
The Papacy, the Spanish Kingdoms and Las Navas de Tolosa

El papado, los reinos hispánicos y Las Navas de Tolosa

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Abstract: The victory of Las Navas de Tolosa was of profound significance to Pope Innocent III. It came after a long period of intensive papal activity in Spain. We can only understand Innocent III's actions during the campaign by looking first of all at the actions of his predecessors over a long period of time. Innocent built on a long tradition of aiming to secure peace between the Christian kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula, combined with the reform of the Church and the promotion of the military and religious orders. But Christian divisions and a lack of military success, either in Spain or the Holy Land, meant that the papacy was sometimes hesitant to commit itself to campaigns against the Almohads.

Keywords: Navas de Tolosa, Innocent III, Alfonso VIII, Almohads

Resumen: La victoria de las Navas de Tolosa era de enorme importancia para el Papa Inocencio III. Se produjo después de un largo periodo de intensa actividad papal en España. Sólo podemos comprender las acciones de Inocencio III durante esa lucha armada si consideramos en primer lugar las acciones de sus predecesores a lo largo de mucho tiempo. Inocencio se basaba en una larga tradición de intentos de asegurar la paz entre los reinos cristianos en la Península Ibérica, junto con los esfuerzos en la reforma de la Iglesia y la promoción de las órdenes militares y religiosas. Pero las divisiones entre los cristianos y la falta de éxito militar, ya sea en España o en Tierra Santa, significan que el papado se mostraba a veces indeciso para comprometerse en las luchas contra los almohades.

Palabras clave: Navas de Tolosa, Inocencio III, Alfonso VIII, almohades

THE PAPACY AND SPAIN IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

Although the pontificate of Innocent III was significant in very many ways and left few corners of Western Europe untouched, politically or religiously, there can be no doubt that in the pope's own mind the victory of the Christian forces at Las Navas de Tolosa was an event of the most profound importance, especially as it demonstrated divine intervention against those who hated the cross of the Lord¹. Nobody can read Innocent III's response to Alfonso VIII's victory letter (which was very possibly penned by Archbishop Rodrigo) –with its exultancy in the power of the Lord to humble the arrogance of the strong and to subdue the conceit of the infidels– without appreciating how momentous the news of victory was for the pope and for the Roman curia². When hearing the news, Innocent called the clergy of the city and all the people of Rome to his presence, read the king's letter to them, and then explained it to them personally, presumably in the vernacular³. That was probably around mid-October 1212, since the pope's congratulatory response to Alfonso was dated to 26 October. Likewise in October, in a minatory letter to the consuls and people of Milan, the pope advised them that crusading victories in Provence and by the army of the faithful in Spain –an army which had miraculously overcome innumerable Agarenes– demonstrated that no multitude of armies could resist the Lord⁴. It is also fitting to mention here that the pope's call to the Fourth Lateran Council came at a time when the papacy was exultant, following the Las Navas victory. In the crusading bull *Quia Maior* of April 1213, the call to the Fifth Crusade, the pope referred to the sign which the Lord had given that good was to come, that the end of the beast was approaching⁵. It is highly probable that the sign which the pope referred to was Las Navas. The exultancy is explicable because, although Innocent did not wish to assign the victory to himself any more than he wished to attribute it

¹ Demetrio MANSILLA (ed.), *La documentación pontificia hasta Inocencio III (965-1216)*, (Monumenta Hispaniae Vaticana, 1), Rome, 1955 [hereafter MDI], no. 488, p. 521. Generally on the pontificate of Innocent III, see John C. Moore, *Pope Innocent III (1160/1-1216): to root up and to plant*, Notre Dame, 2009.

² MDI, nos. 488, pp. 519-21; 483, pp. 510-15; Maurilio PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, *Sobre la edición de textos latinos medievales: la carta de Alfonso VIII a Inocencio III en 1212*, in *Veleia*, 17 (2000), pp. 231-66, at pp. 254-7.

³ MDI, no. 488, pp. 520-1: 'Convocantes ergo urbis clerum et populum universum, ei, qui facit mirabilia magna solus etsi non quantas debuimus, quantas tamen potuimus, una cum illis gratiarum exsolvimus actiones, ipsas tue celsitudinis litteras legi coram universa multitudine facientes, et ore proprio exponentes easdem'.

⁴ Jacques Paul MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologiae latinae cursus completus*, 221 vols, Paris, 1844-64 [hereafter PL], 216:710-14.

⁵ PL, 216: 818: 'Confidimus tamen in Domino, qui iam fecit nobiscum signum in bonum, quod finis huius bestiae appropinquat, cuius numerus secundum Apocalypsum Joannis intra sexcenta sexaginta clauditur, ex quibus iam pene sexcenti sunt completi'.

to Alfonso (the Lord had done it all), it undoubtedly arrived as a success after a very long period of intense papal activity in the Iberian Peninsula⁶.

It is impossible to understand Innocent's interventions in various fields within Spain without consideration of the actions of his predecessors. As Demetrio Mansilla recognized more than half a century ago now, the most important aspect of what might be called a papal 'policy' towards Spain in the second half of the twelfth century lay in the Roman curia gradually accepting the changed political circumstances of the peninsula after the death of Alfonso VII of León-Castile in 1157⁷. The papacy moved from a position where it operated with a Castile which was overwhelmingly dominant, to one where Castile was still of primary importance but where other kingdoms had to be respected and encouraged in their battles against the Almohads. The first step here was taken by Pope Adrian IV in regularizing the existence of what later came to be known as the Crown of Aragon. It was only in June 1158, 24 years after the death of Alfonso I of Aragon, that a letter of Adrian to Ramon Berenguer IV conceded that the count of Barcelona and his heirs held the lands which Alfonso had bequeathed to the military orders (loosely defined) in his testament because those orders (the Templars, the Hospitallers and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre) in turn had conceded them to Ramon Berenguer⁸. The count of Barcelona's primary role in military action against the Muslims undoubtedly helped the pope, who knew him personally, to look upon him sympathetically. The second step came in May 1179 when Alexander III recognized Afonso Henriques as king of Portugal, in the famous bull, *Manifestis probatum*⁹. The move came almost forty years after Afonso had first claimed the royal title for himself and arrived precisely because the pope considered Afonso an intrepid extirpator of those who hate the Christian name and a diligent propagator of the Christian Faith. The third step came in 1196 when Pope Celestine III recognized Sancho VII as king of Navarre. After the break-up of Aragon-Navarre in 1134, the papacy had only entitled García Ramírez and Sancho VI as dukes. Celestine's decision came in response to the Christian defeat at Alarcos, in an attempt to extricate Sancho from an alliance with the Almohads, in order that he might arm himself to expel the perfidy of the Sara-

⁶ MDI, no. 488, p. 521.

⁷ Demetrio MANSILLA, *Inocencio III y los reinos hispanos*, in *Antbologica Annua*, 2 (1954), pp. 9-49.

⁸ Paul KEHR (ed.), *Papsturkunden in Spanien. I Katalonien*, Berlin, 1926 [hereafter *Papsturkunden*] no. 81, pp. 364-5; Damian J. SMITH, *The Abbot-Crusader: Nicholas Breakspear in Catalonia*, in Brenda BOLTON and Anne DUGGAN (eds.), *Adrian IV: the English Pope*, Aldershot, 2003, pp. 29-39.

⁹ PL, 200: 1237-8; Carl ERDMANN, *O papado e Portugal no primeiro século da história Portuguesa*, Coimbra, 1935; Peter FEIGE, *Die Anfänge des portugiesischen Königtums und seiner Landeskirche*, in *Spanische Forschungen der Görres-Gesellschaft. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens*, 29 (1978), pp. 85-436; Antonio GARCÍA Y GARCÍA, *Reforma Gregoriana e idea de la «militia sancti Petri» en los reinos ibéricos*, in *Studi Gregoriani*, 13 (1989), pp. 241-62. José María SOTO RÁBANOS, *¿Se puede hablar de un entramado político religioso en el proceso de independencia de Portugal?*, in *Hispania*, 67 (2007), pp. 795-826.

cens¹⁰. In all of these measures, Innocent III's predecessors had worked to strengthen the position of the Christian rulers, hoping that, secure in their own kingdoms, they would work together in peace to defeat the Almohads.

