

Rozalia Sasor*

Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1461-8453>

The historical background of Catalan separatism: The case of Occitania

Introduction

Provençal troubadours are widely known, however not everyone realizes that the type of lyric that made them famous was popular not only in the relatively small region of Provence and treating it as a part of history of French literature is a methodological simplification. The poetry of troubadours, with its characteristic metric forms and themes – the most famous being naturally the concept of *fin'amor*, courtly love – belongs to the original, native works of the whole *langue d'Oc* area, meaning not only Occitania, but also the Crown of Aragon. The political domination of the counts of Barcelona, and later the kings of Catalan-Aragonese Crown in the region beyond the Pyrenees not only facilitated the intermingling of cultures in this area. It also led to the creation of one, common, Occitan-Catalan cultural environment, where the poets of Languedoc, Provence and Catalonia travelled between the noble courts and composed songs in the same style and language. Due to this it makes more historical sense to include their poetry not in the history of French literature, but Catalan literature that in the 14th century still used Occitan language, alien to the works of *langue d'oïl*. The same fact makes understandable the claims of Catalan people regarding the separateness of their own culture from the culture of Castille, at least with regard to the Middle Ages.

The goal of this article is to show the political and cultural dependencies between the County of Barcelona (and the Crown of Aragon in the later times) and the Occitan centers of power between 993 and 1213¹. The south of modern France during the times described in this article consisted of a number of loosely connected duchies, counties and baronies, only formally subjected to the royal or imperial rule. Hence, due to intensive feudal fragmentation, Occitania quickly became a political battleground, dominated by the conflict of two dynasties: counts of Barcelona and Toulouse. Understanding this conflict and the knowledge of successes of the expansionist Barcelonan politics

* Correspondence address: Institute of Romance Philology, Jagiellonian University, Gołębia 24, 31-007 Kraków, e-mail: rozalia.kosmider-sasor@uj.edu.pl.

¹ This article does not cover the Albigensian Crusade, besides the events related directly to the Catalan rule in the region. Readers interested in the history of religious conflicts in Languedoc should refer to the extensive literature available.

allows us to explain the existence of the aforementioned cultural environment, as well as its viability even after the end of the Albigensian Crusade. The proximity of Catalan and Occitan language, customs and aesthetic preferences had a significant influence over the Catalan ethnic identity (being formed in the 12th century), while the common past remains still an important element of Catalan historical memory.

Ramon Berenguer I (1035-1076)²

Regardless of the relations between the Hispanic Marches, including the County of Barcelona, and the Carolingian West Francia, the expansion of future Catalonia beyond the Pyrenees began only in mid-10th century. It was then that the houses ruling Barcelona, Besalú, Urgell and Pallars, initiated political activities in order to create diplomatic alliances through marriages with Occitan aristocracy³. The first interesting direction is Auvergne, followed by Languedoc and Provence — the main areas of the over ninety-year long war of domination⁴. The intensity, as well as the continuity, of the marital relations between both sides of the Pyrenees is not an accident after all, since both Catalan and Occitan counties came into being as a result of the breakup of Charlemagne's empire and were a part of a single political – and especially in the troubadour era, also cultural – sphere. The subordination of dioceses in the County of Barcelona and allied counties to the archbishop of Narbonne, being also the hierarch of Languedoc dioceses, clearly shows not only a formal relation with West Francia, but also an early establishment of cultural community between the regions. A community strengthened by the similarity of the language, allowing a circulation of texts belonging to both oral and later written literature. Additionally, the memory of the legacy of Frankish rulers in the regions belonging to the counts of Barcelona was present even in the 11th century, which can be seen for example in dating of the documents, based on the years of reign of Carolingian and later Capetian rulers⁵.

The first, impactful display of the aforementioned marriage policy was a marital contract between the count of Barcelona, Girona and Osona, Ramon Borrell (992/3-1017) and Ermesinde of Carcassonne, the daughter of Roger I the Old, count of Carcassonne,

² If not otherwise noted, parenthesis contain the reign dates.

³ A detailed description of activities of the counts of Barcelona and the kings of the Crown of Aragon in Occitan lands can be found in a relatively new collective work (Ferrer i Mallol, Riu, Benito, 2009). This publication contains an extensive literature of the topic and constitutes a basis for a summary of events described in Catalan historiography as the Great Occitan War, while in French – *la grande guerre méridionale*, contained in this article. A short description of the war can also be found in (Benito, 2017: 92-124). The historical background of the Catalan-Occitan relations was described by (Balcells, 2009; Fontana, 2014).

