

## Foreword

The first article in this issue examines the advent of modern man, called *Homo sapiens* or Cro-Magnon man, in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula during the old Upper Palaeolithic around 40,000 years ago, replacing Neanderthal man. That species had been adapted to and living in this region for millennia. With Cro-Magnon man, what was called the Mousterian culture was replaced by the Aurignacian. This entailed the replacement of one kind of human for another, a phenomenon which has never quite been fully explained. There does not seem to have been interbreeding or evolution between the two physically different species, and this is confirmed in the archaeological sites located in Catalonia. Symbolic objects appeared with modern man, who was now anatomically similar to us. The cultural continuity between this land and others quite distant to each other becomes clear when we analyse the sites where human remains and tools, weapons and beads have been found from the successive periods from the Upper Palaeolithic, specifically the Cova del Reclau Viver in the township of Serinyà (Pla de l'Estany), Cova de l'Arbreda (Mollet del Vallès) and Abric Romaní (Capellades, Anoia).

Another quite different topic examined in this issue of the *Catalan Historical Review* is the public and private financial organisation in Catalonia in the 14th and 15th centuries, an organisation that witnessed notable development for the period. The regulation of financial activity by parliamentary legislation did not prevent the bankruptcy of the bankers in 1381, which led to the 1401 founding of a public credit institution, the Taula de Canvi, insured by the municipal power of Barcelona. The Crown's monetary policy was subjected to changes and debates in parallel to the struggles between citizen groups around a protectionist or liberal customs strategy. This issue was debated between the supporters of devaluation and the upholders of a strong currency, and the sides were not divorced from their status as producers or rentiers, debtors or creditors of the public finances. The Civil War from 1462 to 1472, which ruined the country, demanded a policy to restore the public finances, an indispensable condition for the revival of private banking. This issue offers a snapshot of the financial, fiscal and monetary policy of the era, a topic which has occupied Catalan historiographic research since Jaume Vicens Vives, with notable contributions and new developments.

The Catalan art of the European Renaissance during the 16th century deserves attention that has been scarce because of the cliché of the general decline of the country at the onset of the Modern Age. The Italian influence is clear in a kind of architecture, sculpture and painting that

underwent considerable development during this period, especially due to religious and ecclesiastic motivations, as the country was recovering from its economic, social and political upheaval of the second half of the 15th century. Spotlighting the artistic output of the 16th century in Catalonia, some of which has vanished because of the destruction wrought by Napoleon's troops between 1808 and 1814, the disentailment of the assets of the religious orders after 1836 and the consequences of the Civil War from 1936 to 1939, is the purpose of this issue's overview of the fine arts in Catalonia from the 16th and early 17th centuries. Through specific examples, this article offers an inventory whose scope may astonish lay readers.

The façade of the Palau de la Generalitat was chosen to grace the cover of this issue because it is the most notable work of civil architecture from the Renaissance in Catalonia, following the Italian fashion. The new body, with the Sant Jordi chapel, was built between 1597 and 1619 as a southward expansion of the Gothic building constructed during the first third of the 15th century, with subsequent additions. The architect Pere Blai (1553-1621) was the designer of this new Renaissance wing, which symbolised the self-assertion of the autonomous governing body of Catalonia before the power of the king, who lived in Madrid and was identified with the Crown of Castile. King Philip II regarded the project with mistrust because he believed that it was tantamount to turning the Generalitat's headquarters into an urban fortress, but the difficulties were overcome. The crisis in relations between the royal power and the Generalitat had been dormant since prior to that composite monarchy that governed the Hapsburg dynasty after the acute crisis of 1640. Pere Blai had already made a name for himself as an architect of the castle-palace of Torredembarra (Tarragonès), which had been commissioned in 1565. This is the building with a fully Renaissance layout that still survives in Catalonia. The image of the Palau de la Generalitat was chosen for the cover for artistic rather than political reasons. This building has been the headquarters of the presidency of the autonomous government of Catalonia since 1977. The continuity of this building is related to a historical pluri-secular tradition.