As the papacy worked to support those rulers who supported the Christian Faith, then it was equally ready to diminish kingdoms which did not do so. This was the case with León and it is important to remember that already by the time Innocent became pope, there was plenty of 'history' in relations between the papacy and the Leonese kings. Ferdinand II of León had increasingly allied himself with the Almohads against the growing threats to his kingdom from Portugal and Castile and Alfonso IX, deeply embittered by his early humiliation at the hands of Alfonso VIII of Castile, sided with al-Mansur after the Castilian defeat at Alarcos¹¹. We should remember that the response to this from Celestine III was to launch what is now usually described as a 'political crusade'. In October 1196, Celestine actually instructed the archbishops of Toledo and Compostela and their suffragans to encourage people to take up arms against Alfonso just as they would against the Saracens¹². Then, in April 1197, the pope went further, instructing Sancho I of Portugal that those who took up arms against Alfonso, while he remained allied to the Almohads, would be granted the same remission of sins as those who went to Jerusalem. Whatever, declared the pope, Sancho or anybody else, took from Alfonso, either by fighting or in another way, was legally taken and need never revert to the domain of the king¹³. Although the 1197 peace between Castile and León helped avoid this nightmare scenario, it was undoubtedly the case that the papacy had little confidence in the good faith of Alfonso IX and this undoubtedly impacted on Innocent III's overall thinking concerning the Iberian Peninsula and made him especially cautious in dealing with its political affairs.

But it is also important to remember that caution had generally been the papacy's watchword during the previous half-century where the Spanish crusades were concerned. It was the case that the flamboyant Cardinal Hyacinth (the later Celestine III) had, at the councils of Valladolid and Lleida in 1155, not only assured the defenders of Christendom of the same remission of sins as those who went to Jerusalem, but at Valladolid even placed the sign of the cross of Christ on his own breast and proposed himself to lead an army against those who hated the cross of

¹⁰ Fidel FITA, *Bulas inéditas*, en *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 27 (1895), pp. 229-30, no. 3.

¹¹ '*Chronica Latina Regum Castellae*', ed. Luis CHARLO BREA, in *Chronica Hispana Saeculi XIII*, ed. CHARLO BREA, Juan ESTÉVEZ SOLA and Rocío CARANDE HERRERO, Turnhout, 1997, pp. 41-7; LUCAS OF TUY, *Chronicon Mundi*, ed. Emma FALQUE. Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis [hereafter CChr.CM] 74, Turnhout, 2003, pp. 316-9; Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, *Historia de rebus Hispaniae sive Historia Gotbica*, ed. Juan FERNÁNDEZ VALVERDE, CChr.CM 72, Turnhout, 1977, pp. 241-253.

¹² Fidel FITA, *Bulas históricas del reino de Navarra en los postreros años del siglo XII*, in *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 26 (1895), no. 3, pp. 423-4.

¹³ Carl ERDMANN (ed.), *Papsturkunden in Portugal*, Berlin, 1927, no. 154, pp. 376-7.

Christ¹⁴. And in 1172, on his second legation to Spain, Hyacinth offered pardon of sins to those rallying against Abu Ya'qub Yusuf during the siege of Huete¹⁵. But throughout the 1160s, with royal minorities in Castile and Aragon, the papacy did not push the crusade. It would only be in 1175, probably in response to Hyacinth, that Pope Alexander III issued the bull *Merore pariter*, which, while it granted pardon of sins to those who died fighting against the *Massamuti* and allowed those who fought against them for one year at their own expense the same remission for their confessed sins as those who visited the Holy Sepulchre, appears to indicate that the papacy considered the crusade in Spain of slightly lesser spiritual value than that to the Holy Land¹⁶. It should also be noted that the next crusading bull to Spain, Clement III's *Cum pro peccatis*, in May 1188, only came after the loss of Jerusalem, and alluded to the pope's fear that just as that city had been lost through the sins of Christians, so Spain was under threat because of the discord between various Christian kings¹⁷. Cardinal Hyacinth, as Pope Celestine III, was again prominent in intensifying activity, expressing his bewilderment that Spanish rulers allied with the Ismaelites when all Christendom was uniting against them¹⁸; sending, in 1192, his relative, Cardinal Gregory of Sant'Angelo, to procure peace among the Christians so that they might make war upon the Saracens¹⁹; in 1193, instructing that the military orders and others should war against the Muslims even when the Christian kings had pacts with them²⁰; and on 10 July 1195, encouraging Alfonso VIII in the action that he was about to undertake against the Saracens – an action which nine days later would result in the devastating defeat at Alarcos²¹. The best therefore that Celestine could hope for when sending Gregory for a second time was for the pacification of the Christian kingdoms²². This should

¹⁴ MDI, no. 98, pp. 116-17; Fidel FITA, *Concilios nacionales de Salamanca en 1154 y Valladolid en 1155*, in *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 24 (1894), pp. 467-75; Gener GONZALVO I BOU (ed.), *Les Constitucions de Pau i treva de Catalunya (segles XI-XIII)*, Barcelona, 1994, no. 12, p. 53; Ferran VALLS TABERNER, 'Ein Konzil zu Lerida im Jahre 1155', in *Papsttum und Kaisertum. Festschrift für Paul Kebr*, ed. Albert BRACKMANN, Munich, 1926, pp. 364-8.

¹⁵ Julio Porres MARTÍN-CLETO (ed.), *Los Anales Toledanos I-II*, Toledo, 1993, pp. 144-5.

¹⁶ Fidel FITA, *Tres bulas inéditas de Alejandro III*, in *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 12 (1888), pp. 167-8. See Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades 1147-1254*, Leiden, 2008, pp. 62-5.

¹⁷ Juan Francisco RIVERA RECIO, *La Iglesia de Toledo en el siglo XII (1086-1208)*, Rome, 1966, pp. 222-3, n.74.

¹⁸ Juan Francisco RIVERA RECIO, *La Iglesia de Toledo*, p. 228, n. 79. Also see SMITH, *The Iberian legations of Cardinal Hyacinth Bobone*, in John DORAN and Damian J. SMITH, *Pope Celestine III (1191-1198): Diplomat and Pastor*, Farnham, 2008, pp. 81-111.

¹⁹ Juan Francisco RIVERA RECIO, *La Iglesia de Toledo*, pp. 229-30, n. 80.

²⁰ Paul KEHR (ed.), *Papsturkunden in Spanien II: Navarra und Aragon*, Berlin, 1928, no. 200, pp. 554-5.

²¹ Pietro ZERBI, *Papato, Impero e «respublica christiana» dal 1187 al 1198*, Milan, 1980, no. 1, pp. 179-80.

²² Stefan WEISS, *Die urkunden der päpstlichen legaten von Leo IX. bis Coelestin III (1049-1198)*, Cologne, 1995, pp. 300-305.

then be noted. Except for Celestine, the previous popes had been generally slow and reluctant to grant crusading indulgences for the war in Spain. The defeat at Alarcos and its aftermath would not have suggested to Cardinal Lothar of Segni that subsequent attempts were likely to succeed.

While the papacy, during the second part of the twelfth century, had been somewhat reticent to grant crusading indulgences in the Iberian peninsula, conversely this same period saw a dramatic increase in the general level of papal government. While this increase was not always immediately related to the crusade, sometimes it was; and even when it was not, it still often had an impact upon crusading. Innocent III became pope at a time when papal involvement in Iberian affairs had dramatically increased. Legates, and most obviously Cardinal Hyacinth, had undertaken legations which were more wide-ranging than ever before. Moreover, in councils over which the legates presided, victory over the infidel was connected to the internal purification of Christendom. In 1155 and 1173, after offering the same indulgences which Urban II had granted to those setting out for Jerusalem, Hyacinth had set out in his constitutions a programme of moral reform, insisting on ending the abuses of clerical marriage and simony, but also emphasizing the proper conduct of the laity, whose duties to pay tithes were insisted upon, as were the punishments for those who married within the prohibited degrees or who attacked the Church²³. Cardinal Gregory of Sant'Angelo also linked crusade and moral reform in the 1190s²⁴. The insistence on the sanctification of the Christian community in order to undertake military conflict would be especially emphasized in Innocent's pontificate and was a major theological concern for the pope.

