



# Authoring the Past: History, Autobiography, and Politics in Medieval Catalonia

*Jaume Aurell*

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*Authoring the Past* surveys medieval Catalan historiography, shedding light on the emergence and evolution of historical writing and autobiography in the Middle Ages, on questions of authority and authorship, and on the links between history and politics during the period. Jaume Aurell examines texts from the late twelfth to the late fourteenth century—including the Latin *Gesta comitum Barcinonensium* and four texts in medieval Catalan: James I's *Llibre dels fets*, the *Crònica* of Bernat Desclot, the *Crònica* of Ramon Muntaner, and the *Crònica* of Peter the Ceremonious—and outlines the different motivations for the writing of each.

For Aurell, these chronicles are not mere archaeological artifacts but rather documents that speak to their writers' specific contemporary social and political purposes. He argues that these Catalonian counts and Aragonese kings were attempting to use their role as authors to legitimize their monarchical status, their growing political and economic power, and their aggressive expansionist policies in the Mediterranean. By analyzing these texts alongside one another, Aurell demonstrates the shifting contexts in which chronicles were conceived, written, and read throughout the Middle Ages.

The first study of its kind to make medieval Catalonian writings available to English-speaking audiences, *Authoring the Past* will be of interest to scholars of history and comparative literature, students of Hispanic and Romance medieval studies, and medievalists who study the chronicle tradition in other languages.

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