

The article by Verdés has links to the study of Jordi Morelló, who draws on the tax of the *generalitats*, whose origin is found in the Cortes of Monzón (1362-1363). This levy taxed with customs duties the movement of goods and properties, as well as the manufacture and sale of cloths, being another mechanism to collect the *subsídios* and donations requested in the Cortes. In principle, all citizens were required to contribute to it, including ecclesiastics, but between 1371-1375 the clergy sought to escape the tax imposed on textile production, adducing that they already suffered other charges. For this reason, they were returned, a posteriori, the amounts they had paid for this tax. Specifically, the amount equivalent to what the clergy with benefices had contributed through the acquisition of cloths in each bishopric was deduced from the total amount of the triennial tenth granted by Pope Gregory XI to Pere the Ceremonious in 1371.

In sum, the various articles collected here offer different interpretations, from an institutional, social or purely fiscal perspective, where the clergy appears as an active part of the process of creation and consolidation of the different late medieval tax systems.

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SALRACH, Josep M., 2013. *Justícia i poder a Catalunya abans de l'any 1000*, Vic, Eumo Editorial, EPub 2: 224 p. ISBN: 978-84-9766-486-8/ Paper: 248 p. ISBN: 978-84-9766-475-2

Some historians have the enviable ability to weave into their works a historic account that perfectly combines high level scientific content with a stimulating and enjoyable discourse. This is the case of Josep Maria Salrach, one of the key figures of Catalan medievalism and the author of a recent work entitled, in an excessively modest fashion, “Justícia i poder a Catalunya abans de l'any mil”. As Jaume Sobrequés, the current president of the Catalan Society of Historical Studies, remarked in the presentation of this volume at the Museum of History of Catalonia, the title chosen by Salrach does not do justice—pun intended—to the dimension of this work and its contribution to the medieval history of our country. Beyond the legal issues and the management of power in Catalonia before the year 1000, Salrach’s work provides a rich and well-founded vision of Catalan society from early medieval times through legal sources.

Salrach’s work, included in the collection *Referències* published by Eumo and directed by Joaquim Albareda, has the virtue of concentrating, in a little over two hundred pages, the results of an investigation based on the corpus of legal documents prior to 1000, mostly published in several volumes of *Catalunya Carolíngia* and *Pergamins de l'Arxiu Comtal de Barcelona*, by the Institut d’Estudis Catalans and the Fundació Noguera, respectively. The exceptional amount of extant information, with regard to the size of the country, is a well-known fact that still surprises today both Catalan and foreign scholars. Abundance, on the other hand, that acquires its full value

through research projects such as this one. The great knowledge of these documents displayed by the author—who has himself co-edited some of their editions in recent decades—is evident from the first pages, which contributes to the strength of the work and the approach put forward by one of the world leading specialists in the early medieval Catalan world.

After an initial section on the functioning of justice in the Catalan counties in the 9th and 10th centuries, from the composition of the courts to the legal basis through the mechanics of litigation, the author structures his work in a series of chapters according to a thematic division. The structure itself shows the historiographic positioning of the author, implicit throughout the work, and heir to that “French style” historical materialism that has influenced Catalan historiography so much. Thus, Salrach emphasizes the conflict between “powerful and weak” and the struggles among the former “for the land and the surplus,” with special attention paid to the “anonymous protagonists of history”, which the author tries to remove from oblivion through necessarily biased documentation. Through case studies and inviting the reader to read the actual documents thanks to faithful Catalan translations of original texts, Salrach moves with subtlety and rigour between microhistory and general historical phenomena. Thus, the case of Llorenç Canavelles, accused of being a serf of the Treasury before the comital court in 874, serves the author to reflect on the concepts of *servus/servitium* and the reality of slavery and serfdom in the early medieval period, while the detailed analysis of the 913 trial against the peasants from Vilamacolum, along with other examples, allows him to outline the conflicts related to the public duties of peasant communities, their relationship with the comital and diocesan authority, and the structure of the Treasury in territories increasingly distant from the Carolingian power. At the same time, numerous case studies serve the author to raise crucial issues as the influence of the Visigothic tradition enshrined in the *Liber Iudiciorum*, the importance of the connections with the Carolingian world regarding legal culture and the role of the judge in society or the confidence in memory and in writing as sustainers of the law and auxiliaries of justice.

The systematic interpretative caution of his proposals, coupled with the rigour in the presentation of the evidence on which each case is based, go along with a factor both necessary and valuable for any high level historical work: the use of intuition. A necessary resource, we say, given the fragmented nature of the documentation; and a precious resource, because it is inextricably linked with a deep understanding of the sources and the historical context of the period.

Thus, although it might seem a priori a catalogue or repertoire of case studies, it actually becomes a masterful study of Catalan society in the 9th and 10th centuries derived from its relationship with justice. In other words, it is not simply—despite its title— a history of justice before the year 1000, but a brilliant approach to the Catalonia of the 9th and 10th centuries through the extant legal documents. In short, an essential book in order to understand early medieval Catalan reality with the aid of one of its leading specialists.

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