⁴ Regarding the marriage policy of Catalan countries see (Salrach, 1978; Ferrer i Mallol, Riu, Benito, 2009; 2018; Aurell i Cardona, 1998); Canal Sánchez-Pagín, 1989: 119-136).

⁵ Stefano Cingolani, based on Michel Zimmermann, points out that even though the documents use dating based on years of reign of Frankish rulers, one can also prove an existence of a communal identity centered on the counts of Barcelona, as well as territorial separation between the county and West Francia (Cingolani, 2015: 85; Zimmermann, 1989: 45-53).

signed in 993. Strengthening of the relations between two count houses led to nominations, for example the brother of Ermesinde, Peter Roger, became the bishop of Girona, as well as further marriages. In 1052, the grandson of Ramon Borrell and Ermesinde, Ramon Berenguer I married Almodis de la Marche, a relative of descendants of Roger I of Carcassonne⁶, which in turn led to the sale of rights to counties of Carcassonne (Cat. *Carcassona*) and Razès (Cat. *Rasés*) to the count of Barcelona. This transaction was caused by a long-term conflict of three branches of the house ruling the demesne after the death of Roger I (1012), especially the Trencavels (counties of Carcassonne and Razès, vice-counties of Béziers and Agde) and counts of Foix. The fragmentation of the rights to the demesne led the heir of the Trencavels, Ermengard, to seek feudal guardianship, as well as diplomatic and military support of a powerful liege – Ramon Berenguer I. The sale was made on the basis of 13 treaties, however due to various methods of document dating⁷, as well as three stages of this transaction, it is difficult to define the exact date of the sale, hence historiography usually gives a four-year period, between 1067 and 1071. One should also note that the sale of rights and the feudal pact were not just meant to secure the liege's protection of the new acquisition, but also became a basis of a political alliance against the competing dynasties of counts of Foix and Toulouse⁸.

The case of the feudal fragmentation of the county of Carcassonne mirrors the political and administrative situation of all Occitania in the 11th and 12th century, fraught with conflicts of domination, where alliances were made as eagerly as broken. Ramon Berenguer I only used a favourable situation in order to invest into territorial expansion a tribute paid by the Muslim ruler of Zaragoza, emir Ahmad al-Muqtadir. Although his primary goal was securing the title and lands of his son, Ramon Berenguer II, however his decision laid foundations to the Occitan expansion of the County of Barcelona, since the family and feudal alliances caused the influence of the counts of Barcelona to extend beyond the counties of Carcassonne and Razès up to Narbonne, the county of Melgueilh (Fr. *Mauguio*, Cat. *Melguer*) and Marseille – significant to the later conflict with the counts of Toulouse.

In October 1071, after confirming the purchase of rights to Carcassonne and Razès, Peter Raymundi (Cat. *Pere Ramon*), the son of Ramon Berenguer I and Isabela Trencavel, afraid for his position as the heir, murdered Almodis. As a punishment he was dis-

⁶ Ermesinde caused the newlyweds to be excommunicated by the Pope, because their marriage constituted bigamy: both Ramon Berenguer I and Almodis had previous spouses (Isabela Trencavel and Pons of Toulouse) who were still alive and not officially divorced. What's interesting, both wives of the count of Barcelona were members of the same house – Isabela was a daughter of Almodis' sister.

⁷ As mentioned above, timekeeping in Barcelona was based on the years of reign of Frankish rulers, while in Languedoc (naturally used in the County of Carcassonne) – based on calculation of the so-called annunciation style, however in the case of aforementioned documents it's impossible to say if the authors used the Pisan or the Florentine variation of this style. Additionally, one can encounter the Spanish era calculations, carried back 38 years in relation to modern timekeeping (see Wąsowicz, 2016: 239-240).

