

## FROM *FORUM GRANATE* TO VILAFRANCA'S FAIR. ORIGIN, FOUNDATION AND ARTICULATION OF A MARKET NETWORK IN THE FEUDAL PENEDEÈS (9TH-12TH C.)

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### Resum

Amb l'objectiu de millorar el nostre coneixement sobre el paper dels mercats en el procés de gènesi i consolidació del feudalisme, aquest treball analitza l'origen de la xarxa d'intercanvis desenvolupada al territori del Penedès entre els segles IX i XII. L'estudi integrat de fonts documentals, arqueològiques i territorials, i la utilització dels Sistemes d'Informació Geogràfica (GIS) en la representació i anàlisi de les dades, permet acostar-nos al procés d'articulació de la xarxa de mercats medieval. L'encontre comercial més antic del Penedès feudal fou el de la Granada, celebrat sobre el traçat de la Via Augusta. A partir del segle XII la seva ascendència va veure's eclipsada per l'aparició del mercat i fira de Vilafranca del Penedès, que ben aviat es convertirà en el mercat més important d'aquest territori. L'estudi de les motivacions polítiques i econòmiques que ocasionaren aquest canvi de jerarquia ens ajuden a entendre la lògica territorial i comercial del feudalisme. Assistim al procés de creació d'una xarxa de mercats sòlida i ben articulada, liderada per Vilafranca de Penedès i reforçada, a partir del segle XIII, per la institució de nous mercats i fires capaços d'abastir, amb el seu radi d'influència, tot el territori penedesenc.

**Paraules Clau:** Feudalisme, Economia rural, Mercats i fires, Xarxa d'intercanvis, Territori, GIS

### Abstract

With the aim of improving our knowledge about the role of markets in the process of genesis and consolidation of feudalism, this paper analyses the origin of the network of exchanges that was developed in the Penedès region between the 9th and the 12th century. The integrated study of documentary, archaeological, and territorial sources, and the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in the representation and analysis of data, allow us to approach the process of interaction of the network of medieval markets. The oldest commercial gathering of the Penedès region was the one held in La Granada, located along the axis of the Via Augusta. From the 12th century onwards, the importance of this market was overshadowed by the emergence of the market and fair of Vilafranca, which soon became the most important market in the area. The study of the political and economic motivations that caused this change in the hierarchy helps us understand the territorial and commercial logic of feudalism. We are looking at a strong and well articulated market network, led by Vilafranca del Penedès and reinforced, from the thirteenth century on, by the foundation of new markets and fairs able to supply, with their radius of influence, the entire territory of Penedès.

**Key Words:** Feudalism, rural economy, Markets and fairs, trade network, territory, GIS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the past few years we have devoted our studies to survey the markets and fairs from the County of Barcelona, aiming to determine their location, economic logic, and organization. My doctoral thesis has provided an in-depth understanding of the network of county markets from an economic and territorial point of view.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, we have recently surveyed the dietary component as well as the social and cultural role of these commercial transactions.<sup>2</sup> Overall, these studies have allowed us to conclude that the market was a significant space: the fundamental valve of the feudal economic system.<sup>3</sup>

The following paper is intended as a further step in our research on feudal markets. The case study is placed in a specific territory, the historical region of Penedès, and in a precise chronology spanning from the French conquest of Barcelona to the first documentary mention of the fair of Vilafranca del Penedès in 1191.<sup>4</sup> We will survey the genesis of the Penedès market network and its role in the development of feudalism. Our aim is to acknowledge the territorial, political, and economic facts that allowed the continuity of an ancient market, the so-called market of La Granada, and the emergence of a new fair and market, that of Vilafranca del Penedès, which was meant to become the most relevant economic trading space of this region during the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

It is not an easy task to analyse the origin, development, and organization of market networks in the region of Penedès between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The extant documentation is scarce, essentially in private hands, and provides very little information about the functioning and hierarchy of these transactions. We have tackled this issue by making two significant decisions: on the one hand the use of a comprehensive approach that conceptualizes the market as a space

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<sup>1</sup> The interest in the study of markets and fairs within the County of Barcelona has led to the publication of several papers (SOLER 2002a, SOLER 2004a, SOLER 2004b) and the elaboration of my doctoral thesis, supervised by Dr. Antoni Riera Melis (SOLER 2007).

<sup>2</sup> We are preparing two papers on this topic that can serve as example: one on food products traded within early medieval markets (RIERA, SOLER in press) and the second one focused on the market's social, cultural, and ludic perspective (SOLER in press).

<sup>3</sup> We therefore consider us as followers of Guy Bois' interpretation, who stated that the market is not something foreign to feudal society, yet assumes a very important role within medieval economy (BOIS 1991). Concerning the study of markets in Catalonia during the Middle Ages, see SALRACH 1995 SALRACH, 1998b, 2004 SALRACH as well as BATLLE 2004, and recently, SABATÉ 2014.

<sup>4</sup> ACA, Cancelleria, Pergamins, Alfons I, 586, 1191.

of confluence of production and consumption (SOLER 2007: 35-39); and, on the other, a thorough data collection from all available sources: documentary,<sup>5</sup> archaeological,<sup>6</sup> and territorial.

