International Colloquium

***Cantar quer’eu dos d’Aragon e dos da Cadalonha***

**The Crown of Aragon at the crossroads of cultures**

Girona, 14-16 June 2023

Due to their particular geographical position between the Gallo-Romance and Iberian-Romance areas, the territories of the Crown of Aragon played a fundamental role as a political and cultural crossroads during the Middle Ages. Since the reign of Alfonso the Chaste (1157-1196), the first king of Aragon from the Barcelona dynasty and a troubadour in the Occitan language, the cultural dimension – troubadour lyrics in the first place, but not only – was put at the service of a political project aimed not only at consolidating the dynastic roots and political prestige of the Catalan-Aragonese monarchy, but also at reinforcing the relations of power over Occitan territories.

For almost two centuries (2nd half of the 12th C- 1st half of the 14th C), the Crown of Aragon was involved in some of the most important political events in Western Europe, sometimes alongside and others in conflict with the rulers of France, England, and the other peninsular kingdoms (Navarre, Castile, and Portugal), while its relationship with the Papal Curia was complex, and at times conflicted. Its role in contemporary politics can be gauged in the fight against peninsular Muslim kingdoms and its intertwining of complex interactions between Christian and Muslim as well as among Christians (see as an example the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212), the Albigensian Crusade and the defeat at Muret in 1213 (leading to the death Peter the Catholic), the Treaty of Corbeil (1258), the Mediterranean expansion under the impulse of Jaume I and the subsequent punitive crusade that Pope Martin IV called against Peter the Great of Aragon in 1285, as well as King Peter’s previous interference in the lawsuit for succession in the Kingdom of Castile and Leon.

The poetic production of troubadours in Occitan, sometimes supportive and sometimes openly adversarial to Catalan-Aragonese policy, has turned all these events into a dense network of allusions, not always unambiguous and easy to grasp, which testifies to the vivacity of this cultural heritage in the Crown of Aragon. It is undeniable that the long reign of James I (1208-1276, reigning from 1213) did not represent a particularly fertile moment for troubadour lyricism in Catalan lands – although King James is allegorically alluded in *Jaufré* by means of its eponymous hero, and early on in his reign the Occitan nobility oppressed by the victorious French crusaders saw the young king as a liberator. However, it is also undisputable that the Crown of Aragon played a role far from secondary in the historical development of Occitan lyrics. In this sense, the troubadour Cerverí de Girona, at the service of Peter the Great (1240-1285), is emblematic, and in its lyrical experience «non sarà fuori luogo scorgere le origini, più ancora che le dirette premesse, della nuova scuola nazionale catalana» (Asperti 1999: 23).

The Catalan-Occitan lyrical relations are nowadays a widely studied sector, both in philological-literary terms and in its historical implications. On the other hand, the contacts between Occitan and Galician-Portuguese lyrics in the Crown of Aragon are still under-researched. With the exception of Vicenç Beltran’s contributions (now collected in Beltran 2005), critical attention has been mainly focused, certainly for good reasons, on the courts of Alfonso X and Fernando III in Castile-León, and of Dom Dinis (Denis I) in Portugal. A fairly complete picture of the Occitan and Galician-Portuguese poetic relationships in Castilian lands has emerged, sometimes investigated from the angle of intertextuality, others from a technical-formal study of metrical-melodic imitation in an Iberian context. However, these relationships have almost always been approached from an Occitan-centric point of view, as a one-way phenomenon: whenever imitation occurred, the imitator is deemed to be the Iberian troubadour. We might recall, for instance, Billy/Canettieri/Pulsoni/Rossell 2003, which draws attention, however, to the Aragonese territories as a meeting and exchange point for troubadours belonging to both traditions.

The problem opens up wider questions about the circulation of poets, manuscripts and, in a much broader sense, ideas. Indeed, it cannot be overlooked that the earliest and strongest links of the Crown of Aragon with the other Iberian monarchies rests on a shrewd matrimonial policy. Alfonso X of Castile (1221-1284) was both the son-in-law of James I of Aragon, whose daughter Violant he had married in 1249, and the father-in-law of D. Alfonso III of Portugal, who in 1253 had married D.na Beatrice, the Castilian king’s illegitimate daughter. Similarly, D. Dinis, Alfonso X’s nephew, was both the son-in-law of Peter III of Aragon, after marrying his daughter Isabel in 1282, and the father-in-law Fernando IV of Castile, who in 1302 had married the *infanta* Constance of Portugal, daughter of the Portuguese king. It does not seem impossible, therefore, that traces of reciprocal troubadour influences, even if fleeting, remained in the links of these close relations.

We invite researchers from different disciplines to contribute to a multi- or interdisciplinary exchange of ideas in order to reassess the Crown of Aragon as a crossroads of cultures between the second half of the 12th and the first half of the 14th C. Although the sphere of lyrical exchanges remains one of the privileged sectors of interest, we wish to highlight other important research lines.

-- Cultural relations

-- Political relations

-- Commercial relations and mobility

-- The role of the nobility, and female nobility

-- The role of religion and religious otherness

This list does not intend to be exhaustive, and we welcome for this common reflection all contributions, from any disciplinary and/or methodological point of view, which will place at the heart of their research the cultural exchanges between the Crown of Aragon and the Iberian kingdoms (Navarre, Castile, Portugal) or between the Crown of Aragon and the Gallo-Romance world (Occitania and France).

Languages: Proposals (and papers) are accepted in all Romance languages and in English.

Proposals for papers (*ca*. 250/300 words, *ca*. 20 min.) should be sent through the website XXX before May 7, 2023. The organizing committee will communicate its response as soon as possible.

The symposium will preferably have traditional in-person sessions in Girona. Nevertheless, it is possible to give a conference, or to attend it online (virtual sessions).

Registration fees: 80 euros / communicant; 50 euros / student communicant without grant or young researcher without contract; 10 euros / attendance with certificate of presence

Conference proceedings will be published.

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