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Expansion in Twelfth Century Catalonia. Counties, Towns and the Church²

La expansión catalana del siglo XII. Condados, ciudades y la Iglesia

Abstract:

The Catalan territories experienced a very significant territorial expansion and economic growth in the twelfth century. New institutions responded to these changes and boosted them. This can be seen in the redefinition of county power, the beginnings of urban governance and the introduction of new ecclesiastical organizations. In the early twelfth century, the Catalan counties were a mosaic of political powers while by the end of the century they were to some extent subject to the hegemony of the County of Barcelona. Ramon Berenguer IV reinforced his leadership thanks to his union with the heiress to the kingdom of Aragon. Additionally, he became preeminent among other regional powers with the conquest and administration of the Southern lands. From mid-century, signs of population and economic growth were evident. As with the political situation, Barcelona lead the rise in commerce, although other towns prospered as regional centres. Social and economic developments called for a new organization of powers, in order to guarantee peace, and favour commerce and military efficiency.

Keywords:

Catalonia; Powers; Territorial expansion; Economic growth.

Resumen:

Los territorios catalanes experimentaron una trascendente expansión territorial y crecimiento económico en el siglo XII. Nuevas instituciones y nuevas fórmulas de gobierno respondían e impulsaron dichas transformaciones. Se produjo la redefinición del poder condal, los inicios del gobierno urbano y la introducción de nuevas organizaciones eclesíásticas. A inicios del siglo XII, los condados catalanes configuraban un mosaico de poderes políticos mientras que a finales de siglo estaban sujetos a cierta hegemonía del condado de Barcelona, cuyo titular era el rey de Aragón. Ramón Berenguer IV, reforzó su liderazgo gracias a su unión con la heredera del reino de Aragón. Además el conde alcanzó su preeminencia frente a otros poderes regionales gracias a la conquista y a la administración de las tierras meridionales desde mediados de siglo. Desde entonces los signos del crecimiento poblacional y económico se hicieron evidentes en la proliferación de villas, el crecimiento de las ciudades, y de la actividad artesanal, agraria y mercantil. De forma pareja a la situación política, Barcelona fue principal y predominante en el despliegue mercantil, aunque otros núcleos urbanos prosperaron como centros regionales. Las novedades sociales y económicas reclamaron una nueva ordenación de los poderes, que garantizaban la paz, favorecieran la viabilidad comercial y la eficacia militar.

Palabras-clave:

Cataluña; Poderes; Expansión territorial; Crecimiento económico.

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This paper brings together the political and economic history of Catalonia in the twelfth century. It offers a survey of these developments from the late eleventh to the early thirteenth centuries and it explains how territorial expansion and economic growth gave shape to new institutions and new forms of government. In the early twelfth century, the Catalan counties were a mosaic of political powers while by the end of the century they were to some extent subject to the hegemony of the County of Barcelona, whose holder was the King of Aragon. As Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer IV reinforced his leadership thanks to his union with the heiress to the kingdom of Aragon. Additionally, he conquered territories in al-Andalus and became preeminent among other regional powers with the administration of the Southern lands from mid-century. The counts of Barcelona also extended their dominions north of the Pyrenees, incorporating portions of Languedoc and they gradually absorbed neighboring counties in Old Catalonia. Moreover, they achieved the aforementioned leadership through feudal agreements, marriage ties, military aggression, political and maritime alliances. From mid-century on, signs of population and economic growth were evident, manifesting in the proliferation of villages, the development of cities, and the increase of artisanal, agricultural and commercial activity. As with the political situation, Barcelona led the rise in commerce, although other towns prospered as regional centres. Social and economic developments called for a new organization of powers, in order to assure peace and favour commerce and military efficiency. The Count and his son, King Alfonso II, claimed some guarantees for these things, just as they did with military command. However, in practice, they promoted the deployment of other powers in the territories under their domination, such as urban or ecclesiastical institutions and their own delegates. New church institutions functioned as alternatives to their power and contributed to the organization or balance of the regional powers. Catalonia consolidated itself as a political entity at the intersection between political spaces, acting as a crossroads, which boosted its expansion in all senses. The movement of people, commercial traffic and cultural exchange were clear expressions of geopolitical and economic conditions in the twelfth century.

1. Introduction. The mosaic of Catalan politics at the intersection of frontiers

From the beginning of the twelfth century, the counties of Old Catalonia initiated plans for expansion, which the southern regions of New Catalonia were subject to the Andalusian frontier towns. In the northeastern part of Spain, Catalonia was a land of frontiers, lying between Andalusia and other Christian political entities. The maritime activities of some of these political entities reinforced the special character of Catalonia as a long-term geohistorical crossroads. In the first third of the century, various projects were formulated and initiatives taken but without producing important results, especially

by the County of Barcelona (Ferrer, 2009: 162-163)³. Military pressure from the Almoravids put a stop to these plans for conquest, and the Almoravids even managed to reach the outskirts of Barcelona (Pagés, 1992: 102-103. Felipe, 1997: 100).