In a study of this nature, the territory plays a key role, for the remains of the economic activity of the past are fossilized on it. The study of the landscape allows us to recognize the road structures through which the network of medieval markets was organized; yet it also approaches us to the physical reality of the *platea mercatalis*. Through a retrospective analysis of current urban plots we can understand the origin and evolution of the towns of the Penedès region, analyse the impact of trade activities upon the urban layout, and localize—when possible—the square where the market was held.<sup>7</sup>

The study of such a diverse range of sources has been possible thanks to the use of an integrated database capable of managing information from different sources.<sup>8</sup> Each piece of data has been considered as a geographically referenced event, allowing us to store all the information in a database, which has later been represented on a single digital map. This process was done by using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), through which we have obtained a set of historical maps, not only on the production and consumption of goods (SOLER 2013: 71 and 73) but also concerning the location of the transactions studied. By analysing the resulting maps we have interpreted the origin and organization of the market network in feudal Penedès (see Figs. 1-4).

### 3. THE «TERRITORIO PENETENSE» (THE PENEDÈS TERRITORY)

From the conquest of Barcelona by Louis the Pious in 801 until the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the County of Barcelona was a well-defined territorial entity, albeit in constant expansion. It relied on the hinterland to support the needs of the city of Barcelona (the area of Vallès and Maresme)

<sup>5</sup> Unpublished documentary sources have been searched at the following archives: Archive of the Crown of Aragon (ACA), Chapter Archive of Barcelona, Historical Archive of the Library of Catalonia, Regional Historical Archive of Vilafranca del Penedès and the Municipal Historical Archive of Olesa de Montserrat. As for the published written sources we have used the following: ALTURO 1985, BACH 1987 (SMS), BISSON 1984, FÀBREGA, 1995 (DCB), FELIU et al. 1999, FERNÁNDEZ I TRABAL, FERNÁNDEZ I TRABAL 1989, FONT I RIUS 1969-1983, MARCA 1688, MAS 1914 (LAEC), MIQUEL 1945-1947 (LFM), ORDEIG 1993, PARDO 1994, PÉREZ 1988, PONS I GURI 1984, PUIG 1995, RIBAS I CALAF 1990, RIUS 1945-1981 (CSC), UDINA I ABELLÓ 1947, UDINA I ABELLÓ 1984, VALLÈS et al. 1992. The acronyms in parentheses correspond to the formula used to refer to the references throughout the text.

<sup>6</sup> The research of archaeological sources has been made on the basis of the Archeological and Paleontological Heritage Inventory of Catalonia (*Inventari del Patrimoni Arqueològic i Paleontològic de Catalunya* (IPAPC), by analysing the data of published and unpublished excavation reports carried out in the chronological and territorial framework studied. Additionally, we have surveyed Volumes XIX and XX of the collective work directed by Jordi Vigué and Antoni Pladevall known as *Catalunya Romànica* (VIGUÉ, PLADEVALL 2004). Throughout the text we will refer to this reference by the acronym CR, followed by volume and page number.

<sup>7</sup> The results of the analysis of more than a hundred villages concentrated within the County of Barcelona were published in SOLER 2002b, and SOLER 2003.

<sup>8</sup> We have applied here Historical Information Management Systems (SGIH in Catalan), designed and used by Alfred Mauri in his undergraduate dissertation (MAURI 1997), and later improved, both methodologically and conceptually in his doctoral thesis (MAURI 2006). This working system has been used in several joint projects (MAURI SOLER 1999; MAURI SOLER 2004) as well as in the doctoral dissertation of the author of this paper (SOLER 2007).

and also had the Penedès territory as a frontline area, which became a strongly militarized *extreme borderland*.<sup>9</sup>

The so-called *territorio penetense* or Penedès Territory is described in the sources as an area provided with a strong identity of its own.<sup>10</sup> It comprised the current regions of Upper Penedès, Lower Penedès, and Garraf, with a variable extension that depended on the conquest process and the subsequent organization of the county. It was limited to the East by the valley of the Llobregat River, and to the West by the border of the county. On the northern side, its natural limits were the mountains of Ancosa, which acted as a border between the counties of Osona and Barcelona (SOLER 2013: 67).

The expansion of the county domains over the Penedès region began during the first quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century through two penetration routes that crossed the River Llobregat.<sup>11</sup> In the southern area, the comital attack started at the Castle of Cervelló,<sup>12</sup> across the Ordal range and into the Garraf territory, reaching the coastline through the castles of Ribes and Sitges.<sup>13</sup> To the North, the penetration headed towards the Anoia River reaching the castles of Lavit and Masquefa,<sup>14</sup> from where the enclave of gelida was seized.<sup>15</sup> From then onwards, the border was established around the castles of Sitges, Olivella, and Olèrdola, stretching up to the area of Castellet and Cubelles (MAURI 2006: 110).

The documentary references to new Christian enclaves beyond this border disappear during the second third of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, a fact that seems to indicate the existence of a standstill period, coinciding with the non-aggression pacts between the counts Sunyer and Borrell II and the caliphs of Cordoba Abd al-Rahman III and al-Hakam II.<sup>16</sup> These agreements must have been

<sup>9</sup> ACA, Cancelleria, Pergamins, Ramon Berenguer II, carpeta 23, doc. 3, 1076.