Part of the increase of papal government was a result of the ever-increasing use of the Roman curia as a court of first appeal or at times of first instance. This was especially the case in disputes between episcopal sees and between episcopal sees and religious orders in relation to rights over lands, possessions and peoples. Indeed, the papacy's major strength lay in the fact that it was generally accepted that the pope had the right to judge in such cases. Many of these cases were of long-standing and extremely complicated, sometimes relating back to the ecclesiastical geography of the Iberian Peninsula pre-Islam. All of these disputes were a financial drain on the Church (and hence usually on the Crown) and some of them also contributed further to political divisions since they involved sees which were strongly identified with a particular Christian kingdom. The most important dispute concerned the primacy of Toledo, which was closely associated with the hegemony of the kingdom

²³ Gener GONZALVO I BOU (ed.), *Les Constitucions de Pau i treva de Catalunya*, pp. 53-67.

²⁴ Stefan WEISS, *Die urkunden der päpstlichen legaten*, pp. 300-5.

of Castile²⁵. The dominance of Toledo over the other metropolitan sees was an indication of Castilian pre-eminence in the Peninsula. Although in the 1150s and 1160s the papacy appeared to be moving towards recognizing the independence at least of Compostela and probably Tarragona, ultimately the papacy upheld the terms of Urban II's bull *Cunctis sanctorum*, recognizing primatial authority²⁶. The insistence of Toledo on this authority would both help and hinder the crusade of Las Navas. That is, Archbishop Rodrigo was undoubtedly energized in his support for the Las Navas campaign by a desire to glorify his own see. On the other hand, his insistence on trying to tie the primacy issue into the crusade left Innocent III with a thorny problem with which to deal²⁷.

As the papacy, across the course of the twelfth century, increased its authority through its supreme appellate jurisdiction, so it did also through the privileges it conceded confirming the existence and the possessions of very many religious institutions. More and more monasteries and canonries placed themselves under the protection of the Apostolic See in return for various forms of exemption from local jurisdiction and small money payments. This was as much the case in the Iberian Peninsula as elsewhere and these privileges were very important in strengthening the position of religious communities in their local environment (if the privileges had not been useful, they would not have been asked for with such regularity!). Many of these communities played a significant part in consolidating Christendom or extending the Christian frontier, through their economic and spiritual endeavours, as well as through the population of vital areas. This was especially the case for the Cistercians and Premonstratensians, who became impressively powerful under papal protection²⁸. It was also crucially the case for the military orders which played such an immense part in the struggle against the Almohads. The Templars and the Hospitallers were sustained by a vast array of papal privileges and advanced the Christian cause, especially in Aragon and Portugal²⁹. But most important of all was the papal

²⁵ Juan Francisco RIVERA RECIO, *La primacía eclesiástica de Toledo en el siglo XII*, in *Anthologica Annua*, 10 (1962), pp. 11-88.

²⁶ MDI, nos. 91, pp.107-8; 100, pp. 118-19; 110, pp. 128-9.

²⁷ MDI, no. 455, pp. 482-3.

²⁸ Jean-Berthold MAHN, *L'Ordre Cistercien et son gouvernement des origines au milieu du XIIIe siècle (1098-1265)*, Paris, 1951, pp. 119-69; Maur COCHERIL, *L'implantation des abbayes cisterciennes dans la péninsule ibérique*, in *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 1 (1964), pp. 217-87; Luis Rafael VILLEGAS DÍAZ, *El Císter y la fundación de la Orden de Calatrava*, in *Cistercium*, 57 (2005), pp. 165-95; Bonifacio PALACIOS MARTÍN, *El Císter y la fundación de la Orden de Alcántara*, in *Cistercium*, 57 (2005), pp. 197-211; Norbert BACKMUND, *Monasticon Praemonstratense*, 3 vols, Straubing, 1949-56, 3, pp. 154-208; Eduardo CORREDERA GUTIÉRREZ, *Los Condes soberanos de Urgel y los Premonstratenses*, in *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia*, 36 (1963), pp. 33-102, 209-82.

²⁹ Many of these bulls are published in the *Papsturkunden* of ERDMANN and KEHR, as well as in Rudolf HIESTAND (ed.), *Papsturkunden für Templer und Johanitter*, 2 vols, Göttingen, 1972-84; Joseph DELAVILLE LE ROULX, *Cartulaire générale de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jerusalem 1100-1300*, 4

support for the new religious-military orders born in the Iberian Peninsula itself. All the major developments here took place during the pontificate of Alexander III. In 1164, the pope confirmed the military and religious purpose of the brothers of Calatrava³⁰. In 1175, Alexander received the Santiagans under papal protection and insisted that they must themselves protect Christians from Saracen invasion, as well as spreading the Christian faith³¹. The following year, the pope placed the community of San Julián del Periero under papal protection³². Eight years later, Lucius III would exempt them from episcopal control and encourage them in the defense of *Christianitas*³³. All these orders- Calatrava, Santiago, Alcántara (as it would become) – were, of course, to be of immense importance and Innocent III's continuation of the policy of his predecessors in supporting them was to be highly significant.

INNOCENT III AND SPAIN BEFORE THE LAS NAVAS CAMPAIGN

Innocent III must then be seen in the light of the actions of his predecessors and their attention to peace and the reform and renewal of the Church. But Innocent did also place his personal stamp on papal relations with the Iberian Peninsula. This was most obviously the case in the field of marriage and the making and breaking of political marriages had a major impact on the war against the Moors. As a cardinal, Innocent had written a treatise, *De quadripartita specie nuptiarum*, in which he had outlined his matrimonial theology³⁴. As Vicar of Christ his concern was with the unity of the Church and the matrimonial theology of the Church did not allow him to understand the marriage union in any narrow sense. Innocent's deep consciousness of the range of matrimonial relationships (between Christ and the Church, God and the just soul, the Word and human nature, man and woman) made him absolutely determined that the marriage of a man and a woman should mirror and complement

vols, Paris, 1894-1906; Josep Maria MARTÍ BONET, *Privilegios papales del archivo diocesano de Barcelona (Celestino II a Celestino III, a. 1144 al 1196)*, in *Anthologica Annua*, 27 (1980), pp. 779-820.

³⁰ Ignacio José ORTEGA Y COTES, Juan Francisco ÁLVAREZ DE BAQUEDANO and Pedro de ORTEGA ZUÑIGA Y ARANDA (eds.), *Bullarium Ordinis Militiae de Calatrava*, Madrid, 1761, p. 2.

³¹ PL, cc. 1024-30; Santiago DOMÍNGUEZ SÁNCHEZ, *Documentos pontificios referentes a la diócesis de León (siglos XI-XIII)*, Universidad de León, 2003, no. 43, pp. 103-7; José Luis MARTÍN RODRÍGUEZ, *Los orígenes de la Orden Militar de Santiago (1170-1195)*, Barcelona, 1974, no. 73, pp. 248-54; Eutimio SASTRE SANTOS, *La Orden de Santiago y su regla*, 2 vols, Madrid, 1982, II, pp. 3-4.

³² Bonifacio PALACIOS MARTÍN (ed.), *Colección Diplomática Medieval de la Orden de Alcántara (1157?-1494). I: De los orígenes a 1454*, Madrid, 2000, no. 13, pp. 6-8.

³³ *Colección Diplomática... Alcántara*, no. 16, pp. 10-13; Joseph O'CALLAGHAN, *The foundation of the Order of Alcántara*, in *Catholic Historical Review*, 47 (1962), pp. 471-86, at pp.478-9.

