *Les préliminaires*, pp. 181–2; Bombi, ‘Benedict XII’, pp. 210–11.

48 On this issue, see J.N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms, 1250–1516* (2 vols, Oxford, 1976), i, pp. 39–44; T.N. Bisson, ‘The Problem of Feudal Monarchy: Aragon, Catalonia, and France’, *Speculum*, liii (1978), pp. 460–78.

49 *Foedera*, ii pt 2, p. 993.

50 Jerónimo Zurita, *Anales de Aragón*, ed. A. Canellas (Zaragoza, 2003), l. 6, ch. xli, p. 223. On attempts at establishing an Anglo-Aragonese alliance in the 1320s, see Lloyd, *Alien Merchants*, p. 162. See also C.A. Willemsen, ‘Jakob II. von Mallorca und Peter IV. von Aragon (1336–1349)’, in J. Vincke, ed., *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens*, viii (Münster, 1940), pp. 81–198, at 93. For a general introduction to Peter IV’s reign, see Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms*, i, pp. 347–71.

51 *Foedera*, ii pt 2, p. 961, 971–2, 977, 993. See also Lloyd, *Alien Merchants*, pp. 159–62. On trade between Brabant and the Iberian Peninsula at the outbreak of the Hundred Years War, see Boffa, ‘The Duchy of Brabant’.

52 *Foedera*, ii, pt 2, pp. 1008, 1010.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 1010. See Linehan, ‘Castile, Navarre’, p. 365; Averkorn, ‘Kastilien als europäische Großmacht’, pp. 328–9; A. Masiá de Ros, *Relación Castellano-Aragonesa desde Jaime II a Pedro el Ceremonioso* (2 vols, Barcelona, 1994), i, p. 229; Ordovás, *Amistad*, p. 67–8.

54 *Foedera*, ii pt 2, p. 1011; *Benoît XII (1334–1342). Lettres closes*, no. 408, col. 259.

55 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 1r.

56 *Ibid.*, m. 2r.

57 *Ibid.*, m. 2r–3r. On documents recording sensitive information, see Péquignot, *Au nom du roi*, pp. 105–6.

58 Moeglin and Péquignot, *Diplomatie*, pp. 664–6.

59 Few original letters of envoys survive for the reign of Peter IV of Aragon (1336–87), but Péquignot draws attention to the mission of the Catalan knight Ramon de Melany to the French court between March 1329 and July 1332, when the king of Aragon, Alfonso IV, sought French support for the organisation of a crusade against the Muslims in Granada: S. Péquignot, ‘Diplomatie et itinérance curiale. Cinq ambassades des rois d’Aragon en France (premier tiers du XIV^e siècle)’, in B. Bove, A. Salamagne and C. zum Kolk, eds, *L’itinérance de la cour en France et en Europe* (Villeneuve d’Ascq, 2021), pp. 127–48, at 131 n. 13, 137–47. On relations between Peter IV of Aragon and John II of France in 1350–51, see J. Mutgé i Vives, ‘La inseguretad en el Mediterrani Occidental: acord entre el rei catalanoaragonès Peres le Cerimoniós i el francès Joan II de Valois per a la solució de les marques existents entre ambdós reines (1351)’, in M.T. Ferrer i Mallol, J. Mutgé i Vives and M. Sánchez Martínez, eds, *La Corona catalanoaragonesa i el seu entorn Mediterrani a la baixa edat mitjana* (Barcelona, 2005), pp. 185–204; E. Belenguer Cebrià, *Vida i regnat de Pere el Cerimoniós (1319–1387)* (Lleida, 2015), p. 55.

60 James I of Urgell had acquired the county from Philip VI through his marriage with Cecilia of Comminges, daughter of the count of Comminges, Bernard VIII. This marriage had been negotiated in 1336 with the mediation of Cardinal John of Comminges, a son of Bernard VIII and brother of Cecilia: Emeis, ‘Peter IV.’, p. 111. See also C. Higounet, ‘Comté et maison de Comminges entre France et Aragon au Moyen Age’, *Bulletin hispanique*, xlix (1947), pp. 311–31, at 325–6; R. Lützelshwab, *Flectat cardinales ad velle suum? Clemens VI. und sein Kardinalskolleg. Ein Beitrag zur kurialen Politik in der Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Oldenburg, 2007), pp. 473–5. On the strategic importance of the county of Toulouse in the Anglo-French conflict, see P. Solon, ‘*Tholosanna Fides*. Toulouse as a Military Actor in Late Medieval France’, in Villalon and Kagay, eds, *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus*, pp. 263–96, at 267–8, 275–81.