<sup>10</sup> Sources mainly call this territory “penetense” (CSC, 9, in 917), yet in at least three documents we have identified the denomination “komitatum quem dicunt Penitensem” with a status and consideration that the territory did not have (LFM, 338, 1063; ACA, Cancelleria, Pergamins, Ramon Berenguer II, carpeta 29, doc. 142, 1111; ACA, Cancelleria, Pergamins, Ramon Berenguer II, carpeta 32, doc. 284, 1126). This demonstrates the strong political personality of this area.

<sup>11</sup> We follow the interpretation given by Alfred Mauri in his doctoral thesis, according to which the expansion of the comital domain into the lands of the Penedès had two prongs, both perpendicular to the Llobregat River (MAURI 2006: 104-110).

<sup>12</sup> First mentioned in the sources in 904 (CR, XX: 332).

<sup>13</sup> The first mention of the Castle of Ribes is in 900, whilst that of the Castle of Sitges is much later (in 1041). Since the first mention of the castle of Sitges appears in a transfer of rights, we believe that its construction must predate this document (CR XIX: 268; CR XIX: 44).

<sup>14</sup> The Castle of Lavit is attested in the sources since 956 (CR XIX: 40); whereas the Castle of Masquefa is first mentioned in 963 (CR XIX: 312).

<sup>15</sup> Mentioned for the first time in the documents in 945 (CR XIX: 120, 123).

<sup>16</sup> According to Josep M. Salrach, a truce was initially agreed between Count Sunyer and Abd al-Rahman III in 940, and renewed by Sunyer's successor, Count Borrell II, in 950. After the Muslim raid into the territory of Barcelona led by the new caliph al-Hakam II in 965, Borrell II sent an embassy to Córdoba requesting a renewal of the peace truce, which was granted by the caliph in 966, and subsequently renewed in 971 and 974. These peaceful relations eventually broke down after the death of al-Hakam II, the enthronement of Hisham I, and the political rise of al-Mansur, who led several raids into the comital territories in 978 (SALRACH 1998: 249 et seq).

definitively broken by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when the count assaulted and occupied the areas of Albinyana (1011), Calders (1017), Clarà (1057), and Ullastret (1060) along the Gaià River.

The new conquests finally settled the border in the Gaià River, and, thus, the Penedès territory reached the limits of what has been considered its original nucleus (SABATE 1997: 35). The consolidation of the comital authority over the Penedès region would soon allow the control of the surrounding areas of a long-desired city: Tarragona,<sup>17</sup> which was taken in 1118, thus pushing the border to the Francolí River.

#### 4. THE TERRITORIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FEUDALISM

The analysis of the documents prior to 950 reveals the factors that induced the development of feudalism in the Penedès region. One of the first proofs of change is the construction of a large number of castles, which were at first linked to the process of conquest but soon became centres of authority, ruling over the territories under their jurisdiction (MAURI, SOLER 2004).

The gradual introduction of feudalism entailed a significant expansion of agriculture, which became a major economic pillar, in contrast to its more modest role during the early Middle Ages<sup>18</sup> (SOLER 2009: 85-91). The use of GIS and the mapping of the evidence of cultivated land have corroborated this point. An unstoppable expansion of the crops is detected from 950 to 1100, with a significant increase in the availability of agricultural lands in the territories of Olèrdola (547 references), Cervelló (296), and Masquefa (394). The chronological interpolation of each of the aforementioned references results in a map that allows us to confirm that the agricultural expansion process that began in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century was already noticeable throughout most of the considered territory at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (SOLER 2013: 69-71).

The expansion of the cultivated lands coincided with a gradual concentration of the population in stable settlements (SOLER 2003: 71), and the disappearance of small freeholds at the hands of feudal lords, who in their eagerness to obtain storable and easy marketable incomes turned cereal (bread) and grapes (wine) into the basis of the agricultural production and the dietary system.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Concerning the incorporation of Tarragona to the domains of the county of Barcelona, see BIOSCA, VINYOLES, XORTÓ 2001: 19-20.

<sup>18</sup> Early medieval society saw a decline in agricultural practice with respect to ancient times, and a significant increase of forests and moors. Pollen samples provide sequences spanning from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, hinting at the existence of an aggressive deforestation carried out not so much to obtain new fields but to create pastures for cattle (RIERA, PALET 1993, ESTEBAN et al. 1994).

<sup>19</sup> The study of the products grown in the Penedès area between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries suggests a predominance of cereals (wheat, barley, rye, millet, and spelt wheat), whereas vineyards for the production of wine come second (SOLER 2013: 70).



The restriction of the crops to these two products drastically impoverished the peasant diet,<sup>20</sup> and also resulted in an increasingly strong dependence on the market.

The subsequent expansion of the cultivated area, the improvement of productivity, and the increase in the incomes, made the market a necessary space for the commercialization of the surplus. Under these circumstances, the market was necessary for everyone: on the one hand, for the peasants, who, once their own needs were covered, could sell the surplus and obtain money to acquire goods, and pay debts; and on the other, for the feudal lords, who needed the market to trade the produce they received as income (SOLER 2007: 302).

As the County of Barcelona shows, the need for markets demanded the creation of a well-structured and solid exchange network (SOLER 2007: 283-290). The feudal system managed to control the still existing ancient trade flows (perceptible through the Carolingian *telonea* and archeological evidence) and promoted the appearance of new commercial meeting points. Although some of these markets had an ancient origin mostly were newly created. From that moment on, both old and new markets had a well-controlled space, a weekly day for celebration, a particular system of weights and measurements, and a strict definition of the beneficiaries of the taxes on their exchange activities (SOLER 2007: 255-303). Fairs appeared later, well into the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and due to their regional scope (often even international) they became the latest and most prestigious link of the feudal market network (SOLER 2007: 375).

