

Foreword

Yet another year, we are continuing our mission of sharing the burgeoning research in the history of the Catalan-speaking lands in all facets and periods.

Three thousand years ago, iron metallurgy and kiln-fired pottery were introduced among the tribes that inhabited the territory of the modern-day Valencian Country. They began to produce wine surpluses for trade, while contacts with the Phoenicians introduced luxury goods from the eastern Mediterranean. Other major changes were occurring at the same time. Clear social stratification and concentration in fortified settlements came hand-in-hand with the goal of controlling exchanges and production. Recent archaeological work has furthered our knowledge of the organisation of that mosaic of human groups, and the first article in this issue provides an overview of this work.

Another article is on the topic of troubadour literature, which has a long scholarly tradition in Catalonia. For years, the Institut d'Estudis Catalans has been tasked with leading the development of the *Corpus des Troubadours* as an International Union of Academies programme. Troubadour poetry used the educated variant of the Occitan language and extended from southern France to Catalonia and northern Italy. Catalan poetry used Occitan until well into the late Middle Ages, while the prose of chronicles, chancery documents and philosophical essays adopted the vernacular Catalan language instead of Latin early on, in the thirteenth century. Unconsummated love was the main subject of the troubadours' poetry, but political rivalries also appear in the literature of creators who were simultaneously performers and associated with the different princes' courtly circles. The kings of Aragon and Catalonia favoured the troubadours' poetry at a time when there were active relations between the lands north and south of the Pyrenees. This type of literature survived when the count-kings of the House of Barcelona lost political influence of over Occitania with the crusade against the Cathars in the early thirteenth century.

Another topic addressed in this issue is old constitutionalism. With the Spanish monarchy's recovery of military control over Catalonia in 1652, old constitutionalism was defeated and weakened, but not fully abolished, although no Catalan Corts were held in the last forty years of the seventeenth century. First the Bourbon king Philip V in the 1701 Corts, and later Archduke Charles in the 1705 Corts, had to provide guarantees that neither their representatives nor those of the Generalitat, as the government of the Principality, could exercise power over their subjects arbitrarily, while both sovereigns vying for the Spanish crown accepted measures in favour of free

trade to benefit Catalan merchants. Before weapons definitively defeated traditional Catalan constitutionalism in 1714, the main political option in Catalonia had more in common with its contemporary, English parliamentarianism, than with French absolutism. However, it would be anachronistic to equate the foundations of that old Catalan constitutionalism with the liberal constitutionalism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as some Romantic nineteenth-century historians did. Personal rights were compatible with privilege in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, yet the system did contain elements in favour of individuals' rights, which were absent from the absolutism that was imposed in the eighteenth century.

Catalonia's own civil law, along with its own language and collective memory, has long been part of Catalan identity. This issue of the Catalan Historical Review offers an overview of the survival of Catalan private law after the abolition of public law and its institutions of self-governance in 1716. Without the legislative power to be able to update Catalan civil law and adapt it to societal changes, it suffered from erosion from Spanish jurisprudence, which reflected Castilian civil law, which was codified as general Spanish civil law in 1889. The 1960 compilation of Catalan civil law preserved it, albeit precariously. The 1979 Catalan Statute of Autonomy enabled Catalonia's own law to be codified and its future assured. However, before that, some of the norms of Catalan common law, though often labelled obsolete, were in fact potentially progressive, like the separation of assets in marriage, which enabled the wife to make her own arrangements for her properties and professional income, unlike the common property systems in Castilian and Spanish law. Law exists to resolve conflicts, but it cannot avoid them if the political and social circumstances lead to insurmountable clashes. One example is the 1934 law on crop contracts, which was approved by the Parliament of Catalonia but nullified by the Tribunal de Garanties Constitucionals [Court of Constitutional Guarantees], which argued that a law that allowed peasants access to landownership in exchange for indemnification of the owners in instalments was an authority of the State, not autonomous Catalonia, even though the latter had authority in civil law. This and other political factors led to the Catalan government's revolt on 6 October 1934 and the suspension of the 1931 Statute of Autonomy.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, literary and artistic Noucentisme began to take over from Modernisme. Noucentisme got its name from the new century, in clear contrast to the previous one, and it became dominant in Catalonia just as political Catalanism managed to

unite the four provincial councils of Catalonia into a federation in 1914 with the authorisation of the central authority. This federation was the Mancomunitat de Catalunya, and it was an attempt to prepare for the country's self-governance. In the arts, Noucentisme was also called Mediterraneanism. The serenity of this new classicism took over from the exuberance and vitality of Modernisme. Noucentisme was expressed in literature, the fine arts and architecture. This issue contains an overview of what Catalan Noucentisme meant in art. It was a figurative trend which sought to be the most genuine expression of Catalan character, even though it existed at a tumultuous time in history and ended up coexisting with the avant-gardes and architectural rationalism. Overcoming the dichotomy between urban and rural, articulating the whole of Catalonia as 'Catalunya Ciutat' and capturing the idea of the garden city were just some of Noucentisme's goals. And, in fact, Noucentisme was prominently expressed in public and private gardens, with figures like

the architect-landscaper Nicolau Rubió i Tudurí, who carried on the work launched in Barcelona by Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier, but imbued it with his own personality.

The image chosen for the cover of issue 18 of the *Catalan Historical Review* is the oil painting by Joaquim Sunyer (Sitges 1874-1956) entitled *Mediterranean Life* (1909), which can be considered typical of the painting of Noucentisme. Sunyer drew inspiration from the landscape in Sant Sebastià beach in his hometown, Sitges, and turned a calm, everyday scene of a fishing family into an image that transcends time and reality to achieve a symbolic dimension.

The issue closes with the usual sections reporting on the Institut d'Estudis Catalans's historical publications, the new members of the History-Archaeology Section and its extensive editorial board.

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