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Archives of the Mediterranean: Governance and Record-Keeping in the Crown of Aragon in the Long Fifteenth Century



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Abstract

From the late medieval period the Crown of Aragon was at the forefront of archival innovation. Culminating in the establishment of the Royal Archive of Barcelona in 1318, this development was not, as is traditionally stated, a mere imitation of external models but the result of an innovative historical process that had its roots in local history and reflected the structure of the Aragonese monarchy. As a result of the later enlargement and decentralization of the Crown, and especially after the advent of the House of Trastámara in 1414, the Aragonese developed an extensive system for record-keeping across the Mediterranean. By focusing on what I describe as a complex archival network, this article analyses a series of administrative developments, which are generally studied in isolation, as interrelated responses to similar needs across disparate and far-flung territories. The results differed within the Iberian dominions (Aragon, Majorca and Valencia) and in the Italian kingdoms of Sicily and Naples, with Sardinia somewhere in between. For all these differences, however, the establishment of a number of financial archives shows that this network had an especially crucial role in defending the royal patrimony in all the territories under the rule of the Crown of Aragon. The authorities also tried to use archives as tools for exercising pressure upon local political elites, as demonstrated, for instance, by the systematic inquiry into feudal possessions and pecuniary rights instigated by King Ferdinand II in early sixteenth-century Sicily. The outcome, however, was totally unexpected.

Keywords

Archives, Crown of Aragon, information management, Mediterranean history, record-keeping, uses of knowledge

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The historiographical debate on the rise of the state during the late Middle Ages developed in earnest from the 1970s, proposing a range of different interpretations and local specificities that emphasized the concurrent development of different political contexts within this wider process.¹ Bernard Guenée, for instance, has illustrated the growth of central bureaucracies and their role in governing increasingly large territories. After a period of crisis in the mid-fourteenth century, this expansion led to the burgeoning growth of complex, stratified bureaucracies across fifteenth-century Europe.² This, however, was not merely a process of centralization, as administrative institutions became sites of negotiation between rulers and the political societies that were fully involved in central and local governments.³ Recent studies on the late-medieval Plantagenet Empire demonstrate the increasing role of government beyond the state level as a means of establishing a more efficient control over territories, especially after their military conquest. This is illustrated, for example, by the transnational bureaucracy developed by the English to rule over a conglomerate of distant territories.⁴ Throughout late-medieval Europe, this process of bureaucratization led to a constant growth in the production of records for different administrative purposes (financial, judicial, diplomatic, military and so on), increasing the rulers' attention to the preservation of documents. In addition to the medieval treasury-archives – which preserved the most important charters, usually those attesting their rights – authorities established dedicated documentary repositories for the storage of all administrative records that were useful for government, developing at the same time new strategies for facilitating the organization and consultation of the records themselves.⁵ This process was especially important in composite monarchies such as the Crown of Aragon – the subject of this study – as rulers presiding over a number of territories scattered across the Mediterranean needed to gather and organize vast bodies of information, both at the centre and in the peripheries, in order to control their dominions effectively.

The recent 'archival turn' in the humanities has indicated the early modern age as the turning point for the establishment of central governmental archives across Europe, as a result of the explosion in record-keeping.⁶ However, the Crown of Aragon was at the forefront of this innovative process from as early as the fourteenth century, during which time its kings developed a number of documentary stores scattered across the Mediterranean. The creation of this archival network is intimately connected to the history of the state and its composite structure. Various descriptions as a pluralist monarchy, a confederation or an Empire, the Aragonese institutional structure does not seem to fit a single interpretative model.⁷ This can be demonstrated by following its territorial evolution. Whereas the Aragonese nobility focused above all on expansion by land, the Catalan component of the Crown promoted expansion by sea, which resulted in the conquests of Majorca (1231) and Sicily (1282).⁸ However, at the end of the thirteenth century, the Aragonese kings only controlled territories in the Spanish peninsula, since Majorca had become an independent realm in 1276 and the Kingdom of Sicily had split away in 1296. At this stage, therefore, three different Aragonese dynasties,

each related to the other by blood, ruled over numerous distinct political environments: the Spanish dominions (Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia), Majorca and Sicily.⁹ From the first half of the fourteenth century, a new wave of expansion – supported in particular by Catalonia and its merchant class – led to the conquest (or reconquest) of several territories: Sardinia (1323), Majorca (1344), Sicily (1412) and Naples (1442 and again in 1504).¹⁰ Meanwhile, Aragon and Valencia developed their own separate institutions. The Crown of Aragon therefore took the institutional shape of a composite monarchy, an aggregate of distinct kingdoms and minor entities, which were united by the personal rule of a single monarch.¹¹ To administer such an extensive dominion, the Aragonese developed a system of long-distance rule by entrusting the government of provinces to a number of delegates, variously defined as governors, lieutenants and viceroys.¹²

A number of historians have stressed the importance of this political system for ruling the Crown of Aragon as a whole, but none have yet sufficiently highlighted the role played by the control and management of information, in the form of record-keeping, in the governments of distant territories. The functioning of such a composite monarchy required the constant circulation of papers between the centre and the Aragonese dominions, as well as the regular preservation of documents, accounts and orders in each state of the Crown. From an institutional point of view, the establishment of the Royal Archive of Barcelona (1318) marks a turning-point as not only the creation of a central documentary repository for the monarchy, but also as the first step in the development of an archival strategy that involved all the various dominions of the Crown. This process is especially noticeable from the fifteenth century – around the time of the second major wave of expansion – in which the kings of Aragon created permanent and well-functioning archives in all the territories of the Crown.

According to Spanish historiography, this trend should be considered as part of the contemporary institutional reformism and administrative devolution that affected the Crown. Over the course of the fifteenth century in particular, local *Cortes* (assemblies) in different areas of the Aragonese dominion requested not only the establishment of independent institutions, but also archives of their own. This regional approach, however, forms only one part of a wider picture, since this was a universal process largely driven by common concerns of the Crown itself. Historians have yet to offer a comprehensive interpretation of this archival process, and instead have focused on single case-studies (Aragon, Barcelona, Sardinia and Valencia), describing the administrative history of each in isolation. Even the most important recent study by Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina – which also includes an extraordinary collection of sources concerning the Aragonese archives – is devoted to single archives in the Iberian area and Sardinia alone, analysing each state separately within each of the seven distinct chronological sections of the book.¹³ No attempt has been made at a properly comparative analysis; moreover, the archives of the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily have so far been ignored, despite their importance within the Crown of Aragon.

Instead, if we look at the monarchy as a whole, a common archival strategy appears to emerge. This strategy was not just the consequence of administrative devolution but the result of a number of intertwining factors, ranging from the enlargement of the monarchy and the establishment of long-distance rule, to the new financial and political needs arising from an ever-demanding foreign policy. Each of these circumstances led in turn to an increased production of documents. In order to control and retrieve information with greater ease and efficiency, the Aragonese undertook reforms that resulted in the establishment of a system of stable stores for documents across its Mediterranean dominions. This does not mean that one single archival model was imposed upon every territory, but that the management and preservation of archives assumed a crucial role for the administration of the Crown as a whole, and for defending the royal patrimony in a similar manner throughout each of its territories. In a broader perspective, therefore, the *western* documentary repositories of Barcelona, Majorca, Valencia and Zaragoza, and the *eastern* repositories of Sardinia, Sicily and Naples should be considered as different parts of a single archival network. Within this large supra-regional context, each archive – or ‘archival system’, since each state usually operated a number of different archives – was influenced by its immediate environment, and took the shape of local institutions.