Next, we will discuss the origin of the first documented markets in the medieval Penedès region and the initial articulation process of the feudal exchange network. Our goal is to know whether the creation of this network responded to parameters and interests similar to those observed in other territories of the County.

## 5. THE SURVIVAL OF AN ANCIENT MARKET? THE *FORUM GRANATE*

The oldest market documented in the medieval Penedès region is the market of La Granada, mentioned in a document from 1080 with its own cereal measurement “*sextarios III de formento ad mesuram de ipsa Granata.*”<sup>21</sup> This is the first written record preserved concerning the activities of this market at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, however, we believe that its origins could have been much more ancient.

The case of La Granada is very similar to that of the ancient markets located in the old county of Barcelona, such as Martorell, Sabadell, Granollers, Caldes de Montbui, and Sant Pere de Vilamajor (SOLER 2007: 169-174). Like these markets, La Granada did not have a transfer charter

<sup>20</sup> On early medieval dietary diversity and the progressive simplification of feudal times, see MONTANTARI 1979, and RIERA 1997.

<sup>21</sup> CSC, 699, 1080.

of its own, and in medieval records it is named both as *mercatum* —a customary name for the markets created since the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards—and as *forum*,<sup>22</sup> a term with a clear Latin origin.

The market of La Granada was held along the route of the ancient Via Augusta, with a direct connection to the aforementioned markets of the River Llobregat and the areas of the Vallès (Fig. 1). These were placed along the old Roman roads, and in their immediate space we can observe a continuity of settlements from the Late Roman age to the Early Medieval period (SOLER 2007: 171-172). All these traces allow us to interpret the Early Middle age *fora* of Martorell, Sabadell, Granollers, Caldes de Montbui, and Sant Pere de Vilamajor as exchange areas of an ancient origin, which ended up under the control of feudal powers after the comital conquest. It is for this reason that they do not appear in the written records until well advanced the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Nevertheless, in the case of the market of La Granada, unlike in the other examples, archaeological evidence does not allow us to establish a continuity of the usage of spaces from the Late Roman period to the medieval centuries beyond the survival of the Via Augusta (later known as “calciata Francischa” o “via Morischa”)<sup>23</sup> and the nearby Roman crossroads.<sup>24</sup> The historical evolution of the villa known as Teuleria dels Àlbers, next to the aforementioned road and very near the current town of La Granada, is still little known and does not provide chronological data beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>25</sup>

In this context, the use of the Latin word *forum* to refer to the market does not seem sufficient to determine its ancient origin. We should wait for future archaeological data in order to obtain further conclusive facts on the continuity of its location. In our view, the origins of the commercial exchanges at La Granada can be traced back to an ancient origin, albeit of uncertain chronology, and it became one of the most important markets in the Penedès region with the advent of the feudal period.

As we have previously mentioned, currently, archaeological evidence does not allow us to determine the origins of this market, although it provides relevant information concerning its location in the feudal era. Thanks to the discovery of an ancient stone porch during demolition

<sup>22</sup> Such as the cases of the “forum Martorelium” (CSC, 524, 1032); the “forum Sabatelli” (LAEC, III, 184, 1111); and the “fori Granulariorum” (RICHOU 1987: doc. 1, 1187), the market of La Granada is also mentioned in the records under the Latin formula *forum*: “forum Granate” (ACA, Gran Priorat de Sant Joan de Jerusalem, carp. 127, perg. 243, 1138).

<sup>23</sup> It is thus named in two documents concerning the territories of Santa Margarida i els Monjos (CSC, 130, 978) and Olèrdola (DCB, 234, 992), which evinces a continuous usage from Roman times up to the medieval period.

<sup>24</sup> Studies carried out by Miquel Vives on the road networks of the Penedès region demonstrate that the market of La Granada was not only a further stage of the ancient Via Augusta, but also the place where the secondary Roman roads coming from Barcelona through the Ordal and Garraf hills, or the mountain pass named “la Barraca” branched off. All these routes were subsequently included within the medieval road network (VIVES 2007: 352-354, Map 5.1, Map 6.2).

<sup>25</sup> The Roman villa known as Teuleria dels Àlbers is a very little known farming settlement. A preventive archaeological intervention conducted in 2007 showed the existence of several structures from the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries (ESQUÉ 2007). On the relation between the villa and the Via Augusta, see VIVES 2007, Map 5.1.

works we know that the market of La Granada was located at one of the ends of the medieval town, on the current “de Baix” [lower] street (Fig. 4) (CASANOVAS, ÀLVAREZ, MARTÍ 1992: 128). The location of the market in the urban plot can be followed also through written records via two donations: the first referring to a pen near the marketplace; and the second concerning some houses that faced the market on their south facade (CASANOVAS, ÀLVAREZ, MARTÍ 1992: 127). In 1090, as specified in a *capbreu*, market rights were equally distributed between the bishop and the castellan.<sup>26</sup>

The market of La Granada was the most important trade event in the Penedès region during the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It was located in the middle of the *territorio penetense* and had a central position in relation to the medieval road network (Fig. 1). New routes joined the valuable legacy of the Roman road network as a consequence of the new needs of a territory that was on its way to feudalization. The articulation into the same road system of old roads and new types of traffic reinforced the role of the market of La Granada within the communications network (VIVES 2007: Map 5.1, Map 6.2). It is due to this strategic location that it became the most important market of the Early Medieval Penedès.

