

# Old Age and Rulership

## King James I of Aragon and Venetian Doge Marin(o) Falier(o)

### Abstract

Although kingship represents a classic topic of historical research, systematic studies are nevertheless rare. So far, certain aspects related to old age have been dealt with in the context of several studies that link political history with the history of culture and medicine. Due to the systemic differences between various kinds of political regimes, the analysis of the period of old age starts from rather diverse scenarios. While kings often ascended the throne by succession in their youth or middle age and grew old while exercising their office, the late medieval Venetian doges were usually not elected until they were on average about 65 years old. In this paper, two case studies of different political systems will be analysed in a comparative view based primarily on narrative, but also on administrative sources: a hereditary monarchy, namely that of King James I of Aragon (1208–1276, r. 1213–1276, who died at the age of 68); and a republic using electoral procedures as in the case of the Venetian Doge Marin(o) Falier(o) (1280 or 1285–1355, r. 1354–1355, who died at the age of 70 or 75). The study highlights aspects of old age that are common to both case studies such as for example health and illness, compensation, sexuality, and the preparation for death, as well as aspects that are unique to each case, such as warriorship and the perceptions of old age in a situation of discord and antagonism.

### 1 Introduction

Although kingship is a classic topic of historical research, systematic studies are still rather uncommon.<sup>1</sup> Important areas of study include, for instance, sacrality, consensual rule,

1 For example, cf. Hans K. Schulze, *Grundstrukturen der Verfassung im Mittelalter*, vol. 4: *Das Königtum*, Stuttgart 2011 (Kohlhammer-Urban-Taschenbücher 464).

rituals, and ceremonial aspects, and most recently warriorship and masculinity.<sup>2</sup> With regard to Venetian dogeship, in addition to an approach that concentrates on the persons of the doges – taking up the tradition of the *vitae ducum* – a systematic approach was also chosen. In this context, important topics include election, the ducal duties and tasks, representation and ceremony, the dogaressas (the wives of the doges) as well as death and tombs.<sup>3</sup> Robert Finlay's contribution from the late 1970s, which is dedicated to the topic of old age, should especially be highlighted in this case.<sup>4</sup> Certain problems concerning the ageing of rulers have so far been dealt with in studies that combine political with cultural and medical history.<sup>5</sup> Another topic addressed in the research is the retreat of

2 For example, cf. Martin Clauss/ Andrea Stieldorf/ Tobias Weller (Eds.), *Der König als Krieger. Zum Verhältnis von Königtum und Krieg im Mittelalter*, Bamberg 2015 (Bamberger interdisziplinäre Mittelalterstudien – Vorträge und Vorlesungen 5); Gerd Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale. Symbolik und Herrschaft im Mittelalter*, Darmstadt 2013; Katherine J. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England*, London 2013; Franz-Reiner Erkens (Ed.), *Die Sakralität von Herrschaft. Herrschaftslegitimierung im Wechsel der Zeiten und Räume*, Berlin 2002; Yves Sassier, *Royalauté et idéologie au Moyen Âge. Bas-Empire, monde franc, France (IV<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris 2002 (Collection U. Histoire); Bernd Schneidmüller, *Konsensuale Herrschaft. Ein Essay über Formen und Konzepte politischer Ordnung im Mittelalter*, in: Paul-Joachim Heinig/ Sigrid Jahns/ Hans-Joachim Schmidt/ Rainer Christoph Schwinges/ Sabine Wefers (Eds.), *Reich, Regionen und Europa in Mittelalter und Neuzeit. Festschrift für Peter Moraw*, Berlin 2000 (Historische Forschungen 67), pp. 53–87.

3 For a systematic approach, cf. Giorgio Ravegnani, *Il doge di Venezia*, Bologna 2013 (Universale paperbacks Il mulino 654); Gino Benzoni (Ed.), *I Dogi*, Milano 1982; Bartolomeo Cecchetti, *Il doge di Venezia*, Venezia 1864. For an approach focusing on the single doges, cf. Andrea Da Mosto, *I dogi di Venezia*, Venezia 2003. On the dogaressa: Holly S. Hurlburt, *The Dogaressa of Venice. 1200–1500. Wife and Icon*, New York 2006 (The New Middle Ages); Staley Edgcumbe, *The Dogaressas of Venice*, London 1910. On the doges' death and their tombs: Debra Pincus, *The Tombs of the Doges of Venice*, Cambridge 2000; Andrea Da Mosto, *I dogi di Venezia con particolare riguardo alle loro tombe*, Venezia 1939.

4 Robert Finlay, *The Venetian Republic as a Gerontocracy. Age and Politics in the Renaissance*, in: *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 8 (1978), pp. 157–178. The Venetian political system of the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries is analysed as a gerontocracy. Through this focus, the individual doges fade into the background. An important prerequisite for the emergence of the Venetian gerontocracy was the constitution of the nobility after the *serrata* ("closure") which made membership hereditary. On this topic: Stanley Chojnacki, *Social Identity in Renaissance Venice. The Second Serrata*, in: *Renaissance Studies* 8 (1994), pp. 341–358; Gerhard Rösch, *Der venezianische Adel bis zur Schließung des Großen Rats. Zur Genese einer Führungsschicht*, Sigmaringen 1989 (Kieler historische Studien 33). On the relationships between patricians and common people: Dennis Romano, *Patrizi e popolani. La società veneziana nel Trecento*, Bologna 1993 (Biblioteca storica).

5 Achim Thomas Hack, *Alter, Krankheit, Tod und Herrschaft im frühen Mittelalter. Das Beispiel der Karolinger*, Stuttgart 2009 (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 56); Agostino Para-

(elderly) rulers to monasteries.<sup>6</sup> Elderly rulers and characters have also been the subject of studies in literary history.<sup>7</sup>

The following two case studies will focus on the rulers' old age and the related aspects thereof. The fundamental questions are: (1) Which aspects of ageing and old age can be studied by them?, (2) What role does the difference of the political systems play?, (3) How significant are context and perspective for the evaluation of old age?, (4) Which connections to modern gerontological theories and concepts can be drawn?

With regard to the Crown of Aragon, King James I (1208–1276, r. 1213–1276) is one of the best known and most well-studied kings. Three major congresses have already been dedicated to him and the period he lived in.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, several monographs and numerous articles on specific aspects of James's personality and reign have been published.<sup>9</sup> To varying degrees, the sovereign's ageing has been important, but not as a

vicini Bagliani, *Der Leib des Papstes. Eine Theologie der Hinfälligkeit*, München 1997 (C. H. Beck Kulturwissenschaft); Paul E. Dutton, *Beyond the Topos of Senescence. The Political Problems of Aged Carolingian Rulers*, in: Michael McMahon Sheehan (Ed.), *Aging and the Aged in Medieval Europe*, Toronto 1990 (Papers in Mediaeval Studies 11), pp. 75–94.

6 Nicholas J. Higham, *The Shaved Head That Shall Not Wear the Crown*, in: Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Ed.), *Royal Authority in Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford 2013 (BAR. British Series 584), pp. 7–16; Jonathan R. Lyon, *The Withdrawal of Aged Noblemen into Monastic Communities. Interpreting the Sources from Twelfth-Century Germany*, in: Albrecht Classen (Ed.): *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Berlin-Boston 2007 (Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture 2), pp. 143–169.

7 For example, cf. Sonja Kerth, *Wolframs Greise. Alter(n) im "Parzival", "Titurel" und "Willehalm"*, in: *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und Literatur* 144 (2015), pp. 48–76; Solveig Kristina Malatrait, *Le vieillard sous l'armure ou le paradoxe du vieux guerrier*, in: Christoph O. Mayer/Alexandra-Kathrin Stanislaw-Kemenah (Eds.), *Die Pein der Weisen. Alter(n) in romanischem Mittelalter und Renaissance*, München 2012 (Mittelalter und Renaissance in der Romani 5), pp. 137–160; Thijs Porck, *Vergrijzing in een Oudengels heldendicht. De rol van oude koningen in de Beowulf*, in: *Madoc. Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen* 26 (2012), pp. 66–76; Jean E. Jost, *Age-Old Words of Wisdom. The Power of the Aged in Grail Literature*, in: Classen (Ed.), *Old Age* (see note 6), pp. 263–298; Helen Adolf, *Le vieux roi, clef de voûte du Conte del Graal*, in: Fred Dethier (Ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune*, Gembloux 1969, pp. 945–955.

8 Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol (Ed.), *Jaume I. Commemoració del VIII centenari del naixement de Jaume I*, 2 vols., Barcelona 2011–2013 (Memòries de la Secció Històrico-Arqueològica 91–92); *Jaime I y su época. X Congreso de Historia de la Corona de Aragon*, 3 vols., Zaragoza 1979–1982 (Publicación de la Institución 'Fernando el Católico' 675); *I Congrès d'Historia de la Corona d'Aragó dedicat al Rey en Jaume I y a la seua época*, 2 vols., Barcelona 1913.

9 Ernest Belenguer, *Jaume I i el seu regnat*, Lleida 2007; Stefano Maria Cingolani, *Jaume I. Història i mite d'un rei*, Barcelona 2007 (Biografies i memòries 68); Ferran Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I el Conqueridor*, Barcelona 1958 (Biblioteca catalana 14); Charles de Tourtoulon, *Études*

topic in its own right.<sup>10</sup> A rare testimony for the Middle Ages is the “Llibre dels Fets”, a chronicle ‘dictated’ by James himself, which makes it highly autobiographical.<sup>11</sup> Presumably, the work was written from a retrospective viewpoint during his old age.<sup>12</sup> Whereas the “Llibre” is practically always considered for research on James I, the archival records

sur la maison de Barcelone. Jacme Ier le Conquerant, Roi d’Aragon, 2 vols., Montpellier 1863–1867. On James’s personality and his old age: Xavier Renedo i Puig, La bona mort dels reis d’Aragó segons Ramon Muntaner, in: *Mot so razo 14* (2015), pp. 39–52; Josep Antoni Aguilar Àvila, ‘The Lion in Winter’. La figura de Jaume I. Del ‘Llibre dels feits’ a la ‘Crònica’ de Ramon Muntaner, in: Albert Guillem Hauf Valls (Ed.), *El ‘Llibre dels feits’. Aproximació crítica*, Valencia 2013, pp. 211–238; Ricard Urgell Hernández, Els fills de Jaume I i la política successòria, in: Ferrer i Mallol (Ed.), *Jaume I. Commemoració* (see note 8), vol. 1, pp. 599–608; Ernest Marcos Hierro, La croada a Terra Santa de 1269 i la política internacional de Jaume I, in: Ferrer i Mallol (Ed.), *Jaume I. Commemoració* (see note 8), vol. 1, pp. 509–522; Cynthia L. Chamberlin, The ‘Sainted Queen’ and the ‘Sin of Berenguela’. Teresa Gil de Vidaure and Berenguela Alfonso in Documents of the Crown of Aragon. 1255–1272, in: Paul E. Chevedden / Larry J. Simon (Eds.), *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages. Studies in Honor of Robert I. Burns S. J.*, 2 vols., Leiden-New York-Köln 1995–1996, vol. 1, pp. 303–321; Robert I. Burns, The Spiritual Life of Jaume the Conqueror King of Arago-Catalonia. 1208–1276. Portrait and Self-Portrait, in: *Jaime I* (see note 8), vol. 2, pp. 323–357.