The Catalan territories experienced very significant territorial expansion and economic growth mainly in the second half of the twelfth century, boosted by an important change in its political forms and institutions. The political mosaic at the start of the century was gradually integrated, from a formal point of view, into one territory, which was identified as Catalonia by the end of the twelfth century, subject to the authority of the Count of Barcelona, who was also the King of Aragon (Bofarull, 1836: 218, 225)⁴. These institutional changes implied a more defined hierarchy of power, the high point of certain political organizations such as the County of Barcelona, as well as the proliferation of new ecclesiastical institutions. In addition to increasing economic activity, there was a growth in urbanization and a development of a polycentred economy. All these changes had their precedent in the previous century, but from the twelfth century onwards, together they amounted to a renewed social and political system, whose forms prefigured further progress until the end of the medieval period. Without doubt, the splendid artistic creation of this period was one of the highest expression of the dynamism and growth of these social organisations.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, the Catalan territory was organized into a group of counties coming from the Carolingian *Marca Hispanica* and was mainly located to the north of the Llobregat River, in what was known as Old Catalonia. Among these counties, the foremost was the County of Barcelona, which had an important city at its centre. Barcelona had ambitions to expand towards Andalusian lands, as did the neighbouring County of Urgell. By mid-eleventh century, the County of Barcelona had reached the outskirts of Tarragona and the Count of Urgell conquered Balaguer in 1105, thereby opening the way to fertile valley of the River Segre, which was then in Muslim hands (Betran, 2007). The Andalusian town of Lleida entered into Urgell's plans for expansion as well as those of the Kingdom of Aragon (Laliena, 2005: 126). Tortosa formed part of Barcelona's expansion plans from 1097 (Risco, 1859: 279-282. Baiges, 2010, II: 296), and Aragon's plans (Laliena, 2005: 123)⁵. Tortosa was a prosperous Andalusian frontier city in the *Marca Superior*, as it connected the hinterland of the Ebro Valley with the sea. Between these Christian and Muslim frontiers, there was a region called the Camp de Tarragona, which fell outside any clear political authority, and the city itself was depopulated (Bramon, 2000: 122. Font, 1966). Lleida, Tortosa and Tarragona,

³ For a pisan-catalan expedition to Mallorca, (Ferrer, 2009: doc. 37 (pp. 289-291). An agreement between the "Moorish" governor of Lleida and the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer III, (Baiges, 2010, II: 525). Catalan places and people names are given in Catalan.

⁴ Catalonia was referred to in the king's will (Gonzalvo, 1994: 19).

⁵ For the twelfth century see (Bofarull, 1849: 2).

together, formed New Catalonia, and they became subject to the County of Barcelona in the twelfth century.

The trans-Pyrenean lands were another area of important geopolitical interest to the Counts of Barcelona, given their economic and cultural proximity (Benito, 2009: 56-59). The Count of Barcelona's ambitions with regard to Provence culminated in its struggle for domination in the last third of the twelfth century (Benito, 2015). The ruler of the House of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer III (1097-1131), opted for the title of Marquis of Provence (Baiges, 2010, II: 478)⁶, and his grandson King Alfonso II, known as Alfonso the Chaste (1162-1196), called himself *rex Aragonensis, comes Barchinonensis et marchio Provincie* from 1166 on (Sánchez Casabón, 1995). His father, Ramon Berenguer IV (1131-1162), called himself "Marquis of Tortosa and Lleida" (Font, 1969: 79, 86, 99, 88, 76), as well, thereby conferring a distinct rank on the titles of these conquered lands. The term 'marquis' was Carolingian in its origins and implied an important status in the hierarchy of power. It was used to refer to the dominion over a frontier land which was subject to a prominent political entity (Sabaté, 2015: 84-87), in this case the County of Barcelona, and bore with it military obligations.

The expansion to the north and the expansion to the south were given the same importance, and were not the result of a choice being made between them, as has been suggested by some authors⁷. Rather, they were result of *realpolitik*. These Marches were not marginalized defensive spaces but three regions of intense economic activity, which contributed to the growth of the aforementioned polycentred economy of Catalonia, in the second half of the twelfth century. The County of Barcelona augmented its territory thanks to the integration of New Catalonia to its south and west around the middle of the century and thus achieved an important position in Christian Spain, especially after the union with Aragon. The fragmented map of the northern Catalan counties at the start of the century was replaced by another wider map, in which Barcelona played a central, political, military and economic role in a more unified territory which only by the end of the century would be recognised as Catalonia.

2. The Catalan counties and the progressive predominance of the County of Barcelona

In the twelfth century, there was no concept of a unified territory, neither Christian nor Andalusian. The plurality of powers was organized through vassal ties, covenants or

⁶ As a count of Provence and Marquis, (Baiges, 2010, II: 573).

⁷ J. Torró criticizes some historians who preponderate the conquest of trans-Pyrenean lands to the Southern ones, (Torró, 2007: 82-83).

certain regional power hierarchies (Kosto, 2001)⁸. The Count of Barcelona and, to a lesser degree, the Count of Urgell, acquired leading positions as beneficiaries of a number of outstanding personal dependencies such as oath of fidelity, especially through ties with some high-ranking members of aristocracy (Kosto, 2001: 221-230). Consequently, these two counties acquired a certain degree of authority over the other Catalan counties. The first third of the twelfth century still saw some pacifications and the imposition of the Count of Barcelona over other powers, as happened with the Viscount of Beziers or the Count of Empúries (Baiges, 2010, II: 425, 426, 595, 733). As an example of an agreement, there was the peace achieved between Artau II from Pallars Sobirà and Ramon Bernat from Pallars Jussà, which was guaranteed by the Count of Urgell, Ermengol VI, and the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer III (Baiges, 2010, II: 563, 565). In general, the Christian powers were affected significantly by instability and bellicosity throughout the century (Bonet, 2015). The Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer III, showed some leadership in regional or "international" political scenarios, and this was consolidated in subsequent decades. His political and military initiatives were in line with Barcelona's commercial initiatives in the Mediterranean. Ramon Berenguer III's marriage to Douce of Provence in 1112 may be interpreted in this context. All the domains of the house of Provence were incorporated into the house of Barcelona, and this implied the vassal dependence of major Provençal lineages to him, as some of them sought protection from some expansionary attempts by the County of Toulouse. In 1125, the counts of Barcelona and Toulouse achieved a treaty of partition of the Occitanian lands (Baiges, 2010, II: 573. Benito, 2009: 40-44 and doc. 39. Salrach, 1987: 348-352).