Written documents provide us very few details concerning how these commercial events took place because they only mention these transactions indirectly, that is, in relation to the system of weights and measurements that regulated trade. The fact that these measurements were always related to the purchase and sale of grain—mostly wheat<sup>27</sup>—attests to the close relationship between this market (whose name, La Granada, literally means “grained”) and grain. As we have already mentioned it became the most abundant crop in the Penedès region during the feudal period.<sup>28</sup>

In order to establish the area of influence of this market, we have placed on a map the different mentions documenting the measurement system used at the market of La Granada (Fig. 2). Some of them appear within 15 km of the village (the theoretical distance of a two-way day trip), and although in most cases the distances are slightly further, they are never placed farther than 30 kilometres (a one-day one way trip). This fact evidences that the economic interest of the market of La Granada market went far beyond the village, and its influence area included a significant part of the feudal Penedès.

<sup>26</sup> LAEC, IV, 358, 1090.

<sup>27</sup> Besides the aforementioned measurements of wheat (CSC, 699, 1080), the records also include the payment of an annuity consisting in a *sester* of wheat by the Bishop of Barcelona to Berenguer of Avinyonet (LAEC, IV, 254, 1150); and the establishment of two *sesters* of clean wheat ready for grinding according to the “legitima mensura Granate” by the Monastery of Sant Cugat del Vallès (CSC, 1019, 1158). Translator’s note (TN hereinafter): A *sester* was a unit of capacity used for wheat that varied its value according to the region where the transaction took place.

<sup>28</sup> See note 19.



## 6. OPTING FOR A NEW LEADERSHIP: VILAFRANCA DEL PENEDÈS

During the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the county needed stable settlements in areas of special economic or territorial interest, which influenced the establishment of new urban entities known as *vilanoves* or *vilafranques*. These centres were created through tax exemptions in order to favour the influx of settlers and the creation of towns that usually were granted the privilege of holding a market (SOLER 2003: 82-84).

At the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the model of Olèrdola, a mountaintop village, was in decline, which made evident the need for a new settlement down on the plain, in an area that was better suited for the economic and territorial requirements of the feudal system. The favourable edaphic conditions, the abundant presence of water and, above all, its strategic position in the network of medieval communications, made the current area of Vilafranca del Penedès the right place for the foundation of a market village meant to exercise economic, administrative, and territorial control.

Opting for Vilafranca del Penedès had a clear objective. The Penedès was a strongly feudalized region, and the memory of the revolt of Mir Geribert<sup>29</sup> forced the king to consolidate his dominion by creating a powerful economic, political, and administrative centre. For this reason, in 1066, Count Ramon Berenguer I decided to buy the lands known as Torre Dela where he promoted the construction of a new town.<sup>30</sup> He possibly granted it tax exemptions (hence the name *Vilafranca*<sup>31</sup>) and one or more privileges to hold its own market. Unfortunately, these documents have not survived.

The first written records concerning the existence of a market in Vilafranca del Penedès are two documents from 1177 and 1179, respectively.<sup>32</sup> Thereafter, the news concerning the market of Vilafranca disappear until 1191, when the king ceded part of his rights over the fair (mentioned here for the first time) and the market.<sup>33</sup> This document has been interpreted on occasion as a Town Charter (GRASES 1931: 53), yet in our opinion it must instead be considered only as a donation charter granting rights over the market and the fair, which probably had been already established in previous times.

Little is known concerning how the market of Vilafranca worked during the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was possibly located within the original urban centre, somewhere near the now disappeared church of

<sup>29</sup> On the figure of Mir Geribert and the noble revolts against the Count of Barcelona, see PLANES 1970; BONNASSIE 1979: 2 and 85-104, SALRACH 1998a: 312-324.

<sup>30</sup> According to data provided by Carolina Batet in her monograph on the Castle of Olèrdola, in 1066, Count Ramon Berenguer I purchased lands from five different owners and the Torre de Dela for a significant sum. This premeditated purchase informs us of the count's desire to create a new and powerful space of control in this territory (BATET 2004: 65-67).

<sup>31</sup> TN: "Vila" means village, and "franca" means, among other things, free from taxes.

<sup>32</sup> LAEC, XI, 288, 1177, and ACA, Cancelleria, Pergamins, Alfons I, carpeta 47, doc. 292, 1179.

<sup>33</sup> ACA, Cancelleria, Pergamins, Alfons I, 586, year 1191.

Santa Maria, where the current Gothic Basilica was built. The existence of a market triggered the economic life of the area, for numerous workshops settled around the square, some of which have been traced through archaeological remains (ROSSELLÓ, MARSÉ 1986). These workshops included a shop that opened directly to the market through long counters where craftsmen displayed their respective goods.

As for the fair, we know that it was held annually in October, on Saint Luke's day (18 October) and lasted 15 days. It took place outside the walled area (Fig. 4) at the end of the current boulevard called "Rambla de Sant Francesc", in the space where the current "Plaça del Penedès" is located (MASSACHS 2008: 98). The large number of documents establishing the fair day as a deadline for the settlement of debts attests to the importance of the fair of Vilafranca throughout the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The economic importance of this commercial event attracted artisans and merchants from distant lands who, with their quality products, transformed the fair into a relevant economic space, not only at the regional level but also internationally (BATLLE 2004: 47-48).