The Establishment of Central Archives in Barcelona

The foundation of the Royal Archive of Barcelona in 1318 coincided with the reign of James II (1291–1327), who had already ruled over Sicily (1285–1291) before becoming king of Aragon. The experience in Sicily led James II to promote a series of reforms, influenced by the thirteenth-century Sicilian administration, within the Aragonese institutions. This is evident, for example, in the organization of the Royal Chancery and in the establishment of the office of the *Mestre Racional*, which was in charge of managing the finances of the Kingdom.¹⁴ Early twentieth-century historiography, however, pointed out that this process also led James II to establish a central and permanent documentary repository in Barcelona following the Sicilian example.¹⁵

This previous assertion seems to have been based on the firm belief that the Swabian Kingdom of Sicily was a ‘model state’, and its celebrated Chancery included well-organized archives. In contrast, the latest generation of scholarship has subjected the argument that the Swabian state under Frederick II was a fully organized and centralized state to substantial revision.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the idea that the Swabian government promoted significant innovation in administration – especially in the reorganization of the Norman Chancery, the office in charge of producing and sending royal privileges and letters – is still broadly accepted.¹⁷ This resulted in the development of new types of documents – especially for financial affairs – and a growth in the production of written records, parallel to that which was also occurring in states such as England.¹⁸ There is, however, no evidence of well-preserved archives in Swabian Sicily, with only a few remaining clues attesting

their existence. In affirming Sicilian influence over Aragonese archives, most Spanish historians refer to Eugenio Casanova's well-known handbook of archival science (1928), which established a sort of 'natural' relationship between the advanced organization of the Royal Chancery and its depositories.¹⁹ However, since the Swabian archives did not survive – except for a fragment of one register (dating from 1239–1240 and itself destroyed during World War II) – there is no evidence for this exaggerated interpretation.²⁰ According to later Angevin sources, the Swabian registers and documents were scattered among several archival repositories, such as the castles of Canosa and Lucera, most likely due to the travels of Frederick II's court – there was no recognized capital at the time, and Palermo had lost its supremacy in the 1230s.²¹ Equally, it is not possible to attest the existence of an old Swabian archive in Sicily, since upon occupying Messina in 1356 the Angevins set fire to the archives where all of the Chancery registers were preserved.²² We can only suppose that that depository also contained Swabian registers, but we have no proof of their existence. Yet, while it is true that from the 1270s the Angevin kings promoted the concentration of documents in a single store, an official central archive would only be established in Naples in 1292, when James II of Aragon had already left Sicily on his way to Barcelona.²³

Furthermore, it has been suggested that Papal practices in managing and organizing archives – which apparently reached Aragon through Sicily – also contributed to the establishment of the Royal Archives in Barcelona.²⁴ In fact, despite the *Curia's* recognized precocity in preserving documentation, it seems that during the thirteenth century, Papal writings and registers were scattered amongst several depositories. Just as the Swabian monarchs in the Kingdom of Sicily and the Aragonese kings in their territories, popes especially relied on mobile archives, which they would carry with them (together with the treasury and library) on their travels across the Papal states, whilst the majority of the documents produced before the thirteenth century had already been lost. The use of mobile archives is also demonstrated by the fact that between 1198 and 1304, the Papal Court was absent from Rome for sixty per cent of the time, whilst six out of 19 thirteenth-century Popes never even entered the city.²⁵ In fact, a centralized Papal archive would only have been established in Italy after the end of the western schism (1378–1417), when the new Pope Martin V (1417–1431) ordered a massive transfer of Papal documents to Rome. This documentation had been in effect scattered among several cities, including Avignon.²⁶

While there is little evidence of external influence over the Royal Archive of Barcelona, the latter seems instead to have been the result of a historical process originating from the unique structure of the Crown of Aragon.²⁷ The progressive territorial expansion of the County of Barcelona from the tenth century onwards, and the union with the Kingdom of Aragon in the following century, resulted in an early growth in the production of documents, leading to experimentation in record-keeping and the development of new archival techniques.²⁸ After the 1238 conquest of Valencia, where the Muslim state had developed a flourishing paper industry in

the city of Játiva, the Aragonese acquired the skills for producing paper on a large scale. As suggested by Robert Ignatius Burns, this ‘Paper Revolution’ also had consequences for chancery activity.²⁹ Its clerks adopted this cheap material for producing registers, transcribing within them ‘copies of the charters they set out on expensive parchment’.³⁰ Another likely consequence of this development was that from the thirteenth century, James II began preserving the most valuable documents in several permanent depositories, among which the monasteries of *San Juan de Jerusalén* in Barcelona, *San Juan de la Peña* in Aragon and *Santa Maria de Sijena* were the most important.³¹ As attested by the recurring circulation of papers, we know that the Aragonese monarchs periodically sent emissaries to search these archives and collect documents.³² Mobile archives, however, continued to play a dominant role in the government of the monarchy itself, and a huge amount of documentation often moved with the Royal Court across the Aragonese territories.³³

As a result of the growth of administration and documentary production, this system of scattered repositories proved to be inefficient, as well as dangerous, for the safeguarding and secrecy of documentation.³⁴ For the better management of the Crown’s affairs, the Aragonese monarchs promoted the collation of all their archives as close as possible to the Royal Chancery, the core of the production and dispatch of documents. Its staff required constant access to the papers and registers stored in the archives in order to fulfil their administrative tasks.³⁵ In 1308, King James II ordered the prioress of Sijena to send back to the Royal Chancery ‘that chest and that case (“*archam et caxiam*”) in which there were several deeds and other writings’.³⁶ These documents, together with the other archives, would have been merged with in the new Royal Archive at the royal palace in Barcelona, where a previous depository, attached to the Chancery, is known to have been present since at least 1286.³⁷ In July 1318, the same sovereign charged Arnau Messeguer with arranging the old palace’s chapel for the storage not only of ‘registers, privileges and other writings of his Chancery and other affairs of his Court’, but also – on the upper floor – his personal Treasury.³⁸ In 1316, James II had already ordered the conversion of another room of the Royal Palace into a financial archive storing all the books and writings of the *Mestre Racional*, the officer in charge of the management of this depository.³⁹ To control the registers and audit their accounts, his officers required constant access to this archive.⁴⁰ In just a few years, therefore, the Crown had brought all the archives of the kingdom under its direct control, concentrated them within one building, and established a royal monopoly over the management of information. Despite simply being used as a mere depository for storing documents for about three decades, the organization of the Royal Archive would be further improved under King Peter IV (1336–1387), who in 1346 appointed Pedro Passeya, a clerk of the Royal Chancery, as ‘keeper of our archive’s keys’; in other words, the first archivist of that central repository.⁴¹ A few decades later, in 1384, he also provided a well-defined set of rules for the management of this growing body of heterogeneous documentation.⁴²

The Composite Archives of the Aragonese Territories

The events that subsequently marked the archival history of the Crown of Aragon conflicted only superficially with the establishment of the Royal Archive of Barcelona. In fact, the creation of depositories in other Aragonese dominions should be seen as a first attempt at composing a Mediterranean archival network, with Barcelona at its core. Controlling information was not straightforward, but it was crucial, especially for ruling over a composite state such as the Crown of Aragon. This is particularly striking if we consider the case of Sardinia, granted to King James II by Pope Boniface VIII in 1297, but only conquered in 1323 by his son Alfonso IV (1325–1357). Despite the ‘Catalanization’ and repopulation of the island, the Aragonese domination was weak and subject to continuing warfare against both local rebel lords and the Genoese, who ruled over the north-west of the island.⁴³ In order to obtain the ‘good and prosperous state of the Kingdom of Sardinia’, Alfonso IV instituted a central archive in Cagliari in 1332, entrusting its management to the lieutenant of the Aragonese *Mestre Racional*, Bernat Dez Coll, who was personally in charge of auditing the kingdom’s finances.⁴⁴ Established in the secure Cagliari castle, the archive was provided with cases and armoires to store every document, arranged by its originating office, including both the financial records of the *Mestre Racional* and the governmental records produced by the general governor of Sardinia. The archive assumed a key role for the governance of the island, since it allowed the distant Aragonese kings to keep both the economic resources of that realm and the activity of its officers under control simultaneously. The importance of the information it stored is further highlighted by Alfonso IV’s statement in 1334 that ‘we want [the archive] to be kept carefully and secretly’, for which he ordered that only the *Mestre Racional* and his lieutenant could access and consult the documents stored therein.⁴⁵ This established that only the kings of Aragon, and their direct servants, would have jurisdiction over the preservation of documents.⁴⁶

Whereas the Royal Archive of Barcelona had been organized in two separate depositories, dependent on the Royal Chancery and the *Mestre Racional* respectively, in Sardinia the Aragonese established a single central archive under the control of local financial officers. On the one hand, as has been stressed, this was likely due to the small scale of Sardinian institutions at that time.⁴⁷ On the other hand, however, this development should also be considered in relation to a much broader process involving the entire Aragonese monarchy: that is, the growing interest in the preservation and control of financial records in response to the ever-increasing financial demands of supporting expansion across the Mediterranean.⁴⁸ The establishment of financial archives in Valencia and Aragon during the first half of the fourteenth century – despite their inconsistent functioning – also appear consistent with this trend.⁴⁹ These depositories stored accounts and financial registers prepared in their respective kingdoms, and thus facilitated the accounting activity led by the *Mestre Racional*, whose office followed the mobile royal court in its travels across the Aragonese dominions.

