

Foreword

The first article in this issue examines the spread of Christianity in the northeast Tarraconense province in the Roman Empire. The earliest written record of this process discusses the trial and martyrdom of bishop Fructuosus of Tarragona and the deacons Augurius and Eulogius in AD 259. Once the periodic persecutions of Christians came to an end in AD 313, the archaeological remains of their religion began to leave remains. The cover illustration of this issue of the *Catalan Historical Review* is one of the scenes depicted on the fourth-century Bethesda sarcophagus, which is embedded on the façade of the cathedral of Tarragona, a temple which began to be built in the mid-seventh century. The relief depicts Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem as he is hailed with palm fronds just five days before his crucifixion. The other high-relief scenes on this sarcophagus depict different times when Jesus miraculously healed the ill according to the Gospel stories. The image of Christ is still beardless, as was common in the early centuries of Christianity.

In the city in late antiquity, the bishop came to replace the former curia. This was fostered as the most powerful families joined the Christian hierarchy. The palaeo-Christian basilica, the episcopal palace and the adjacent reception hall occupied a prominent place in the urban space. Christianity, which had previously been considered a subversive religion, or at least one that was at odds with the Roman Empire, became the power that maintained order at times of enormous instability and insecurity on the frontiers. It did not become the official religion until emperor Theodosius in AD 380, although neither pagans nor Arians were persecuted. The problem of Christians' divisions regarding the divinity of Jesus and the Trinity persisted, and councils of bishops were needed to define the Church's dogmatic orthodoxy.

Romanesque sculpture is yet another topic addressed in this issue. It appears in the pediments of the entrances to churches, on the capitals in cloisters and on the frontals of altars, as well as in freestanding figures like the one depicting Mary and her son Jesus seated on the royal throne, along with the first scenes of the Passion with Christ crucified. The sculptors are anonymous, although one exception is in the cloister of Sant Cugat del Vallès, where Arnau Cadell has been identified and represented on one capital as the author of the entire set. This article debates whether, except for the plant motifs, the scenes on the capitals in the cloister of this monastery are telling a story, given that just like painting, sculpture was also didactic and doctrinal. Professor Josep Maria Jaumà has published his interpretation, which seems to dem-

onstrate that they reflect a thematic programme inspired by biblical scenes and the everyday lives of the monks.

Another topic examined in this issue is the solution to the struggle over the throne in the early fifteenth century upon the end of the dynasty that had governed the Crown of Aragon since its inception. This ushered in a profound political crisis, where violence mixed with parliamentary negotiations among representatives of the kingdoms of Aragon and Valencia, along with those from the Principality of Catalonia, leading to the instatement of the Castilian Trastámara dynasty in the Crown of Aragon. The factors in this shift, its nature and its consequences have been the subject of longstanding debate between historians and political essayists. This debate is clarified in the article on this topic in this issue of the *Catalan Historical Review* which uses the traditional name of the Compromise of Casp, based on the town in Aragon where the delegates from the Corts of all three kingdoms in the Crown gathered to resolve the issue of succession to the throne.

More than just an instrument of commercial exchange and taxation, currency is always a sign of collective identity and the sovereignty of a country's political power. This issue analyses the evolution of Catalonia's issuing its own currency between two major political and social crises: the War of the Reapers in 1640 and the Civil War from 1936-1939. The abolition of Catalonia's own political institutions in 1714 with the instatement of the Bourbon dynasty put an end to its right to issue its own currency, which the Generalitat de Catalunya had held until it was terminated. However, more than 100 years later, during the First Carlist War, it once again had to issue small coins to finance the war effort, and Barcelona's mint came to operate at full capacity. Overcoming inflation required an extraordinary effort under the vigilance of the Spanish central power, which frowned on what seemed like an act of regional sovereignty. Yet additionally, due to the increase in trade debt, the Bank of Barcelona was established and after 1845 earned the privilege to issue bank notes, which at the time could be converted into gold or silver coin. This privilege ended in 1874 when the Bank of Spain gained the monopoly on issuing paper currency throughout the entire kingdom. With the 1936 Civil War, the disappearance of metal coin led different town halls in Catalonia to issue small paper bills, an illustration of the atomisation of power at a time of revolutionary crisis and the disappearance of most metal coins from everyday retail purchases.

In 2022, the celebration of the centennial of Joan Fuster i Ortells' birth was an occasion to reflect on his activity and commitment to the identity of the Region of Valencia

within the Catalan-Speaking Lands. He made a decisive contribution to this concept by justifying and defining the Catalan lands via their linguistic unity, from Roussillon north of the political frontier with France to the Balearic Islands, the Region of Valencia and the Principality of Catalonia. A poet, essayist, critic, historian of literature, author of journals, writer of opinion articles for the press and cultural promoter, the Valencian Joan Fuster is a figure with multiple dimensions who resists simple classification and deserves the same anti-dogmatism that he maintained through his entire life to be applied to his own theses.

The Institut d'Estudis Catalans, which chose Joan Fuster as a member of its History-Archaeology Section in 1978, devoted a scholarly conference on 28 September 2022 to the writer in conjunction with the Institució de les Lletres Catalanes. After Joan Fuster's death 20 years ago, his personality and oeuvre went through a period of scant public attention until 2015, when Valencian law lost its regional power. In recent years, his thinking and work has been revived, and Fuster Year in 2022 is proof of this. Antoni Furió, a professor at the Universitat de València and the editor of Fuster's complete works and correspondence, read the keynote speech at the conference on the continued relevance of Joan Fuster, using one of his quips as the title: 'My profession, however, is being Joan Fuster'. Almost 20 experts examined multiple aspects of the diverse facets of Joan Fuster's public persona at that conference and would concur on his continued relevance today.

The last article in this issue examines the evolution in socialists' position towards the Catalan national question. The socialists have had to define their stance regarding the Catalan national movement for more than a century.

Until the 1930s, inhibition of this issue predominated within the UGT and PSOE, which never stopped being minorities within an industrial and urban Catalonia, even though they should have been powerful as both a union and a political party. With the 1936 Civil War, the socialists and communists in Catalonia unified, and the new party earned recognition from the Communist International while becoming an important part of the new correlation of forces until the republican defeat in 1939. As the Franco dictatorship waned, the Catalan communists' and socialists' commitment to Catalonia's claims for self-governance kept workers who had immigrated to Catalonia from the rest of Spain from taking a hostile stance towards Catalanism. Between the democratisation process that started in 1977 and 2003, Catalan socialists experienced a contrast between their success in general and local elections and their failure in Parliament of Catalonia elections. They finally governed the Generalitat de Catalunya between 2003 and 2010, and the years since then are more current events than history.

This issue closes with the customary list of historical publications by the different sections and societies affiliated with the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, while we also remember our colleagues who have left us forever: Joan Sanmartí, Núria de Dalmasas, Olimpio Musso and Efrém Compte. We on the extensive editorial board of the *Catalan Historical Review* also welcome Francisco M. Gimeno and Rafael Roca, new members of the History-Archaeology Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans.

ALBERT BALCELLS
Editor