The *masia* (or Catalan farmhouse) is another topic spotlighted in this issue. The world of the farmhouse was glorified by the ideology that was dubbed *pairalisme*, based on the concept of the *casa pairal*, or family home. This is an attitude that is predisposed towards our ancestors' norms, associated with the paternalism of the owners, rural owners particularly. This attitude crystallised in the 19th century and lasted into the 20th century in times

of crisis in the relationships of rural production. It is an ideology which has been studied and drawn from by jurists, historians and literary critics. It has rural roots associated with the *masia* or *mas* (from the Latin *mansus*), which is analysed here in its twofold facet of material and cultural patrimony. It is a complex, ever-changing, long-lasting reality which has little to do with the image of stability, homogeneity and social harmony which traditional thinking has conveyed about this kind of farm and the family legal structure associated with it. In any event, the *masia* has reached the threshold of contemporary times. It is a part of our heritage which has been reappraised at a time when workers in the primary sector barely account for three percent of the active population and when rural tourism has begun to develop.

Studies on the topic have a longstanding tradition in Catalonia. In 1923, the patron Rafael Patxot created the Fundació d'Estudi de la Masia Catalana (Foundation for the Study of the Catalan Farmhouse) at the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya. The photography archive of Catalan farmhouses contains 7,705 pictures of 1,500 units in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. In 1975, it was bequeathed to the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya by Rafael Patxot's heir. The first Congrés sobre el Món de la Masia (Congress on the World of the Catalan Farmhouse) held at the Institut d'Estudis Catalans from the 11th to 13th of March 2015 on the initiative of the Institució Catalana d'Estudis Agraris, an affiliate of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, is an expression of the interest sparked by the subject and the vitality of studies of the *masia*, a topic on which we offer a snapshot of the issue spanning a long period ranging from the 16th to the early 20th centuries. The Catalan novel has exploited the topic of the *masia*, with the family farmhouse as a microcosm with all its poetic connotations, dramas and family entanglements. It may not be a coincidence that the residence of the younger players from the lower ranks of Futbol Club Barcelona have stayed at Can Planas *masia*, an old farmhouse from the early 18th century located near this world-famous sporting club's large stadium. The fact that La Masia is also the centre of Barça and the place where some of its most famous players have emerged is symbolic. La Masia is also, therefore, the family home of the most famous sporting club of Catalonia and one of the most important ones in the world.

In another sphere, literary works, this issue discusses the historical novel, which seems like an antiquated,

abandoned genre, although it has recently reaped considerable success among readers with works like *L'església del mar* (*Cathedral of the Sea*, 2006) by Ildefons Falcones, which recreates life in 14th-century Barcelona, and *Victus* (2012) by Albert Sánchez Piñol, a story which takes place within the city's 1714 resistance of the Bourbon troops and defence of the autonomous Catalan institutions, which were later abolished by absolutism. Both novels were published in both Catalan and Spanish, and *Victus* also has an English-language version. The article in this issue studies the evolution of the historical novel in Catalan between 1862 and the early 20th century. Springing up within the European context of Romanticism and the Catalan literary Renaixença, the historical novel is examined in terms of its evolution, which partly occurred within the success of Galdós' *Episodios Nacionales* in Spanish literature, 46 titles that appeared between 1873 and 1912 which were set in the 19th century. The genre was later marginalised, first by realism and later by the devaluation of the novel as a genre in general until it was revived within Catalan literature in the 1930s. Today the historical novel has experienced a fascinating revival within parameters different to those of the 19th century, as mentioned above, and the phenomenon has taken place within an international trend.

This issue also offers its usual list of the historical publications in all fields that the different sections of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans and its affiliated organisations have published.

It further contains the biographical sketches of three new members of the History-Archaeology Section: Ferran Arasa, Ignasi Baiges and Enric Pujol.

Finally, we are pleased to notify our readers and contributors that the number of electronic consultations of the *Catalan Historical Review* rose 22% over the past year, which encourages us to continue the job we started ten years ago. So far, the choice to offer sweeping overviews of the overarching topics in all aspects and eras in the history of the Catalan-speaking lands seems justified so that scholars everywhere can get a picture of the state of the research, which is often little-known despite its high degree of development. This knowledge is necessary in the field of comparative history, which is the only truly universal history.

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