Territorial expansion led to the conquest of Majorca in 1344, where a system of independent archives was directly connected to the local offices that had produced the records.⁵⁰ Then, in 1392, the Aragonese landed in Sicily in order to establish Martin the Younger (1392–1409) – grandson of King Peter IV of Aragon – and his wife Mary, the last heiress of the Sicilian Kingdom. Despite strong baronial opposition, the Aragonese captured the island and succeeded in ending decades of insular infighting.⁵¹ As a result of further political instability, however, local administration was only fully developed in the fifteenth century when Sicily was definitively absorbed by the Crown of Aragon under the Trastámaras, an event that also led to the creation of long-distance government through viceroys.⁵² This resulted in the establishment of an innovative administrative system in which Catalan and Castilian influence reshaped the old Sicilian institutions, preserving their names but changing their functions. It also led to the reorganization of Sicily's archives, which – as in Sardinia – eventually strengthened the crown's control over the island and its finances. It seems that in the first half of the fourteenth century, the central archive of the Kingdom of Sicily had been organized in three separate stores (for political/administrative, financial and judicial material) all located in the royal palace of Messina, in which the administrative officers stored all documents that were no longer useful for current affairs.⁵³ All of the newest registers were instead preserved in mobile archives that followed the kings of Sicily in their travels across the island. After the destruction of royal documentation prior to the 1350s during the siege of Messina by the Angevins, Frederick IV of Sicily (1355–77) moved the central administration to Catania's *Castello Ursino*, where his successor Martin I later established his seat. Royal travels across the island again entailed the use of mobile archives, which – it must be noted – only stored a few registers at the time.⁵⁴ By contrast, from the 1410s onwards, a process of specialization designated central institutions and shaped the organization of archives, which were centralized at the *Hosterium* palace in Palermo, 'for the greater honour of the aforementioned office [the viceroy] and for a greater convenience for the management of affairs'.⁵⁵ This building thus became the official seat of Sicily's viceroys for both ideological and practical reasons.

The results of this reform differed from both the archives established in Barcelona (two separate depositories for political and financial affairs) and Cagliari (one central depository for all the writings). In Sicily, the Aragonese instead developed a complex archival system based on a number of depositories and shaped by multiple chanceries. Unlike the Crown of Aragon, where each administrative branch was organized around a 'pyramidal' structure served by a common chancery and archive, the Kingdom of Sicily developed an institutional system organized around a number of parallel offices, each provided with its own separate chancery. For example, whereas the *Protonotario* was the head of the writing office of the Royal Chancery of Barcelona, and was subordinate to the Chancellor, their Sicilian counterpart was the head of an independent office, with his own designated chancery and clerks, as well as an archive.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the fifteenth-century Sicilian *Regia Cancelleria* consisted solely of

a chancellor – who was marginally involved in administrative affairs – a *magister notarius* (master notary), two clerks and, from 1446, a *taxator* (sealer).⁵⁷ This office no longer exercised its traditional task of producing documents, but maintained instead the role of checking, validating and transcribing them into its specific series of registers. The latter, preserved within the chancery archive, were therefore simply collections of copies of ‘all the provisions and letters [produced] by the offices of the *Prothonotarius* and *Magistri Rationales*’, respectively the main political and financial chanceries of the kingdom.⁵⁸ Each of these offices had a chancery, headed by a *magister notarius* who supervised a group of clerks, and who was in charge of managing the archive and the registers preserved therein. In 1436, King Alfonso V (1416–1458) himself stated that the ‘onus’ (which meant both ‘task’ and ‘burden’ at the same time) of keeping and preserving records was to be entrusted to the *magister notarius* of each office.⁵⁹

The judicial administration of Sicily was also provided with a separate archive, but here both tasks and burdens were divided, with the preservation of the records overseen by an *archivarius* appointed ad hoc. In principle, the use of a dedicated clerk was probably the result of the broad variety of the documentation produced and received by the central courts in their daily exchanges with local officers, peripheral courts, lawyers, and so on. By 1438, however, Andreas de Carioso, *magister notarius* of the island’s principal court, the *Magna Regia Curia*, had already bought the office of archivist and absorbed its tasks, enabling his family to control this archive throughout the rest of the century.⁶⁰ Within a few years the judicial archive was thus divided once again. To prevent further dispersion of documents, in 1444 King Alfonso created a specific *magister notarius* for preserving the archive of the *Commissarii* – that is, replacements of central judges – and in 1452 another *magister notarius* was appointed for the appeal court of the *Sacra Regia Coscienza*.⁶¹

As far as the Sicilian *Secretaria* was concerned, secretaries – who were accustomed to preserving registers in their homes – vigorously resisted the attempt at centralizing its archival depository, to the extent that King Alfonso had to declare in 1443 that ‘those registers are ours and not of those secretaries’ (*registra ipsa esse nostra et non eorundem secretariorum*). The latter staunchly defended their right to personally keep the registers that they produced during a trial against the new archivist of their office, a trial which caused the king not only to reinstate their privilege, but also to abolish the office of archivist itself.⁶² Despite the royal and viceregal decrees periodically issued for concentrating these registers at either the Royal Chancery or the financial archive, Sicilian secretaries continued to maintain their right of personal preservation.⁶³ This resistance probably explains the almost total loss of the documentation they produced at that time,⁶⁴ whilst a central documentary repository was only to arise in the seventeenth century.⁶⁵

In sum, the evolution and spread of archives across the Aragonese Mediterranean over the course of the fifteenth century neatly followed the enlargement of the Crown and its administrative decentralization. This process is further demonstrated by turning to the development of separate and permanent royal archives in the kingdoms of Valencia and Aragon.⁶⁶ In 1419, at the request of

the Valencian Courts, King Alfonso agreed to transfer there all the judicial writings produced by the *Real Audiencia* concerning Valencian affairs. At the same time, just as his predecessors had already done for Majorca, Sardinia and Sicily, he created new series of territorial registers dedicated to the kingdom of Valencia.⁶⁷ Finally, the sovereign also ordered his chancery staff at Barcelona to make copies of all the old records relating to that kingdom, and to send them to Valencia.⁶⁸ For the preservation of this material, Alfonso did not establish a new archival repository, but gave the previously existing *Archivo del Real* in Valencia's royal palace 'a permanent and normative nature, turning it into a depository of antecedents', which the Aragonese monarchs and their officers could use for consultation.⁶⁹ Similarly, in 1461, King John II of Aragon (1458–1479) – referring to a 1348 disposition that had never been implemented – ordered the transfer of all the registers concerning the affairs of the Kingdom of Aragon to Zaragoza, where they were to be stored in the building of the local *Diputación del Reino*, a permanent magistracy which was a representative organ of the local *Cortes*.⁷⁰ Those registers arriving from Barcelona became the core of the royal archive, while a different depository for the kingdom of Aragon 'as a state' had previously been established in 1436.⁷¹