⁸ Regarding the complicated family and political relations between the descendants of Roger I of Carcassonne see (Cheyette, 1988: 826-864).

inherited, with inheritance passing first to the son of the count and Almodis, Ramon Berenguer II the Towhead (1076-1082; Cat. *Cap d'Estopes*), followed by his twin brother Berenguer Ramon II the Fratricide (1082-1097; Cat. *Fratricida*)⁹. The tragic death of Almodis, who at the same time was the mother of count William IV of Toulouse, strained the relations between the houses of Barcelona and Toulouse. Although William IV paid a vassal tribute to Ramon Berenguer II as the count of Carcassonne, in 1080 he usurped his title, which in turn led to the siege of Carcassonne by local nobility and knights. Bernard Ato IV, son of Ermengard¹⁰, managed to take control of the situation, however his actions only partially supported the policies of the counts of Barcelona. Bernard Ato IV came into agreement with the nobility and stopped the siege of the city, but at the same time he proclaimed himself a lord of Carcassonne and Razès till the age of majority and knighting of Ramon Berenguer III. This made Bernard the real ruler of both counties. In order to defend his title, he made an alliance with the rival of Ramon Berenguer II, count William IV of Toulouse, the same one that lost Carcassonne to him a while earlier.

Ramon Berenguer III (1097-1131)

The next important step of the Catalan trans-Pyrenean expansion was the wedding of Ramon Berenguer III and Douce I, Countess of Provence (Cat. *Dolça de Provença*) in 1112, that gave the counts of Barcelona Provence as a dowry. Similar to Carcassonne and Razès, also this region was treated as a kind of a material security for children, as after the death of Ramon Berenguer III the rule of Provence was granted to his younger son, Berenguer Ramon I, Count of Provence. The year 1112 is significant also for another reason, as it saw the beginning of the first armed conflict for the lands of Languedoc, so-called First Occitan War. The opponents were the count of Barcelona and Bernard Ato IV, the former allied to the county of Narbonne, the latter – to the king of Aragon, Alfons I the Battler, as well as counts of Foix and Toulouse. Besides the military operations, other actions were undertaken that can be called diplomatic: the inhabitants of Carcassonne, encouraged by Ramon Berenguer III, began a revolt and made a solemn oath to defend the city against other rulers. It is worth noting that among the 485 signatories of the oath one can find four persons with names indicating a Catalan heritage: two Arnal Catalan, one Raimond Catalan and one Geral de Cataluing, which proves the constant presence of Catalans in the city. It is also the oldest source containing the Catalan ethnonym, older even than *Liber maiolichinus de gestis Pisanorum illustribus* – a Pisan chronicle of the expedition to Majorca (described below), written be-

⁹ In 1082, Ramon Berenguer II died in a hunting accident. The death was blamed on Berenguer Ramon II, who was forced to pass the rights and titles of the county to his nephew, Ramon Berenguer III, after he came into age. Berenguer Ramon II died during the First Crusade, in Jerusalem, that he possibly joined as a penance.

¹⁰ The same Ermengard listed as a party in the documents regarding the sale of rights to Carcassonne and Razès.

tween 1117 and 1125 and until recently seen as the first document proving the existence of the ethnonym.

The first clash for domination in Languedoc ended with signing of two treaties, both still in 1112, between Ramon Berenguer III and Bernard Ato IV, who paid a vassal tribute to the count of Barcelona yet got to keep his lands. The armistice – since that is how one should treat such agreements, since they did not guarantee a lasting peace – also ensured a truce between Barcelona and Toulouse, required due to a planned expedition against the pirates of Majorca. This quest, recognized by Paschal II as a crusade¹¹, encompassed the troops of Pisa, as well as armies of Catalonia, Languedoc and Provence, united under Ramon Berenguer III. Ibiza and Palma de Majorca were looted and Christian captives were freed. The success of the expedition made the count of Barcelona the strongest ruler in the Western Mediterranean. Additionally, in 1118 two other trans-Pyrenean regions were added to the country of Barcelona – Conflent and Cerdanya, nowadays belonging to so-called Northern Catalonia (or French Catalonia), and inherited by Ramon Berenguer III after the death of the last heir of the local count dynasty. As this brief summary shows, in less than 50 years from the purchase of Carcassonne the Catalan influence in Occitania grew significantly, also leading to the increase of tensions in the region.