³⁴ PL, 217: 921-68. Wilhelm IMKAMP, *Das Kichenbild Innocenz' III. (1198-1216)*, Stuttgart, 1983; Isabelle ENGAMMARE, *Il trattato «De Quadripartita Specie nuptiarum» e la parentela spirituale del Cristo con la Chiesa*, in Andrea SOMMERLECHNER (ed.), *Innocenzo III. Urbs et Orbis*, 2 vols, Rome, 2003, 1, pp. 340-51.

the strength of the other bridal relationships³⁵. The marriage of Alfonso IX of León and Berenguela of Castile in October 1197, for the royal houses of Castile and León and for most of the churchmen in those kingdoms an entirely reasonable strategy whereby the two kingdoms would be at peace and hence could war upon the infidel, was wholly unacceptable to the pope because peace could not be obtained through sin and war could not be won by those who were sinful. In Innocent's eyes, the marriage was incestuous and as such was abominable in the sight of the Lord and detestable in the judgement of the faithful³⁶. When Innocent sent his legate Rainier to Spain in order to secure peace between the kingdoms and dissolve iniquitous unions, he was just as sure that peace could not exist while iniquitous unions existed, as most of the prelates of Spain were sure that there would be no peace without such a union³⁷. Many of the prelates no doubt genuinely believed that the pope's measures, and especially the interdict imposed upon León, would lead to a weakening of the Christian Faith³⁸. Writing some years after, Archbishop Rodrigo, considered that Innocent's decision had caused war and devastation³⁹. But Innocent felt very strongly that the Church in Spain, by supporting such an incestuous union, was repeating the very error which had led to loss in the Holy Land, especially through the marriage of Isabelle of Jerusalem, first to Conrad of Montserrat and then later to Count Henry of Champagne. The Christian people were scandalized, Innocent wrote to Archbishop Peter of Compostela, that now the sins that had led to such disasters and persecutions in the East were being transferred to the West⁴⁰.

Although Innocent was frustrated during a number of years by the continuation of the marriage (a situation for which, from the reports he received, he actually considered Alfonso VIII of Castile primarily to blame), it should be remembered that it was the pope's consistent opposition which ultimately led to the separation of Alfonso IX and Berenguela (by then, of course with four children, including the future Ferdinand III), a separation which caused further conflict over Berenguela's dowry⁴¹. Equally, in another marriage case, the pope's influence had been decisive, in that he had insisted on the invalidity of the marriage of King Peter II of Aragon to a sister

³⁵ MDI, no. 497, p. 535; Wilhelm IMKAMP, *Das Kirchenbild Innocenz' III*, p. 224.

³⁶ Die Register Innocenz' III., 9 volumes to date, ed. Othmar HAGENEDER, Anton HAIDACHER, Alfred STRNAD, Werner MALECZEK, Karl RUDOLF, Andrea SOMMERLECHNER, John MOORE, Christoph EGGGER, Rainer MURAUER, Reinhard SELINGER, and HERWIG WEIGL, Vienna, 1964-2010 [hereafter Register], 1, no. 92, pp. 132-4; MDI, no. 138, p. 169.

³⁷ Register 1, no. 92, p. 133; MDI, no. 138, p. 168.

³⁸ Register 2, no. 72, pp. 126-34; MDI, no. 196, p. 210.

³⁹ Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, *Historia de rebus Hispanie*, Bk. VII, c. 24, p. 247

⁴⁰ Register 2, no. 72, pp. 127-8; MDI, no. 196, p. 210. See also Joseph O'CALLAGHAN, *Innocent III and the Kingdoms of Castile and Leon*, in John MOORE (ed.), *Pope Innocent III and his World*, Aldershot, 1999, pp. 319-25.

⁴¹ Register 7, nos. 93-4, pp. 146-50; MDI, nos. 304-5, pp. 335-9.

of Sancho VII of Navarre. Though we have no commentary on the matter from the Iberian Peninsula, that decision too might well have been seen as detrimental to the prosecution of the war against the Almohads. Sancho VII of Navarre had been entitled king by Celestine III in 1196, in an attempt to draw him away from his alliance with the Muslims against Castile⁴². But it is not clear that Sancho broke that alliance, and in 1198 both Alfonso VIII and Peter II invaded Navarre⁴³. Peter agreed a secret truce with Sancho, provided one of his sisters became Sancho's wife. Alfonso VIII, informed of the accord, insisted Sancho swore to the truce before his own departure from Navarrese lands. Sancho swore to the truces and the marriage, even though his sister was related to Peter in the third degree of consanguinity. In this matter, Innocent intervened on the question of an oath illicitly sworn. As Sancho's oath was a bond of iniquity and faith in evil promises should be completely repealed, Innocent strictly forbade him from fulfilling the terms of the oath lest an incestuous marriage resulted from it⁴⁴. Sancho, protected by Innocent, as he had been by Celestine, rendered himself indefensible when he fled to the lands of al-Nasir before renewed Castilian attacks⁴⁵. But here again the pope had made a decision in order to avoid iniquity, although the incorporation of Navarre into Castile and Aragon would have, on the face of it, militarily strengthened Christian Spain.

These early problems concerning marriage and oaths, undoubtedly shaped Innocent's view of the peninsula's problems, but amidst these difficulties Peter II of Aragon, although, even setting aside the Navarrese expedition, he had been involved in various contentions over his father's will and his mother's castles, and had been forced by Innocent's intervention to withdraw from circulation coinage of fraudulent weight, nevertheless developed his image as a champion of the papacy and an eager crusading king⁴⁶. This was most obviously done through his coronation at Rome on 11 November 1204, an event very possibly without precedent⁴⁷. At San Pancrazio, King Peter was anointed by Peter, cardinal-bishop of Porto and afterwards crowned by Innocent himself. Innocent bestowed upon the king all the royal insignia (the

⁴² Fidel FITA, *Bulas inéditas*, pp. 229-30, no. 3.

⁴³ Cardinal Gregory appears to have excommunicated Sancho and placed his kingdom under interdict for attacking Alfonso VIII's castles and Brother Rainier was charged to investigate whether Sancho continued to ally with Saracens against Christians (MDI, no. 138p. 169.); Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, *Historia de rebus Hispanie*, Bk. VII, ch. 30, p. 254; Lucas of Tuy, *Chronicon Mundi*, Bk. 4, ch. 83, p. 322; *'Chronica Latina Regum Castellae'*, chs. 14, p. 48; 16, p. 50.

⁴⁴ Register 1, no. 553, pp. 801-2; MDI, no. 181, pp. 197-8.

⁴⁵ Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, *Historia de rebus Hispanie*, Bk. VII, ch. 30, p. 254; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. William STUBBS, 4 vols, London, 1868-71, III, pp. 91-2, iv, 78-9.

⁴⁶ Register 2, no. 28; MDI, no. 183, pp. 199-200; Damian J. SMITH, Innocent III and the Crown of Aragon: the limits of Papal Authority, Aldershot, 2004, nos. 1, 3, pp. 264-5; Thomas BISSON, *Quanto personam tuam (X 2.24.18): its original significance*, in *Proceedings of the Fourth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, ed. Stephan KUTTNER, Toronto, 1976, pp. 239-40.

⁴⁷ Register 7, no. 229, pp. 406-9; MDI, no. 337, pp. 339-41.

mantle and tabard; the sceptre and orb, the crown and mitre) and in return Peter swore to be obedient to Innocent, his Catholic successors and the Roman Church, to defend the Catholic Faith and to persecute heretical wickedness. He also swore to guard the liberty and immunity of the Church and to serve justice and peace in all his lands. At the basilica of Saint Peter, the king offered his kingdom to Saint Peter and made himself a tributary, offering an annual census of 250 *mazmudins* in return for papal protection for himself and his successors and his kingdom⁴⁸. The motives of the king in performing this act were undoubtedly complicated. They related to his own prestige and that of his dynasty within his realms, the protection of his holdings in Languedoc and Provence, the projected marriage of his sister to King Frederick of Sicily (the Emperor Frederick II) and a projected campaign against the Muslims of Majorca⁴⁹. For Innocent, who followed his predecessors in being generally sympathetic to the kings of Aragon, the coronation had the additional benefits of providing him with a propaganda coup both before the ever troublesome Roman people, and in the imperial election dispute, since Philip of Swabia had been crowned in the wrong place and by the wrong person. Generally, the coronation of Peter demonstrated Innocent's conception of how the world should be governed, with the secular power being the obedient arm of the Church in the defense of the faith, willing executor of justice and promoter of peace⁵⁰.

While Innocent was certainly impressed with Peter II's resolve to attack the infidel (and in June 1205 agreed to the establishment of an episcopal see in Majorca, if God would give the island into Peter's hands)⁵¹, the pope was clearly reluctant to make a full commitment to the war against the Moors at this time. In February 1204, Innocent had already argued to Peter that while he delighted in the king's enthusiasm to attack those who 'wished to wipe the memory of the name of Christian from the earth', the other Christian kings of the Peninsula were still opposed to one another and that made an attack against the king of Morocco, now doubly powerful after the taking of Majorca from the Almoravids, inadvisable⁵². By August 1204 and with an improvement at least in relations between León and Castile, the pope was more enthusiastic about the projected campaign to be undertaken with the help of Genoa or Pisa, but he still advised Peter to travel to Rome first and Genoa afterwards, and appeared more interested in the marriage of his

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Bonifacio PALACIOS MARTÍN, *La Coronación de los reyes de Aragón 1204-1410: aportación al estudio de las estructuras medievales*, Valencia, 1975; IDEM, *La bula de Inocencio III y la coronación de los reyes de Aragón*, in *Hispania*, 29 (1969), pp. 485-504.

