

## Patronage and Piety: Montserrat and the Royal House of Medieval Catalonia-Aragon

This paper examines the long relationship between the monastery of Santa María de Montserrat and the royal house of Catalonia-Aragon. The members of this house, from Raymond Berenguer IV in the twelfth century to Alfonso V in the fifteenth, singled out this Marian shrine for deeply felt devotion. It was an association that benefited both sides. In return for the spiritual support of Montserrat's monks and *La Moreneta*, the blackened icon of the Virgin residing there, the rulers of Catalonia-Aragon showered the monastery with gifts, privileges, and attention. The monastery's fortunes only rose through the expansion of the Aragonese realm and the ensuing crises, difficulties and personal afflictions that burdened its ruling house. With the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon in 1469, the importance of Montserrat by no means diminished, remaining a powerful religious symbol for both the Spanish monarchy and Catalonia.



*The surroundings of Montserrat in the beginning of the sixteenth century; the monastery lies at approximately 50 kilometers or 30 miles from Barcelona to the northwest (Spruner-Menke, Hand-Atlas für die Geschichte des Mittelalters und der Neuere Zeit, Dritte Auflage, Gotha: Justus Perthes 1880, No. 19).*

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