Already in the beginning of the second decade of the 12th century, directly after the Majorcan expedition, military operations in Occitania were initiated again – this time not only in Languedoc, but also in Provence. In 1120, the citizens of Carcassonne rebelled against Bernard Ato IV. The rebellion was defeated only in 1124 by his son, who took his vengeance on the inhabitants by gouging their eyes and cutting off their noses, among others. The mutilated Carcassonnians found refuge in the court of the count of Barcelona, their liege, yet the city itself remained in the hands of the Trencavels. Roughly at the same time, in 1121, Alfons Jordan, the count of Toulouse, tried to take Provence, leading to a diplomatic conflict and in 1123 to regular war. In this conflict, Pisan troops thought for Ramon Berenguer III and Genoa was allied to Toulouse. After the count of Barcelona conquered Avignon (1125), the main Provencal holding of Alfons Jordan, the conflicted parties decided to sign a peace treaty, leading to the division of Provence into the coastal part, belonging to the County of Barcelona, and the continental Toulousan part, with the border along the river Durance (Cat. *Durença*). Additionally, Alfons Jordan swore fealty to Ramon Berenguer III, which led to a six-year truce in the First Occitan War.

To sum up this stage of the Catalan expansion beyond the Pyrenees, one can note that from Barcelonan perspective the Occitan domains were treated mostly as materi-

¹¹ Recognition of an armed expedition as a crusade by the Pope meant granting particular rights to its members, including the guarantee of territorial integrity during the expedition. In case of the mentioned invasion of Majorca, there is however no full certainty regarding the number of types of Papal privileges granted, hence not all historians treat the expedition as a full crusade.

al security for younger sons of the counts: Carcassonne and Razès for Ramon Berenguer II, Provence – for Berenguer Ramon, also spelled the I of Provence (1131-1144). The division of lordship over the new territories between the branches of the dynasty initiated in the 12th century is visible especially in the next century, when James I The Conqueror (1213-1276) ceded Majorca to his younger son James II, and Peter II (III) the Great (1276-1285)¹² gave Sicily to James II the Just, who after receiving the title of the king of the Crown of Aragon ceded the island to his younger brother, Frederick II (III). The politics of fragmentation of rule let the house of Barcelona to maintain influence over even such distant territories as the Duchy of Athens¹³ without causing conflict with other European rulers or the Papacy. At the same time, such division into a number of more or less independent centers can be perceived as weakness or – in extreme cases – lack of Catalan political traditions. This argument had been often raised during the debate related to 2017 referendum, when the opponents of Catalan independence accused the independents of relating to a non-existent ‘Catalan state’, without taking into account the political realities of the past.

At the same time, regardless of the intensity of military operations, the Catalan-Occitan area saw the beginning of the formation of a remarkably durable, present still in the 14th century, network of cultural centers encompassing magnate courts and monasteries, that supported the exchange of literary trends and fashions between the regions. Indeed, thanks to the family and political relations the Catalan, authors embraced the poetic of Occitan troubadours, however not as imitators, but a fully-fledged members of the literary movement. The aforementioned similarity between the Catalan and Occitan language definitely eased the commonality of cultural codes, in poetry expressed in a familiar, homey language, yet treated as a convention belonging to defined norms (see Marshall, 1972: 6). Hence, if not for the expansionist politics of the counts of Barcelona in Occitania, the beginnings of the Catalan literature could have been completely different.

Ramon Berenguer IV (1131-1162)

Returning to the events in Occitania, the death of Bernard Ato IV (1130) and Ramon Berenguer III (1131), i.e. the main opponents in the conflict, did not prolong the truce of 1125. In 1135, the conflict between Barcelona and Toulouse ignited again, with new participants and alliances. Alfons Jordan incited the city commune of Montpellier to

¹² The double numeration of the kings of the Crown of Aragon from the house of Barcelona stems from two systems used in historiography. Catalan scholars, as well as scholars analyzing the past from the perspective of the County of Barcelona, name the rulers starting from the first king of the dynasty. Spanish historians, followed by English, French and Polish ones, do not make that distinction. Hence, I decided to use both schools: first number in line with the Catalan tradition, with the Spanish one in parenthesis.

¹³ Taken over by the Catalan Company in 1311, vassal to Frederick II (III), the king of Sicily from the house of Barcelona.