10 Hans-Werner Wahl / Andreas Kruse, Lebenslaufforschung – ein altes und neues interdisziplinäres Forschungsthema, in: id. (Eds.), *Lebensläufe im Wandel. Entwicklung über die Lebensspanne aus Sicht verschiedener Disziplinen*, Stuttgart 2014, pp. 16–36; Jaber F. Gubrium / James A. Holstein, *Constructing the Life Course*, New York 2000 (The Reynolds Series in Sociology); Christian Alexander Neumann, Perspektiven einer Gerontomediävistik, in: *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 98 (2018), pp. 387–405, at pp. 400–403.

11 *Les Quatre grans Cròniques*, vol. 1: *Llibre dels feits del rei En Jaume*, ed. by Ferran Soldevila, rev. by Jordi Bruguera / Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol, Barcelona 2008 (*Memòries de la Secció Historico-Arqueològica* 73). An English translation: *The Chronicle of James I King of Aragon, surnamed the Conqueror*, transl. by John Forster, 2 vols., London 1883. For evaluations of the “Llibre”, cf. for example: Barbara Schlieben, Von der Schwierigkeit, alles anders als der Vater zu machen. Worte, Werke, Amt und “Selbst” im *Llibre dels Fets* Königs Jakobs von Aragón (1213–1276), in: *Viator Multilingual* 43 (2012), pp. 117–132, at pp. 117–118; Cingolani, *Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 345, 347; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 309–310. Perhaps Jaume Sarroca, bishop of Osca and notary of the king, finished the ‘Llibre’, which will be mentioned later on (Damian J. Smith, *James I and God. Legitimacy, Protection and Consolation in the ‘Llibre dels Fets’*, in: *Imago temporis. Medium Aevum* 1 [2007], pp. 105–119, at pp. 107, 109; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* [see note 9], pp. 326–328). ‘Dictation’ is not to be understood as a verbatim reproduction of the king’s words. Rather, what was recounted and remembered verbally was written down (Renedo i Puig, *La bona mort* [see note 9], p. 92; Stefano Maria Cingolani, *La memòria dels reis. Les quatre grans cròniques i la historiografia catalana. Des del segle X fins al XIV*, Barcelona 2008, pp. 33, 50).

12 Cingolani, *La memòria dels reis* (see note 11), pp. 33–35; Smith, *James I* (see note 11), pp. 107–108; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), pp. 326–327. Cingolani assumes that the king devoted himself to the work especially from the 1270s onwards and suggests that after the failed crusade of

are less intensively used.<sup>13</sup> Researchers have been, and continue to be, generally positive in their evaluations of his long reign. In recent decades, however, more differentiated judgements have increasingly been observed.<sup>14</sup>

Marin(o) Falier(o) (1280 or 1285–1355, r. 1354–1355) has a special position in Venetian history as he was the only doge to be beheaded under the accusation of wanting to overthrow the existing regime.<sup>15</sup> During the period of the “ducal monarchy” during the first centuries after the emergence of Venice, violent deaths of doges were quite frequent.<sup>16</sup> In the course of the restrictions imposed on their power from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the dynastic transmission of the office was prohibited and replaced by a complex electoral system.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the doges became increasingly older. For those who reigned between 1400 and 1600, Finlay gives an average age of 72 at the time of their election.<sup>18</sup> In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the election of old men was already so firmly established

1269 he had reached a time in his life where he could reflect on his successes and failures (Cingolani, *La memòria dels reis* [see note 11], pp. 34–35).

13 This is certainly due to the fact that a considerable amount of available material has not yet been systematically edited. On this, cf. for example: Alberto Torra Pérez, *Los registros de la cancellería de Jaime I*, in: Ferrer i Mallol (Ed.), *Jaume I. Commemoració* (see note 8), vol. 1, pp. 211–230, at p. 213. On James’s registers in the Archive of the Crown of Aragon, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 211–230.

14 Josep Maria Salrach i Marés, *Jaume I. Una valoració del regnat*, in: Ferrer i Mallol (Ed.), *Jaume I. Commemoració* (see note 8), vol. 2, pp. 837–854, at p. 847; Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol, *Jaume I. Vida i gestes*, in: ead. (Ed.), *Commemoració* (see note 8), vol. 1, pp. 11–36, at p. 35. Josep Maria Salrach points out that historians from the different former kingdoms of the crown developed their own traditions of evaluating James’s reign. These views can be traced back to the differences in the relationships the king had with the respective kingdoms; Salrach i Marés, *Jaume I.* (see above), pp. 847–851.

15 Daniele Dibello, *La stabilità delle istituzioni veneziane nel Trecento. Aspetti politici, economici e culturali nella gestione della congiura di Marino Falier*, in: *Reti Medievali Rivista* 19,2 (2018), pp. 86–129, at pp. 4–5; Giorgio Ravegnani, *Il traditore di Venezia. Vita di Marino Falier doge*, Bari 2017 (*Storia e società*), pp. 75–108.

16 Stefano Gasparri, *The First Dukes and the Origins of Venice*, in: Sauro Gelichi / id. (Eds.), *Venice and Its Neighbors from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Through Renovation and Continuity*, Leiden-Boston 2018 (*The Medieval Mediterranean* 111), pp. 5–26; Gherardo Ortalli, *Il travaglio d’una definizione. Sviluppi medievali del dogado*, in: Benzoni (Ed.), *I Dogi* (see note 3), pp. 13–44.

17 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 21–76. Ugo Tucci, *I meccanismi dell’elezione dogale*, in: Benzoni (Ed.), *I Dogi* (see note 3), pp. 107–124.

18 Finlay, *The Venetian Republic* (see note 4), pp. 157, 169. This development can be seen as being part of a general trend of decline of violent deaths of rulers in Europe between 600 and 1800. From the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the rate of regicide dropped significantly. Rulers who died a natural death reached their 53<sup>th</sup> year of life on the average (Manuel Eisner, *Killing Kings. Patterns of Regicide*

that deviations from this rule required justification.<sup>19</sup> The “doge monarchs” of the early Middle Ages had become office-holders, although certainly not ordinary ones, because they were highly respected, possessed a sacred aura as representatives of Saint Mark and, despite all the restrictions, had a certain power to influence politics.<sup>20</sup> Falier’s ‘conspiracy’ was intensively studied, particularly in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and especially by Vittorio Lazzarini whose research is still fundamental.<sup>21</sup> The events of April 1355 are recounted in greater or lesser detail in almost every book on the history of Venice.<sup>22</sup> After decades of inactivity, a renewed interest in the topic has arisen in recent years.<sup>23</sup> As far as the sources are concerned, the Venetian ruling class propagated its ‘official’ version immediately after the events. In the administrative documents, there is almost no information on the happenings of 1355, because this information should not be writ-

in Europe. AD 600–1800, in: *The British Journal of Criminology* 51 [2011], pp. 556–577). Against this backdrop, too, Falier’s case is an exception and James I reigned for an unusually long time.

19 Ravegnani, *Il doge* (see note 3), pp. 38–43. This was the case, for example, when Andrea Dandolo was elected doge in 1343 while being in his mid-30s.

20 Ravegnani, *Il doge* (see note 3), pp. 29, 36; Ortalli, *Il travaglio* (see note 16), p. 37; Alberto Tenenti, *La rappresentazione del potere*, in: Benzoni (Ed.), *I Dogi* (see note 3), pp. 73–106, at pp. 76, 79.

21 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), p. 78. Above all, cf. Vittorio Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura*, in: *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* 13 (1897), pp. 5–107, 277–374; id., *Marino Faliero avanti il dogado*, in: *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* 5 (1893), pp. 95–197; id., *Genealogia del doge Marino Faliero*, in: *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* 3 (1892), pp. 181–207. Many of his studies were combined into a monograph in the 1960s: id., *Marino Faliero*, Firenze 1963 (Biblioteca storica Sansoni. Nuova serie 39). Since Falier’s wife, Aluica (Ludovica) Gradenigo, also became part of the legends, she was given considerable attention as well. On this topic: Bartolomeo Cecchetti, *La dote della moglie di Marino Falier*, in: *Archivio Veneto* 29 (1885), pp. 202–204; id., *L’ultimo testamento di Lodovica Gradenigo. Vedova di Marino Falier*, in: *Archivio Veneto* 20 (1880), pp. 347–350; id., *La moglie di Marino Falier*, in: *Archivio Veneto* 1 (1871), pp. 364–370. In the following, the single quotation marks around ‘conspiracy’ (or similar terms) are omitted because it has been mentioned that this is a specific interpretation.

22 For example, cf. Frederic C. Lane, *Seerepublik Venedig*, München 1980, pp. 275–279; Roberto Cessi, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, vol. 1., Milano 1981, pp. 315–316; Samuele Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, vol. 3, Venezia 1912, pp. 176–193.

23 Dibello, *La stabilità* (see note 15), pp. 86–129; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15). Furthermore, a contribution by Giovanni Pillinini from 1970 should be referred to: Giovanni Pillinini, *I “popolari” e la “congiura” di Marino Falier*, in: *Annali della facoltà di lingue e letteratura straniere di Ca’ Foscari* 9 (1970), pp. 63–71.

ten down – “non scribatur”.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, narrative texts inform about the conspiracy, although they must be read critically. As for the sources of both case studies, they reveal insights into both discourses on old age and how it was dealt with in practice. Especially narrative texts, which prevail here, move between these two levels when they speak about specific rulers.<sup>25</sup>

## 2 King James I of Aragon

James I was born on 1 February 1208.<sup>26</sup> After the unexpected death of his father in the Battle of Muret in 1213, he came to the throne while still a child. His mother also died in the same year. James therefore grew up as an orphan in the circle of the Knights Templar in Montsó (Monzón). According to Antoni Riera i Melis, he was raised to be a “warrior king”.<sup>27</sup> Due to his early accession to the throne, his reign extended over 63 years. During his minority, a regency council under his great-uncle Sanç led the affairs of state until 1218.<sup>28</sup> The king comments that as a child he did not know how to rule his kingdom and was therefore dependent on the guidance and advice of others.<sup>29</sup> In the first chapters of the “Llibre”, James frequently mentions that he was ‘only a child or a youth’ – that is, actually still too young to be a ruler – but that even in his youth he had shown unusual

24 Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* (see note 21), p. 5. On the other hand, the persecution of the supporters of the conspiracy is documented.