⁵⁰ Damian J. SMITH, *Innocent III and the Crown of Aragon*, pp. 43-78; IDEM, *Motivo y significado de la coronación del rey Pedro II de Aragón*, in *Hispania*, 60 (2000), pp. 163-79.

⁵¹ Register 8, no. 94, p. 173; MDI, no. 318, p. 349.

⁵² Register 6, no. 234, pp. 395-6; MDI, no. 295, pp. 329-30.

ward Frederick than anything else⁵³. Innocent's caution is comprehensible. The Almohads appeared to be advancing and strengthening. There was no guarantee that peace would last between Castile and León (and, indeed, it did not)⁵⁴, and, besides this, neither Castile nor Aragon were at peace with Navarre. Moreover, relations between Castile and Portugal were somewhat strained, and while Innocent had in his first year had the pleasure of receiving the payment of the Portuguese census, those payments remained irregular, as did the behaviour of Sancho I⁵⁵.

Reluctant in the crusade, the Pope remained fully enthusiastic in his support for ecclesiastical reform. Innocent did not only wish to build up the Church in Spain metaphorically but quite literally. Indeed, it seems likely that when Innocent sent his faithful servant Rainier into the Iberian Peninsula in 1198, he was as much concerned with the repair of the physical state of the churches, which the legate crossed on his path, as with their moral state⁵⁶. The two, of course, were not disconnected, and in 1205, the pope would be concerned with both the financial and moral damage caused by attacks which the seemingly ungrateful Peter II had made on the diocese of Elne, because the bishop had been elected without his consent⁵⁷. Similarly, in that same year, report reached Innocent from the bishop of Burgos of various abuses against ecclesiastical liberty committed by Alfonso VIII, who, in the eyes of the pope, appeared to extol the mosque and the synagogue while undermining ecclesiastical liberty⁵⁸. Criticism and threats appear to have made far more impression on the king of Aragon than on the king of Castile, and with a statute which Innocent confirmed on 30 October 1207, Peter II revoked the

⁵³ Johannes FRIED, *Der päpstliche Schutz für Laienfürsten: Die politische Geschichte des päpstlichen Schutzprivilegs für Laien (11.-13. Jh.)*, Heidelberg, 1980, p. 329.

⁵⁴ After Alfonso IX and Berenguela had been absolved and separated, their excommunications were lifted (Register 7, no. 68, pp. 105-6; MDI, nos. 299, p. 332; 304, pp. 335-6.) but the pope required Berenguela to give up the castles which she had from Alfonso as a dowry (Register 7, no. 93, pp. 146-9; MDI, no. 305, pp. 336-9). This led to new disputes between León and Castile ('Chronica Latina', ch. 17, p. 52). In March 1206, Innocent entrusted leading Spanish prelates the task of settling these disputes (Register 9, no. 2, pp. 10-11; MDI, no. 331, p. 358), although the kings had in fact done so at the treaty of Cabreros of 26 March 1206, before the pope's letter arrived (Julio GONZÁLEZ, *El reino de Castilla en la época de Alfonso VIII*, 3 vols, Madrid, 1960, I, pp. 738-40; II., 365-74, no. 782; IDEM, *Alfonso IX*, 2 vols, Madrid, 1944, I., pp. 121-3; II., 284-91, no. 205).

⁵⁵ The kingdom was a census-paying protectorate. Sancho I cleared the arrears in part in 1198 (MDI, p. 193, no. 170) but does not appear to have paid again. Afonso II paid off most of the debt in 1213 (Antonino POIARES, *Uma carta de frei Gonçalo Hispano núncio do Papa Inocência III*, in *Gaceta Numismática*, 170 (2008), 17-22), though not to the entire satisfaction of Honorius III (Antonio Joaquim DIAS DINIS (ed.), *Monumenta Henricina*, 15 vols [Lisbon 1960-74], I, no. 27, pp. 50-1). Now on the early kings of Portugal, see Maria Alegria FERNANDES MARQUES, *A corte dos primeiros reis de Portugal: Afonso Henriques, Sancho I, Afonso II*, Somonte-Cenero, 2009.

⁵⁶ Register, I, no. 395, p. 594; MDI, no. 166, pp. 189-90.

⁵⁷ Register, 8, no. 9, pp. 22-3; MDI, no. 311, pp. 342-4.

⁵⁸ Register, 8, no. 50, pp. 86-7; MDI, no. 312, pp. 344-5.

pessima consuetudo whereby the election of prelates without the advice or assent of the king had been forbidden⁵⁹. Peter may not really have been giving away all that much, but the concession was important for a pope who had probably witnessed the canonization of Becket at Segni in 1173 and definitely visited his tomb at Canterbury a few years later. Innocent appeared to be winning his long-term battle for the freedom of the church⁶⁰.

Innocent also sought to further the standing of the Roman Church by judging ecclesiastical disputes to an unprecedented extent. While it is true that the pope was sometimes frustrated both by the number and type of cases coming to Rome, he sought to make the best decisions possible to resolve complex disputes. There were many such disputes between churches in Spain, but the two which occupied most time during Innocent's pontificate were those between Braga and Compostela over various sees, and between Huesca and Lleida over a great many churches. Both disputes were conditioned by the war against the Moors. When Compostela rose to the status of the metropolitan see in the early twelfth century it incorporated the sees of the ancient province of Mérida⁶¹. This meant sees within the kingdom of Portugal were under the jurisdiction of Compostela, while the metropolitan see of Braga held jurisdiction over some sees outside of Portugal. In 1199, Innocent and his lawyers sought to resolve the problem with Solomonic wisdom by placing Lamego and Idanha under the jurisdiction of Compostela, while Coimbra and Viseu fell to Braga. Though this did not resolve the dispute altogether (and a further dispute concerning Zamora was not settled) it quieted the conflict⁶². This was similarly the case with Huesca and Lleida. To unravel all the strands of that tangled affair is not possible here. But both Huesca and Lleida claimed jurisdiction over various churches on the basis of royal and papal privileges, some of which had been granted to their replacement sees before their recapture (in 1094 and 1149 respectively). The authenticity of some of those privileges was hotly disputed. In 1203, Innocent and his lawyers settled the case with a division of rights of almost bewildering complexity, which again calmed the contending parties⁶³. As in times past, while the disputes were not

⁵⁹ Register 10, no. 144, pp. 248-9; MDI, no. 373, pp. 394-5; Johannes VINCKE, *Staat und Kirche in Katalonien und Aragon während des Mittelalters*, Munster, 1931, p. 261.

⁶⁰ On Innocent's early life, see Michele MACCARRONE, *Immenzo III prima del pontificato*, in *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 66 (1943), pp. 59-134; John MOORE, *Lotario de Conti di Segni (Pope Innocent III) in the 1180s*, in *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 29 (1991), pp. 255-8.

⁶¹ Antonio GARCÍA Y GARCÍA, *Alejandro III y los reinos ibéricos*, in *Miscellanea Rolando Bandinelli Papa Alessandro III*, ed. Filippo LIOTTA, Siena, 1986, pp. 237-57, at 245-6.

⁶² Register 2, nos. 95, 97-8, pp. 201-7, 209-16; MDI, nos. 198-200, pp. 215-227; Demetrio MANSILLA, *Disputas diocesanas entre Toledo, Braga y Compostela en los siglos XII al XV*, in *Anthologica Annua*, 3 (1955), pp. 89-144.

⁶³ Register 6, no. 75, pp. 104-16; MDI, no. 271, pp. 292-300; Eladio GROS BÍTRIA, *Los límites diocesanas en el Aragón oriental*, Zaragoza, 1980.

directly related to the prosecution of crusade, their closure or near closure did free up a little money which had previously been wasted in legal expenses.