It is worth stressing that the County of Barcelona allied itself with the main Italian powers to carry out expeditions to conquer Andalusian lands. When the Pisans initiated the crusade against Mallorca (1113-1115), under papal protection, they gathered the support of the Count of Barcelona and the Count of Empúries. A Pisan chronicle highlighted the leadership of the Count of Barcelona, referring to him as the Duke of Catalans '*dux catalanensis*' and also as '*rector Catalanicus hostes*' or hero, a term which the same text also used to refer to the count of Empúries (Liber Maiolichinus: 68, 76, 82, 91. Bonet, 2015, 177). In 1128, the Count of Barcelona made another agreement with the King of Sicily, who promised to help militarily and subsequently joined the comital army to attack the Andalusian lands (Ferrer, 2009: 300-302)⁹. The County of Barcelona established agreements with prominent leaders of the Mediterranean expansion and its principal aim was to conquer Tortosa within the context of a more ambitious program¹⁰. In the end, the Count gained Tortosa thanks to the Genoese navy (Caffaro, 1973).

⁸ For the spread of these agreements from the eleventh century onwards, see (Bonnassie, 1969).

⁹ *In servicium Dei et auxilium exercitus ad exercitum Hispaniarum*, (Baiges, 2010, III: 609, 608). The agreement was still in the memoirs of King Alfonso II, (Sánchez Casabón, 1995: 255 (1178))

¹⁰ For agreements with Genoa, see (Bofarull, 1849: 144, 141. Ferrer, 2009: doc. 51, 52).

In order for the Count to succeed in the conquest of Tortosa, a priority was to occupy the region of Tarragona, which at this time was "no man's land". However, despite being the "natural" and intended area of expansion of the County of Barcelona, the conquest and occupation of the city escaped the comital authority until 1151 (Bofarull, 1849: 69). The regaining of Tarragona was conceived and, partly executed, as a central aim in the recovery or restoration of the church in pagan lands (Morera, 1981: 354-369. Mc. Crank, 1976-77: 5-39. Bonet, 2011: 68-78). It was executed by the military presence of the Norman Robert Bordet, who became a vassal of the archbishop of Tarragona in the first third of the century (Miret, 1920. Mc. Crank, 1981). This shows the reality of feudal power, as well as the Count of Barcelona's lack of capacity for real action at that time.

A key episode for the County of Barcelona in achieving a certain "hegemony" in the Catalan and international context was the celebrated dynastic union with the Kingdom of Aragon. In 1137, the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer IV, established the marriage covenant with Petronila, daughter of Ramiro II, King of Aragon. From then he was taken to be *regni Aragonensis dominator* or later as *Princeps aragonensis* (Baiges, 2010, III: 884, 1031). His position undermined the rights of the military orders that had benefited from the will of the king, Alfonso I, as heirs to the kingdom. The son of Petronila and Ramon Berenguer IV was the first King of Aragon and Count of Barcelona of this medieval lineage. Whenever the king figured himself, his title as a king preceded his title as count, which suggests he was fully aware of the importance of his royal rank. Therefore, the description of "count-king" as applied to the members of this dynasty is a legal and historiographical fiction (Sabaté, 2007: 42).

The dynastic union was primordial in the affirmation of the authority of Ramon Berenguer IV, although other events also contributed the gradual hegemony of the County of Barcelona among other Catalan counties. By way of reminder, it should be noted that in 1111 and 1117 the County of Barcelona absorbed the counties of Besalu and Cerdanya, respectively (Baiges, 2010, III: 371 (1107), 372, 373, 410 (1111). Aurell, 1998: 322-329). Later, in 1172, Barcelona received the county Roussillon by will as well as the rights to Pallars Jussà in 1192 (Salrach, 1987: 378-379. Aurell, 1998: 329-340). In 1166, King Alfonso II was appointed Marquis of Provence on the death of his cousin Ramón Berenguer III of Provence. The County of Urgell consolidated itself as a vassal of Barcelona after the conquest of Lleida (Bofarull, 1849: 54. Font, 1969: 79)¹¹. In 1209, Count Ermengol VIII died without male issue and there followed a succession crisis (Villanueva, 1976: 196-197). From then onwards this county began to depend more strongly on King Pedro II of Aragon, Alfonso's son, and only the counties of Empúries and Pallars Subirà remained independent of him (Bisson, 2003: 49).

¹¹ Decades before, the count Ermengol VI was under Castilian influence and was a vassal of the king of Aragon, to whom he gave Balaguer in 1106, (Baiges, 2010, II: 367).

In the middle of the twelfth century, the Count of Barcelona increased its authority thanks to gaining the Andalusian cities of Tortosa in 1148 and Lleida the following year, and finally the mountainous district of Siurana (1153-1154) (Salrach, 1987: 372-377. Sabaté, 1996. Zimmerman, 1993)¹². These regions in New Catalonia amounted to an increase of 11,000 km², which opened the door to exploitation and domination by people immigrating from Old Catalonia and elsewhere. Ramon Berenguer IV achieved those conquests after a series of calculated and fruitful covenants (Bofarull, 1849: 51, 54. Shideler, 1987: 186). He also received the express support of the Papacy, which was encouraging a peninsular holy war at the time (Bishko, 1975: 399, 410. Bofarull, 1849: 129, 133. Flórez, 1770: 223-224). This climate of crusade favoured participation in the conquest of Tortosa, by people from Genoa or from England, France or Italy as well as a contingent of Templars (Caffaro, 1973: 24-34. Pagarolas, 1984: 54-58. Montesano, 2006: 272-273)¹³. Such a conjunction of forces was outstanding in the regional context and made the conquest possible after a major siege. Once these conquests were complete, the count divided the conquered lands among new owners, organized the feudal powers and established some guidelines of government for cohabitation, especially in the cities of Tortosa and Lleida (Bonet, 2006: 449-460. Barton, 2010). The Christian occupation and successful organization of both towns was a priority in the Count's policy (Font, 1969: 75, 79). Ultimately, military activity and some government action resulted in an increase in the county authority.