a revolt (1141) against count William VI, Toulouse was attacked by Louis VII of France (1141), while Roger de Béziers, finally recognizing his vassal obligations to Barcelona, created an anti-Toulouse coalition of Catalan, Pisan and Genoese forces, supported by Pope Innocent II. Almost simultaneously, in 1142, Provence sees a rebellion of the Baux (cat. *Baus*) house, allied to Toulouse and Genoa, against the rule of Ramon Berenguer I of Provence. By supporting the mutiny, Alfons Jordan definitely counted on implementation of his own plans, lost due to the peace treaty after the First Occitan War, however he had to abandon them again. When the leader of the revolt, Roger de Baux, received from Conrad III of the Hohenstaufen the confirmation of his rights to Provence (The Golden Bull of 1145), Alfons Jordan quickly changed sides and joined Ramon Berenguer IV in order to retake Provençal lands from the wayward nobility (1146). The pacification of de Bauxs had only a short-term effect, as the new count of Toulouse, Raymond V, began in 1152 aggressive operations against the count of Barcelona and his vassal, by supporting another de Baux rebellion and allying Genoa. Although thanks to the support of the Trencavels, Ermengarde of Narbonne and William VI of Montpellier the count of Barcelona put down also this rebellion, also gaining Narbonne, yet the period until 1162 is marked by constant conflicts between his Occitan vassals and changing alliances, where durability – or lack thereof – was dependent on current priorities. Still, the County of Barcelona (already joined with Aragon by the dynastic union described below) not only kept its lands across the Pyrenees, but also gained the aforementioned Narbonne and Bearn (1154).

The strengthening of the influence of counts of Barcelona in Occitania, as well as their international position in the 12th century, might not had been that easy if not for the marriage of Ramon Berenguer IV with Petronilla of Aragon in 1137. This led to Aragon and the County of Barcelona being joined in a union and creation of a new polity, the Crown of Aragon, ruled by so-called count-kings of the house of Barcelona until the death of childless Martin the Humane in 1410. Although Ramon Berenguer IV did not bear the title of the king of the Crown of Aragon¹⁴, the scope of his competences did not really differ from royal ones, as Ramiro II the Monk, the father of Petronilla, abdicated, leaving the full powers to his son-in-law. Additionally, Petronilla was a cousin of Eleanor of Aquitaine, which in connection to the Plantagenet interests in Occitania (after the marriage of Eleanor and Henry II of England in 1152) tightened not only the economic and political relations of the Crown of Aragon and Aquitaine, but also cultural ones. Around 1137-1138 Marcabru, one of the earliest known troubadours active in the court of the Duke of Aquitaine, William X the Saint, in *Empeiraire, per mi mezeis* encouraged Ramon Berenguer IV to take part in the *reconquista* (Harvey, 1999:

¹⁴ The first count of Barcelona also titled the king of the Crown of Aragon was the son of Ramon Berenguer IV, Alfons I (II), also called the Chaste or the Troubadour (1164-1196). Alfons the Troubadour originally bore the dynastic name of the counts of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer, and assumed the new name, in line with the Aragonian rulers tradition, after ascending the throne.

55-60)¹⁵, and ten years later in *Pax in nomine Domini* praised him for the conquest of infidel Lleida and Tortosa (Gaunt et al., 2000: 440-441). Although the works of Marca-bru do not point to a direct relations between the troubadour and the count, they still prove an interest in the actions of the ruler of the Crown of Aragon. On the other hand, the work of Peire d'Alverhna, *Bel mès, qui a son bo sen*, proves a significantly closer relation, as in it the troubadour refuses Ramon Berenguer the place among *courtois* due to his lack of generosity (Del Monte, 1955: 144).

Alfons I (II) the Troubadour (1164-1196)

After the death of Ramon Berenguer IV (1162) and Ramon Berenguer I of Provence (1166), as well as the recognition of the rule of the house of Barcelona over Provence by the emperor Barbarossa, Occitania saw a period of tumultuous fighting. Hence the Second Occitan War that took place in 1166-1196 not only encompassed new areas, such as Limousin and aforementioned Aquitaine, but also engaged the most important figures of European politics of the era: Henry II, Richard Cœur de Lion and Frederick Barbarossa (on the side of the Crown of Aragon), as well as Louis VII and Philip Augustus (supporting the counts of Toulouse). Additionally, Barcelona fought with Toulouse over Provence and Languedoc vassals-initiated rebellions, allying themselves sometimes with the king of the Crown of Aragon Alfons I (II) the Troubadour, sometimes with Raymond V of Toulouse. In 1171, Italian mercenaries joined the fight for domination once again – Genoan troops hired by the count of Toulouse attacked Montpellier, while the Crown of Aragon gained Roussillon (Cat. *Rosselló*). The beginning of 1170s saw the culmination of the chaos in the region, while the scale of war damage, as well as the plague and famine decimating the inhabitants, caused the Church, as well as Knights Templar and the Order of St. John, to join the peace efforts. In 1173, a peace treaty was signed between Raymond V and Alfons I (II), additionally the count of Toulouse swore fealty to Henry II Plantagenet. It is assumed that both decisions of Raymond V were caused not by the will to end the conflict in Occitania, but by the threat of excommunication from the Church. Similarly, Alfons I (II) in fact only pretended to act for peace. Although he announced the enforcement in his territories of the Peace and Truce of God (Cat. *Pau i Treva de Déu*), rules that threatened excommunication of individuals causing material losses and violence, as well as their direct lieges, yet simultaneously he mobilized his troops in order to attack the count of Toulouse and his allies. Only in 1176, the conflicted rulers made peace by confirming the treaty of land division made in 1125.