25 Amy J. Cuddy/Susan T. Fiske/Michael I. Norton, *The Old Stereotype. The Pervasiveness and Persistence of Elderly Stereotype*, in: *Journal of Social Issues* 61 (2005), pp. 267–285; Gerd Göckenjan, *Das Alter würdigen. Altersbilder und Bedeutungswandel des Alters*, Frankfurt a. M. 2000 (Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 1446). Among other issues, narrative gerontology deals with these questions, for example, as described in Gary M. Kenyon/Phillip G. Clark/Brian De Vries (Eds.), *Narrative Gerontology. Theory, Research, and Practice*, New York 2001.

26 Ferrer i Mallol, *Jaume I* (see note 14), pp. 13–16; Antoni Riera i Melis, *Jaume I i la seva època. Anàlisi breu d'un important llegat polític i cultural*, in: *Catalan Historical Review* 1 (2008), pp. 163–170, at pp. 163–164; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), pp. 324–325.

27 Riera i Melis, *Jaume I* (see note 26), p. 164.

28 Ferrer i Mallol, *Jaume I* (see note 14), pp. 13–15; Vicente García Edo, *La monarquia de Jaume I*, in: Ferrer i Mallol (Ed.), *Jaume I. Commemoració* (see note 8), vol. 1, pp. 45–58, at p. 46. For the period of minority, in particular cf. Salvador Sanpere y Miquel, *Minoría de Jaime I*, in: *I Congrès* (see note 8), vol. 2, Barcelona 1913, pp. 580–691.

29 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 16, p. 74; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 1, ch. 16, p. 29.

bravery and an aptitude for governing.<sup>30</sup> This description brings to mind the *puer senex* motif.

In his “Llibre”, James focuses on his deeds, “fets”, especially his military enterprises, which were intended to serve the glory of God and were desired by God.<sup>31</sup> Although he primarily saw himself as a warrior, James has also been historically regarded as a proficient lawgiver and administrator.<sup>32</sup> In the prologue, which was either dictated by the king himself or written according to his instructions, a moral-religious-didactic function is attributed to the “Llibre”.<sup>33</sup> Both James’s longevity and his exceptionally good health are underlined, showing that length of reign, age and health were aspects of the perception of rulership. Against the background of topical references to the brevity of human life and the transience of everything earthly, James’s long life is interpreted as a sign of divine grace.<sup>34</sup> Through his pious deeds, James proved that he was pleasing to God, and at the end of his life he turned fully to Him by entering the Cistercian monastery of Poblet. His good health is also regarded as being a God-given gift. Consequently, illness is seen as a

30 For example, cf. *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 16, p. 74; ch. 20, p. 77; ch. 21, p. 82; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 1, ch. 16, p. 31; ch. 20, p. 36; ch. 21, p. 39; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), p. 356; cf. also the contribution by Monica Ferrari in this volume.

31 Schlieben, *Von der Schwierigkeit* (see note 11), pp. 119–120, 123, 130, 132; Smith, *James I* (see note 11), p. 106; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), p. 334.

32 Salrach i Marés, *Jaume I* (see note 14), pp. 843, 845; Donald J. Kagay, *The Line between Memoir and History. James I of Aragon and the “Libre dels Feits”*, in: id., *War, Government, and Society in the Medieval Crown of Aragon*, Aldershot et al. 2007 (*Variorum Collected Studies Series 861*), pp. 165–176, at pp. 174–175; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), p. 328. On this topic in more detail, cf. García Edo, *La monarquía* (see note 28), pp. 221–253; Marta VanLandingham, *Transforming the State. King, Court and Political Culture in the Realms of Aragon (1213–1387)*, Leiden-Köln 2002 (*The Medieval Mediterranean 43*). Burns describes James’s spirituality as idiosyncratic. In his way of thinking, God-pleasing deeds could compensate for worldly sins; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), pp. 356–357.

33 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), *Pròleg*, pp. 47–49; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 1, *Preface*, pp. 1–3; Josep Antoni Aguilar Àvila, *Introducció a les Quatre Grans Cròniques*, Barcelona 2011, pp. 17–18; Cingolani, *La memòria dels reis* (see note 11), p. 34. Since the reference is to ‘listeners’, the communication should primarily occur by word of mouth.

34 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), *Pròleg*, pp. 47–48; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 1, *Preface*, pp. 1–3. “E quan nostre Senyor Jesucrist, que sap totes coses, sabia que la nostra vida s’allongaria tant ...” (*Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila [see note 11], *Pròleg*, p. 47). “And as Our Lord Jesus Christ, who knows all things, knew that our life would be prolonged so that ...” (*The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 1, *Preface*, p. 1).

punishment by the Lord, “en manera de castigament”, and compared to the punishment of a son by his father, which is supposed to have an educational purpose.<sup>35</sup>

In the “Llibre”, illnesses and injuries are very rarely mentioned. Although it is not impossible that the king remained in extraordinarily good health throughout his life with almost no exceptions, this would be surprising in light of the constant battles he was involved in and the many journeys he undertook.<sup>36</sup> He only became seriously ill in his final days, and thus this illness will be discussed together with his death. There is no description of James’s physical appearance in the “Llibre”. The only contemporary representation dates from around 1259, when he was about 50–55 years old, and is included in the “Cantigas de Santa María” of Alfonso X of Castile.<sup>37</sup> James is depicted as having a short, greyish-white beard and hair of the same colour. His stature is slender and upright.<sup>38</sup> He is therefore portrayed as an elderly ruler who shows no age-related impairments; on the contrary, his hair colour confers him with dignity. From the “Llibre” it becomes evident that the king was aware that he could die at any moment, regardless of age.<sup>39</sup> In July 1237, when James was about 30 years old and conquering the Kingdom of Valencia, he was not in good health for a certain period of time and remained in one place.<sup>40</sup> A disease of the eyes is described, which the king was only able to open by using warm water.<sup>41</sup> Shortly afterwards, he was wounded on the forehead by an arrow fired off by Muslim soldiers.<sup>42</sup> In his old age, the king still demonstrated considerable physical strength: at the age of almost 60, James succeeded in conquering the Muslim Múrcia in alliance

35 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), Pròleg, p. 48; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 1, Preface, p. 2. On the *cura corporis*, cf. also the contributions by Daniela Santoro and Daniel Schäfer in this volume.

36 Cingolani, *La memòria dels reis* (see note 11), p. 71; Joaquim Miret i Sans, *Itinerari de Jaume I “el Conqueridor”* Barcelona 1918 (Institut d’Estudis Catalans 8), pp. 538, 542.

37 Belenguier, *Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 331; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), p. 325.

38 The examination of James’s skeleton showed that he was quite tall compared to his contemporaries; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), p. 325.

39 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 140, pp. 231–232; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 1, ch. 140, pp. 237–238; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), p. 340.

40 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 213, pp. 286–287; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 1, ch. 213, pp. 319–320.

41 *Ibid.*, ch. 257, p. 323; ch. 257, pp. 370–371.

42 *Ibid.*, ch. 266, pp. 329–330; ch. 266, pp. 380–381. The wound must have remained visible because it was still clearly recognisable when the king’s mortal remains were examined; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), pp. 325, 341.

with Alfonso X (1265–1266).<sup>43</sup> In 1269, the Aragonese king organised a crusade to the Holy Land, which he himself abandoned when he left the fleet in Aigues-Mortes.<sup>44</sup> For its organisation, he had travelled through his entire kingdom on horseback. The king's devotion to the enterprise might well be connected with old age, because he saw in the crusade the pinnacle of his works for the glory of God and may have expected a corresponding reward in the afterlife.<sup>45</sup> In the "Llibre", in a rather extensive and partly dramatic narration, James describes violent storms, which he interprets as a divine sign that he should not continue his journey.<sup>46</sup> Some contemporaries saw the real reason in the fact that he had not wanted to part from his lover, Berenguela.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the young woman was always by his side, as administrative documents prove.<sup>48</sup> Even two years before his death, James still displayed his physical capacity and fitness for war, which contrasts with the negative old-age stereotype of physical weakness. In 1274, he went to the Second Council of Lyon. There he had his horse perform tricks with him as the rider, which so impressed the attending French nobles that they said "Lo, the king is not so old as people said! He could still give a Turk a good lance-thrust".<sup>49</sup>

43 Marcos Hierro, *La croada* (see note 9), p. 519; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 259–265.

44 Aguilar Àvila, *Introducció* (see note 33), pp. 58–64; Marcos Hierro, *La croada* (see note 9), pp. 509–522; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 266–270; Reinhold Röhrich, *Der Kreuzzug des König Jacob I. von Aragonien (1269)*, in: *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 11 (1890), pp. 372–395; Tourtoulon, *Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, pp. 395–399.

45 Marcos Hierro, *La croada* (see note 9), p. 519. For the king's travels, cf. Esther Redondo García, *Mapes de l'itinerari de Jaume I (1208–1276) durant tota la seva vida*, in: Ferrer i Mallol (Ed.), *Jaume I. Commemoració* (see note 8), vol. 2, pp. 857–876, at p. 872.

46 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), capp. 482–490, pp. 471–478; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 482–490, pp. 600–607; Chamberlin, *The 'Sainted Queen'* (see note 9), p. 320; Tourtoulon, *Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, pp. 395–399.

47 Chamberlin, *The 'Sainted Queen'* (see note 9), p. 320. The cleric Guillaume de Puylaurens, from what is now Southern France, criticised the fact that James, burning with love, abandoned his crusade on the advice of a woman, "consilio mulieris" (Guillaume de Puylaurens, *Chronique* [1203–1275]. *Chronica magistri Guillelmi de Podio Laurentii*, ed. by Jean Duvernoy, Paris 1976 [Sources d'histoire médiévale], ch. 48, pp. 196–197; Tourtoulon, *Études* [see note 9], vol. 2, p. 396). On the author: Guillaume de Puylaurens, *Chronique*, ed. by Duvernoy (see above), pp. 1–9.