The *Usatges of Barcelona*, understood as legislation compiled and implemented by Count Ramon Berenguer IV (1131-1162) and inspired by Roman law, referred to the figure of the count as Prince, and defined the keys of his power (Valls, 1984. Bonnassie, 1988: 340-350. Kagay, 1994: 33-39. Kosto, 2001: 278-81. Bisson, 2009: 194-5). The text also collected other traditions and formulations related to feudal relationships, but at the same time it gave him greater consideration. The figure of the count based part of his authority on his military leadership. The law attributed him the right to organize attacks and negotiate peace with the Muslims. Besides this, the famous *usatge princeps namque* required all men under his authority to come to defend 'the land' if it was attacked, but also if he besieged enemies in his turn (Valls, 1984: 63, 64, 65, 68)¹⁴. Under these laws, the count was responsible for war, especially outside his territory, and also he was required to guarantee other aspects of common interest.

¹² According to a poem, probably written in 1149, he was given the titles of king of Lleida and Duke of Tortosa due to the importance of these conquests, (Alturo, 2012: 477). His epitaph recalled his great military skills, as he had conquered many places in Muslim lands, (Bofarull, 1836: 201-204).

¹³ For the "official" version in Catalan sources, see (Cingolani, 2012: 102-103).

¹⁴ The prince, that is to say the count, was *ibi mandarent hostes quibus irent ad destruendam Yspaniam*, being *Hispania* the Muslim part of Spain (Valls, 1984, 124). About the *Usatge Princeps namque*, see (Kagay, 2007: 57-58). According to the author, this rule marked the path to 'Catalonia's emergent sense of nationhood'. In my opinion, there were no references to people or territory, only to the 'land' subject to comital authority. His understanding of 'nation in arms' seems an excessive interpretation, considering the meaning of the rule.

Alfonso II carried out some new policies that can be considered the foundation of a “monarchical system”. Nevertheless, this governmental development has been overemphasized by some scholars, who, in their turn, have been influenced by a ‘statism’ approach¹⁵. And yet, the most active powers were still the feudal ones and they demonstrated themselves as such, often against royal initiatives or at least independent of them¹⁶. However, there are three governmental targets pursued by King Alfonso in the last quarter of the twelfth century: the territorialisation of royal power, some fiscal initiatives and the promotion of cities. The king imposed peace throughout Catalonia and set up delegates of his authority *in situ* with this end, especially in the cities, namely the vicars or veguers (*vicarii* and others *paciarri*) (Bisson, 1977. Font, 1985: 316-25. Sánchez, 1995: 33). All the same, such general peacekeeping measures were not respected. In Cerdanya, in 1188, the Viscount Arnau de Castellbó and some knights raided twenty-five places, which they looted and burned, kidnapping the people (Bisson, 1991: 98-99)¹⁷.

As the king was hard pressed by military necessity, he set taxes, but he met with significant failures, as, for instance, the first *bovatge* of 1174-5, which drew a violent backlash from magnates¹⁸. An increase in the number of accounts documents from this time has been taken as proof of the origins of the fiscal system, but indeed these sources refer to the king’s patrimony (Bisson, 1984: 78-121. Sánchez, 1995: 34-35). In addition, in some contemporary examples, the king gave up parts of his domain as he did part of Tortosa, when he granted it to the Templars in 1182 (Pagarolas, 1984: 245-249). It seems he did so in order to ensure at least some income from those domains.

These new political forms coincided with the renewal in historical memory, much of which was in favour of the house of Barcelona. The *Deeds of the Counts of Barcelona* or *Gesta comitum Barchinone et regum Aragonie* was an important piece in this construction of memory, probably compiled in the 1180s by monks of Ripoll (Cingolani, 2006. Cingolani, 2012: 14. Aurell, 2005: 237-239). This narrative paid attention to the comital lineage, leaving the royal one in the background. The discourse established dynastic legitimacy and celebrated Ramon Berenguer IV as the restorer of Guifré the Hairy’s patrimony while suggesting in a fable that he was a descendant of Charlemagne. This stressed a legitimate dynastic descendant from the heroic founders of the anti-Muslim cause¹⁹. In addition, the families

¹⁵ Only as an example, see (Cabestany, 1985: 57).

¹⁶ As Th. Bisson has pointed out this period was a critical one, marked by the contradiction between ceremonial decision-making and spontaneous and engaged opposition (Bisson, 2009: 499).

¹⁷ After the war ended, peacekeeping measures were imposed by the king in Catalonia (Gonzalvo, 1994: 17).

¹⁸ Indeed, the first *bovatge* was conceived as a tax for keeping the peace, (Bisson, 1984, I: 84 and II: 86. Ortí, 2000: 574-577).

¹⁹ According to Th. Bisson, a first nucleus was written in 1161 (Bisson, 2003: 35). I understand that the text was prepared by Ripoll monastery to highlight the ties it maintained with the county lineage, in order to counteract

who ruled Besalú, Cerdanya and Urgell counties were linked to the family of Barcelona since Guifré (Cingolani, 2012: 14). Significantly, these counties became linked to Barcelona precisely when Barcelona imposed its hegemony in the twelfth century. In addition, the writing, or maybe the project, of the *Liber feudorum maior*, of 1191, could be taken as another piece in the development or creation of this “king’s memory” (Bisson, 1977b: 281-292)²⁰. These “official” sources in favour of kingship contrasted with the fact that some troubadours offered criticism of the count or the king, such as Peire de Alvernha and Guillem de Berguedà. Despite this, other authors, such as Giraut de Bornelh, defended the king or Catalonian counties against the expansionist Capetian monarchy (Riquer, 1993: 158-184. Riquer, 1971. Cabestany, 1985: 89-95)²¹.