The military expansion of Alfons I (II) the Troubadour was complemented by cultural policies, with their goal being, among others, legitimization of rule over Provence disputed with counts of Toulouse. The king, who personally composed songs in Occi-

¹⁵ All quoted troubadour songs are also available at Corpus des Troubadours (2020).

tan¹⁶, also gave patronage to poets from both sides of the Pyrenees, as well as led to full assimilation of the troubadour poetry and related system of courtly virtues by the royal court. One should remember though that the troubadour convention of poetry, besides the virtues *fin'amor*, also encompassed political criticism. Among 19 poets mentioning Alfons I (II), such as Arnaut Daniel, Arnaut de Marueilh, Folquet de Marselha and Peire Vidal, one can find some opponents: Bertran de Born who wrongly accused the monarch of breaking the promise of marriage to Greek princess Eudokia Komnene¹⁷ and his friend, Guillem de Berguedà, a Catalan troubadour constantly rebelling against Alfons I (II).

Still, storm clouds were gathering over Occitania. After a failed attempt to conquer Narbonne, in September 1177, Raymond V sent to the king of France Louis VII a request for intervention in the lands of Roger II Trencavel, accusing him of favouring the Albigensian heresy. This diplomatic move brought the count numerous benefits in the short term. First, already in the next year Louis VII sent a delegation of bishops to Toulouse. They proclaimed Roger II a traitor and heretic, as well as excommunicated him for the lack of active measures against the spreading Catharism. Second, the Third Council of the Lateran of 1179 excommunicated the Albigenses of Languedoc, encouraging Christian knights to undertake a crusade against them. Raymond V quickly brought the Council resolutions to life, but in his own way, organizing a campaign with the goal of conquering Béziers and Nîmes. Due to this, the vice-counts of this cities and Roger II Trencavel himself had no choice but to ask help from Alfons I (II) the Troubadour, who accepted their vassalage hoping to regain Carcassonne and Razès. Still, in the long term, the initiative of Raymond V led to proclamation of the Albigensian Crusade and significantly contributed not only to incorporation of the Occitan counties into France, but also to the downfall of the refined culture of troubadours, continued later in the Catalan lands.

Similarly to the First Occitan War, the second war was also conducted in phases that lasted for few years, interrupted by the periods of relative peace. One can distinguish three such phases after the Third Council of the Lateran: 1181-1183, 1185-1188 and 1193-1194. During the first one, Raymond V raided Nîmes and Narbonne, combatting Ramon Berenguer III of Provence. After the murder of Ramon Berenguer III of Provence, the land passed to another brother from the house of Barcelona, Sanç of Provence, who however joined the anti-Catalan coalition and allied himself with Toulouse, Genoa, Forcalquer and Montpellier¹⁸ against Alfons I (II). Only the Church intervention, i.e. proclaiming the Peace of God in all Languedoc, led to a cessation of fighting. Still, the peace treaty of February 1184 was based on shaky foundations and did not last

¹⁶ Two songs remain to our times: a love canso *Per manhtas guizas mès datz* and *tenso Be me plairia, senhèn reis*, which is a debate with troubadour Giraut de Bornelh over the question whether a king can behave in line with the rules of *fin'amor* (Cluzel, 1957-1958: 321-373; Kolsen, 1910).

¹⁷ *Pois lo gens terminis floritz* (PC 80, 32).