61 Higounet, ‘Comté et maison’, pp. 325–6, pointed out that mediation in this matter was possibly

pursued by Cardinal John of Comminges. See also Emeis, 'Peter IV.', p. 111 n. 252.

62 D. Abulafia, *A Mediterranean Emporium. The Catalan Kingdom of Majorca* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 38–9. See also M. Gavrilovitch, *Étude sur le traité de Paris de 1259* (Paris, 1899), pp. 71–3.

63 C. Higounet, 'Comminges et Aragon au début du XIVe siècle. Les passages de la haute chaîne luchonnaise', *Revue de Comminges, Pyrénées centrales*, lxxviii (1955), pp. 159–64; Higounet, 'Comté et maison', p. 312; Péquignot, 'Diplomatie et itinérance', pp. 132–4.

64 Ordovás, *Amistad*, pp. 62–4.

65 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 1r: 'Sur les queles choses m'est avys que bon serroit que nostre seignur le roi mandast ses messages au roi Darragonn qui aussi/poer demer et determiner toutes les demandas que le roi Darragonn farra. Et finelement m'est avys solom mon petite sen que bon serroit que au/dit roi Darragonn feussent largement, et terez et confermez les dites demandes per V condicions' ('On which matters it was made known to me that it would be good for our Lord the King to send his messages to the King of Aragon, who would also be able to decide and determine all the requests that the King of Aragon would make. And finally it was made known to me ... that it would be good for the said King of Aragon to be fully satisfied, and to confirm and grant the said requests under five conditions').

66 See, for instance, Seseres's remark after setting out the five provisions for the King of Aragon just below, *ibid.*: 'Et si a le roi Darragonn se vidroit assentir en lavandite manere m'est avys per diverses et infinitez resons que serroit a mout grant profit et honur de nostre dit seignur le roi' ('And if the King of Aragon were to agree in this way, I have been informed of various and infinite reasons that would be to the great benefit and honour of our said lord the king'.)

67 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 1r.

68 Abulafia, *A Mediterranean Emporium*, pp. 37–41; T.N. Bisson, *The Medieval Crown of Aragon: A Short History* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 104–7. A diplomatic mission addressing the status of

Montpellier was dispatched from Aragon to France in 1295: Péquignot, 'Diplomatie et itinérance curiale', pp. 129–32. On the importance of Majorca as a trading centre in the first half of the fourteenth century and its competition with Aragon, see Y. Renouard, 'Les principaux aspects économiques et sociaux de l'histoire des pays de la couronne d'Aragon aux XIIe, XIIIe, et XIVe siècles', in Y. Renouard, *Études d'histoire médiévale* (Paris, 1968), pp. 1095–1101; P. Wolff, *Commerces et marchands de Toulouse (vers 1350–vers 1450)* (Paris, 1954), pp. 34–41, 138–47.

69 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 1r: 'en eide et confort de nostre dit seignur le roi et de ses busoignes/et en grevance et disseynement du dit mons Philip'.

70 The requests concerning taxation and custom rights are particularly striking and may indicate that Peter IV needed to recover the income lost in tax exemptions. Notably, in 1338–39 the consuls of Montpellier addressed a supplication to the king of Majorca, asking for exemption from the commercial taxes levied by royal officials: Abulafia, *A Mediterranean Emporium*, Appendix II, pp. 253–63.

71 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 1r. Envoys had been dispatched from England to Castile in early 1338: see n. 50 above. On how the alliance with Castile intertwined with English control over Gascony, see Lloyd, *Alien Merchants*, pp. 159–62.

72 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 1r: 'Item les dictz messages purroient treiter avec les merchanz des ditz roialmes qils veignent en les parties Dengleterre et de Flandres ens conduyt les costumes nostre seignur le roy acresseront et le leynes Dengleterre et les draps de Flannndres averont mellours ventes [meillour] issues et le people avera meillour marche des biens et marchanndises que les dit merchanz estranges apporteront qils navie [mey]ntenant. Et ceo serra a grant profit et avantage del nostre seignur le roi et des siens'. Constable, *Trade and Traders*, pp. 250–52, points out how the Hundred Years War damaged international trade, especially affecting the export of Iberian and English wool to Flemish markets. Diplomacy was used to secure some stability, as happened in 1345, when Edward III protected the arrival of foreign ships in the port of Swin, near Bruges, and promised protection to the Castilian merchants as part of the Anglo-Castilian alliance in 1351. On the role of Spanish merchants in trading between England, Flanders and the Iberian Peninsula,

see Lloyd, *Alien Merchants*, pp. 165–6; Riera, ‘The Beginning’, pp. 223–33.

73 On secrecy and information gathering in the Aragonese context, see Péquignot, *Au nom du roi*, pp. 100–106; Péquignot, ‘Les marchands’, pp. 182–5.