As was to be expected, the economic and commercial strength of Vilafranca del Penedès took over the old market of La Granada, which, despite its ancient origins (with its own measurement system and an outstanding commercial dynamism) was surpassed by the success of the market of Vilafranca. Although the measurements of La Granada were again documented between 1192 and 1222,<sup>34</sup> our opinion is that these records repeated an already known value and does not reflect the economic strength of its commercial activity. Everything indicates that in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century the market of La Granada had already disappeared.

## 7. MARKETPLACES WITHOUT WRITTEN EVIDENCE

The commercial events that took place in La Granada and Vilafranca del Penedès were markets, because they are directly or indirectly mentioned as such in the documentation. They are mentioned in the sources because of their high economic interest, endowed with their own measurement system, and a strict control of the resulting income.

However, market needs lead us to consider the existence of other types of commercial transactions—of a more limited economic importance and scope—that have left no trace in the documents due to their spontaneity. In this chapter we will try to overcome the silence of the written records by analysing archaeological and territorial sources. An accurate observation of the medieval road network and its superimposition on the urban plots of the population centres created during the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the Penedès area should allow us to locate the existence of small marketplaces that were likely to be used as simple and probably intermittent exchange spaces.

<sup>34</sup> SMS, 168 and 240, respectively.

This could be the case, for example, of the squares located in villages created around crossroads, especially when the creation of a new town was related to the gradual decline of a former inhabited centre on the mountains. In our view, this was the case with Banyeres del Penedès. The gradual abandonment of its settlement in height created a new town on the plain, at the crossroads of the road from Bisbal to Arboç and the road connecting Banyeres with the village of Papiol. The urban confluence of these two roads generated a square—the current Plaça Major—that still preserves three old stone arches shaped as a porch, which could be an indication of the commercial vocation of this space (SOLER 2007: 276).

Similar examples can be seen in Sant Sadurní d'Anoia—which was born as a result of the decline of the castle settlement of Subirats and the gradual displacement of the population to the crossroads along the old Via Augusta—and Masquefa—where the abandonment of the ancient mountain settlement of Sant Pere prompted the creation of a new village along the royal road that ran across the plain. Other squares detected in newly created centres such as Font-Rubí, Avinyonet, Vendrell, and Vilobí del Penedès can be added to this group (SOLER 2007: 281, table 31).

Unfortunately, due to the lack of written references, we have to be cautious and consider the squares formed by the urban plots of these villages only as likely spots where smaller exchanges of agricultural products and the acquisition of salt could have taken place. Hopefully, archaeology will be able to provide us further conclusive data in the near future that will help us consider these squares as full-fledged members of the exchange network in medieval Penedès.

## 8. THE ARTICULATION OF A MARKET NETWORK IN THE FEUDAL PENEDÈS

According to the above, we can state that by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century the territory of the Penedès set up the foundations for what later would be its own market network (Fig. 3). As in other territories of the county, the feudal system took control over the old markets (probably, the market of La Granada) and created new trade spaces (Vilafranca el Penedès), which produced a double hierarchy of articulated markets.

At the first level there were weekly markets—held in villages endowed with a certain economic capacity—in which the residents of small villages located within a day's distance, and those who lived scattered around the territory under the influence of the main settlement converged. It was held one fixed day per week and had its own established system of weights and measurements. New market privileges were soon granted, adding to the weekly markets of La Granada and Vilafranca, such as the ones in Arboç (1202), Sant Quintí de Mediona (ca 1250), Vilanova de Cubelles (1274), and Pontons (1291-1300).<sup>35</sup> Together they strengthened the original market network and practically covered the entire territory.

<sup>35</sup> Data from SOLER 2007: 339, table 42.

At a second level, and of greater importance, there were the annual fairs, which, due to their regional character—even international, as in the case of Vilafranca del Penedès—became the most relevant economic events. Unlike weekly markets, which lasted only one day, fairs were held once a year and lasted one or two weeks. They were places where not only farmers or artisans converged, but also professional merchants from distant lands who brought along quality products. For a time, Vilafranca del Penedès was the only village in the region bestowed with a privilege to hold an annual fair. However, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, other fairs were also granted this privilege, such as l'Arboç (1211), and Vilanova de Cubelles (1281).<sup>36</sup>

With the incorporation of markets and fairs, the commercial network of the Penedès region was perfectly structured as a solid trading system that, far from remaining stationary, varied depending on the needs of each moment. Furthermore, the market villages of Penedès were very zealous of their privileged status, and, when convenient, they defended their interests as one. This can be observed for example in a document where the king decided to grant a privilege to hold a market in the town of Múnia,<sup>37</sup> which did not succeed due to the vigorous opposition of the towns of Arboç and Vilafranca.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this paper we aimed to analyse the origins and articulation of the market network of the medieval Penedès region, noticing the difficulty of not having enough explicit sources concerning exchange activities. For this reason, we proposed a systemic approach together with the survey of all the sources at our disposal.

