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## Introduction

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## Introduction

Kyle C. Lincoln

In 1217, the accidental death of the young Castilian king, Enrique I (r.1214–7), changed the course of Castilian and Leonese history. The ascension of Fernando III, as has been shown, was anything but a guaranteed result, and took the intervention of both his mother, Queen Berenguela, and the major clerical and aristocratic leaders of Castile.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, historical hindsight makes Fernando's rule as king of Castile (1217–52) and León (1230–52) appear to be nothing short of miraculous: his conquest of Córdoba, Jaén, Badajoz and Sevilla marshalled a new era. The annexation of so much territory changed both the economic fortunes of the kingdom—both for good and ill—and refashioned the kings of Castile-León into one of the preeminent powers of Iberia, if not all of Europe.<sup>2</sup> For the eight-hundredth anniversary of Fernando's self-coronation and self-knighting as King of Castile in 1217, then, marking the occasion with thoughtful scholarly contributions pays some small tribute to the tectonic shift that Fernando's reign initiated.<sup>3</sup>

The variety of topics that Fernando's reign provides for rigorous research is considerable, and no serious study can suggest that it provides a comprehensive coverage of the historical events that comprised the thirty-five years of Fernando's reign as king. Instead, this special issue will aim to provide a series of studies that indicate four major areas of ongoing and future research. In the first essay, Edward Holt examines the ways in which the royal court circulated information and conveyed its own self-constructed identity in the territories that were under Fernando's political control. In the second contribution, Carlos de Ayala Martínez undertakes a critical reevaluation of the beating heart of Fernando III's lasting political legacy: his crusading activities against al-Ándalus. The third

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the excellent work of Janna Bianchini and Miriam Shadis on the role of Berenguela: Miriam Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile (1180-1246) and political women in the High Middle Ages*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009); Janna Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand: Power and Authority in the Reign of Berenguela of Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Teofilo Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that, at a special conference held at Saint Louis University's Madrid Conference, a group of scholars convened to begin remedying this issue. Although the papers will premier in a later volume, the names of those scholars involved will serve as a useful research tool for those interested in the subject beyond the essays in this volume: Martín Alvira Cabrer, Carlos de Ayala Martínez, Simon Barton, Barbara Boloix Gallardo, Cristina Catalina, Francisco Garcia-Serrano, Francisco García Fitz, Edward Holt, Kyle C. Lincoln, Oscar Pérez Rodríguez, Jose Manuel Rodriguez Garcia, Ana Rodriguez Lopez, and Teresa Witcombe.

contribution, by Teresa Witcombe, examines one of Fernando's key clerical allies, the noted Arabophile Mauricio of Burgos, and uncovers the complex multicultural background of a figure at the center of the Castilian monarchy who helped spur the development of one of the great cathedrals on the Camino de Santiago. My essay, the last in this special issue, examines the scientific process behind the examination of Fernando III's material remains as part of his canonization process and the ways in which witnesses in contemporary Seville used the scientific tools at their disposal to retrench the historical memory of Fernando III's sanctity within the context of the religious tensions of Hapsburg Spain. Taken together, it is hoped that this might be the start of a new series of conversations about important scholarly subjects and begin a new series of special issues for stimulating discussion.

This special issue covers several important themes linked to Fernando III. In Carlos Ayala's essay, the qualities of military and political changes that shaped the alignment of the Iberian Peninsula in the thirteenth century are given considerable examination. Given the reputation of Fernando III as a great conqueror king, these essays get to the core of what made Fernando a king of such lasting significance from thirteenth century onward. Holt and Ayala's essays intersect in their common considerations of how the identity of Fernando III as a warrior-king was constructed (in Ayala's piece) and deployed (in Holt's). In Teresa Witcombe's paper, she situates Mauricio of Burgos within the complicated intercultural exchanges of the twelfth and thirteenth century in order to uncover the broader trends that influenced architectural achievements in the heady days of the early thirteenth century. In his essay, Ayala's subject of the crusades against al-Andalus looms large, and the intersection between these topics contributes to the breadth of the portrait their work contributes. The production and reception of Fernando's identity is examined in both Holt and Lincoln's essays, examining the two ends of the possible spectrum on the subject: the close personal environment of a collaborative thirteenth century Iberian monarchy and the cold distance of the scientific examination of Fernando's remains in 1668. Taken as a whole, these five essays, then, make a substantive and contribution to scholarship on the occasion of an important anniversary in the history of medieval Iberia.

Of course, no single conference or journal issue can survey such a broad era with so many important historical subjects for study in any truly comprehensive fashion. Even in the most recent volume on Fernando III, more than a dozen essays were only able to make a dent in the subject of crusading in the era of Fernando III, and as Ayala's essay for this special issue shows, there is still work to be done.<sup>4</sup> Already, a number of conferences in the fall of 2017 in Spain have been planned in order to make a substantive contribution to the larger

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<sup>4</sup> Carlos de Ayala Martínez and Martín F. Ríos Saloma, eds., *Fernando III: tiempos de cruzada*, (Madrid: Silex, 2012).

scholarly conversations about the era of Fernando III. As a result, a special issue of the *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies* provides the opportunity for the *Bulletin* to help shape the dialogue around such an important subject. It is hoped, too, that a special issue will also help spur a renewal of medieval contributions to the Bulletin and contribute to a more holistic and comprehensive picture of the Spanish and Portuguese historical past.