48 Chamberlin, *The 'Sainted Queen'* (see note 9), pp. 320–321.

49 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), capp. 523–542, pp. 500–509; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 523–542, pp. 638–655; Belenguier, *Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 318; Burns, *The Spiritual Life* (see note 9), p. 356. "El rei no és tan vell con hom desia,

During his long life, the king had two official wives who were queens and one common-law wife, Teresa Gil de Vidaure, who did not have the official status of a queen; as well as numerous lovers or mistresses.<sup>50</sup> In the “Llibre”, the ladies at his side appear only rarely. The following comments may offer a possible explanation for this. James spent approximately the last ten years of his life with the Castilian Berenguela (or Berenguera) Alfonso de Molina, who died in 1272, and then with the (young) Catalan noblewoman Sibil·la de Saga.<sup>51</sup> Berenguela was much younger than James.<sup>52</sup> In the eyes of the Church and Pope Clement IV, it was impossible for James to divorce Teresa Gil de Vidaure, and the king’s behaviour was sinful and inappropriate because he acted like a *senex amans* by being in a relationship that was unequal with regard to age.<sup>53</sup> Among other things, the pope admonished him by saying that he should rather focus on the afterlife and refrain from sins of the flesh, especially in light of the fact that his life would probably not continue much longer.<sup>54</sup> He should not “pollute the last years of his life” (“nec te decet extrema polluere vitae tuae”). The judgement of some historians is comparable, as they regard James’s relationship with Berenguela as being “an old man’s folly”, and

que *encora* poria doner a un turc una gran lancea” (Llibre dels Feits, ed. by Soldevila [see note 11], ch. 535, p. 507; The Chronicle of James I, transl. by Forster [see note 11], vol. 2, ch. 535, p. 650).

50 Nikolas Jaspert, Indirekte und direkte Macht iberischer Königinnen im Mittelalter. “Reginale” Herrschaft, Verwaltung und Frömmigkeit, in: Claudia Zey (Ed.), Mächtige Frauen? Königinnen und Fürstinnen im europäischen Mittelalter (11.–14. Jahrhundert), Ostfildern 2015 (Vorträge und Forschungen 81), pp. 73–130, at pp. 87, 126; Belenguier, Jaume I (see note 9), pp. 265, 276–277, 336; Chamberlin, The ‘Sainted Queen’ (see note 9), pp. 303–321; Burns, The Spiritual Life (see note 9), p. 349; Soldevila, Vida de Jaume I (see note 9), pp. 244–253; Joseph Soler y Palet, Un aspecte de la vida privada de Jaume I, in: I Congrés (see note 8), vol. 2, pp. 536–579, at pp. 539, 556.

51 Belenguier, Jaume I (see note 9), p. 277; Burns, The Spiritual Life (see note 9), pp. 343, 349; Soldevila, Vida de Jaume I (see note 9), pp. 248–253; Soler y Palet, Un aspecte (see note 50), pp. 554, 557–565, 568–573.

52 Chamberlin, The ‘Sainted Queen’ (see note 9), p. 314. “... for this Castilian noblewoman young enough to have been his daughter, if not his granddaughter ...” (ibid.).

53 Shulamith Shahar, The Middle Ages and Renaissance, in: Pat Thane (Ed.), A History of Old Age, Los Angeles 2005, pp. 71–111, at pp. 94–95, 102–103; Chamberlin, The ‘Sainted Queen’ (see note 9), p. 311; Soler y Palet, Un aspecte (see note 50), pp. 556–557; Röhrlich, Der Kreuzzug (see note 44), pp. 372–373, 380; Tourtoulon, Études (see note 9), vol. 2, pp. 359–360. On the relationships between James I and the popes: Smith, James I (see note 11), pp. 523–536.

54 Thesaurus novus anecdotorum, ed. by Edmond Martène/Ursin Durand, vol. 2, Paris 1717, epistola 322, cols. 362–363; Chamberlin, The ‘Sainted Queen’ (see note 9), p. 316.

criticise the king's weakness for women.<sup>55</sup> Despite this harsh exhortation, James did not change his ways. Nevertheless, the "Llibre" does describe his apparent concerns for his salvation, although it is not always clear whether these are just rhetoric. He describes his relationship with Berenguela as a "worldly sin" from which he either cannot or will not desist.<sup>56</sup> James believes that he can free himself from this sinfulness by means of God-pleasing deeds, above all by conquering Muslim territories. James's last lover Sibil·la did not express any aspirations for marriage, which may also be related to the king's advanced age.<sup>57</sup> In 1274 (confirmed in 1275), the king gave the city and castle of Tàrbena (Kingdom of Valencia) to her as an allodium to be passed on to their children after her death.<sup>58</sup> Therefore even at the age of 66, the king still considered it possible to father children. Apart from his lovers, in his old age James was also close to two members of his court entourage: the bishop of Osca (Huesca), Jaume Sarroca, and the judge and legal expert Albert de Lavània.<sup>59</sup> Sarroca probably had more influence than de Lavània, as not only was he a scribe, ultimately becoming chancellor of the royal chancery, but was also a witness to important matters and a procurator of financial transactions.

During his long life, the king wrote several wills. The first one was made in 1232 and proclaimed James's son Alfonso – from his first marriage with Eleanor of Castile – as heir.<sup>60</sup> After his divorce, the king married Violant of Hungary in 1235. From this union, the Infant Peter was born in 1240. A second will was therefore drawn up in 1242,

55 Chamberlin, *The 'Sainted Queen'* (see note 9), p. 304, Soler y Palet, *Un aspecte* (see note 50), pp. 578–579.

56 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 426, pp. 436–437; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 426, p. 548–550; Smith, *James I* (see note 11), p. 118; Soler y Palet, *Un aspecte* (see note 50), pp. 554–555.

57 Belenguier, *Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 277; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 252.

58 Soler y Palet, *Un aspecte* (see note 50), pp. 569–571.

59 Miret i Sans, *Itinerari* (see note 36), pp. 535, 539–542. On Sarroca in detail: Ricardo Del Arco y Garay, *El obispo Don Jaime Sarroca. Consejero y gran privado del rey Don Jaime el Conquistador (noticias y documentos inéditos)*, in: *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 9 (1917–1920), pp. 65–91. On Sarroca in the "Llibre": *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 563, p. 525; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 563, p. 673; Miret i Sans, *Itinerari* (see note 36), pp. 540, 542.

60 Ricard Urgell Hernández, *Jaume I. Les disposicions testamentàries i la creació de la corona de Mallorca*, in: *L'últim testament de Jaume I (Montpeller, 26 d'agost de 1272)*, ed. by id., Barcelona 2018, pp. 9–66, at pp. 19–20; Alfonso García Gallo, *El derecho de sucesión del trono en la Corona de Aragón*, in: *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* 36 (1966), pp. 5–187, at p. 27.

according to which the territories of the Crown were to be divided between both sons.<sup>61</sup> After the birth of further sons, two of whom were to receive possessions, a third will was drawn up in 1248, which divided the lands between the four sons alive at the time.<sup>62</sup> Between 1251 and 1262, two of his sons and both wives died.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, in 1262, the ruler had a new, fourth will written.<sup>64</sup> In it, he divided his kingdom between his two sons, Peter and James, with the intention of establishing two independent kingdoms.<sup>65</sup> The king also included this division in his fifth – and final – will of 22 August 1272.<sup>66</sup> In the will, only a few references to old age are found in a formulaic way: on the one hand, at the beginning, a reference is made to the transience of all earthly things and, somewhat later, the legally relevant phrase that the king is still in good physical and mental health can be found.<sup>67</sup> The ruler designated the Cistercian monastery of Poblet as his desired final resting place.

During another revolt of the Muslims in the Kingdom of Valencia, which began in 1275 and only ended after James's death in 1277, he became seriously ill, and his condition deteriorated rapidly.<sup>68</sup> By the summer of 1276, he was already noticeably weakened and

61 Tourtoulon, *Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, doc. 5, pp. 556–559; Urgell Hernández, *Els fills* (see note 9), p. 602; García Gallo, *El derecho* (see note 60), pp. 27–29.

62 Urgell Hernández, *Els fills* (see note 9), p. 602; Riera i Melis, *Jaume I* (see note 26), p. 169; García Gallo, *El derecho* (see note 60), pp. 29, 31.

63 Urgell Hernández, *Jaume I* (see note 60), pp. 21–23; Soler y Palet, *Un aspecte* (see note 50), p. 555.

64 Urgell Hernández, *Jaume I* (see note 60), pp. 22–23; García Gallo, *El derecho* (see note 60), pp. 30–31.

65 Aragon, Valencia and Catalonia were assigned to Peter, while Mallorca, the Roussillon and the Cerdagne, the Conflent, the Vallespir and Montpellier were to pass to James. Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol and Antoni Riera i Melis regard this decision as the king's greatest mistake against the backdrop of an otherwise impressive reign (Ferrer i Mallol, *Jaume I* [see note 14], p. 33; Riera i Melis, *Jaume I* (see note 26), pp. 169–170). Urgell Hernández emphasises that James did not want to leave his younger son without an inheritance (Urgell Hernández, *Jaume I* [see note 60], pp. 18–25).

66 *El Testament de Jaume I del 1272*, in: *L'últim testament*, ed. by Urgell Hernández (see note 60), pp. 125–152; Urgell Hernández, *Els fills* (see note 9), pp. 605–606; Cingolani, *La memòria dels reis* (see note 11), pp. 35–36; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 299.

67 *El Testament de Jaume I del 1272*, ed. by Urgell Hernández (see note 66), pp. 127, 129.

68 Aguilar Àvila, 'The Lion in Winter' (see note 9), pp. 222–223; Cingolani, *Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 366–367; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 295–296. The number of his journeys and the travelled distances reduced significantly during the last two years of his reign; Redondo García, *Mapes* (see note 45), p. 875.

his followers therefore strongly advised him not to go into battle.<sup>69</sup> James reluctantly gave in to their request. Perhaps it saved the king's life, because the Catalans suffered a heavy defeat.<sup>70</sup> After departing from Xàtiva to Alzira, James's health further declined.<sup>71</sup> By 9 July, the king could no longer engage in the fighting and gave Infant Peter the permission to man the castles in the Kingdom of Valencia.<sup>72</sup> In view of his dwindling strength, James made his last confession and received Holy Communion.<sup>73</sup> The illness from which he died is not known. He called on Peter to come to him in his final days. In his speech in the presence of the royal council, he not only exhorts him to take an example from his life, but also looks back on his long reign.<sup>74</sup> He sees himself as having been guided and blessed by God in his actions and regards his reign of more than 60 years as a sign of divine grace, because no previous king had ruled for that long. As a specific comparison, James chooses the biblical kings David and Solomon. According to the Book of Kings, both rulers reigned for 40 years and therefore reached old age.<sup>75</sup>

69 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 558, pp. 521–522; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 558, p. 668–670; Cingolani, *Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 366–367; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 296.

70 Cingolani, *Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 366–367; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 297; Tourtoulon, *Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, pp. 505–506.

71 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 560, p. 523; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 560, p. 671; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 297.

72 ACA (= *Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó*), *Reial Cancelleria, registres, Jaume I, reg. 22, fol. 48r*; Miret i Sans, *Itinerari* (see note 36), p. 534.

73 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 560, p. 523; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 560, p. 671; Cingolani, *Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 369; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 299.