74 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 2r: ‘chivacher mout avant en le roialme de France et defaire ses volentes en cas que mons Philip/eit tant affaire en les parties vers Alemaigne come il avoit nadgieires qant nostre dit seignur le roi et ses amys chivache/rent sur France’. On the War of Saint-Sardos, see S. Phillips, *Edward II* (New Haven, 2011), pp. 468–81; Ormrod, *Edward III*, pp. 34–7.

75 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 2r: ‘Et seront obeysanantz a sa volente et ia le mayns les gentz du roialme de Navarre ne luis serront de/rienx contre, qar ils ount iurez le dit roi Darragonn come roi de Navarre apres cesty qorest. Et il y ad gentz creables/en la court nostre seignur le roi qi furent en Navarre deux en trois iours apres ceo qi le dit roi fust iure’. See also Bisson, *Medieval Crown of Aragon*, p. 107.

76 *Foedera*, ii pt 2, p. 737. Reymond Durant could possibly be identified with Ramon Durand, a lawyer and lieutenant of the seneschal of Gascony between 1318 and 1324, constable of the castle of Colomiers: ‘Durand, Ramon (person)’, in *The Gascon Rolls Project (1317–1468)*, <https://www.gasconrolls.org/indexes/entity-006006.html> (accessed 26 Mar. 2025).

77 B. Leroy, ‘Les débuts de la dynastie d’Evreux en Navarre: des expériences mutuelles, de nouvelles situations’, *En la España Medieval*, xvii (1994), pp. 17–30, at 25; B. Leroy, ‘Les hommes du pouvoir en Navarre au XIV siècle. Gouvernement et société dans le royaume de Navarre de 1328 à 1425’, *Moyen Age*, xcv (1989), pp. 475–90, at 476–7; Belenguer Cebrià, *Vida i regnat*, pp. 56–7. See also Higounet, ‘Comminges et Aragon’, pp. 162–4.

78 Favier, *La Guerre*, pp. 46–7; Ormrod, *Edward III*, p. 189, 225. On Robert’s French supporters and Philip VI’s action to circumvent them, see Sample, ‘Philip’s Mortal Enemy’, pp. 270–73.

79 M. Vale, *The Angevin Legacy and the Hundred Years War, 1250–1340* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 90–

91, 230–31.

80 J.P. Leguay, 'Jean III le Bon, Herzog der Bretagne (1312–1341)', in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (10 vols, Munich, 1980–98), v, p. 333.

81 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 2r: 'M'est avys que les dit mons Robert purroit grant lieu tenir as busoignes nostre dit, seigneur le roi. A l'endroit de la persone de mons de Huntyndon, en le quel repose grant sen, chivallier diligente et summe de loialte et plusors autres vertus. Per les queles et per ceo auxi que plusors marchantz des roialmes de Castell et Darragonn et de celles parties ount denuncie seu bon revenu. Par mye la grant bonnte et loialte que ils ount trove en lui en plusors choses qils ount ewe affaire per devers luis, le dit seigneur purroit plusors bones oepres faire'.

82 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 2r: 'si le roi Darragonn dune part et les ditz seignurs dautre part feussent appareillez per chyvacher tantost se retourneroit/toute le Douchee entierement a nostre seigneur le roi et les dites comitees de Tolouse et de Comenge au roi Darragonn. Ensi serroit qils/purroient chyvacher par mye tant le roialme de Franncce a lour volente totesortz, ma en tente est que nostre seigneur le roi et ses alies/feussent toutz prestes de chyvacher sur Franncce come ils ount este nyadgaires'.

83 See n. 40 above.

84 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 2r: 'il serra forme et les pointz de la comission'. On diplomatic envoys and their letters of credence, see G.P. Cuttino, *English Diplomatic Administration, 1259–1339* (Oxford, 1940), pp. 110–11; P. Chaplais, 'English Diplomatic Documents to the End of Edward III's Reign', in D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey, eds, *The Study of Medieval Records. Essays in Honour of Kathleen Major* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 22–56, at 29–30; Bombi, *Anglo-Papal Relations*, pp. 57–8.

85 Bombi, *Anglo-Papal Relations*, p. 117. See also J. Sayers, 'Centre and Locality: Aspects of Papal Administration in England in the Later Thirteenth Century', in P. Linehan and B. Tierney, eds, *Authority and Power. Studies on Medieval Law and Government Presented to Walter*

Ullmann (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 115–126, at 126. See also M. Kintzinger, ‘Voyages et messageries. Diplomatie in Frankreich zwischen Familiarität und Funktion’, in C. Zey and C. Maßrtl, eds, *Aus der Frühzeit europäischer Diplomatie. Zum geistlichen und weltlichen Gesandtschaftswesen vom 12. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert* (Zürich, 2008), pp. 191–229, at 219; W. Untergehrer, *Die päpstlichen nuntii und legati im Reich (1447–1484). Zu Personal und Organisation des kurialen Gesandtenwesens* (Univ. of Munich doctoral thesis, 2012), pp. 264–73.