However, the privileges granted by the pope to the military orders aided the war against the Muslims more visibly and more substantially. Of particular relevance here are the confirmations by the pope of the rule and possessions of the order of Alcántara in letters of 1199, 1205, 1207, and 1214⁶⁴. The Santiagans, while gaining confirmation of their privileges in 1205 and 1210, had their opportunities to remarry limited by Innocent in a letter of 1208 at the request of the Master himself, so as not to disturb the communal life⁶⁵. The Calatravans received confirmation of their rule from Innocent, the protection of their property, and the renewal of their exemptions⁶⁶. In an especially significant letter of 16 June 1205, Innocent responded to complaints made by Peter II of Aragon that the brothers of Calatrava and Vélez did not dare to fight against the Saracens while Alfonso VIII of Castile had truces with them. Peter asked that the Calatravans should come to fight on his frontier and Innocent ordered them to do so if they thought it was fitting⁶⁷. We should also remember that the Templars and the Hospitallers were very active in Spain, especially in the lands of the Crown of Aragon, and that the pope confirmed many of their privileges on many occasions⁶⁸. All of these actions significantly helped in strengthening the position of forces which would play a substantial part in the Christian victory a few years later. It is also appropriate here to mention the special support that Innocent gave to the Trinitarian order for the ransoming of captives from the Moors. They were especially active in Spain and he was especially active in support of them. In a letter of 8 March 1199, which would have been received by al-Nāsir, Innocent commended the Trinitarians to him, explaining that the redemption of captives was especially commended to the faithful by Christ, and expressing his wish that al-Nāsir and his subjects would soon hasten towards the Truth that is Christ⁶⁹.

INNOCENT III AND THE LAS NAVAS CAMPAIGN

The ‘policies’ which Innocent and his predecessors had developed of seeking the reform of the Church and peace between the different kingdoms, that is to say, their

⁶⁴ *Colección Diplomática... Alcántara*, no. 38, p. 22; no.47, p.25; no. 48, pp. 25-6; no. 55, p. 28.

⁶⁵ Register 11, no. 135, pp. 212-13; MDI, no. 324, p. 353; no. 390, pp. 404-5; no. 423, pp. 442-8.

⁶⁶ Francisco de UHAGÓN, *Índice de los documentos de la Orden Militar de Calatrava*, in *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 35 (1899), pp. 67-9.

⁶⁷ Register 8, no. 97, pp. 175-6; MDI, no. 321, p. 351.

⁶⁸ Damian J. SMITH, *Innocent III and the Crown of Aragon*, pp. 241-2.

⁶⁹ Register 2, no. 9, pp. 16-17; MDI, no. 182, p. 198. See James M. POWELL, *Innocent III, the Trinitarians, and the Renewal of the Church. 1198-1200*, in Giulio CIPOLLONE (ed.), *La liberazione dei ‘cattivi’ tra Cristianità*, Vatican City, 2000, pp. 245-54.

general intent on the spiritual purification of Christendom- were carried forward into the Las Navas campaign. Having gained the submission of Ifr quiya in 1205-6, al-Nāsir had called on his Andalusian governors to prepare for a renewal of war against the Christians of the peninsula, and while that projected campaign was aborted and some of his chief advisors were against a renewed attack, believing the Christian position to have strengthened since Alarcos, it is most probable that their was a general desire for war on the Almohad side, just as their was on the Aragonese side in particular⁷⁰. From 1209, Aragon was at peace with the entire Christian Peninsula and ready for action. Castilian-Almohad truces extended to 1210 but it appears that Peter II was already prepared for action in 1208⁷¹. In the winter of 1209-10, Peter sent ambassadors to Innocent urging him to persuade Alfonso VIII to join with him in the battle against al-Nāsir or at least not to impede his subjects from doing so⁷². At the time Peter's ambassadors arrived with this request, the situation for Innocent was somewhat complicated. The Albigensian crusade against the heretics in the south of France had been initiated and Innocent was very much hoping that Alfonso VIII and Peter II would support that campaign, especially by capturing heretics in flight from the action led by Simon de Montfort. In the bull *Licet ad promovendum*, on 11 November 1209, Innocent had expressed to both kings his belief that they would be able more easily to destroy the invading pagans if they had Catholic neighbours in the north⁷³. But Innocent's concern for Spanish support against heretics did not ultimately outweigh his desire to see the war against the Muslims. When Peter made his request, Innocent, as so often, linked in his mind the struggle in Spain and the struggle in the Holy Land. In a letter dated 16 February 1210, *Exemplo miserabilis*, Innocent responded to Peter's petition by writing to Archbishop Rodrigo of Toledo and his suffragans, urging that the trickery of the pagans that had led to losses in the Holy Land should not be repeated in Spain⁷⁴. Telling Rodrigo that Peter II, burning with orthodox zeal, prepared to fight against the perfidy of the Saracens, Innocent asked Rodrigo to persuade Alfonso VIII to emulate Peter's example but if he could not be persuaded to do so, then he should at least not impede his subjects from doing so. Those subjects would receive a remission of sins in promoting 'tantum Dei servitium'.

⁷⁰ For the military and political background to the crusade, see Francisco GARCÍA FITZ, *Las Navas de Tolosa*, Barcelona, 2005; Antonio HUICI MIRANDA, *Las grandes batallas de la Reconquista durante las invasiones africanas*, Madrid, 1956, pp. 219-327; Martín ALVIRA CABRER, *Guerra e ideología en la España Medieval: cultura y actitudes históricas ante el giro de principios del siglo XIII. Batallas de Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) y Muret (1213)*, Tesis Doctoral, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2000, pp. 179-227.

⁷¹ Damian J. SMITH, *Innocent III and the Crown of Aragon*, pp. 82-3, 90.

⁷² MDI, no. 416, p. 436.

⁷³ MDI, no. 411, pp. 430-1. Most recently on Innocent's actions within the Albigensian Crusade, see Marco MESCHINI, *Innocenzo III e il negotium pacis et fidei in linguadoca tra il 1198 e il 1215*, Rome, 2007.

⁷⁴ MDI, no. 416, p. 436

Innocent's letter, following that to the Calatravans four years before, appears a very deliberate attempt to goad the Castilian king into action, by contrasting his apathy with the enthusiasm of the young king of Aragon. The suggestion that not only the military orders but others among his subjects should campaign with Peter II, while he sat idly by, could not but have hurt the man who had been so cruelly humiliated at Alarcos. As his truces with the Almohads were coming to an end, Alfonso VIII sought to renew hostilities at Segura and Jaén, just as Peter II in league with the Templars, conducted an important campaign in the kingdom of Valencia⁷⁵. As Peter II set himself up as the Christian champion, it fell to Alfonso VIII's eldest son, Prince Ferdinand, to do the same and in late 1210 Ferdinand sent messengers to Innocent to indicate to the pope his desire to exterminate the enemies of the Christian name. In response, with *Significavit nobis*, of 10 December 1210, Innocent, as well as emphasizing that the Almohads impiously occupied the lands which they held in Spain, again took up what was for him the vital theme of Christian unity⁷⁶. The pope delighted that Ferdinand desired to dedicate the first fruits of his military life to God. He commended his plan and ordered the archbishops and bishops throughout Spain to persuade kings and princes who were not strictly bound by truces with the Saracens to aid Ferdinand in his venture, both with money and people, for which they would receive remission for all their sins, as would those pilgrims who proceeded out of devotion from whatever country. This was a significant moment in the campaign which would lead to Las Navas, as the pope now envisioned the forthcoming struggle as ideally involving all the Christian rulers and Christian forces from outside Spain.

It is probable that Innocent, perhaps due to reports received from Ferdinand's messengers, perhaps from the bishop of Palencia, was expecting that the kings of León and Portugal would not support the enterprise. A version of *Significavit nobis* was also sent to the archbishop of Toledo and the bishops of Coimbra, Zamora, and Tarazona, dated 22 February 1211, in which the pope ordered them that if, while Alfonso VIII and Ferdinand were fighting against the Saracens, any king of Spain violated truces which they held with them, they were to be subject to ecclesiastical punishment⁷⁷. The information that there was likely to be Christian disunity and conflict if a campaign was undertaken may very well explain Innocent's reaction to the request which Alfonso VIII made to him, through Bishop Tello of Palencia, for a legate to be sent to Spain. Innocent, in *Cum personam tuam*, also of 22 February 1211, denied the request because of the unpeacefulness of the times⁷⁸. It is, of

⁷⁵ Miguel GUAL CAMARENA, *Precedentes de la Reconquista valenciana*, Valencia, 1952, pp. 208-12; Martín ALVIRA CABRER, *Guerra e ideología*, p. 176.