Despite the institutionalization of separate documentary repositories for the kingdoms of Valencia and Aragon, the documents themselves were produced by the Chancery of the Crown of Aragon, in Barcelona. These therefore appear to have constituted local 'branches' of the Royal Archive of Barcelona rather than truly 'independent archives'. This depiction emerges very clearly from a comparison with the Sicilian case. In the fifteenth century, a group of secretaries of the Aragonese royal chancery in charge of Sicilian affairs produced a number of letters on behalf of their kings (orders, privileges, grants and so on) to be sent to Sicily on a daily basis. Before dispatching them, chancery scribes regularly transcribed all of the documents in one of the Sicilian series of registers that, unlike Aragon and Valencia, were stored at the Royal Archive of Barcelona, where they are still preserved.⁷² Documents produced by the Aragonese Chancery were not in fact legally valid in Sicily unless the sovereign was on the island in person. Instead, they had to be handled by local viceroys who commanded the Chancery in charge of that specific subject (the *Prothonotarius* for political affairs, and the *Magistri Rationales* for financial affairs), or else by their secretaries executing royal orders by re-elaborating them in the form of *lictere executorie* (executive letters). For example, when in September 1437 King Alfonso the Magnanimous bestowed the office of royal auditor in favour of Leonardus de Bankerio, the royal secretary prepared the privilege to be sent to Sicily. Here, the viceroy Rogerius de Paruta, in May 1438, entrusted his secretary Iohannes de Vicencio to compile the *lictera executoria*, which, before being dispatched, was transcribed not only in the registers of the *Prothonotarius*, but also in the *Regia Cancelleria* registers and in the books of the *Conservatoria*.⁷³ All of the *lictere exequorie*, together with the documents directly originating from the viceregal authority, were therefore copied only in local registers and nowhere else. Therefore, the local archival system was simply the result of the activity of Sicilian chanceries. Unlike the royal archives of Valencia and

Aragon, Sicilian depositories were fully independent from Barcelona, save for the 'archival connection' represented by the *lictera executoria*.

Archives and the Defence of the Royal Patrimony

A broader interpretation of the scattered archival network of the Crown of Aragon therefore demonstrates that the fifteenth-century Aragonese monarchs promoted different archival policies in the dominions under their control. These range from the 'absence' of chancery archives in Majorca and Sardinia to the creation of archival-sections in Zaragoza and Valencia, while Barcelona and Palermo instead possessed fully independent depositories, each of them marked by the shape of local institutions (the case of the Kingdom of Naples will be analysed below). Despite this heterogeneous development, a common archival strategy begins to emerge. Within it, administrative devolution evidently had an important role, but other factors were equally crucial. The development of a number of documentary stores across the Mediterranean was also the result of the political and financial needs of the Crown, especially under the Trastámaras. During his brief reign, Ferdinand I of Aragon (1412–1416) frequently made impressive use of the Royal Archive of Barcelona, whilst at the same time forbidding the granting of copies of documents stored therein without his permission.⁷⁴ In a period covering less than four years, eighty documents have been identified relating to relationships between Ferdinand and Diego García, the archivist of the Royal Archive of Barcelona, in relation to either political or patrimonial affairs.⁷⁵ This documentation stresses not only Ferdinand's recurring need for documents, but also his deep personal knowledge of the archive itself. In 1415, for example, he ordered his archivist to find a verdict issued by King Martin (1396–1410) concerning a trial between the latter and the heirs of Berenguer de Cortilles. In addition, it was Ferdinand himself who suggested how García might locate that document: 'you should find it already in its proper form and sealed in the house of our *Prothonotari*, who has already written to you about this. And if you do not find it at his house, check the registers, since you will surely find it there'.⁷⁶ Significantly, most of the archival surveys requested by King Ferdinand I concerned the protection of the royal patrimony.

A patrimonial idea of the archive had already been clearly defined in 1384, when King Peter IV asserted that having all the chancery registers stored in one place would be crucial in facilitating information retrieval, and thus in defending the royal patrimony itself.⁷⁷ It was, however, under King Alfonso the Magnanimous that the Crown extended the patrimonial use of archives to all the territories under its rule.⁷⁸ Alfonso needed complete control over his finances to fund his expensive campaigns in continental Italy and to gain the political support of his local subjects. The royal patrimony – which included both the royal demesne and royal rights – was in effect a crucial source used by monarchs for granting lands, economic rights and other benefits. Moreover, the frequent absence of Alfonso from Spain, culminating in the transfer of the Aragonese Court to Naples in 1442,

heightened his need to control territories from afar, especially in the Western dominions. In addition to the existing offices in Barcelona and Sicily, the Aragonese also established the *Mestre Racional* in Valencia (1419) Aragon (1420), Mallorca (1451) – and later in Sardinia (1480) – in order to facilitate the control over accounts in those territories and, if possible, to increase the royal patrimony. In each state, this officer was in charge of managing his documentary repository, in which they stored local accounts and financial registers relating to their specific jurisdiction. Relationships between Alfonso and the archivist of Barcelona are therefore proven by a number of letters through which the King asked for documents stored in that depository to be sent to him in Naples.⁷⁹

In Naples, Alfonso concentrated control over finances around the former Angevin office of the *Camera Summarie*, whereas the old *Curia Magistrorum Rationalium* maintained only marginal functions.⁸⁰ As a result of its broad range of tasks, the *Summaria* produced a huge mass of documents (registers, receipts, accounts and so on), receiving at the same time a number of writings from the demesne towns and territories of the Kingdom of Naples.⁸¹ An archive was therefore indispensable for an office entrusted with the ‘conservation of crown rights and property against infringement’.⁸² In order to have the financial documentation under the management of a loyal officer, Alfonso appointed his librarian Tommaso Aulese as archivist of the *Camera Summarie*, entrusting him with organizing and maintaining the archive.⁸³ In a similar manner to the archive of the Kingdom of Sardinia, and in keeping with Angevin tradition, the Aragonese would also have stored the chancery registers in that depository, but for the *archivum regie sicile*, which included the previous Angevin registers and was under the direct responsibility of a local *Magister Rationalis*, Bernardus de Raymo.⁸⁴ At the same time, the Treasury clerk Antonio de Barbastro was in charge of preserving the so-called series *quaterniones*, in which was transcribed documentation concerning feudal possessions.⁸⁵ The chancery documentation produced in Naples under Alfonso was transferred to Barcelona in 1467, although most of these registers were lost in the seventeenth century.⁸⁶

Unlike Naples, where the pre-eminence of the financial repository as a general archive seems unmistakable, in Sicily the archive was fragmented and each office was in charge of storing and organizing its depository. However, the interest of monarchs in defending – and using – the royal patrimony since the 1420s had produced a significant development. In 1423, the viceroys decided to concentrate both the financial offices of the *Magistri Rationales* and the *Conservator regii patrimonii* – created in 1414 – within the chapel of *Sant’Antonio*, close to the *Hosterium* of Palermo, where its officers ‘could have easily gathered, and checked and defined accounts’.⁸⁷

The chapel, described at the time as an appropriate place ‘for storing the documents and writings of the offices of Royal Court’, was further adapted for securing the archive: in 1428, for example, local viceroys were ordered to close its windows and to prepare two bolts for protecting the accounts preserved therein.⁸⁸ The Sicilian government started accumulating there not only documentation produced

by the *Magistri Rationales* and the *Conservator*, but also the dozens of registers that they received for the annual audit by the Treasurer and the other officers who managed money. The financial archive, however, did not work perfectly. In 1436, King Alfonso himself accused Iohannes de Vitillino, the *magister notarius* in charge of preserving the repository, of personally keeping part of the documentation (probably the old registers) ‘in a place which was quite inconvenient, foul-smelling and indecent’, and ordered him to move it immediately to a proper room. At the same time, he also ordered that it was to be kept secret. In order to avoid damaging these documents, the monarch established that only the archivist – namely the *magister notarius* in Sicily – ‘should have and keep the keys of the building in which the aforementioned archive is ordered and stored, and no one else’.⁸⁹ Royal control over resources, and their distribution within a distant state such as the Kingdom of Sicily, was crucial for supporting the Italian policy of Alfonso the Magnanimous and the conquest of Naples.⁹⁰

The intervention of the Trastámara monarchs with the aim of preserving royal patrimony had continued from the 1410s, when King Ferdinand ordered all land, office and rights holders to present the new office of the *Conservator* with the original documents attesting their possessions. In the following years, the *Conservatoria* clerks thus verified hundreds of writings, transcribing them in a specific book known as *Libro de previlleias, feudas et de otras cosas*.⁹¹ In some cases, we have information of surprisingly ancient grants. This is the case, for example, with a Norman privilege dating back nearly three centuries, to 1123, attesting the possession of the land of Sicamino by Iohannes de Sicamino, which was now registered by the *Conservator*.⁹²