86 On unofficial diplomatic envoys travelling under disguised identity, see Moeglin and Péquignot, *Diplomatie*, pp. 658–60.

87 TNA, C 47/32/23, m. 3r: ‘confermer et garantir au roi Darragonn le pais que lui serra grante per conquest’.

88 *Ibid.*, m. 3r: ‘Si nostre seignur le roi vorroit enfranchir au roi Darragonn les ditz comitees ou lui vodroit prester ascune quantitte de moneye, ie soi bien que les busoignes enproudrient mout meillor espleiter’.

89 M. Carr, ‘Benedict XII and the Crusades’, in Bueno, ed., *Pope Benedict XII*, pp. 217–40, at 227. See also N. Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305–1378* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 30–31, 82–4.

90 See n. 17 above.

91 Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, pp. 176–7, 183.

92 On the immunity of diplomatic envoys and merchants, see E. Nys, *Les origines du droit international* (Brussels, 1894), pp. 338–41, 379–87; K. Plöger, ‘Die Entführung des Fieschi zu Avignon (1340): Zur Entwicklung der diplomatischen Immunität in der Frühphase des Hundertjährigen Krieges’, *Francia*, xxx (2003), pp. 73–105; R. Kolb, ‘The Protection of the Individual in the Times of War and Peace’, in B. Fassbender and A. Peters, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of International Law* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 317–22; D.J. Bederman, ‘The Sea’, in *The Oxford Handbook of International Law*, pp. 359–65; J. Benham, *International Law in Europe*,

700–1200 (Manchester, 2022), pp. 156, 241.

93 See n. 37 above.

94 In Hillgarth's opinion (*The Spanish Kingdoms*, i, pp. 271–6, 347–8, 353), the Aragonese Crown tried to create a 'Mediterranean Empire'. This argument is supported by Abulafia, *A Mediterranean Emporium*, pp. 37–8; D. Abulafia, 'The Catalans and the Mediterranean', in Sabaté, ed., *The Crown of Aragon*, pp. 510–15. Hillgarth's view and his use of the term Empire with reference to the Iberian expansion in the Mediterranean during the late Middle Ages has been challenged by Flocel Sabaté, 'The Crown of Aragon in Itself and Overseas: A Singular Mediterranean Empire', in Sabaté, ed., *The Crown of Aragon*, pp. 27–36.

95 Renouard, 'Les principaux aspects', pp. 1095–1101.

96 In 1343, Peter IV managed to annex Montpellier to Aragon as part of the kingdom of Majorca: Abulafia, *A Mediterranean Emporium*, pp. 38–9, 180–86. See also Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms*, i, pp. 359–63. On James III of Majorca's request for English help against France to control the county of Roussillon in the 1330s, see Ordovás, *Amistad*, pp. 62–3.

97 See n. 50 above.

98 Hofmann, *Kardinalat*, p. 73; Emeis, 'Peter IV.', pp. 108–9. See above, nn. 28, 47.

99 Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms*, i, pp. 339–40, 357; Linehan, 'Castile, Navarre', pp. 631–2; Masiá de Ros, *Relación Castellano*, pp. 236–9. See also n. 75 above.

100 See, among others, Déprez, *Les préliminaires*, pp. 164–6. On Froissart and his account, see Diller, 'Robert d'Artois', pp. 217–31; Sample, 'Philip's Mortal Enemy', pp. 272–84.

101 Déprez, *Les préliminaires*, pp. 200–201 and p. 200, n. 5; Diller, 'Robert d'Artois', pp. 224–5; Sample, 'Philip's Mortal Enemy', pp. 275–8.

102 See n. 91 above.

103 Déprez, *Les préliminaires*, pp. 108–9; H. Jenkins, *Papal Efforts for Peace under Benedict XII, 1334–1342* (Philadelphia, 1933), pp. 41–53; Housley, *The Avignon Papacy*, pp. 30–1, 82–123. See also Bombi, ‘Benedict XII’, pp. 191–202; M. Carr, ‘Benedict XII and the Crusades’, in *Benedict XII*, pp. 231–40.


104 See n. 40 above.

105 Péquignot, *Au nom du roi*, pp. 105–6.

106 On this point see Péquignot, ‘Les marchands’, pp. 189–96; Ordovás, *Amistad*, p. 50.

107 *Foedera*, ii pt 2, pp. 1022, 1025.

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