3. Economic and urban growth

Economic and urban growth was the principal indicators of the transformations in Catalonia, above all, from the middle of the twelfth century²². Most of the resettlement cards were granted from about 1140 to the beginning of the thirteenth century, giving rise to the consolidation or even creations of villages, such as the ones with names like Vilanova, Vilafranca or Pobla. Most of the charters there were given to places in New Catalonia and it provided a model of organizing the population into villages (Font, 1983: 103-120. Font, 1985. Bonet, 2006). Towns such as Perpiñán, Gerona and Barcelona also grew at this time (Bisson, 2003: 40-42. Riera, 1996. Riu, 1992: 353). Moreover, cities provided the axis for organizing areas conquered by the Count of Barcelona in the cases of Tarragona, Tortosa and Lleida. After the conquest of New Catalonia, the urban functions and spaces of these cities were reactivated and this was a primordial and strategic element in the count’s policy. In addition, these towns came to dominate their regions, centralizing the receipt of feudal rents and they experienced a mercantile expansion, patronized by the privileges granted by the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer IV (Bonet, 2004: 479-488. Bonet, 2006: 446-440. Sabaté, 2003: 220. Sobrequés, 1984: 330). At the same time, the comital policies towards Muslims imposed exile or captivity, favouring Catalonia’s magnates and new settlers in conquered territories. However, he managed to obtain the acquiescence

Alfonso’s decision to transfer the royal pantheon to Poblet in 1176. This implies that the text was written after this event. In fact, the *Gesta* refers to his father being buried in a silver sepulchre in Ripoll, (Cingolani, 2012: 101).

²⁰ According to A. Kostó, the work presented to the king Alfonso had been completed before 1196, when he passed away (Kostó, 2001b: 3-6). In our approach, this is a controversial topic.

²¹ Ramon Vidal de Besalú may have written *Romanç del compte de Barcelona e rey d’Aragó*. For “cultures of power” related to troubadours, see (Bisson, 2009: 430-437).

²² Agrarian change was a main cause in the economic growth. Social changes in agrarian world were also important and transcendent, (Benito, 2003). Despite these changes, villagers and peasants were “beneficiaries and victims of new social and economic forces” (Bisson, 1998: 3). We understand that they started to “have voices” against who “tormented” them as a result of improving their social and economic conditions, even if it is also true that they were complaining because of the lord’s abuses.

of few members of the Muslim elite (Bonet, 2006: 450-457). The reactivation of villages and cities came about in all Catalonia, the influence of Barcelona was primordial in the economic growth of the country from mid-century onwards. The convergence of the interests of the bourgeoisie and the political expansionism was manifested during the siege of Tortosa, when some of them gave a loan to the Count of Barcelona (Bisson, 1984: 143. Salrach, 1992: 167. Sabaté, 2005: 153).

Barcelona was a major Mediterranean port in the eleventh century. However, according to Stephen Bensch, there was what he described as an 'aborted take-off' in urban economy between 1090 and 1140, which could be linked to the arrival of the Almoravids. The author suggests that this slow-down responded to an incomplete structural evolution and not a cyclical downturn (Bensch, 1995: 119-120). He indicates that Barcelona failed to break out of the confined regional parameters that had contained it in its first phase of growth. Even though he warns that pillage and protection money, known as *parias*, endowed Catalonia with precious metals and luxury goods²³. Without entering into the debate, it is no minor issue that the gold in circulation throughout the century came from al-Andalus and North Africa. So, it's worth highlighting that the conditions of war or peacekeeping drained a significant amount of wealth, especially towards Barcelona. The golden morabetinos circulated for most of the twelfth century, as the Almohad *masmudina* did later²⁴.

Other businesses flourished with the conquests and because of the frontier conditions, such as the one dedicated to the ransom of captives and their transfer to Muslim lands. There was a monopoly in the redemption of captives in the hands of a high official known as an *almostalaf*, who was appointed by the count and the king in Barcelona and Tortosa (Batlle, 1988: 107-133, 110-113, 125-131). The conquest generated many captives or slaves, and Tortosa became a major slave market that operated beyond regional boundaries. The Tortosa merchants even took Muslim slaves from other places like Valencia, Granada, Algeciras and Ceuta to Genoa (Verlinden, 1955: 268-269. Verlinden, 1977: 428-450, 451-2. Ferrer, 1990. Ferrer, 2012: 165-6). Sometimes *almostalafes* travelled to Muslim lands, that were also a major destination for Catalan trade. The littoral route had destinations like Tortosa, Valencia and Almeria, and reached down to the North of Africa. Another destination in Muslim parts was Mallorca, and sometimes on from there to Bugia. In fact, one of the most important Mediterranean route for Catalonia in the twelfth-century was the one linking it with the ports of North Africa (Batlle, 1988. Ferrer: 91-93, 96-99. Salrach, 1988: 435).

Barcelona's economic growth resulted in its extramural urban sprawl, in increased local craft and in its growing connectivity to maritime routes and others across the

²³ For increased consumption of species, see (Riera, 2000: 1028).

²⁴ However, the silver coin was degraded in the second half of the twelfth century and the gold one experienced a decline from 1160, (Feliu, 1992: 227).