74 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 562, p. 524; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 562, p. 672; Ferrer i Mallol, *Jaume I* (see note 14), p. 34; Cingolani, *Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 369; Tourtoulon, *Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, pp. 507–508. "... e en qual manera nostre Senyor nos havia feit regnar al seu serviï pus de seixanta anys, més que no era en memòria, ne trobava hom que negun rei, de David o de Salamó ençà ..." (*Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila [see note 11], ch. 562, p. 524). "... and how He had made me reign in His service more than sixty years, longer than in the memory of man any king since David and Solomon had reigned ..." (*The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster [see note 11], vol. 2, ch. 562, p. 672). On both kings, see also the contribution by Kathrin Liess in this volume.

75 *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. by Bonifatius Fischer, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1969, III Rg. 2, 11, p. 459, III Rg. 11, 42, p. 480. This length of reign can also be found, for example, in the "Etymologies" by Isidore of Seville and in the "Trésor" by Brunetto Latini (*Isidorus Hispalensis, Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, ed. by Wallace M. Lindsay, Oxford

James exhorts both of his sons to “love and honour each other”.<sup>76</sup> He gives his eldest son the more extensive and important inheritance, so that he can be satisfied with it and “no quarrel will arise”. Consequently, Peter was clearly favoured. Towards the end of the “Llibre”, numerous events are told in which father and son act together and their actions take place in concord.<sup>77</sup> In the last two years, father and son fought battles against rebellious nobles and Muslims.<sup>78</sup> On 20 or 21 July 1276, the king abdicated and died a few days later on 27 July in Valencia.<sup>79</sup> Previously, James had confirmed his will in two codicils (20 and 23 July).<sup>80</sup> In the first one, the ruler’s illness is dealt with in formulaic words and his still robust mental health is emphasised.<sup>81</sup> Among the witnesses of the confirmation were the aforementioned Sarroca and de Lavània.<sup>82</sup> On the same day, the

1911, vol. 1, lib. V, 38–39; Brunetto Latini, *Trésor*, ed. by Pietro G. Beltrami, Torino 2008, lib. 1, 41, pp. 76–77, 44–45, pp. 78–81).

76 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 563, p. 524; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 563, p. 673.

77 Schlieben, *Von der Schwierigkeit* (see note 11), p. 130. In the previous years, when James’s illegitimate son Ferran Sanxis de Castre was still alive, whom the king favoured for some time, the relationship between the king and his firstborn was tense. Ferran joined the ranks of rebellious nobles and thus became a ‘traitor’ in his father’s eyes. During a battle, Ferran was murdered by Peter’s men in 1275 (Ferrer i Mallol, *Jaume I* [see note 14], pp. 33–34; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* [see note 9], pp. 246, 281, 284–288). After James’s death, Peter was to see to it that his father’s body would be transferred to Poblet (*Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila [see note 11], ch. 564, p. 526; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster [see note 11], vol. 2, ch. 564, p. 675).

78 Schlieben, *Von der Schwierigkeit* (see note 11), pp. 130–131; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 283–284. After the king’s death, the royal seals were given to a procurator of the Infant (ACA, Reial Cancelleria, registres, *Jaume I*, reg. 22, fol. 65v; Miret i Sans, *Itinerari* [see note 36], p. 536).

79 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), capp. 565–566, p. 527; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 565–566, p. 675–677; Cingolani, *Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 369–370; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), pp. 301–302; Miret i Sans, *Itinerari* (see note 36), pp. 535, 537.

80 ACA, Reial Cancelleria, pergamins, *Jaume I*, Serie general, no. 2287. The first codicil: Tourtoulon, *Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, doc. 21, pp. 605–608. The second codicil: *ibid.*, doc. 22, pp. 609–612; Cingolani, *La memòria dels reis* (see note 11), p. 41; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 301; Miret i Sans, *Itinerari* (see note 36), p. 535; Tourtoulon, *Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, pp. 508–509.

81 Tourtoulon, *Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, doc. 21, p. 605.

82 *Ibid.*, doc. 21, p. 608; doc. 22, p. 612. Regarding possible legal actions or claims related to his functions at court, the king granted Sarroca immunity (20 July) (ACA, Reial Cancelleria, registres, *Jaume I*, reg. 22, fol. 64r; Miret i Sans, *Itinerari* [see note 36], pp. 535, 540). Furthermore, James

king assigned several castles and towns to the monastery of Poblet.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, James settled numerous financial matters.<sup>84</sup> In Valencia, James confessed his sins and put on the monk's habit, but without ultimately reaching Poblet.<sup>85</sup>

This part of the article will conclude with an examination of how James's old age was portrayed in later chronicles, using Ramon Muntaner's particularly informative work as an example.<sup>86</sup> Muntaner was an ardent supporter of the Aragonese royal house.<sup>87</sup> For the chronicler, James I represented an exemplary, almost saintly monarch.<sup>88</sup> He describes him as always being physically and mentally healthy up to the point that he fell so seriously ill

recommended his person to the Infant in a special way (*Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila [see note 11], ch. 563, p. 525; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster [see note 11], vol. 2, ch. 563, p. 673; *Miret i Sans, Itinerari* [see note 36], p. 542).

83 ACA, Reial Cancelleria, registres, Jaume I, reg. 22, fols. 65r–v; *Miret i Sans, Itinerari* (see note 36), p. 535. This is also mentioned in the second codicil: *Tourtoulon, Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, doc. 22, p. 611.

84 *Miret i Sans, Itinerari* (see note 36), pp. 536–537.

85 *Llibre dels Feits*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 11), ch. 566, pp. 527–528; *The Chronicle of James I*, transl. by Forster (see note 11), vol. 2, ch. 566, p. 676; *Miret i Sans, Itinerari* (see note 36), p. 537. His mortal remains first rested in Valencia Cathedral. In 1278 they were transferred to Poblet; *Miret i Sans, Itinerari* (see note 36), p. 538.

86 Since Ramon Muntaner's chronicle, in comparison with the works of Bernat Desclot and Pere Marsili, deals with James's old age in greater detail (*Ramon Muntaner, Crònica de Ramon Muntaner*, ed. by Ferran Soldevila, rev. by Jordi Bruguera / Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol, Barcelona 2011 [*Memòries de la Secció Historico-Arqueològica* 86]), only this work will be discussed here due to the limited scope of this article (*Bernat Desclot, Crònica de Bernat Desclot*, ed. by Ferran Soldevila, rev. by Jordi Bruguera / Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol, Barcelona 2018 [*Memòries de la Secció Historico-Arqueològica* 80], ch. 73, pp. 152–153; *Petrus Marsilii, Liber gestorum sive Chronice illustrissimi Regis Aragonum Domini Iacobi victorissimi principis*, in: id., *Petri Marsilii Opera Omnia*, ed. by Antoni Biosca i Bas, Turnhout 2015 [*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 273], pp. 1–445, at lib. IV, 56–59, pp. 441–445).

87 Aguilar Àvila, 'The Lion in Winter' (see note 9), p. 211.

88 Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 86), ch. 6, pp. 31–32; Ramon Muntaner, *The Chronicle of Muntaner*, ed. by Lady Anna Goodenough, London 1920–1921, ch. 6, pp. 13–14; Renedo i Puig, *La bona mort* (see note 9), p. 42. At the age of nine, the chronicler met or saw the king when he was stopping at the house of Muntaner's father while passing through the town (*Ramon Muntaner, Crònica*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 86), ch. 2, p. 25; ch. 23, pp. 60–61; *Ramon Muntaner, Chronicle*, ed. by Goodenough (see above), ch. 2, pp. 5–6, ch. 23, pp. 50–51; Soler y Palet, *Un aspecte* [see note 50], pp. 538–539). However, the chapters devoted to the reign of James I do not focus on him, but on the Infant Peter.

at the end of his life and became immobile.<sup>89</sup> This account corresponds to the spirit of the “Llibre”. Going beyond this, Muntaner stresses that even in his old age, the king always rode horses, enjoyed hunting, and personally visited his lands. Furthermore, Muntaner portrays the image of a grandfather who visited his daughters-in-law and grandchildren, gave them presents and had a joyful time with them.<sup>90</sup> Physicians who cared for the king are mentioned without being specified. The chronicler puts his age at more than 80 years, which is not correct, and comments that “at that age one cannot recover as quickly as a young person”.<sup>91</sup> According to Josep Antoni Aguilar Àvila’s interpretation, Muntaner intended to make the king appear even wiser and more venerable than he was.<sup>92</sup> Cingolani also recognises an increase in sacrality in this portrayal.<sup>93</sup>

The period of the ruler’s illness and immobility is portrayed as being precarious. According to Muntaner, when the king learned of the defeat of the Catalans by rebellious Muslim forces, he cried out, while lying in bed, that his horse should be brought to him and that he should be equipped for battle. He raised his hands and asked God why he had let him become so powerless, for alone his presence in the litter would help to defeat the Muslims.<sup>94</sup> This scene can neither be found in the “Llibre” nor in any other of the “Great Chronicles”. Muntaner’s portrait of James as a warrior who is unbroken in spirit can be considered legendary.<sup>95</sup> Aguilar Àvila agrees with this assessment and explains, on

89 Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 86), ch. 26, p. 63; Ramon Muntaner, *Chronicle*, ed. by Goodenough (see note 88), ch. 26, pp. 55–56; Aguilar Àvila, *Introducció* (see note 33), p. 99.

90 Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 86), ch. 17, p. 50; Ramon Muntaner, *Chronicle*, ed. by Goodenough (see note 88), ch. 17, pp. 38–39; Cingolani, *La memòria dels reis* (see note 11), p. 176.

91 Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 86), ch. 26, p. 63; Ramon Muntaner, *Chronicle*, ed. by Goodenough (see note 88), ch. 26, pp. 55–56.

92 Aguilar Àvila, ‘The Lion in Winter’ (see note 9), p. 213.

93 Cingolani, *La memòria dels reis* (see note 11), p. 176.

94 Aguilar Àvila, ‘The Lion in Winter’ (see note 9), pp. 223–224; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 297; Tourtoulon, *Études* (see note 9), vol. 2, p. 506. “... ‘Ah, Senyor, per què us plau que en aquest punt jo sia així despoderat? Ara tost, pus llevar no em pusc, isca tost la mia senyera e fets portar mi en una anda entrò siam ab ells ...’” (Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica*, ed. by Soldevila [see note 86], capp. 26–27, pp. 63–64). “‘Lord, why does it please Thee that, at such a juncture, I should be thus disabled?’ But at once he added: ‘As I cannot get up, let my banner go out and let me be carried in a litter, until I reach the insolent Moors ...’” (Ramon Muntaner, *Chronicle*, ed. by Goodenough [see note 88], ch. 27, pp. 56–57).