In order to collect money for supporting his military campaigns all over Italy, Alfonso V promoted a new wave of verifications between 1452 and 1453, after which point the sovereign confirmed all feudal possessions in return for a payment, even in the absence of documentary proof, by having them entered in four large registers within the Royal Chancery.⁹³ From the 1490s, however, the Catholic King Ferdinand II (1477–1516) promoted a broader *inquisitio* (inquiry) in Sicily. As Alfonso’s reign had been marked by the extensive alienation of the royal demesne and rights, Ferdinand aimed instead at rebuilding the royal patrimony through the accurate use of archival records.⁹⁴ This inquiry should be considered in relation to the previous reorganization of the Castilian *Hacienda* by which the Catholic monarchs had annulled all the grants assigned between 1464 and 1480 – probably in order to finance the war against the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada. The result had been the so-called *Libro de las Declaratorias de Toledo*, by which they gave detailed judgement for each grant under examination.⁹⁵

Back in Sicily, the strategic change in controlling the royal patrimony was striking, and once again the archives played a central role in this process. Whereas previously feudatories and owners of rights were asked to present evidence of their possessions, at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Crown itself now embarked on an archival *inquisitio*. Ferdinand II entrusted the *magister notarius* of the Royal Chancery, Iohannes Luca Barberi, with the

task of preparing a *Cabreo* or *Capibrevium* – a book containing a general survey of the royal patrimony – by consulting the registers preserved in the archive of the Chancery in Palermo. According to a form of manifesto written by Barberi himself in the so-called *Liber de Secretiis* (c. 1506–1508), this archival enterprise was to be organized in four stages: first, a genealogy of Sicilian Kings; second, a survey of benefices in favour of the Church; third, an inspection over the *secrezie*, which were ‘the offices in charge of collecting tolls’ in demesne towns; finally, an inquiry over ‘counties, towns and fiefs of the Kingdom and several other things assigned against the chapters and laws of the Kingdom and the ordinance of the Parliament of Syracuse’ – namely the lands that, as a matter of fact, the kings themselves had ‘illegally’ granted over the previous century.⁹⁶ After meeting Barberi in Spain in 1509, King Ferdinand also gave him detailed instructions for compiling the survey, and asked him to extend the *inquisitio* to the minor fiefs.⁹⁷ Hastening the compilation of the *Cabreo*, which was ‘much needed for the preservation of our patrimony’, Ferdinand sent several letters to Sicily, ordering his viceroys and officers to give Barberi their full support, and exhorting Barberi himself ‘to conclude it as soon as possible’.⁹⁸ The political role of the archive was clear to King Ferdinand himself, who, not by chance, stated that ‘a great part of our government consists in the preservation of our chancery archives’.⁹⁹

Developed as a tool for defending the royal patrimony, the Royal Chancery archive also became a means through which Ferdinand tried to regulate political conflict from a distance, exercising pressure on Sicilian political society and especially the high aristocracy. This is evidenced by a letter, addressed to Barberi, in which the sovereign stated that ‘henceforth we will not grant confirmation of any fief, until we have seen your *Cabreo*’.¹⁰⁰ Unable to use royal patrimony as a means for obtaining political support in Sicily, Ferdinand therefore used the threat – embodied by the archive itself – to deprive his subjects of their possessions. The royal monopoly over information allowed the overzealous Barberi to find solutions that were always to the advantage of his king. As *magister notarius* of the Royal Chancery, he was legitimately in charge of managing its collection of registers and writings, although he did not access other important stores for documents, such as those of the *Prothonotarius* and *Magistri Rationales*, which are never mentioned in his *inquisitio*. Inspired by the hope of receiving esteem and rewards, he therefore did his best to please his sovereign. On the one hand, he declared that it was impossible to find all the writings attesting royal rights since part of the archive had been lost; on the other, he used the absence of documents as a ruse to prove that a feudatory had no right to possess a land.¹⁰¹ On the subject of feudal possessions, for example, he prepared a section (*informatio*) dedicated to the history of each fief, as well as its old and new possessors, always referring precisely to the specific Chancery register and folio in which the grant had been transcribed. For attesting the illegality of a possession, he simply used a standardized sentence: ‘having diligently searched the Royal Chancery [...] I have never found any writing or investiture’.¹⁰² In order to provide more detail, he also added a different section (*allegatio*) by which he gave legal interpretations about the

legality – or otherwise – of a feudal possession, despite the fact that he himself was no jurist.

Unsurprisingly, Barberi's *inquisitio* was increasingly irritating to Sicilian nobles. As a result, they attempted to persuade the sovereign that Barberi had simply collected unfounded information among documents and registers that had already and often been checked by the royal authorities. They also tried to slow down the implementation of Ferdinand's decisions in Sicily.¹⁰³ The aforementioned instructions for carrying out the survey, granted on 30 July 1509, were for instance only executed by the Sicilian administration some six months later, on 21 January 1510. Worried about Barberi's safety, the sovereign allowed his servants to keep and bear arms both day and night, whilst also suggesting that Barberi work at home, which was close to the *Hosterium* (the viceregal palace), and to which he could transfer the chancery archive until the official depository was properly fortified.¹⁰⁴ Facing baronial and ecclesiastical opposition, which acted as a united front in this battle, in 1514 King Ferdinand was finally forced to accept the requests of the Sicilian parliament. He withdrew his support for Barberi, who was also accused of illicitly making money, since, as a *Magister notarius*, he enjoyed monetary rights for each document transcribed in the *Cabreo*.¹⁰⁵ Sicily's aristocracy subsequently demonstrated its full strength in 1516 when, following Ferdinand's death and the ensuing dynastic crisis, the nobles revolted against the viceroy, renewing the autonomist tendencies of previous centuries.

Conclusion

Adopting an inclusive approach to the archives across the Crown of Aragon enables us to revise some well-established historiographical interpretations. The establishment of the Royal Archive of Barcelona appears as the outcome of an innovative historical process generated by local dynamics, rather than the result of external influence coming from the Papal States or Swabian Sicily. Whereas the latter had several scattered archives, Barcelona's archive was instead created as a central depository. This was, however, only the first stage of a broader strategy leading to the development of an Aragonese archival network. In explaining this process, at least two intertwining factors should be considered: on the one hand, the territorial expansion that, between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, led to the creation of a composite monarchy scattered across the Mediterranean; on the other, the administrative devolution promoted by the Aragonese Kings in response to the political demands coming from the territories of the Crown. In such a complex territorial and institutional context, the Crown of Aragon could no longer rely on a centralized organization and – more importantly for our discussion here – on a single central archive. The Aragonese kings therefore established (and in some cases reformed) archives across the states under their rule. However, they did not impose a single 'archival model'. In fact, they adapted the local archives not only to their governmental needs, but also to the shape of local institutions. This led, for example, to the full independence of Sicilian depositories, which were

produced by local chanceries, and inversely to the external origin of the royal archives of Valencia and Zaragoza, whose registers were written up and organized in Barcelona.

Despite this heterogeneity in preserving documents, the Aragonese archival network was developed throughout as a tool through which the Crown defended the royal patrimony. This is demonstrated both by the establishment of new financial structures such as the *Mestre Racional* in different states, and by the special attention that monarchs paid to financial depositories, often also in charge of preserving chancery registers. If it is true that archives were a crucial means of governing peripheries from afar, and for defending the royal patrimony, their functionality was nevertheless connected to local political circumstances. By focusing on the sixteenth-century inquiry in Sicily led by Iohannes Luca Barberi, we have therefore seen that the Sicilian chancery archive turned out to be a toothless weapon, rather than the 'arsenal of authority' so commonly celebrated by traditional histories of the archive.¹⁰⁶ Facing the powerful baronial and ecclesiastical opposition, Ferdinand II preferred backing away from supporting the overzealous *magister notarius*, regardless of the veracity of Barberi's observations. Using the archive as a site of power and confrontation, Ferdinand would have actually jeopardized his relationships with Sicilian political society – especially as the barons had openly accused him of being the instigator of the *inquisitio*.¹⁰⁷ Unlike the nineteenth-century colonial archives described by Ann Laura Stoler, the 'peripheral' archives of the late medieval Crown of Aragon should be considered less as embodiments of power than as sites of compromise between kings and their subjects.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, this tendency – no doubt amplified by the composite structure of the Aragonese monarchy – reflects a society in which authorities had no absolute control over government, but instead shared the government of the states with local ruling classes.

