

Foreword

The first major topic covered in this issue of the *Catalan Historical Review* is the production and population of the *Conventus Tarraconensis*, a division of the Roman Empire which encompassed what is today Catalonia and the northern part of the modern-day region of Valencia, along with the Balearic and Pityusic Islands. The Roman conquest led to a radical shift in the population structure and the establishment of a network of cities which has lasted until today. The introduction of the Roman villa system was associated with overseas trade in wine and textiles, especially linen and flax. While the study of textiles is more difficult, the archaeology and epigraphy of the remains of amphorae have yielded considerable information on the wine business, which flourished until the 3rd century AD and then waned. However, on the Pityusic Islands, the decline in Mediterranean trade characteristic of the transition to the Late Empire was less pronounced since they had an important material, namely purple dye made of murex shells. Our increasing knowledge of agricultural production and the rural habitat in the last few decades has led to considerable progress in a field that until recently had been explored less than the archaeology of cities in the northeast Iberian Peninsula. The overview in this issue will no doubt be extremely informative for anyone interested in the topic.

The four chronicles by Jaume I, Bernat Desclot, Ramon Muntaner and Pere the Ceremonious, known as the four great Catalan chronicles, boast exceptional historiographic value for the 13th and 14th centuries. Written in the vernacular instead of Latin, the first and the last have the particular feature of drawing inspiration directly from the monarchs themselves, leading them to resemble political autobiographies. In the 19th century, these four chronicles were considered a testimony of the Catalan national identity, and they were the object of numerous editions and translations before 1971, when a joint edition of all four chronicles overseen by the historian Ferran Soldevila was issued. This invaluable work was nonetheless exhausted many years ago. Starting in 2007, it underwent a revision and its notes were expanded by the historian Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol and the philologist Jordi Bruguera, with the oversight of Josep Massot. Published by the Institut d'Estudis Catalans in five volumes, the institute has thus achieved one of its founding goals. This is a major step forward in that it overcomes the separation between the work of historians and philologists on sources which retain their historiographic value, despite the propagandistic intention that inspired them in their day. The article that this issue of the *Catalan Historical Review* devotes to this topic contributes to the knowledge and

value of this exceptional set of literary and historiographic works.

Environmental history is a relatively recent discipline which has already produced such a considerable set of scholarly studies within the Catalan-speaking lands that it deserves an overview of its own; therefore, one article in this issue is devoted to this topic. Even though environmental history began to develop in Catalonia in the last decade of the 20th century, it has a history in numerous fields since the late 19th century, and its closest forerunner is ecological science, which itself took shape in the second half of the 1970s. Environmental history is multidisciplinary, and because of its commitment to the environment, it aspires to update the historiography, a goal that is still pending. Different aspects have been studied to date, ranging chronologically from the Middle Ages until more recently; they include climate history, the environmental history of urbanisation and industrialisation, the history of pollution and agro-ecology. The study of the conflicts stemming from each case is accompanied by an analysis of the discourses developed in each period. Natural, agricultural and wooded landscapes have been reconstructed, particularly after the 19th century, and the relations among the different agrarian, wooded, urban and periurban spaces are examined, along with their influence on land planning and the management of diversity. Historical climatology has started from a consolidated tradition in the Catalan-speaking lands.

Antoni Gaudí is the most famous Catalan architect in the world. His genius outstripped any style, and this is why the article on him in this issue of the *Catalan Historical Review* describes him as the lone wolf of European architecture. It also characterises his work as groundbreaking until he exclusively devoted himself to building the temple of the Sagrada Família and dissociated himself with the evolution of contemporary architecture while the work that has garnered him the most international popularity was being built. This article notes the innovative creativity of Gaudí's early buildings in the 1880s. The works from this period analysed in this article include the Palau Güell on Barcelona's Carrer Nou de la Rambla, which hinted at Gaudí's subsequent functional, spatial and ornamental repertoire. In this article, the church in Colònia Güell in Santa Coloma de Cervelló, in the Baix Llobregat region, which can be admired from the brilliant crypt, closes this overview of the monuments in Gaudí's oeuvre before his venture with the Sagrada Família.

The study of political behaviour in Catalonia in the last few decades of the 19th century and first few decades of the 20th century has generated a historiography that is

notable and dense enough to merit an overview of a topic that is as complex as it is unavoidable in understanding contemporary Catalonia. In many places, there was a long transition from oligarchic liberalism to modern mass democracy, a period in which the domination of the local notables, called caciques in Spain, along with electoral adulteration and abstentionism, tended to be perpetuated in the rural districts. This is true even in a country which had a significant degree of industrialisation and urban population concentration, as Catalonia did in the first few decades of the 20th century, with the corresponding political participation of the masses in an era in which Spain as a whole was underdeveloped and subjected to a political centralism which sought compromises with those who controlled local clientele in an exchange of favours. Given that some Catalan industrialisation took place in rural environments near the Llobregat and Ter Rivers, pre-democratic political practices tended to continue even in these economically modern nuclei after 1901, when Barcelona and the main Catalan cities had emancipated themselves from the control of the two Spanish parties that alternated power in the constitutional monarchy, and Catalanists and republicans had brought authenticity to electoral competition in the urban nuclei. Even the new forces, which presented themselves as renovators and the enemies of old-style politics, tended to reach compromises with the local caciques in some rural places.

This issue of our journal continues to provide bibliographic information on the historical studies of any topic that have appeared in the publications of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans in 2018.

The *Catalan Historical Review* has once again earned the top classification – class A – in the update and revision of Carhus Plus 2018 by the Agència de Gestió dels Ajuts Universitaris i de Recerca of the Generalitat de Catalunya (AGAUR). At the same time, the number of readers of this journal has continued to rise, as shown by the records in the databases where the *Catalan Historical Review* is indexed. This growth has taken place among both scholars outside the Catalan-speaking lands, who are the majority, and for whom the journal was specifically designed, and readers from the Catalan-speaking lands, which proves the usefulness of the overviews provided in the *Catalan Historical Review*.

In 2018, we have mourned the passing of four highly esteemed colleagues: Josep Maria Font i Rius, Eva Serra, Joaquim Garriga and Alexandre Olivari, prominent members of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans and its affiliated societies. Their memory will live on not only because of the affection that they inspired but also because of the value of their works, which are still crucial, lasting contributions to Catalan historiography. At the end of this issue, we devote an obituary to each of these colleagues who is no longer with us.

Along with these losses, we would like to congratulate the entry into our advisory council of eleven new members chosen to be a part of the History-Archaeology Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans. We have published a biographical sketch of each of these researchers at the end of this issue.

ALBERT BALCELLS
Editor