95 Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 297.

the basis of comparable episodes in other chronicles and literary texts, that Muntaner made use of a narrative pattern already used in antiquity with the aim of increasing the dignity of the last days of the king in such a way as corresponds to the relevance of his achievements.<sup>96</sup> James is delighted with Peter's victory over the Muslims, lifts his arms to heaven, kisses his son three times on the mouth and blesses him. This legendary gesture, which may go back to Peter himself, illustrates the transmission of power from the old and seriously ill father to the first-born son as his legitimate successor under divine auspices.<sup>97</sup> The entire court was depressed and worried about the king's poor health. James was "carried" ("portar") from one place to another. In Valencia, the king died a 'good death'.<sup>98</sup> In comparison with the "Llibre" and the administrative sources, it can be seen that the chronicler's depiction of James's old age is rather free and enriched with details and legends.

### 3 Venetian Doge Marin(o) Falier(o)

Marino Faliero or Marin Falier (in Venetian) was born between 1280 and 1285.<sup>99</sup> He descended from a rich noble family with a long tradition. From his first marriage a daughter was born. In 1335 he took Aluica (Ludovica) Gradenigo to be his second wife. There was a considerable age difference between them because Aluica was 25–30 years younger. No children were born of this union.<sup>100</sup> From a young age on, Falier held numerous political and military offices inside and outside Venice and carried out

96 Aguilar Àvila, 'The Lion in Winter' (see note 9), pp. 223–235. According to this motif, a seriously ill or dying hero is carried onto the battlefield to strike fear into the enemy just by his presence. On literary constructions of old age, see also the contributions by Sonja Kerth and Bernard Ribémont in this volume.

97 Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica*, ed. by Soldevila (see note 86), capp. 27–28, pp. 64–65; Ramon Muntaner, *Chronicle*, ed. by Goodenough (see note 88), ch. 27, p. 57; Soldevila, *Vida de Jaume I* (see note 9), p. 298.

98 Renedo i Puig, *La bona mort* (see note 9), pp. 42, 48–49.

99 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 3–12, 29; Romanin, *Storia* (see note 22), p. 177; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), p. 21.

100 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 81, 84; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), p. 69; Cecchetti, *L'ultimo testamento* (see note 21), p. 348. Falier's first wife Tommasina Contarini had died young and he did not marry again until he was 55 years old (Edgcumbe Staley, *The Dogaressas of Venice*, London 1910, p. 143).

diplomatic missions.<sup>101</sup> The years before his election were also characterised by a high level of activity, so that everything indicates that Falier was in good health at the time of his election. He was elected doge on 11 September 1354, when he was on a diplomatic mission in Avignon to negotiate peace with Genoa.<sup>102</sup> In this context, Rafaino Caresini laments how such an outstanding personality could leave the path of virtue and turn to evil.<sup>103</sup> Pietro Giustiniani and Enrico Dandolo mention Falier's noble and long ancestry, and his immense wealth, generosity, courage and wisdom.<sup>104</sup> In summary, the following criteria for being elected doge can be identified, the majority of which could only be attained at an advanced age: wealth, a long *cursus honorum*, loyalty to the republic and a vast knowledge gained through experience. It should also be noted that Falier had no sons and only one nephew, which was also an advantage because the establishment of a dynasty, which was clearly unwanted, thus seemed (more) unlikely.<sup>105</sup> In addition, the chroniclers

101 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 13–49, 143; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), pp. 21–27, 67, 351; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero avanti il dogado* (see note 21), pp. 95–197.

102 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), p. 75; Romanin, *Storia* (see note 22), p. 177; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), p. 36. As he was not present and the office was vacant, the body of the *signoria*, under the leadership of the oldest councillor as vice-doge, took over the government (Marin Sanuto, *Le vite dei dogi*, ed. by Ludovico Antonio Muratori, vol. 22, Milano 1732 [*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 22], cols. 405–1252, at col. 628).

103 Raphaynus de Caresinis, *Raphayni de Caresinis cancellarii Venetiarum Chronica*. Aa. 1343–1388, ed. by Ester Pastorello, Bologna 1966 (*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 12.2), p. 9. Rafaino Caresini (1314–1390) was notary of the ducal chancellery and finally Grand Chancellor. Bound to the government and being an official chronicler, he followed the official reading (*ibid.*, pp. V–XXXII; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* [see note 15], p. 97; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* [see note 21], pp. 9, 344–355).

104 Enrico Dandolo, *Cronica di Venexia detta di Enrico Dandolo. Origini–1362*, ed. by Roberto Pesce, Venezia 2010 (*Medioevo e Rinascimento. Testi* 2), p. 143; Pietro Giustiniani, *Venetiarum historia vulgo Petro Iustiniano Iustiniani filio adiudicata*, ed. by Roberto Cessi/Fanny Bennato, Venezia 1964 (*Monumenti storici* 18), ch. 50, p. 240; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), p. 28. Enrico Dandolo wrote his vernacular chronicle in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Enrico Dandolo, *Cronica*, ed. by Pesce [see above], pp. XI–LIII; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* [see note 15], p. 98). Pietro Giustiniani, who remains almost unknown, wrote his chronicle around 1360 (Pietro Giustiniani, *Venetiarum historia*, ed. by Cessi/Bennato [see above], pp. XX–XXXIII; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* [see note 15], p. 98). On wisdom as an important aspect of historical research on old age: Neumann, *Perspektiven* (see note 10), pp. 403–405. On psychological wisdom research, cf. for example: Ursula M. Staudinger/Judith Glück, *Psychological Wisdom Research. Commonalities and Differences in a Growing Field*, in: *Annual Review of Psychology* 62 (2011), pp. 215–241; see also the contribution by Hans-Werner Wahl in this volume.

105 Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), p. 351.

mention that the doge had only a small number of relatives.<sup>106</sup> Falier took up office during extremely difficult times. Venice had already been at war with Genoa since 1350 and had concluded a military alliance with King Peter IV of Aragon for this purpose in 1351.<sup>107</sup> At the beginning of November 1354, the Venetians suffered a devastating defeat against the Genoese in the harbour of the Aegean island of Sapienza (Porto Longo).<sup>108</sup> With large numbers of prisoners being taken, virtually every family in Venice was affected by the aftermath. Daniele Dibello believes that this event had a not inconsiderable influence on the doge's actions.<sup>109</sup> In the following analysis of the description of the conspiracy in narrative texts, a distinction will be made between contemporary and later works, as well as between Venetian and non-Venetian ones, because only in this way can the development of the narrative be clearly traced and the internal and external perspectives be differentiated.<sup>110</sup> Roberto Cessi considers the official narrative to be an invention that aims to obscure the true motives. The 'truth', however, cannot be ascertained.<sup>111</sup>

In comparison with later chronicles, the relative brevity of the narrative in the contemporary Venetian chronicles is striking: Having been seduced by the devil, Falier allied himself with lowly "popolani", i. e. individuals from the common people, especially sailors and craftsmen, to abolish the aristocratic system. All nobles were to be murdered, and

106 Enrico Dandolo, *Cronica*, ed. by Pesce (see note 104), p. 144; Pietro Giustiniani, *Venetiarum historia*, ed. by Cessi/Bennato (see note 104), ch. 50, p. 245.

107 Christian Alexander Neumann, *Venedig und Aragon im Spätmittelalter (1280–1410). Eine Verflechtungsgeschichte*, Paderborn 2017 (*Mittelmeerstudien* 15), pp. 146–256. After about four years and several battles, all parties showed signs of exhaustion and the Venetian-Catalan alliance also started to break up.

108 The battle is mentioned in numerous chronicles, e. g. Enrico Dandolo, *Cronica*, ed. by Pesce (see note 104), p. 143; Pietro Giustiniani, *Venetiarum historia*, ed. by Cessi/Bennato (see note 104), ch. 50, pp. 241–243; Georgius Stella, *Georgii et Iohannis Stellae Annales Genuenses*, ed. by Giovanna Petti Balbi, Bologna 1975 (*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 172), p. 153. On this battle, cf. Neumann, *Venedig und Aragon* (see note 107), pp. 220–222; Vittorio Lazzarini, *La battaglia di Porto Longo nell'isola di Sapienza*, in: *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* 8 (1894), pp. 5–45. Being at anchor in the harbour of Porto Longo, the Venetian fleet led by Nicolò Pisani was surprised by Paganino Doria's fleet and lost almost without a fight. The Venetian ships were seized and about 5 000 Venetians of all social classes were brought to Genoa as prisoners.

109 Dibello, *La stabilità* (see note 15), p. 22.

110 Administrative documents are also included in the analysis to enable a comparison of the information.

111 Cessi, *Storia* (see note 22), pp. 315–316.

Falier intended to make himself Lord of Venice.<sup>112</sup> This type of rule was contemporarily referred to as ‘tyranny’. The doge himself is regarded as the *spiritus rector* of the revolt. Through the miraculous intervention of Saint Mark, the conspiracy was betrayed by some of those involved and could thus still be exposed in time by some nobles.<sup>113</sup> Enrico Dandolo mentions, without giving details, that Falier’s motive resulted from a disgrace that some young nobles had caused him and for which they had only been lightly punished.<sup>114</sup> As will be shown, these few words were later developed into a sub-narrative of its own. Stories about bad omens were also added. According to Alberto Tenenti, the *consiglio dei dieci* encouraged the proliferation of such legends in order to hinder critical reflection from taking place.<sup>115</sup> Although this narrative creates the image of an antagonism between the doge and the commoners on the one hand and the nobility on the other, Falier actually had supporters among the nobility.<sup>116</sup> Donald Queller underlines the efforts of the (quite) unified ruling class after the *serrata* to not let any internal divisions become known to the outside world.<sup>117</sup> The Venetian government reacted swiftly to the plot and thereby consolidated its power.<sup>118</sup> In the doge’s will, it is stated that he was

112 These include the aforementioned works by Rafaino Caresini, Enrico Dandolo, Pietro Giustiniani and the “Chronicon Monasterii S. Salvatoris”. The latter was written around 1377 by the prior Francesco di Grazia (Franciscus de Gratia, *Chronicon Monasterii S. Salvatoris Venetiarum*, Venezia 1756, pp. VII–XI; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* [see note 15], p. 98; Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* [see note 21], p. 345).

113 Raphaynus de Caresinis, *Chronica*, ed. by Pastorello (see note 103), p. 9; Enrico Dandolo, *Cronica*, ed. by Pesce (see note 104), p. 144; Pietro Giustiniani, *Venetiarum historia*, ed. by Cessi/Bennato (see note 104), ch. 50, pp. 241–243; Franciscus de Gratia, *Chronicon* (see note 112), p. 73.

114 Enrico Dandolo, *Cronica*, ed. by Pesce (see note 104), p. 144; Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* (see note 21), pp. 345–346.