After the death of Ferdinand II in 1516, the new kings of Spain inherited the Crown of Aragon and all its dominions. As evocatively suggested by John Elliot, the Aragonese thus contributed to the construction of the Spanish Empire by making available their governmental expertise.¹⁰⁹ This is especially evident, for example, in the preservation and amplification of the viceregal system for ruling distant territories from afar. The technical know-how accumulated by developing and managing such a complex network of archives across the Mediterranean was another aspect of their legacy. It was in part by resuming a project elaborated by Ferdinand II in the last decades of the fifteenth century, for example, that in 1540 Charles V (1516–1556) finally established a central archive for the Spanish Crown at the fortress of Simancas, near Valladolid, the capital of the Kingdom of Castile.¹¹⁰ Whereas the Royal Archive of Barcelona lost its centrality, the other Spanish depositories maintained instead their own archival structures, which were in fact strengthened further.¹¹¹ Just as in fifteenth-century Sicily, the early modern royal archives of Barcelona, Valencia and Zaragoza were to preserve the documentation produced by each local viceregal administration, but on top of this they also preserved the registers that were produced and periodically sent to them by the *Consejo de Aragón* in Barcelona.¹¹² Instead, in the same way that Sicily had done

under the Aragonese, the Italian dominions of the Habsburgs – including, from 1535, the Duchy of Milan – would also maintain their archival independence within the new and global Spanish archival network.

Notes

1. For a recent summary of this debate, see John Watts, *The Making of Politics: Europe, 1300–1500* (Cambridge 2009), 23–34.
2. Bernard Guenée, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe* (Oxford 1985).
3. On this account, see for example Gerald Harris, ‘Political Society and the Growth of Government in Late Medieval England’, *Past & Present*, 138 (1993), 28–57, and especially his conclusions, 56–7.
4. In this respect, see Peter Crooks, ‘State of the Union: Perspectives on English Imperialism in the Late Middle Ages’, *English Historical Review*, 212 (2011), 3–42, as well as idem, *Before Humpty Dumpty: The First English Empire and the Brittleness of Bureaucracy, 1259–1453*, in Peter Crooks and Timothy H. Parsons, eds, *Empires and Bureaucracy in World History* (Cambridge 2016) 250–87.
5. On the treasury-archives, see for instance the French case-study, illustrated by Yann Potin, *La mise en archives du trésor des chartes (XIIIe–XIXe siècle)*, Thèse de l’Ecole des Chartes, Paris 2007. For an extensive bibliography on the history of archives see Filippo de Vivo, Andrea Guidi and Alessandro Silvestri, ‘Introduzione a un percorso di studio’, in idem, eds, *Archivi e archivisti in Italia tra Medioevo ed età moderna* (Rome 2015), 9–39, as well as ‘Archival Transformations in Early Modern European History’ in this special issue.
6. In this regard, see at least: Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz, eds, special issue: *Archives, Records, and Power*, *Archival Science*, Vol. 2, No. 1–2 (2002); Ann Blair and Jennifer Milligan, eds, special issue: *Toward a Cultural History of Archives*, *Archival Science*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (2007); Randolph C. Head, ed., special issue: *Archival Knowledge Cultures in Europe, 1400–1900*, *Archival Science*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2010), as well as de Vivo, ‘Coeur de l’état, lieu de tension. Le tournant archivistique vu de Venise, XVe–XVIIe siècle’, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 68 (2013), 699–728. For a broad overview on the role of knowledge in governing early modern states, see Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge 2000), ch. 6, ‘Controlling Knowledge: Churches and States’, 116–48.
7. For a summary of the debate see Pietro Corrao, ‘Stati regionali e apparati burocratici nella Corona d’Aragona (secc. XIV e XV)’, in Rafael Narbona Vizcaíno, ed., *La Mediterrània de la Corona d’Aragó. Segles XIII–XVI*, 2 vols. (Valencia 2004), Vol. 1, 99–144 and bibliography therein cited.
8. On the role of Catalan merchants in this early wave of expansion, see Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, ‘The Problem of a Catalan Mediterranean Empire 1229–1327’, *The English Historical Review*, Supplement 8 (1975).
9. About the history of the Crown of Aragon, see Thomas N. Bisson, *The Medieval Crown of Aragon: A Short History* (Oxford 1986). For a Mediterranean approach, see instead David Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200–1500: The Struggle for Dominion* (London 1997) and bibliography therein cited.
10. Mario del Treppo, *I mercanti catalani e l’espansione della Corona d’Aragona nel secolo XV* (Naples 1972) has stressed the role of Catalan merchants for the fifteenth-century

expansion of the Crown of Aragon. Incidentally, as far as Italy is concerned, this trend shows that the Spanish influence over the Italian peninsula, which early modern historians have recently been studying under the tag *Italia spagnola*, in fact began during the Middle Ages under the Aragonese.

11. The idea of a composite monarchy was developed for describing early modern states such as the Spanish monarchy. On this theme, cf. Helmut G. Koenigsberger, 'Dominium Regale or Dominium Politicum et Regale', in idem, *Politicians and Virtuosi: Essays in Early Modern History* (London; Ronceverte, WV, U.S.A 1986), 1–25 and John H. Elliot, 'A Europe of Composite Monarchies', *Past and Present*, 137 (1992), 48–71. In this respect, see also the reflections on the late-medieval English monarchy by Crooks, *State of the Union*, 10–19.
12. On the viceregal system, cf. Jesús Lalinde Abadía, 'Virreyes y lugartenientes medievales en la Corona de Aragón', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, XXXI–XXXII (1960), 98–172 and Alan C. Ryder, 'The Evolution of the Imperial Government in Naples under Alfonso V', in John R. Hale, John R. Highfield and Beryl Smalley, eds, *Europe in the Late Middle Ages* (London 1965), 332–57.
13. Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y archivos en la Corona de Aragón. Siete siglos de reglamentación y praxis archivística (siglos XII–XIX)* (Zaragoza 2008). See also idem, 'Los archivos reales o la memoria del Poder', in *El poder real de la Corona de Aragón (siglos XIV–XVI)*, XV Congreso de Historia de la Corona de Aragón, 5 vols (Zaragoza 1996), Vol. 5, 123–35.
14. Concerning Sicilian influence over the Aragonese Royal Chancery, see Francisco Sevillano Colom, 'De la Cancillería de la Corona de Aragón', in *Martínez Ferrando, archivero. Miscelánea de estudios dedicados a su memoria* (Barcelona 1968), 3 and José Trenchs Odena and Antonio M. Aragón Cabañas, *Las cancellerías de la Corona de Aragón y Mallorca desde Jaime I a la muerte de Juan II* (Zaragoza 1983), 40. On Sicilian influence over the establishment of the office of *Mestre Racional*, see Tomas de Montagut i Estragues, *El Mestre Racional a la Corona d'Aragó (1283–1419)*, 2 vols (Barcelona 1987), I, 64–77.
15. Eduardo González Hurtebise, *Guía histórico-descriptiva del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón en Barcelona* (Madrid 1929), 9–10; Ernesto Martínez Ferrando, *El Archivo de la Corona de Aragón* (Barcelona 1944), 34–5; Francesco C. Casula, *La Cancelleria di Alfonso III il Benigno Re d'Aragona (1327–1336)* (Padova 1967), 15; Federico Udina Martorell, *Guía histórica y descriptiva del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón* (Madrid 1986), 27–8; Carlos López Rodríguez, 'Orígenes del archivo de la Corona de Aragón', *Hispania. Revista Española de Historia*, LXII (2007), 440; Conde, *Reyes*, 38 and 66.
16. David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (New York and Oxford 1988), 202–25. See also Andreas Kiesewetter, 'Il governo e l'amministrazione centrale del Regno', in Giosué Musca, ed., *Le eredità normanno-sveve nell'età angioina: persistenze e mutamenti nel Mezzogiorno* (Bari 2004), 25–68: 37–41.
17. Horst Enzensberger, 'La struttura del potere nel regno. Corte, uffici, cancelleria', in *Potere, società e popolo nell'età sveva (1210–1266)* (Bari 1985), 49–69: 58.
18. Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 3rd edn (Chichester 2013).
19. Eugenio Casanova, *Archivistica* (Siena 1928), 333–4.
20. On this register, see Cristina Carbonetti Vendittelli, ed., *Il registro della cancelleria di Federico II del 1239–40*, 2 vols (Roma 2002) and its vast introduction, XVII–LXXXII.