Pyrenees via Cerdanya and Rosselló. These routes joined Barcelona with Toulouse, Paris, Limoges, Provence and Italy (Orvietani, 2001: 116-156). The trade activity across the Pyrenees was such that merchants paid tolls in Llívia, as it is shown in the inventory of 1151 (Salrach, 1992). Luxury goods imported from al-Andalus, and French, Flemish and Occitanian draperies, were the basis of this trade between these regions and maritime commerce, too, was primarily a transit trade (Salrach, 1988: 435). Barcelona contributed to this trade with local products such as weapons, leather goods, wool textiles, objects made of coral, bedclothes and oil along these routes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Ferrer, 2012: 160-161. Sayous, 1975: 53-54)²⁵. Wool manufacturing was the main Catalan craft production, with centres in Banyoles, Vic, Barcelona, Berga, Girona, Ripoll, Olot, Puigcerdà, Sant Joan de les Abadesses, Ripoll, Sabadell, Terrassa, Perpinyà, Molló, Lleida and Tortosa, to mention some examples of sites in this economic polycentricity (Riera, 2004: 821-902).

Catalan Mediterranean trade was already significant in the twelfth century, but the main routes were consolidated throughout the following century. The Levant route was active and its destinations were Byzantium, the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem and Alexandria. In 1111, there was a small Barcelona colony in Tripoli. There were also numerous pilgrimages to Jerusalem from 1113 to 1127 (Gudiol, 1927). After the fall of the city in 1187, the king of Jerusalem issued a privilege to "men from Provençal parts from Marseille to Barcelona" to allow them to move to Tyre (Nicolau, 1926: 19-20. Feliu, 1992: 234). Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew, found Catalans in Alexandria between 1166-1173 and he said that Barcelona received merchants from all over Greece, Pisa, Alexandria in Egypt, the land of Israel and Africa (Magdalena, 1982: 54, 120-121. Abulafia, 1987: 189-207). Barcelona was also frequented by merchants from Pisa, Paris, elsewhere in France, and Genoese of course, as they were also in Tortosa (Feliu, 1992: 235). The urban growth or revival of Catalan cities in general, and Barcelona in particular, echoed this economic growth, further evidence of which was the significant increase in the building of new churches (Salrach, 1992: 144).

Ramon Berenguer IV and his son, Alfonso the Chaste, promoted urban life in some cities, which in turn helped them to improved their presence in the territory. They provided a legal identity through local rules and also protected and promoted trade. The resettlement charters, given to Tortosa and Lleida by Ramon Berenguer IV just after the conquests, provided the framework for governmental and economic urban development. Some rights were granted to these two cities in their corresponding regions, such as peacekeeping measures, local justice, the basis of the municipal government and commercial privileges. Similar measures were granted to other cities like Barcelona and Tarragona in mid-twelfth century (Bonet, 2004: 479-488). However, the major move towards municipal organization by the king occurred in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, as in the cases of

²⁵ For craft production in Barcelona, see (Bensch, 1995: 183-193. Sobrequés, 1984: 335-339, 340-341).

Girona, Cervera, Perpignan, Lleida, which were parts of the royal domain (Font, 1985: 487-489. Font, 1962. Freedman, 1979).

Commercial activity was patronized by the comital "authority" and it was expressed in law through Usatges in mid-century. Roads and sea-routes were pacified and defined as places subjected to the prince and thus protected by his *potestas* (Valls, 1984, 62)²⁶. Comital peace and truces were imposed on the city of Barcelona, on ships traveling along the Catalan coast and the coinage²⁷. These and other peacemaking measures provided the *securitatem* needed for exchanges to happen (Gonzalvo, 1994, 14, XII, 15, XI, 16, II and 17, XVII). Sometimes, protection was addressed to merchants and travellers who travelled on public roads as they headed to fairs and markets at the end of the twelfth century (Gonzalvo, 1994, 16 (1187), III, 18 (1192), III, 19, IV (1198). Further laws tended to define the rights of the bourgeoisie in the application of justice (Salrach, 1992: 153)²⁸. The Barcelona bourgeoisie was already outstanding, in giving of loans to the count, as mentioned earlier, and patronizing the arts, as was the case of Bernat Marcús with his promotion of a chapel and a hospital (Banks, 1992: 52).

4. Restoration and ecclesiastical renewal

The reorganization of the ecclesiastical map and the drive towards new ecclesiastical institutions were key in shaping new political or power entities, especially in the second half of the twelfth century. Through all these new institutions, the Church adapted itself to new social and economic realities such as agrarian growth, the urban renaissance and the territorial expansion. The Cistercians, the rise of the episcopal sees and the military orders were the response offered by the Church to these important changes. These new institutions and their particularly new organization helped to overcome the fragmentation and conflict manifested in feudal relations and their presence contributed to the restructuring of the aristocratic class. This ecclesiastical renewal was patronized by noble families, who were interested in consolidating and extending their power through to these alliances. The new ecclesiastical reality brought greater hierarchy over the cells of its power and, so, a more efficient power network. Moreover, this favoured the consolidation of the count's power, and later the king's, because these institutions often functioned as elements of otherness to them as they extended their dominance in territories in which the count or king wanted to expand his power. These new church institutions were frequently introduced and patronized as a resource of rising comital and royal power and they served

²⁶ The count was the power, *potestas*.

²⁷ For the town of Barcelona (Valls, 1984, 61), and for the ships along the Catalan coast, (Valls, 1984, 60). For the roads, *camini et strata*, (Valls, 1984, 62) and for the silver and gold coins, (Valls, 1984, 66).