Regarding the systemic approach, we have studied both agricultural production (evolution of crops and increase in surplus), and food consumption (restriction of the variety of products and dependence on the market), placing the *platea mercatalis* in the area of confluence between these factors. The analysis of all these parameters has allowed us to conclude that the market was a vital economic space in feudal Penedès.

The systematic survey of sources—written, archaeological, and territorial—and their cartographic representation through GIS, has approached us to the process of redefining the existing trade flows of the pre-feudal Penedès area, and the gradual organization of a new market network, which, under the leadership of Vilafranca del Penedès, brought about the decline of the old market of La Granada.

<sup>36</sup> Data from SOLER 2007: 271-272, table 43.

<sup>37</sup> The market privilege granted to Garsenda de Montcada and her son Gastó allowed them to hold a “mercatum in loco vestro qui dicitur Almunia [...] singulis diebus iovis”. ACA, Cancelleria, registres, 11, fol. 156, 1259.

The promotion of a *vilafranca* in the Penedès territory responded to a clear political purpose. The count wanted to secure his domains over the feudal lords of the region, and granting a fair and a market privilege in a strategic location such as Vilafranca, guaranteed his territorial and economic power. It was not until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the foundations of the network had already been properly settled and the leadership of Vilafranca had become indisputable, that the monarch granted new privileges to other market villages in the region, which in turn contributed to strengthen the commercial structure without questioning its hierarchy.

Considering all the stated facts allows us to conclude that the process of creating the market network of the feudal Penedès was no different from what happened in other territories of the County of Barcelona, where the creation, disappearance, or modification of weekly markets and annual fairs also responded to economic and territorial interests.





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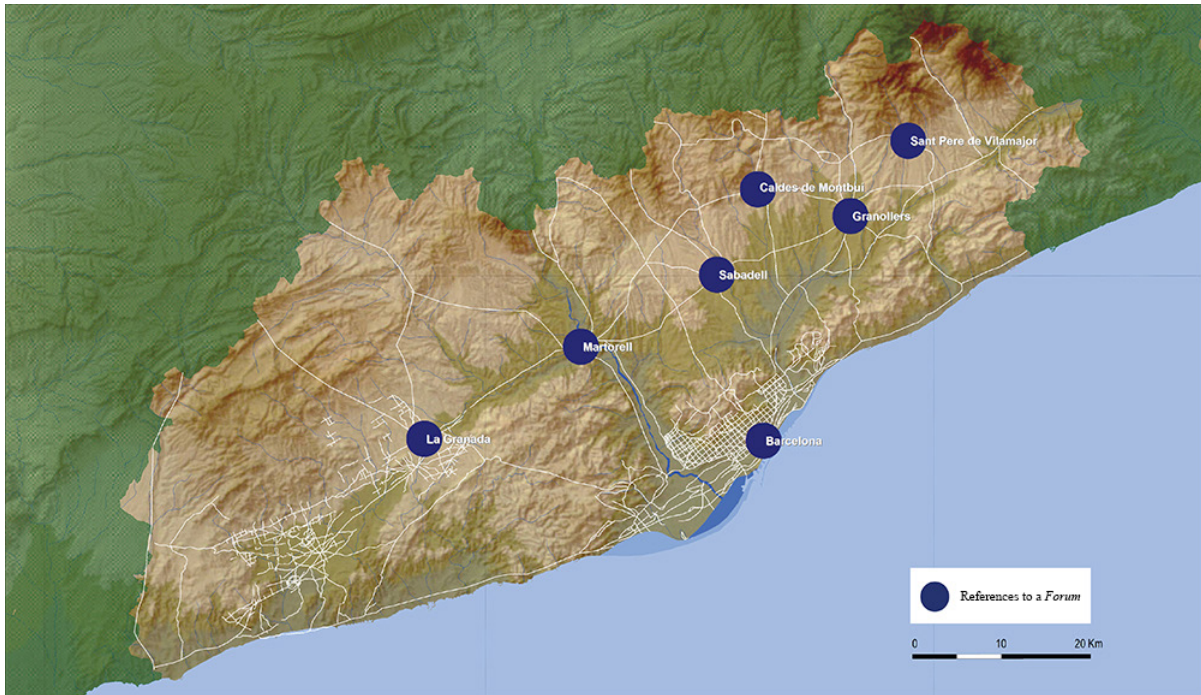


Fig. 1: The market of La Granada among other *forums* of ancient origin.