21. See, for instance, the 1270 order by Charles I of Naples to collect 'all the registers and books of the times of the above-mentioned Emperor [Frederick]', in Antonio Chiarito, *Comento storico-critico-diplomatico* (Napoli 1772), 25.
22. Alessandro Silvestri, 'I Maestri notai e la gestione delle scritture nel Regno di Sicilia (prima metà sec. XV)', in *Archivi e archivisti*, 43–69: 48.
23. Stefano Palmieri, 'L'archivio della Regia Zecca. Formazione, perdite documentarie e ricostruzione', in *L'État Angevin. Pouvoir, Culture et société entre xiii^e et xiv^e siècle* (Rome 1998), 417–45: 418–22 and bibliography therein cited.
24. As discussed above: see note 15.
25. Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, 'La biblioteca papale nel Duecento e Trecento', in *Storia della biblioteca apostolica vaticana*, 1, *La biblioteca dei pontefici dall'età antica all'alto Medioevo* (Città del Vaticano 2010), 73–108: 78.
26. In this respect, see Anna Maria Corbo, 'Martino V, Eugenio IV e la ricostituzione dell'archivio papale dopo Costanza', *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, XXLVII (1968), 36–66, and Marco Maiorino, 'Gli antefatti. L'archivio papale fra Quattro e Cinquecento negli antichi inventari', in *Religiosa Archivorum Custodia, IV Centenario della Fondazione dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano (1612–2012)* (Vatican City 2015), 23–64: 23–4.
27. On the establishment of archives as a historical process see, Randolph C. Head, 'Knowing Like a State: The Transformation of Political Knowledge in Swiss Archives, 1450–1770', *Journal of Modern History*, 75 (2003), 745–82 and Filippo de Vivo, 'Ordering the Archive in Early Modern Venice (1400–1650)', *Archival Science*, 10 (2010), 231–48.
28. Lawrence J. McCrank, 'Documenting Reconquest and Reform: The Growth of Archives in the Medieval Crown of Aragon', *The American Archivist*, 56 (1993), 269–72.
29. Robert I. Burns, 'Revolution in Europe: Crusader Valencia's Paper Industry: A Technological and Behavioral Breakthrough', *Pacific Historical Review*, 50 (1981), 1–30.
30. Robert I. Burns, *Diplomatarium of the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia: The Registered Charters of its Conqueror, Jaume I, 1257–1276*, Vol. I., *Introduction: Society and Documentation in Crusader Valencia* (Princeton, NJ 1985), 9 and 18. About the use of registers under James II, see Stéphane Péquignot, *Au nom du roi: pratique diplomatique et pouvoir durant le règne de Jacques II d'Aragon, 1291–1327* (Madrid 2009), ch. II, 'Les registres et leurs usages', 57–96.
31. McCrank, 'Documenting Reconquest', 293. About the permanent depositories of the Crown of Aragon see López Rodríguez, 'Orígenes' and bibliography cited therein.
32. See some examples in Conde, *Reyes*, Doc. 4, 212–18 (1255–72).
33. McCrank, 'Documenting Reconquest', 293.
34. Burns, *Diplomatarium*, I, 19.
35. López Rodríguez, 'Orígenes', 450 and Péquignot, *Au nom du roi*, 49–50.
36. Conde, *Reyes*, Doc. 30, 232 (8.1.1308). Note that all translations are mine except when otherwise stated.
37. González Hurtebise, *Guía histórico-descriptiva*, 9 and Conde, *Reyes*, 31.
38. Conde, *Reyes*, 35 and Doc. 35, 236–7 (8.5.1319).
39. Conde, *Reyes*, 35 and Docs. 179 (6.4.1316) and 180 (14.8.1318), 481–2.
40. Montagut, *El Mestre*, I, 283–4.
41. On the duties of the archivist, see Antonio M. Aragó Cabañas, 'Funciones del archivero real en el siglo XIV'. *Homenaje a Federico Navarro. Miscelánea de estudios dedicados a su memoria* (Madrid 1973), 39–51.

42. Concerning these archival regulations: Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Les primeres ordinacions de l'Arxiu Reial de Barcelona (1384)* / *Las primeras ordenanzas del Archivo Real de Barcelona (1384)* (Madrid 1993). López Rodríguez, 'Orígenes', 451, points out the heterogeneity of documentation.
43. On the invasion of Sardinia, see Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean*, 123–6.
44. See the order for arranging this archive in Conde, *Reyes*, Doc. 260, 627–8 (21.12.1332). On Bernardo Dez Coll and his career, see Alberto Boscolo, 'Bernardo Dez Coll, funzionario e cronista del re d'Aragona Pietro il Cerimonioso', *Studi Sardi*, XXIII (1973–74), 3–51.
45. Conde, *Reyes*, Doc. 261, 628 (13.5.1334).
46. Gabriella Olla Repetto, 'La Politica archivistica di Alfonso IV d'Aragona', in eadem, *Studi sulle istituzioni amministrative e giudiziarie della Sardegna nei secoli XIV e XV*, 71–98. See also Simona Serci, 'Gli archivi dell'amministrazione centrale del Regno di Sardegna tra XIV e XV secolo: testimonianze documentarie ed ipotesi di lavoro', *Archivi*, 11, No. 1 (2016), 41–75.
47. Olla Repetto, 'La Politica Archivistica', 87.
48. Montagut, *El Mestre*, I, 185–6.
49. Conde, *Reyes*, 62–4.
50. On Majorcan archives, see Conde, *Reyes*, 67–8.
51. On these events, see Pietro Corrao, *Governare un Regno. Potere, Società e Istituzioni in Sicilia fra Trecento e Quattrocento* (Napoli 1991).
52. Alessandro Silvestri, 'Ruling from Afar: Government and Information Management in Late Medieval Sicily', *Journal of Medieval History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2016).
53. Camillo Giardina, ed., *Capitoli e privilegi di Messina* (Palermo 1937), Doc. XL, 115 (4.2.1357).
54. Only few registers have survived for the period prior to 1392, and as we have seen, most had already been destroyed in the course of the century.
55. ACA, RC, *Registros*, no. 2890, fo. 34r, 31.8.1436.
56. For the Crown of Aragon, see Sevillano Colom, 'De la Cancilleria', 19–20; concerning Sicily, see instead Alessandro Silvestri, 'Produzione documentaria e dinamiche di potere nel Regno di Sicilia', *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, XXXIV–XXXV (2008–9), 7–42: 19–24.
57. Francesco Testa, ed., *Capitula Regni Siciliae*, 2 vols (Palermo 1741–3), I, *Alphonsus*, ch. CCCLXXVIII (23.10.1446).
58. ASPa, CR, no. 28, fo. 339v (24.3.1447).
59. ACA, RC, *Registros*, no. 2512, fo. 75v (27.8.1436).
60. ASPa, RC, no. 74, fo. 323r (5.3.1439).
61. See respectively ASPa, RC, no. 82, fos. 31r–34r (29.7.1444) and *Capitula*, I, *Alphonsus*, ch. CDLXXV (12.8.1452).
62. On this trial, see ASPa, CR, no. 31, fos. 509r–512r (17.12.1450). On the suppression of the office of archivist of the secretaries, see ASPa, RC, no. 84, fo. 446rv (14.5.1451).
63. Without any apparent result, the Aragonese sovereigns and their viceroys ordered Sicilian secretaries to regularly consign their registers to the financial archive (*Capitula*, I, *Alphonsus*, ch. DXIV, 24.2.1457), or to the chancery archive (ASPa, RC, n. 230, fo. 195r, 21.10.1510 and again in Francesco Paolo di Blasi and Angelo J. C. Panormitano, eds, *Sanctiones Regni Siciliae*, 2 vols, Palermo 1791–93, I, 348–50, 15.12.1535).