⁷⁶ MDI, no. 442, pp. 472-3.

⁷⁷ MDI, no. 446, pp. 474-5.

⁷⁸ MDI, no. 447, pp. 475-6.

course, not clear whether the pope was referring to the lack of peace in Spain or to the many troubles which he faced both elsewhere in Christendom and in the Holy Land. It may well have been a combination of the two. It may well also have been the case that while Alfonso VIII looked back to the legations of Cardinals Hyacinth and Gregory, as well as brother Rainier, and believed in the abilities of the legates to procure some measure of peace, Innocent did not feel that he had anybody readily available who was likely to achieve that objective and that it was better to leave the matter in the hands of the prelates already in the peninsula, which is, of course, what he did. It should be emphasized that *Cum personam tuam* was generally positive. The pope praised Alfonso VIII personally. He also offered to satisfy the king's petition at a more opportune time. Moreover, he did aim to procure peace through the Spanish bishops⁷⁹.

Innocent next concerned himself (and not for the first time) with the financial problems of Peter II. The king of Aragon faced severe difficulties both because of problems and commitments he had inherited from his father and his own profligacy. His ambitions often outweighed his means⁸⁰. Though Peter was extremely enthusiastic for war against the Almohads, he did not have the wherewithal to pay for his army. In the first part of 1211 he asked the pope that, since he now had to expend a great amount in order to fight against those who hate the Christian name, he be allowed to revoke certain donations which he had made before he had reached his majority, since he had given away a major part of his revenue in this way. Innocent conceded that Peter should be allowed to revoke all donations which he had made illegally at that time, but with the proviso that any donations which had been made to churches or to other pious places, if they were to be revoked, should be revoked according to an ecclesiastical judgement⁸¹. It is difficult at the moment to know how significant this letter, *Cum donationes* of 12 April 1211, would prove to the success of the Las Navas campaign. We know that Peter was in part to be financed by Alfonso VIII of Castile. But did *Cum donationes* allow Peter to recover sufficient money and goods that it significantly helped him to make the journey to Castile in the first place?

By the early summer the pope was faced with another difficult problem since Archbishop Rodrigo of Toledo, who was playing such an immense part in the organization of the crusade, decided to take the opportunity to seek a renewed confirmation of the Toledan primacy. Innocent had only confirmed the suffragans and the primatial dignity of Toledo with *Sacrosancta romana ecclesia* on 4 March 1210, but it

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ On Peter II's financial difficulties, see Thomas BISSON, *Fiscal Accounts of Catalonia under the Early Count-Kings 1151-1213*, 2 vols, Berkeley, 1984, i., p. 122; Manuel SÁNCHEZ MARTÍNEZ, *El naixement de la fiscalitat d'Estat a Catalunya (segles XII-XIV)*, Universitat de Girona, Girona, 1994, pp. 38-43.

⁸¹ MDI, no. 453, p. 481.

is likely that Rodrigo, confident of success, as well as confirming his existing status and his theoretical authority, was also determined to secure his rights to towns and dioceses, which he thought would soon be captured in the campaigns of Alfonso VIII and Prince Ferdinand⁸². Given the number of problems the papacy had faced during the previous almost seventy years concerning the Toledan primacy, it is unsurprising that Innocent reacted coldly to Rodrigo's attempts. The pope confirmed that he had received Rodrigo's petitions but said that he did not intend to hear them at the time since it was inopportune. Innocent reminded the archbishop that since Spain was now faced with the serious danger of the Saracen invasion, it was hardly the right time to sustain a scandal concerning the primacy. 'At the set time which I appoint, I will judge with equity', quoted Innocent from Psalm 74, and in so doing guaranteed that the churches in Spain would not be diverted from the task at hand⁸³. The pope, of course, held good to his promise and would hear all of the arguments, including those dramatically staged by Archbishop Rodrigo, during the Fourth Lateran Council in November 1215⁸⁴.

In the second half of 1211, Alfonso VIII, Peter II, and al-Nāsir were all busily campaigning and preparing for the great conflict ahead. After the Christian loss of Salvatierra in September and the death of Prince Ferdinand in October, there was a renewed effort made by Alfonso and Archbishop Rodrigo to gain outside support for the campaign. The alliance with Aragon was secured, but as well as this Alfonso appealed to Philip II of France, Rodrigo went himself to preach in the Frankish lands, while Alfonso's doctor, Arnaldo, recruited knights in Gascony and Poitou⁸⁵. Towards the end of the year, the bishop-elect of Segovia, Gerard, was sent to Rome, carrying letters from Alfonso informing Innocent of the extent of the threat⁸⁶. Innocent responded by sending a letter to the archbishop of Sens and his suffragans, *Recepimus litteras*, of 31 January 1212, in which he described the extent of the Saracen invasion and the loss of Salvatierra⁸⁷. This letter was also sent to other prelates in France and Provence. The pope informed them of Alfonso's intention to undertake a military campaign in the octave of Pentecost (13-20 May), emphasizing that Alfonso wished to die rather than see harm done to the Christian people. Innocent ordered the prelates to urge their subjects to give help, both in person and with goods, in return for

⁸² MDI, no. 422, p.439.

⁸³ MDI, no. 455, p. 483; Peter LINEHAN, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain*, Oxford, 1993, p. 328.

⁸⁴ Johannes Dominicus MANSI (ed.), *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 31 vols, Florence, 1759-98, 22:1071-5; Antonio GARCÍA Y GARCÍA, *El Concilio IV Lateranense y la Península Ibérica*, in IDEM, *Historia del Concilio IV Lateranense de 1215*, Salamanca, 2005, pp. 87-145, at pp. 94-7; Peter LINEHAN, *History and the Historians*, pp. 328-31.

⁸⁵ Julio GONZÁLEZ, *Alfonso VIII*, III., no. 890, pp. 557-8; '*Chronica latina regum Castellae*', ch. 21, p.57.

⁸⁶ MDI, no. 470, p. 500.

⁸⁷ MDI, no. 468, p. 497.

a remission of all their sins. By doing so both prelates and people could merit eternal glory. Pilgrims coming from whatever place would also enjoy the same remission of sins. It should be said that although subsequent events meant that we know less of the identity of most of the Frankish crusaders, it is likely there was a very positive response to this appeal⁸⁸.

Four days later, Innocent wrote to Alfonso, first of all sending his condolences for the loss of Ferdinand⁸⁹. The pope then informed the king of the letters which he had sent to the prelates of France and Provence, and their content. But after this Innocent did something which he considered absolutely all important for the success of the Christian enterprise. He advised Alfonso that he must place his hope in God and humble himself before Him, since He gives His grace to the humble and returns retribution to the arrogant. It was, said Innocent, through the power that God would give a humble Alfonso that he would magnificently triumph over those who hated the cross of Christ. Here, in *Cum personam tuam* of 4 February, we see what was at the heart of the thought of the pontiff. That is, that the humble are raised up by God. At the same time, the letter revealed the pope's doubts and caution. The pope was conscious that the circumstances within Christendom were hardly such that a new conflict against the Saracens was definitely going to end positively. He advised Alfonso that since the whole world was in turmoil, it might not be the most opportune moment to take on the Saracens and suggested that if he could obtain suitable truces he should do so⁹⁰. This hardly sounds like a rallying cry on Innocent's part, but his ambivalence reflected the thoughts of a man who had no experience of any major Christian victory, saw what he considered the sinful divisions within Christendom, coupled with the increasing problem of heresy, and simply could not afford another disaster on the scale of Hattin and Alarcos.