115 Tenenti, *La rappresentazione* (see note 20), p. 73.

116 Dibello, *La stabilità* (see note 15), pp. 8, 12–14; Donald Queller, *The Venetian Patriciate. Reality versus Myth*, Chicago 1986, p. 245; Romanin, *Storia* (see note 22), pp. 188–189. Among these were Bertuccio Falier and Pietro Badoer, although little is known about their fate. Bertuccio Falier was a distant relative of the doge, but nevertheless close to him. He probably did not play a leading role in the events. Pietro Badoer, who was duke of Crete, was banished from the Venetian dominions for life after expressing his sympathies towards Falier (Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* [see note 21], pp. 82–84, 280–282, 355–356; Queller, *The Venetian Patriciate* [see above], p. 245; Pillinini, *I “popolari”* [see note 23], p. 64).

117 Queller, *The Venetian Patriciate* (see note 116), p. 4.

118 Dibello, *La stabilità* (see note 15), pp. 6–7, 11; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 29, 109–133; Queller, *The Venetian Patriciate* (see note 116), p. 4. The persecution of the supporters

“physically weakened by illness, but still mentally healthy”.<sup>119</sup> Could one thus conclude that Falier’s health was affected as a result of the turbulent events and at the prospect of his imminent death? On the steps where he had taken his oath of office, the doge was beheaded – a symbolically charged act.<sup>120</sup> Afterwards, the ducal counsellors and the heads of the *quarantia* conducted the public affairs. It can be seen that the same mechanism was employed after the violent death of a doge as after a natural death.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, Venetian officials were immediately sent letters to ensure that they remained loyal to the republic. In the letter to the podestà of Treviso, Lorenzo Celsi, the official narrative was referred to *in nuce* so that “it would not be contradicted by false information”.<sup>122</sup>

After concluding the overview of the contemporary Venetian perspective, the viewpoint of outsiders will now be examined. The Paduan chronicler Guglielmo Cortusi first describes the hardships of the war, which had already been raging for some time. As a reason for the conspiracy, he indicates that the doge promised the people peace with Genoa, but that the nobility wanted to continue the war.<sup>123</sup> Falier is thus portrayed as a peacemaker who understood the needs of the people. The Genoese Giorgio Stella sees the motivation behind the conspiracy not only in the doge’s desire to make himself an absolute ruler with the help of the people, but also in the tribulations of the war, which would have provoked an uprising. He also mentions some nobles as being Falier’s

was harsh and continued for months. Suspected conspirators were imprisoned, sentenced, exiled, or executed. After initial suspicion, however, some were released.

119 Rinaldo Fulin, Due documenti del doge Marino Faliero, in: Archivio Veneto 7 (1874), pp. 99–110, doc. 1, pp. 107–109, at p. 107. “... cum essem corporis infirmitate gravatus sanam tamen habens mentem ...” (ibid.). “... since I am afflicted by a disease of the body, but nevertheless of sound mind ...” (own translation).

120 Enrico Dandolo, Cronica, ed. by Pesce (see note 104), p. 144, Pietro Giustiniani, Venetiarum historia, ed. by Cessi/Bennato (see note 104), ch. 50, pp. 244–245.

121 ASV (= Archivio di Stato di Venezia), Maggior Consiglio, reg. 19 (Novella), fol. 46v; Dibello, La stabilità (see note 15), p. 6. On the vacancy after the election: ASV, Maggior Consiglio, reg. 19 (Novella), fol. 42v; Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. La congiura (see note 21), p. 35. Falier was given a dishonourable burial and his *memoria* as a person was eliminated; however, the conspiracy was commemorated annually through a procession to display a hortatory example (Ravegnani, Il traditore [see note 15], pp. 29–30, 164; Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. La congiura [see note 21], p. 107).

122 Giambattista Verci, Storia della Marca Trevigiana e Veronese, vol. 13, Venezia 1789, doc. 1529, pp. 31–32; Dibello, La stabilità (see note 15), p. 21, Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. La congiura (see note 21), pp. 277–278.

123 Guillelmi de Cortusiis, Chronica de novitatibus Padue et Lombardie, ed. by Beniamino Pagnin, Bologna 1941–1975 (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores 12.5), pp. 130–131; Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. La congiura (see note 21), pp. 11, 346.

supporters, by which the image of a united nobility is altered.<sup>124</sup> The Florentine Matteo Villani was inclined towards the Genoese.<sup>125</sup> Due to hatred for the nobility and frustration over his limited power, Falier intended to make himself the only ruler with the help of the common people. “Out of vileness, his mind, which was actually wise, had left him ...”, “... che ’l savio doge divenuto per viltà fuori del senno ...”.<sup>126</sup> This portrays the image of an old man who was greedy for power and had gone mad because of it.

The most critical reflections on the events are given by the early humanist Francesco Petrarca.<sup>127</sup> Petrarca already knew personally Falier for a long time and always appreciated him for his wisdom. The doge’s striving for power appears even more unlikely after reading Petrarca’s statement that Falier “did not aspire the ducal dignity”.<sup>128</sup> The motives seem unclear to Petrarca and “many ambiguous and different things” (“tam ambiguae et tam variae”) are mentioned.<sup>129</sup> In his reflections, Falier’s old age becomes a topic. Although Petrarca considers him to be guilty, he wonders what could have moved a man “at the end of his life” (“sub extremum vitae tempus”) to commit such a deed.<sup>130</sup> The doge seems to be a “frenzied and insane” (“insanus et amens”) old man. Petrarca also doubts whether the impression of wisdom and experience was really true and notes that Falier may have

124 Georgius Stella, *Annales Genuenses* ed. by Petti Balbi (see note 108), p. 120; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), p. 99; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), pp. 12, 346.

125 Matteo Villani, *Chronica. Con la continuazione di Filippo Villani*, ed. by Giuseppe Porta, vol. 1: *Libri I–VI*, Parma 1995, lib. V. 13, pp. 624–627; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 87–89; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), pp. 11, 346. On the chronicle, cf. Matteo Villani, *Chronica*, ed. by Porta (see above), pp. IX–XX. Lazzarini assumes that he had been informed by Florentine merchants who had been in Venice (Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* [see note 21], p. 11). Villani’s account is based on the official version, but he adds numerous details of his own invention.

126 Matteo Villani, *Chronica*, ed. by Porta (see note 125), lib. V. 13, p. 626; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), p. 28.

127 Francesco Petrarca, *Epistolae de rebus familiaribus et variae*, ed. by Giuseppe Fracassetti, vol. 2, Firenze 1862, epistola 9, pp. 534–541; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), p. 99; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), pp. 11, 28. On the author and his work: Victoria Kirkham (Ed.), *Petrarch. A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*, Chicago-London 2009. Petrarca wrote his letter in Milan just a few days after the conspiracy. Lazzarini supposes that he might have been informed by the Venetian envoy in Milan (Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* [see note 21], p. 11).

128 Francesco Petrarca, *Epistolae*, ed. by Fracassetti (see note 127), epistola 9, p. 540; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* (see note 21), p. 36.

129 Francesco Petrarca, *Epistolae*, ed. by Fracassetti (see note 127), epistola 9, p. 539.

130 *Ibid.*, p. 540.

acquired a “false reputation”. It can be observed that the judgements of the outsiders are not aligned with one another and that they refer to diverse motives. Whatever the case may be, it does serve to highlight discrepancies in the official Venetian version: Internal disputes among the nobility, resentment among the people and old age are portrayed. In addition to the image of an old man’s folly, the – ultimately unresolved – question is raised as to why a *senex* without sons would have wanted to make himself an absolute ruler. In the Venetian texts, this incongruity in the story is probably deliberately ignored; instead, greed for power, madness and the working of supernatural forces are highlighted.

As varied and speculative as the sources are the historians’ opinions. Giovanni Pillinini assumes the existence of two opposing factions within the nobility.<sup>131</sup> In the official narrative, however, these internal quarrels were not mentioned. Falier belonged to the faction that wanted to continue the war with Genoa but was then abandoned by his former supporters. Among the *popolani*, resentment had built up against the nobility, which was instrumentalised by the doge to further his personal goals. Nevertheless, the social movement was not widespread and strong enough, which causes Pillinini to describe it as a “popular uprising” (“*rivolta popolare*”) with some hesitation.<sup>132</sup> In contrast, Dennis Romano considers the tensions within the Venetian society to be quite serious and refers to previous revolts, although none of them had previously had the power to bring about a regime change.<sup>133</sup> According to Daniele Dibello, Falier knew how to grasp the discontent of ordinary people and draw political consequences from it.<sup>134</sup> A rebellion of the *popolo* in Venice can be seen as part of a whole series of urban and rural uprisings in the European late Middle Ages.<sup>135</sup> According to Giorgio Ravegnani, Falier did not want to resign himself to his limited power and tried, by means of a conspiracy,

131 Pillinini, I “popolari” (see note 23), pp. 63–71.

132 Ibid., p. 70. Lazzarini also mentions the comparatively few supporters (Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* [see note 21], p. 357). Despite all internal differences, the nobility was still sufficiently united. They were not only able to get rid of a doge whose political views they did not share, but also to suppress the beginnings of an uprising.

133 Romano, Patrizi (see note 4), pp. 14–21. In 1310 the “Querini-Tiepolo Plot” occurred. On this event, cf. for example Dennis Romano, *The Aftermath of the Querini-Tiepolo Conspiracy in Venice*, in: *Stanford Italian Review* 7 (1987), pp. 147–159.

134 Dibello, *La stabilità* (see note 15), p. 8. On revolts in the Late Middle Ages, for example, cf. Peter Blickle, *Unruhen in der ständischen Gesellschaft 1300–1800*, München 1988 (*Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte* 1), pp. 7–21; Samuel K. Cohn, *Lust for Liberty. The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe. 1200–1425. Italy, France, and Flanders*, Cambridge, Mass. 2008.

135 Pillinini, I “popolari” (see note 23), p. 70.

to abolish the aristocratic system and make himself lord.<sup>136</sup> Because of his old age, he did not primarily think of himself, but of a member of his family. Samuele Romanin believes that Falier wanted to establish a *signoria* and refers to developments in other Italian cities.<sup>137</sup> Following Petrarch's scepticism, Frederic Lane also asks why Falier had aspired to establish a lordship, especially in his old age.<sup>138</sup> Lane considers the existence of two factions of the nobility to be possible, even if this cannot be proven. Falier belonged to the "monarchist faction", which wanted to attribute more power to the doge. Without going into detail, Alberto Tenenti is of the opinion that Falier went against the prevailing opinion of the governing class and had to give up his life for it.<sup>139</sup> To summarise, serious quarrels within the nobility and the desire to establish a lordship with the support of rebellious members of the Venetian common people are given as the main reasons.