²⁸ *Sacramentum burgensium*.

as part of its territorial projection (Bonet, 2006b)²⁹. This happened clearly with military orders, which were in charge of the Southern frontier lands, more or less on behalf of the count or king. Church organizations also acquired large domains and created new administrative or economic designs that allowed for the accumulation of incomes unknown till then³⁰. The reformist solutions applied shielded and consolidated ecclesiastical rights and privileges³¹.

The restoration of episcopal sees was a central element in the reorganization of the Catalan Church and sometimes the restoration was promoted and even justified with some crusade proclamations (Freedman, 1991: 153-159). It is worth noting that Urban II boosted the restoration of the Tarragona see in 1089, urging on the Catalan counts and granting any participant the penitential benefits associated with "pilgrimage", the same as for those who went to Jerusalem (Mansilla, 1955: 46). This is an early example of the Crusader ideology that drove the papacy to promote the Catalan expansion of the twelfth century and was taken up by the House of Barcelona. One of the central arguments in pontifical and secular sources for setting up these sees again was that they had been abandoned after the Islamic conquest. This point was made in the plan to transfer the see of San Vicente de Roda to Lleida, by the Pope in bulls from 1110, and by the king of Aragon in his projected conquest of Lleida, which was ultimately carried out by Count Ramon Berenguer IV (Grau, 2010: 99-101, 403)³². The restoration of Tarragona was completed in 1118, and the Bishop of Barcelona, Oleguer, received this assignment from Count Ramon Berenguer III, and thus became lord of a vast domain as Archbishop of Tarragona (Font, 1969: 49).

After these conquests, the restoration of the episcopal sees of Tortosa and Lleida was a major goal and, as such, was promoted by the Count. One priority after the conquest was the restoration of the Church, and a corresponding need to erase the "Islamic oppression", as it was stated. This was also reflected in the count's policy when he obliged newly restored sites to absorb goods and places that belonged before to Muslim sites of worship (Bonet, 2006: 457-458. Virgili, 1997: 13, 19). The restoration of Tortosa was accompanied with a rapid construction of the cathedral, in the same place where the main mosque had been (1158-1178), showing, at some extend, the triumph over the Muslims (Almuni, 2007: 258, 276-278). The restoration of the Church and the consolidation of the crusading movement was a shared aim between the papal and the comital power, which reveals the connection of the major powers and the coincidence between the two processes (Purkis,

²⁹ Counts, king and nobles claimed incomes in certain churches, (Bisson, 2003: 10-15, 22-28).

³⁰ As happened, for instance, with the Cistercians monasteries of Poblet and Santes Creus, (Altisent, 1984: 51-99. Carreras, 1992).

³¹ As Th. Bisson referees, the count Ramon Berenguer IV gave up the seigniorial rights of despoiling widowed churches and episcopal elections were relatively free thereafter, (Bisson, 2003: 46).

³² The documents written to restore sees as Tarragona and Huesca emphasized that these sites had been abandoned for hundreds of years because of the "impetus of the barbarians", (Mansilla, 1955: 50. Laliena, 2005b: 110. Virgili, 1997: 13 and 19 for Tortosa and Lleida).

2008: 123-4, 127, 166-170). It was reinforcement for the Church, but shared and led from early on by the count. In turn, the count and his son, the king, gave important patrimony to ecclesiastical institutions and reinforced their structures, but not without also taking advantage of them (Salrach, 1995: 55. Bonet, 2006: 447, 449, 455-457, 460. Barton, 2009: 3, 6).

In the process of renewal, the new map of the Church's hierarchy was a landmark. Thus, the papacy revitalized *Tarraconensis* as an ecclesiastical province and established its primacy over the sees of Girona, Barcelona, Urgell, Osona, Tortosa, Lleida, Zaragoza, Huesca, Pamplona, Tarazona and Calahorra in 1154 (Mansilla, 1955: 92). The ecclesiastical unity of Catalonia and Aragon, manifested in church meetings, can be seen as an expression of the political union between them. The subsequent church organization also affected the design of the provinces or priories of the Temple and Hospital (Forey, 1973: 89-109. Bonet-Pavón, 2013: 14-20).

The renewal of monastic and religious orders represented a significant change in the panorama of ecclesiastical institutions in twelfth-century Catalonia, as was happening throughout Western Europe at the time. New organizations such as the military orders, the Cistercians, the canons, the Carthusians or the Premonstratensians had their origins in or connections with southern France (Pladevall, 1978: 52. Freedman, 1991: 153-159. Sabaté, 2009: 143-146)³³. The founding of Benedictine monasteries, which were so common in the eleventh century, ceased. Military orders were key agents in the feudal occupation of Catalonia and Aragon's southern borders. This responded to careful political action by Ramon Berenguer IV and his son, who were the orders' main promoters. Initially, the donations to military orders settled the rights that Templars and Hospitallers acquired theoretically through the will of King Alfonso, and in so doing, the political rights become patrimonial ones. Templars and Hospitallers occupied large rural estates and the most important Muslim fortresses or *busun* and they achieved domination over the Ebro Valley, which marked the border till 1233 (Forey, 1973: 15-86: Bonet-Pavón. 2013)³⁴. So a broad and solid defensive system was defined in the frontier region and put into the hands of specialized orders who were faithful to comital and royal power.

Other ecclesiastical institutions were promoted or introduced into territories in order to reshape the balance of regional powers. Through this measure, it was possible for the benefactor in that region to project his power, especially against an adversary or a preeminent power within the district. Without detailing the events, it is worth pointing out this was the case with the introduction of the Cistercian Order into Catalonia, in Valldaura at the hand of Guillem Ramon de Montcada, with the aim of limiting his powerful neighbour, the monastery of Sant Cugat (Udina, 1947: 56)³⁵. And again, later, the Bishop of

³³ Also *la subjecció de monestirs catalans a cases forasteres*, (Pladevall, 1978: 48-49).