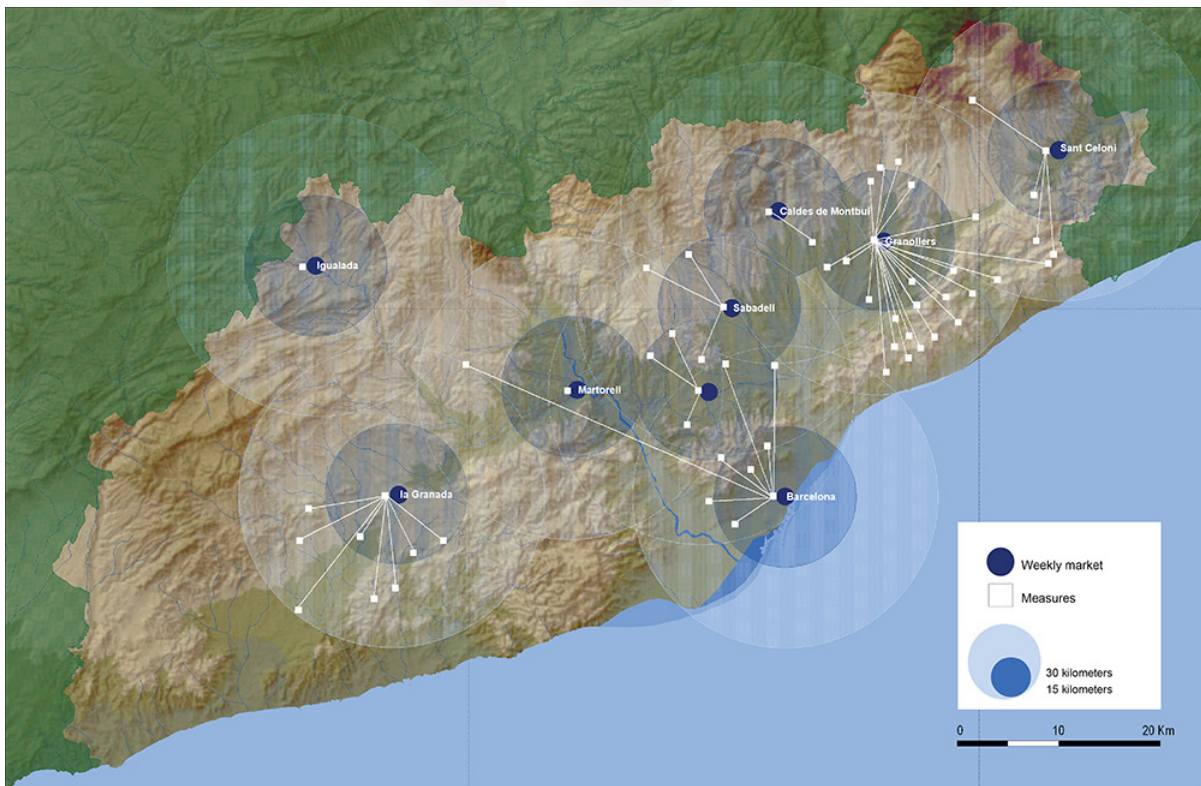


Fig. 2: Territorial influence of the market of La Granada based on the references to its weights and measures.



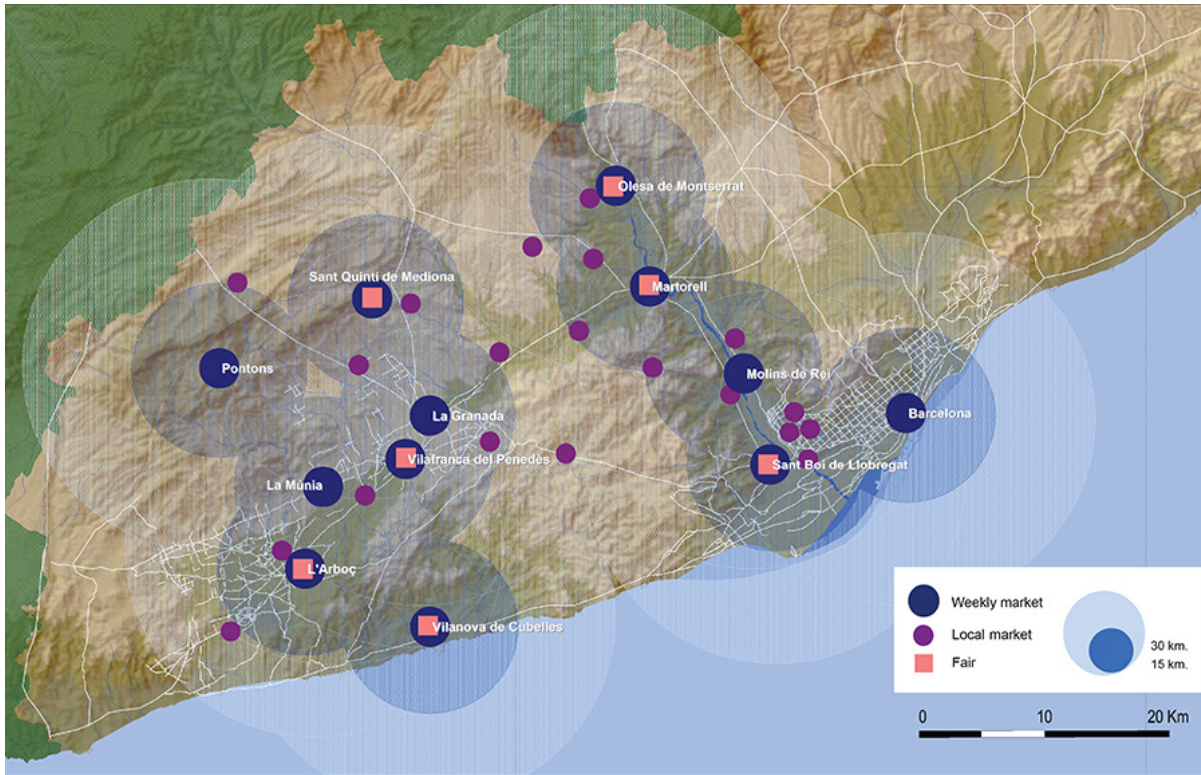


Fig. 3: The articulation of the medieval market network (11th-13th c.)



Fig. 4: Urban development of the market villages of La Granada and Vilafranca del Penedès.