How did the narrative develop in later Venetian chronicles?<sup>140</sup> Two lines can be made out: on the one hand, an uncritical, legendary amplification, and on the other, a growing criticism that was probably made possible by the considerable distance to the mid-14<sup>th</sup>-century events. Marin Sanudo describes Falier's vituperation by young nobles after the Venetians' humiliating defeat and a bad omen on his taking office in detail.<sup>141</sup> This story not only involves a conflict between people of different ages – though there is no evidence of a general generational antagonism here – but also deals with the topics of unequal couples with regard to age as well as sexuality and masculinity in old age.<sup>142</sup> The account of the vituperation is told as follows: The later doge Michele Steno, who

136 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 29, 100. To this end, he relied on citizens who were excluded from power.

137 Romanin, *Storia* (see note 22), p. 181. Around the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Venice was surrounded by *signorie* (Romano, Patrizi [see note 4], p. 15; Lane, *Seerepublik* [see note 22], pp. 278–279; Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero. La congiura* [see note 21], p. 354).

138 Lane, *Seerepublik* (see note 22), pp. 278–279.

139 Tenenti, *La rappresentazione* (see note 20), p. 73.

140 Of the later chronicles, those of Marin Sanudo and Giovanni Giacomo Caroldo will be analysed here because they can be considered as being representative of this development.

141 Marin Sanuto, *Le vite*, ed. by Muratori (see note 102), cols. 628–632. On the author and his work: Angela Caracciolo Aricò, *Le Vite dei Dogi di Marin Sanudo il giovane*, in: *Umanesimo e rinascimento a Firenze e Venezia. Miscellanea di studi in onore di Vittore Branca*, 2 vols., Firenze 1983 (Biblioteca dell'Archivum Romanicum. Ser. 1 180), vol. 2, pp. 567–592.

142 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), p. 81. On this topic, cf. for example Eva Labouvie (Ed.), *Ungleiche Paare. Zur Kulturgeschichte menschlicher Beziehungen*, München 1997 (Beck'sche Reihe 1197); Shahar, *The Middle Ages* (see note 53), pp. 94–95, 102–103; cf. also the contribution by Hartwin Brandt in this volume.

was a young man at the time, covetously touched one of the court ladies of Dogressa Aluica and perhaps other ladies during festivities at the Doge's Palace, causing him to be sent home. In revenge for this humiliation, Steno secretly placed a piece of paper on the doge's chair with the words "Marin Faliero who has a beautiful wife: Others enjoy her and he keeps her".<sup>143</sup> The *quarantia criminal* imposed a rather mild punishment on Steno, also due to his age and the "hot-bloodedness" ("caldezza") of youth. Falier did not agree with this at all and considered his honour to be diminished. Sanudo imputes loose morals and a strong desire for sexual intercourse to the dogressa, who, although she was already older at that time, was not old. The doge is portrayed as a cuckolded husband who accepts this violation of his honour and obviously cannot satisfy his wife sexually. The dogressa's involvement in the antecedents of the conspiracy was the invention of later chroniclers.<sup>144</sup> In the surviving administrative documents there is no evidence of her infidelity; on the contrary, there is evidence of a profound trust between the spouses. That a trial was conducted against Steno and his young companions by the *quarantia* is proven by documents.<sup>145</sup> Several young noblemen, but especially Steno, were found guilty and sentenced to a mild punishment of one month in the dungeon. This sentence was within the usual range for nobles who had offended the doge. Fixed punishments did not exist; rather, decisions were made on a case-by-case basis. Several weeks of imprisonment, as in this case, and also financial penalties are often found in court records.<sup>146</sup>

Giovanni Giacomo Caroldo's portrayal of Falier's dogeship and the conspiracy differs from previous accounts primarily in regard to two aspects. On the one hand, the political and military events are presented in great detail, whereby the context of the conspiracy becomes clearer than before. On the other hand, Caroldo takes a relatively unemotional point of view, omitting legendary details and reflecting on the reasons for

143 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 76–77, 84–85; Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* (see note 21), pp. 52–53, 73–74; Cecchetti, *La moglie* [see note 21], p. 364). "Marin Faliero dalla bella moglie: Altri la gode ed egli la mantien" (Marin Sanuto, *Le vite*, ed. by Muratori [see note 102], col. 631).

144 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 79, 84–85; Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* (see note 21), pp. 69–71. Very few of the trial records have survived. The details of the defamatory lines do not emerge from what has been preserved (Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* [see note 21], doc. 2, pp. 370–371; Ravegnani, *Il traditore* [see note 15], pp. 79, 85).

145 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), pp. 80–81; Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* (see note 21), p. 8. Lazzarini dates the events to the beginning of November 1354 (Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* [see note 21], p. 67).

146 Ravegnani, *Il traditore* (see note 15), p. 81; Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* (see note 21), pp. 58, 60–63; Cecchetti, *La moglie* (see note 21), pp. 364–365.

the conspiracy with the aim of discerning a plausible motive, which he ultimately does not succeed in finding. Caroldo explicitly includes the factor “old age” in his analysis. For the first time in a Venetian source, Falier is explicitly described as being “very old” (“*huomo di grand'età*”), but still physically strong as well as courageous, rich, and generous.<sup>147</sup> The deterioration of the political and social situation after the defeat of Porto Longo becomes quite evident.<sup>148</sup> Caroldo’s account of the events gives the official version. What distinguishes this from older accounts is that the author strives to find objective and dispassionate reasons for the actions of those involved. But, he cannot explain things rationally and points to Falier’s advanced age, “*essendo d'età decrepita*”, and then to the fact that he had no children, as the first objection to this narrative.<sup>149</sup> The chronicler considers the story of the vituperation to be a “popular explanation”.<sup>150</sup> He then gives two novel explanations of his own, the first of which is that Falier sought to achieve political reform, after numerous lower noble families and those who had earned merits had become the makers of Venetian politics, to the disadvantage of the established houses. This makes tensions within the nobility a subject for discussion. In fact, although, the old noble families were not involved in the conspiracy and helped to put it down.<sup>151</sup> The second reason proposed by Caroldo is that Falier entered into some unspecified agreements with Hungary, Padua, and others, but there is no evidence to confirm this.

#### 4 Conclusion

The two case studies analysed here deal with the ageing and old age of rulers. They refer to two different types of secular rule and highlight both common and unique aspects. However, the results are not only determined by this systemic difference, but also by the sources of each case study and, finally, by the particularities of each case. Among the common aspects, health and illness, substitution or ‘compensation’ for permanent

147 Giovanni Giacomo Caroldo, *Istorie Veneziene*, ed. by Șerban V. Marin, 5 vols., București 2008–2012, vol. 3, p. 97. On the author and his work: *ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 7–36.

148 *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 104–108, 112–113. In addition to mourning and dismay, the chronicler mentions rigid coercive measures for the recruitment of crews for new galleys.

149 *Ibid.*, p. 118.

150 *Ibid.*, pp. 118–119.

151 Lazzarini, Marino Faliero. *La congiura* (see note 21), p. 348.

or temporary dysfunctionality<sup>152</sup> (son and royal council vs. the body of the *signoria*), mobility, the transmission of rule (succession vs. election), the preparation for death, memory, and sexuality are particularly prominent. The specific aspects for James I are longevity and length of rule, religion, and warfare; for Marin Falier, these are election and the related criteria as well as the treatment of old age in the event of a struggle for power.

It is likely that both James I and Marin Falier were in good health for most of their lives, indicating that they had ‘aged successfully’.<sup>153</sup> That said, however, it is important to note that functional age was more important than chronological age.<sup>154</sup> The functionality of the person was relevant in both cases, but physical strength is much more prominent in James’s case. Continuity<sup>155</sup> probably mattered greatly to a ruler so focused on his deeds – an aspect that was stressed and exaggerated after his death. The loss of physical strength was therefore more problematic for the king and the stability of his kingdom than it was the case for the Republic of Venice which could rely on institutionalised mechanisms of compensation. As for James, a certain withdrawal, a kind of ‘disengagement’,<sup>156</sup> which happened unwillingly, during his final years in favour of his son Peter can be observed. Although less apparent in the sources, the criteria for election in Falier’s case also show the importance of continuity and the functionality of the person. The Aragonese king intended to remain in the ‘Third Age’ for as long as possible, thus delaying the ‘Fourth Age’; the ducal electors opted for a man in his ‘Third Age’.<sup>157</sup>

152 Paul B. Baltes / Alexandra M. Freund, Life-Management Strategies of Selection, Optimization, and Compensation. Measurement by Self-Report and Construct Validity, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 82 (2002), pp. 642–662.

153 John W. Rowe / Robert L. Khan, *Successful Aging*, New York 1998.

154 Neumann, *Perspektiven* (see note 10), pp. 397–400; Silke Van Dyk, *Soziologie des Alters*, Bielefeld 2015, pp. 13, 22–23; Gertrud M. Backes / Wolfgang Clemens, *Lebensphase Alter. Eine Einführung in die sozialwissenschaftliche Altersforschung*, Basel 2008 (Grundlagentexte Soziologie), pp. 21–22; see also the contribution by François Höpflinger in this volume.

155 Robert C. Atchley, *Continuity and Adaptation in Aging. Creating Positive Experiences*, Baltimore et al. 1999.

156 Elaine Cumming / William Henry, *Growing Old. The Process of Disengagement*, New York 1961.

157 Neumann, *Perspektiven* (see note 10), pp. 398–399; Chris Gilleard / Paul Higgs, *The Third Age. Class, Cohort or Generation?*, in: *Ageing and Society* 22 (2002), pp. 369–382; Bernice L. Neugarten, *Age Groups in American Society and the Rise of the Young-Old*, in: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 415 (1974), pp. 187–198; see also the contribution by Paul Higgs in this volume.

James's relationships with younger women were accepted in principle, but criticised, especially from the point of view of clergymen, as not being age-appropriate in situations in which failures occurred. Moreover, the pope demanded the transcendence of all earthly matters from the king during his old age.<sup>158</sup> In Falier's case, the negative aspects of the two-sided discourse concerning old age came to the forefront at the moment of an extraordinary 'battle'. In contemporary sources, one observes a state of tension between a (probably) intentional avoidance of the topic and a critical reflection on it. Although some criticism arose with an increasing chronological distance, at the same time, the construction of legends, in which masculinity and sexuality as well as the conflictual relations between the young and the old are discussed, also intensified.

To summarise, the examples from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries allow for the study of numerous aspects of ageing and old age. Which aspects can be analysed, is determined by the differences of the political systems, the sources and the specificities of each case. The different evaluations of old age that become evident from the sources are highly influenced by the specific social and temporal contexts, the genres of the texts and the writers' intentions, views and background. Connections to gerontological theories and concepts can be identified and can help to gain a deeper understanding of the empirical findings. Finally, it should be pointed out, that from the series of the Aragonese kings and Venetian doges alone, many more examples of elderly rulers exist, so that numerous new insights can still be expected. The comparative approach pursued here would certainly also be fruitful for future studies.

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158 This is to a certain extent comparable with Lars Tornstam, *Maturing into Gerotranscendence*, in: *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 43 (2011), pp. 166–180.