Aware, however, that the conflict would soon take place, and determined to make the maximum contribution, Innocent made a final push for peace with *Quanta nunc necessitas*, a letter of 5 April, 1212⁹¹. This was directed to Archbishop Rodrigo and Archbishop Peter of Compostela. The pope commented that how a great danger

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* By Alfonso VIII's estimate (MDI, no. 483, p. 510) about 62000 *transmontani* initially came on the campaign. By Arnau Amalric's calculation ('De Francorum expeditione', in Martin BOUQUET and Leopold DELISLE (eds.), *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, 25 vols, Paris, 1869-1904, 19, pp. 250-1) there were 40000. Obviously these figures are greatly exaggerated, but they do indicate that the initial enthusiasm was great. Arnau Amalric ('De francorum expeditione', pp. 250-1), Lucas of Tuy (*Chronicon Mundi*, Bk. IV, c. 88, p. 328), Alfonso VIII (MDI, no. 483, p. 510), the Annals of Toledo (Los Anales Toledanos, P. 172), and the Primera Crónica General (Ramón MENÉNDEZ PIDAL (ed.), *Primera Crónica General de España*, 2 vols, Madrid, 1955, 2, p. 692, c. 1013) all indicated that the Frankish knights and soldiers arrived because of the indulgences granted by the pope.

⁸⁹ MDI, no. 470, pp. 500-1.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; and see Helmut ROSCHER, *Papst Innocenz III und die Kreuzzüge*, Göttingen, 1969, p. 182.

⁹¹ MDI, no. 471, pp. 501-2.

now threatened Spain was best known to them and therefore they should persuade the kings of Spain to serve a peace and truce. Innocent, as one might suspect, was mainly concerned with how Alfonso IX would behave once the campaign was underway and whether he would repeat the errors of the past and side with the Almohads against Castile. The pope ordered that if anybody, but here specifically mentioning Alfonso IX, should help in anyway those who hated the cross of the Lord, who, as the pope had now heard, not only aspired to the destruction of Spain but also to other lands of the faithful of Christ⁹², they were to be subject to excommunication and their lands placed under interdict. Moreover, if there were quarrels between the kingdoms, or indeed other disputes (Innocent may well here also have been considering the danger of the primacy dispute), because of the immediate danger these were to be deferred to a more suitable time and the procurators of the contending parties could argue out their differences at the papal court and the pope would give justice. It should also be noted here that probably just a little after this, the papal legate in the Languedoc, Arnau Amalric, whose legation had been extended by Innocent to the diocese of Pamplona in June 1210, sought to persuade Sancho VII of Navarre, the other king who had sided with the Almohads after Alarcos, to join the Las Navas campaign⁹³. Sancho's response was not immediate, but he did decide to participate and his small force was to play an important part in the battle. On the Muslim side, it was believed he had come under threats from Rome, and it may well have been that Sancho feared the consequences of not participating⁹⁴.

The last contribution of Innocent III prior to the battle came not in more letters to Spain or elsewhere but in the famous and momentously significant *Supplicatio generalis*, the call for a general procession in Rome on 16th May, the Wednesday after Pentecost, the time when the pope believed the campaign would begin⁹⁵. This procession of men and women was called for the peace of the universal church and the Christian people, especially so that God might be favourable in the war that was now supposed to be taking place between the Christians and Saracens in Spain, lest

⁹² A supposed letter of al-Nāsir, threatening to wage war on the king of Aragon, but beyond that the pope himself, was included in the *Continuatio Lambacensis* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores, IX, pp. 557-8: 'Tibi autem rex Aragonum dicimus, quoniam consilio tuo et suggestione tua multa dampna illata sunt Sarracenis, et dicebas aliis, quod id faceres ex consilio domini Romae: quod si diligenter adtenderis, in perniciem christianorum non in salutem dominis Romae fecit. Nos tandem non cessabimus debellando terras vestras, ire usque Romam, et trademus dominum Romae contumelias et miseris'). The same or similar propaganda had evidently reached the ears of Innocent as well.

⁹³ August POTTHAST (ed.), *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum inde ab anno 1198 ad annum 1304*, 2 vols, Berlin, 1874-5, i., no. 4027; Arnau Amalric, 'De Francorum expeditione', p. 251.

⁹⁴ Ibn 'Idārī al-Marrākūshī, *Al-Bayān al-Mugrib fī ijtisār ajbār mulūk al-Andalus wa-l-Magrib*, ed. and trans. Antonio HUICI MIRANDA, *Estudio sobre la batalla de las Navas de Tolosa*, in *Anales del Instituto General y Técnico de Valencia*, 1 (1916), pp. 1-196, at p. 120. On Sancho and Las Navas, see Luís FORTUN PÉREZ, *Sancho VII el Fuerte*, Iruña, 1987, pp. 217-44.

⁹⁵ MDI, no. 473, pp. 503-4.

the Lord should give his people up to mockery and allow other nations to rule over them. All the people, except those with mortal enemies, were to participate. The women were to gather together in the morning at Santa Maria Maggiore, the clergy at Santi Apostoli, the laymen at Santa Anastasia. After Collects, and accompanied by the tolling of bells, the three groups were to process to the Lateran *campus*. The nuns, followed by the other women, minus jewels and finery, were to process behind the cross of Santa Maria Maggiore. The clergy, led by the monks and the regular canons, followed by rectors and other clerics, were to process behind the cross of the Fraternity. The laymen, led by the *hospitularii*, were to be preceded by the cross of St Peter. Meanwhile, the pope, bishops, cardinals and chaplains, were to enter the basilica that is called the *Sancta Sanctorum*, from where they were to take the relic of the True Cross and process to the steps of the palace of the cardinal bishop of Albano, around which all the clergy and people were to be assembled. Innocent would then preach a sermon to all the people. After that, the women were to proceed to the basilica of Santa Croce where the cardinal priest would celebrate Mass saying that prayer *Omnipotens, sempiternus deus*. The women were then to go home. All the men meanwhile were to enter the Lateran basilica, the papal party through the palace, the clergy through the portico, and the laymen through the *burgum*. Mass was to be celebrated and then all were to proceed to Santa Croce, the clergy leading, the laymen following. There they were to recite the prayer *Omnipotens, sempiternus deus* and then return to their homes. All were commanded to fast, so that nobody, except the infirm, should eat fish or pottage. Those who could be, were to be content with bread and water. The others were to drink watered wine in moderation and eat herbs or fruit or even vegetables. All were to give alms to the needy, so that through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, the compassion of the Creator would be returned to the Christian people⁹⁶.

Given that Innocent later called the Roman people to his presence to explain to them Alfonso VIII's letter and to tell them of the great victory, it seems probable that many of them participated in the processions⁹⁷. Here Innocent used his impressive liturgical skills, which he had learnt before everything else, to sacralize the crowd, to draw the Roman and the wider Christian community into a union with the crusaders who were about to fight in the Peninsula, and to unify the Christian people above all through the Eucharist and the Cross, so that, in combination with the saints, and through their spiritual purity, they could persuade God to grant them victory. This procession, prior to the Fifth Crusade and deeply influencing the Children's Crusade, was the perfect fusion of crusade ideology and lay piety and here Innocent demonstrated just how he considered those who hated the Christian people were

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ MDI, no. 488, pp. 520-1.

to be defeated⁹⁸. For Innocent, victory did not rest on political machinations which would bring Christian kingdoms together in alliance through illegal marriages, nor did it rest with the military might of the Castilian king (as he was quick to remind Alfonso VIII afterwards)⁹⁹. Rather it rested with the Christian people, male and female, led by their clergy, processing behind the cross, seeing the relic of the one True Cross, listening to the preaching of the pope, going to Mass, and praying. And not only with this, but also with their fasting and almsgiving. The Christians, for the pope, could only win if they followed the path of the cross, purified their lives and performed all penitential acts with humility. *Then* they would receive God's mercy. *Then* they would receive the sign for which the pope and others had been waiting¹⁰⁰. And when the Christian people had indeed acted in this manner, when they lived as Christians should live, then, finally, they could be victorious. It was not the sword of man but the *gladius Dei* which devoured the enemies of the cross of the Lord¹⁰¹.

⁹⁸ See also Gary DICKSON, *La genèse de la Croisade des Enfants (1212)*, in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 153 (1995), pp. 53-102, at p. 82; Christoph MAIER, *Mass, the Eucharist and the Cross: Innocent III and the relocation of the Crusade*, in *Pope Innocent III and his World*, pp. 351-60, at pp. 352-6.

⁹⁹ MDI, no. 488, p. 521.

¹⁰⁰ PL, 216: 818. Most recently on apocalyptic thought and Innocent III, see Brett WHALEN, *Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, Harvard, 2009, pp. 125-48.

¹⁰¹ MDI, no. 488, p. 521.