³⁴ For *busun* transformation, see (Bonet, 2006: 455).

Barcelona promoted the second transfer of Valldaura to Santes Creus, in order to restrict the growth of the archbishopric of Tarragona (Udina, 1947: 94-95). The foundation of Poblet by the Count, Ramon Berenguer IV, was also a strategy against the growth of the Cervera lineage in the area (Altisent, 1966. Bonet, 2006: 437). King Alfonso's choice of Poblet as his burial site in 1176 symbolized the taking possession of New Catalonia, as the new space dominated by a new generation, and in doing so he abandoned his traditional family vaults (Santacana, 1974: 47. Altisent, 1993: 549). He further provided that, if he conquered Valencia, he should be buried there, in line with the idea of marking sites associated with his authority.

5. Peace, war and political power

Peace was an important matter twelfth-century politics, and there was a qualitative leap in relation to peace and truce precedents. In the 1130s, the counts of Barcelona, Urgell and Empúries, participated in church assemblies that promoted peace movements to defend its members and ecclesiastical property. They also protected other social groups that were key to economic growth, such as merchants and peasants (Gonzalvo, 1994: 10). In the last quarter of the century, the peace process was associated with political authority, and King Alfonso the Chaste and the Count of Urgell indicated that this process was for the "common good" (Gonzalvo, 1994: 15, 16, 17)³⁶. In addition, the king insisted that peace and truce were applied in all his land, and, in doing so, specified the dimensions of Catalonia (Gonzalvo, 1994: 19). The notion of "public order" emerged as associated with the ruler, as in the case of other European monarchs, even if it was all very theoretical (Pascua, 1996: 26. Sabaté, 2010: 17).

The county leadership prospered under the redefinition of peace and especially with the impulse of war. The agreements of the Catalan counts, and particularly the Count of Barcelona, with trade cities, kings and other Christian political leaders, were necessary for success in conducting war or consolidating their gains, such as the agreement with Genoa³⁷. Despite the enhancement of the figure of Ramon Berenguer IV in the organization and development of these conquests, the Genoese version *De Captione Almerie et Tortuose* offers a less heroic account of the Count's action and power. As it has been noted, his role as dealmaker and organizer affirmed his authority in these new regions. In addition, the new law, the *Usatges*, clearly attributed the military leadership to the count, as he was responsible for convening the army, attacking Muslims and negotiating peace with them (Valls, 1984: 123). The fact that he was specifically seen as

³⁵ For the struggle between Ramon de Montcada and the monastery of Sant Cugat, (Benito, 2000: 851-864).

³⁶ Despite these rules, "feudal" or "private" war was recurrent, as the one between the powerful families Montcada and Cardona, (Rodríguez, 2009: 56, 67-68, 71 and 109).

³⁷ *Vid supra*.

predominant in questions of war was one of the main elements in the definition of comital power, and it was made evident when he figured himself Marquis, to refer to these new scenarios acquired or defended by arms. This warrior image of Ramon Berenguer IV was also proclaimed in the construction of his historical memory in the *Gesta comitum* and in his epitaph.

The conquest of Muslim lands was the main fact in asserting comital authority. A strong military power base and leadership by both Count and King were expressed through their continuing involvement in wars. Ramon Berenguer IV fought from 1147 to 1156 almost without interruption. This military authority earned him the agreement with the king of Valencia, Ibn Mardanis, known as King Wolf, in 1149, who paid generous protection money for over twenty years (Guichard, 2001: 133-144). Despite the arrival of the Almohads, the military career of his son had a similar continuity, and wars in the South alternated with others in Occitania (Aurell, 1988: 375-381. Benito, 2015). This military preeminence was accompanied by agreements with other Christian kings or barons set up by the Count and the King, such as marital agreements and covenants, of which the ones with Castile were particularly important. They defined common enemies, the distribution of land after conquering Muslim lands and the division of the kingdom of Navarre, in treaties such as Tudillén (1151) and Cazola (1179) (Bofarull, 1849: 62. Miquel, 1945: 29, 30. Ferrer, 2005: 9-15)³⁸. There was a certain vassallic tie between the count to the king of Castile. Military activity and the benefits associated with it helped the growth of these political powers and boosted the regional economy. The new regions were prosperous in agricultural, craft and commercial activity, and significantly contributed to the commercial and productive polycentricity of Catalonia (Sabaté, 2007: 41, 54-57. Sabaté, 2005: 155-157. Bofarull, 1849: 61. Font, 1983: 251).

As a closing paragraph, we ought to emphasize that the Catalan territories experienced a very significant territorial expansion and economic growth in the twelfth century. Political reality transformed itself due the consolidation of county power, the beginnings of urban governance and the rise of ecclesiastical powers. These new power realities prompted new forms of government, such as pacification or new territorial proposals, which helped to overcome the instability and militancy inherent in the dominance of feudal lords and contributed to military and commercial effectiveness. Indeed, war and trade were key elements of Catalan economic growth. In that sense, the Count and his son, King Alfonso, claimed some guarantees for peace, and favoured commerce and military efficiency, just as they did military leadership. However, in practice, they boosted the deployment of other powers in the territories under their domination, such as urban and ecclesiastical institutions or their own delegates. New church institutions functioned as alternatives to their power and contributed to the organization or balance of the regional powers. In the end, Catalonia consolidated itself as

³⁸ Other agreements were reached between the kings of Castile and Aragon, (Miquel, 1945: 33, 34, 35. Sánchez Casabón, 1995: 4, 426, 488).

a political entity at the intersection of political spaces, acting as a crossroads, and favouring expansion in all senses. The movement of people, commercial traffic and cultural exchange were the clearest expressions of the geopolitical and economic conditions of the twelfth century.

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