64. *Guida Generale degli archivi di stato italiani*, 4 vols, III, *Archivio di Stato di Palermo* (Roma 1986), 287–360: 302 and 306.
65. Cf. Giuseppe La Mantia, *L'Archivio della Segreteria dei Viceré di Sicilia e le 'Istruzioni' date dal Re Filippo III nel 1642*, *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, new series, XLII (1917), 252–73 and *ibid.*, Doc. I, 269–72, the instructions sent to the *arcivero* Francisco Quingles.
66. Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, 'Una discutible decisió arxivística del segle XV', *Lligall*, 8 (1994), 11–17.
67. As explained by Crooks in *Before Humpty Dumpty*, 266–268, a similar practice was also developed in the medieval English monarchy when, under the reign of Edward I (1272–1307), the chancery staff organized documents in different series of rolls dedicated to each of the territories under English rule.
68. Cf. Irene Manclús Cuñat, 'Els registres de cancelleria d'Alfons el Magnànim: l'administració reial i els seus documents', in Guido D'Agostino and Giulia Buffardi, eds, *La Corona d'Aragona ai tempi di Alfonso il Magnanimo*, 2 vols (Napoli 2000), Vol. 1, 439–55.
69. Carlos López Rodríguez, 'El Archivo Real y General del Reino de Valencia', *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna*, 17 (1996), 175–92: 179.
70. Diego Navarro Bonilla, *Los fondos documentales del Reino de Aragón: Estudio y edición crítica del inventario de José de Yoldi (1749–1750)* (Zaragoza 2000), 25.
71. Conde, *Reyes*, 82.
72. Beatriz Canellas and Alberto Torra, 'Los registros de la cancelleria de Alfonso el Magnanimo', in *La Corona d'Aragona*, Vol. 1, 121–45.
73. ASPa, RC, 72, fos. 159v–160r (14.5.1438).
74. Carlos López Rodríguez, 'El Archivo Real de Barcelona en Tiempos de Fernando I de Antequera (1412–1416)', *Signo. Revista de Historia de la Cultura Escrita*, 12 (2003), 31–60.
75. *Ibid.*, 33.
76. *Ibid.*, 37–8.
77. Conde, *Reyes*, Doc. 47, 247 (12.3.1384).
78. On the archival policy under Alfonso the Magnanimous, see López, 'El archivo de la Corona de Aragón en la baja edad media', in E. Sarasa, ed., *Monarquía, crónicas, archivos y cancellerías en los reinos hispano-cristianos: siglos XIII–XV* (Zaragoza 2014), 145–84: 152–9.
79. See, for instance, ACA, RC, *Cartas Reales*, Caja 14, Nos. 1810 (8.2.1442) and 1855 (22.1.1448). Interestingly, Mark Ormrod noted the development of a far-flung fiscal administration in the late-thirteenth-century English monarchy, with its centre in London. In this regard, see: Ormrod, 'The English State and the Plantagenet Empire, 1259–1360: A Fiscal Perspective', in J.R. Maddicott and D.M. Palliser, eds, *The Medieval State: Essays Presented to James Campbell* (London 2000), 197–214.
80. Concerning the *Camera Summarie* in Naples, see Roberto Delle Donne, *Burocrazia e fisco a Napoli tra XV e XVI secolo. La camera della sommaria e il repertorium alphabeticum solutionum fiscalium Regni Siciliae Cisfretanae* (Firenze 2012).
81. On the production and preservation of documents in the Neapolitan demesne towns, see Francesco Senatore, *Le scritture delle universitates meridionali. Produzione e conservazione*, in Isabella Lazzarini, ed., *Scritture e potere. Pratiche documentarie e forme di governo nell'Italia tardomedievale (XIV–XV secolo)*, *Reti Medievali Rivista*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2008), <http://www.rmojs.unina.it/index.php/rm/issue/view/4> (accessed 19

- January 2016), and Pierluigi Terenzi, 'In quaterno communis. Scritture pubbliche e cancelleria cittadina a L'Aquila (secoli XIV–XV)', in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Moyen Âge* (forthcoming).
82. Alan Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous: The Making of a Modern State* (Oxford 1976), 205.
 83. Delle Donne, *Burocrazia*, 103.
 84. Nicola Toppi, *De origine tribunalium urbis Neapolis*, 3 vols, 1659, I, 41 and Ryder, *The Kingdom*, 257.
 85. Ryder, *The Kingdom*, 204.
 86. Canellas and Torra, 'Los registros', 140–1.
 87. Respectively ASPa, RC, no. 55, fo. 60v (20.9.1423) and ACA, RC, *Registros*, no. 2890, fo. 103v (12.11.1437).
 88. Respectively ASPa, RC, no. 55, fo. 60v (20.9.1423) and ASPa, RC, no. 62, fo. 52v (26.11.1428).
 89. ACA, RC, *Registros*, no. 2512, fos. 75v–76r (27.08.1436).
 90. Stephen R. Epstein, *An Island for Itself: Economic Development and Social Change in Late Medieval Sicily* (Cambridge 1992), 328–9.
 91. The original cover of the first book, ASPa, CR, no. 4 (1414–20), has fortunately survived. Other books followed, namely ASPa, CR, nos. 2471 (1414–523), 2472 (1431–536) and 2473 (1497–668).
 92. ASPa, CR, 4, fos. 274r–275r (17.03.1417).
 93. About the 1452–53 verification, see ASPa, RC, nos. 91–4.
 94. See Henri Bresc, *Un monde méditerranéen, économie et société en Sicile: 1300–1450*, 2 vols (Rome 1986), Vol. 2, *Tableau n. 194, Les aliénations du patrimoine royal (1392–1458)*, 856–8.
 95. Antonio Matilla Tascón, ed., *Declaratorias de los Reyes Católicos sobre reducción de juros y otras mercedes* (Madrid 1952).
 96. On the *secretie*, see Epstein, *An Island*, 248. About the inquiry, instead, Enrico Mazzaresse Fardella, ed., *J. Luca de Barberiis, Liber de Secretiis* (Milano 1966), 3.
 97. ASPa, RC, no. 228, fos. 193r–199r (30.7.1509).
 98. See respectively ASPa, RC, no. 230, fo. 218v (30.7.1509), *ibid.*, fo. 219rv (30.7.1509) and *ibid.*, fo. 824v (31.8.1512).
 99. ASPa, RC, no. 228, fo. 195r (21.1.1510).
 100. ASPa, RC, no. 230, fo. 823r (31.1.1508).
 101. Giovanna Stalteri Ragusa, ed., *Il 'magnum capibrevium' dei feudi maggiori di Giovan Luca Barberi*, 2 vols, Palermo 1993, I, XIII–XIV.
 102. See, for instance, Giuseppe Silvestri, ed., *I capibrevi di Giovan Luca Barberi*, 3 vols (Palermo 1879–1888), I, 382, but the examples are copious.
 103. *Capitula*, I, *Ferdinandus II*, ch. LXIII (15.10.1509).
 104. See respectively ASPa, RC, no. 230, fo. 827r (31.10.1512) and *ibid.*, fos. 829v and 831rv (30.4.1514). A few years before, ASPa, RC, no. 230, fo. 821v (21.6.1509), an anonymous letter addressed to Ferdinand also had accused Barberi of the murder of a black slave, asking the King to punish the *magister notarius*.
 105. *Capitula*, I, *Ferdinandus II*, ch. CIX (25.11.1514). In this regard, see also *Il 'Magnum Capibrevium'*, LIV–LVIII.

106. Robert-Henri Bautier, 'La phase cruciale de l'histoire des archives: la constitution des dépôts d'archives et la naissance de l'archivistique (XVIe-début du XIXe siècle)', *Archivum*, 18 (1968), 139-49.
107. *Capitula*, I, *Ferdinandus II*, ch. CIX (25.11.1514).
108. About colonial archives, cf. Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science*, Vol. 2, Nos. 1-2 (2002), 87-109.
109. John H. Elliot, *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716* (London 2002), 43-4.
110. In this regard, see in this special issue Antonio Castillo Gómez, 'The New Culture of Archives in the Early Modern Spain'.
111. Conde, *Reyes*, 92-148.
112. Conde, *Los Archivos*, 133.

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