e-journal of Portuguese History
Why was it nearly forgotten? The 1304 Agreda Treaty between Fernando IV of Castile and Jaume II of Aragon

Bernardo de Sá-Nogueira

Abstract

In 1304 the kings of Portugal, Aragon and Castile, the latter through his uncle Prince Don Juan, and the bishop of Zaragoza were judges in two complex arbitrations that resolved two old conflicts between Aragon and Castile, namely, the claim to the throne of Castile by the Infantes de la Cerda, whose rights were upheld by Jaume II of Aragon, and the demarcation of the border between Aragon and Castile in the region of Murcia. Following the arbitrations, they signed the Treaty of Agreda. This paper reviews the existing bibliography while clearing up misunderstandings and approaching the subject from a slightly different angle.

Keywords

Agreda, treaty, arbitrations, Portugal, Castile, Aragon.

Resumo

Em Agosto de 1304 os reis de Portugal, Aragão e Castela, este através do Infante D. João seu tio, e o bispo de Saragoça, foram juízes em duas complexas arbitragens que vieram resolver dois antigos conflitos entre Aragão e Castela, a saber, a reivindicação do trono castelhano pelos Infantes de Lacerda, cujos direitos eram defendidos por Jaime II, e a demarcação da fronteira entre Aragão e Castela na região de Múrcia. Após as arbitragens, assinaram o Tratado de Agreda. Este artigo passa em revista a bibliografia existente, esclarecendo equívocos e abordando o tema de uma perspectiva ligeiramente diferente.

Palavras-chave

Agreda, Tratado, arbitragens, Portugal, Castela, Aragão.

1 University of Lisbon. Email: bsanogueira@netcabo.pt
Introduction

In 1304, from the 30 July to the 12 August, high-level royal delegations of Aragon, Castile and Portugal met on both sides of the Castilian-Aragonese border—more precisely in the territories of Agreda (on the Castilian side) and Tarazona (across the border, in the old Roman territory of Caesaraugusta, Zaragoza, now the center Crown of Aragon). The kings themselves headed the courtly retinues, composed of senior lay and church dignitaries.

Most primary source data collected for this text was published by Ángeles MASIÁ DE ROS (Masiá, 1994). The first document, dated 30 July 1304, marks the beginning of the peace talks proper, with both parties appointing proxies to hear and ratify the arbitration sentences (Masiá, 1994, I, p.121). The last document, dated 12 August 1304, contains the ratification by King Jaume II of Aragon of the arbitration sentences dated 8 August and the peace agreement signed on the 9 August by the said Jaume II, together with King Fernando IV, King Dinis and Prince Juan of Castile (Masiá, 1994, II, pp.136-137). On the 13 August, Jaume II was already informing the frontier municipalities of Valencia, Calatayud, Daroca, Teruel and Albarracín of the peace agreed with Castile on occasion of the recent meeting, ordering them to publish the document and respect the truce (Masiá, 1994, II, pp.125-126). The biography of Fernando IV by César GONZÁLEZ MÍNGUEZ makes extensive use of chronicles to approach the 1304 juncture (González Mínguez, 1995).

The main short-term objective of this meeting was to formally solve, by way of arbitration, two closely related political problems that had seriously affected the relationship between the Aragonese and Castilian crowns since the death of Alfonso X, el Sábio, in 1284. First, the succession to the throne of Castile and Leon, claimed by Don Alfonso de la Cerda, the son of Fernando who was himself the eldest son of Alfonso X, against his uncle King Sancho IV. Second, the demarcation of the border between the two kingdoms in the area of the former Muslim kingdom of Murcia. The meeting additionally focused on achieving the much desired long-term objective of establishing a long-lasting peace between the crowns of Castile and Aragon (Costa, 1981).

Why was Portugal involved? Portuguese historians have already underlined the key role played by King Dinis as arbiter at these meetings—as well as during the preceding period, namely after the death of Castilian King Sancho IV in 1295 and the invasion of Murcia by King Jaume II in 1296.