¹⁸ Until then the counts of Montpellier had been the most steadfast allies of the house of Barcelona.

a year. The king of the Catalan-Aragonese crown first took Provence from his brother and then entered into military alliance with Henry II Plantagenet. Due to this the English-Aquitainian troops were engaged in fighting against Raymond V, defending Carcassonne among others. In 1187, Richard Cœur de Lion entered the fight, raiding and conquering castles and towns belonging to the country Toulouse, which in turn provoked Raymond V to undertake diplomatic actions with a goal of moving the frontline away from the county. In the same year, the count asked Philip Augustus, the king of France, for help. The king, hoping to enlarge his territory at the expense of English continental holdings, attacked Auvergne¹⁹. One should note that both Richard and Philip Augustus were bound by the crusade obligation, as they should had been preparing for an expedition against Saladin (the Third Crusade), not initiating wars. The decision to engage in the conflict between the Crown of Aragon and the country of Toulouse postponed the crusade and proved that local influence was more important to both rulers than the Christian reign of the Holy Land. Eventually the crusade began and for its duration (1189-1192) all military operations were suspended, also in Occitania.

The Crusaders barely returned home when the relations between Alfons I (II) and Raymond V returned to the old form of military and diplomatic conflict. Already in 1193, the king supported the conquest of Narbonne by one of his vassals, organized the marriage of Alfons II of Provence and the heir to the county of Forcalquer – with the county as dowry, strengthening the Catalan domination in Provence, as well as undertook a military expedition to Marseille in order to quell a rebellion by city commune. In response, Raymond V made alliance with an old ally of the house of Barcelona, William VIII of Montpellier. The last phase of the Second Occitan War, probably the least spectacular from the political perspective, was also the period of great famine and epidemics, lasting from 1194 to 1197, that led to deaths of the most important figures of the Occitan-Aragonese conflict. Roger II Trencavel was the first to go, dying in March 1194. Raymond V followed in December of the same year, while Alfons I (II) the Troubadour – in April 1196. This sudden generational change led on one hand to the immediate end of war, and the other hand to a reconfiguration of alliances between feudal lords engaged in the Occitan conflict. For example, still in 1196, Raymond VI of Toulouse joined the coalition of Richard Cœur de Lion against Philip Augustus, gaining peace between Toulouse and Aquitaine after forty years of struggle, and linked both houses by marrying Joan, a sister of the English king. However, what really cemented the unity of the former enemies was the threat of the Albigenian Crusade, advocated by subsequential Popes: Celestine III and Innocent III.

¹⁹ Concerning the relations of Philip Augustus with Henry II and Richard Cœur de Lion see (Bradbury, 1998; Gillingham, 1994).

Peter I (II) the Catholic (1196-1213)

Paradoxically, the period of the greatest threat to the Catalan presence in Occitania was simultaneously the time of the greatest dominance of the counts of Barcelona in the region that united around Peter I (II) the Catholic. The ruler of the Crown of Aragon, aware of the incoming danger, made peace with the count of Toulouse, which granted the latter the royal protection, as well as the rule of Carcassonne, Foix and Narbonne. The former gained military and diplomatic support of a significant ally, as well as his consent to addition of Montpellier to the Crown of Aragon. Naturally, Peter I (II) had to take care of taking over the city alone. In the cultural sphere, the Catalan-Aragonese ruler continued the policies of his predecessor – gave patronage to Catalan and Occitan troubadours, with almost all of them mentioning the king in their poems, both panegyrics and political works. The king also strengthened the status of Occitan culture at his court – culture that was fully assimilated during his rule by Catalan artists.

Due to the accusations of heresy of the Occitan counts, Peter the Catholic as their liege felt obligated to prove his own orthodoxy. This was especially true in 1204, when Innocent III issued the call to Philip Augustus, asking the king of France, his son or one of his magnates to conduct a military expedition in order to uproot Catharism rampant in the South, while allowing the crusaders to overtake the possessions of counts, barons and burghers sympathetic to the heresy. Hence the ruler of the Crown of Aragon decided to take two bold actions. First, his diplomatic efforts led to his marriage to Marie of Montpellier, the heir of William VIII, which in the eyes of the Pope made him an example of a Catholic king, since Montpellier was openly hostile to Albigenses. Second, following other European rulers, he paid homage to Innocent III, which, among others, led to his epithet. On November 11, 1204, Peter was crowned by the Pope in Rome in the church of San Pancrazio, where he received the royal insignia, and then in the church of San Pietro he accepted a sword as a symbol of his affiliation to *milites sancti Petri*. One could think that such act was beneficial to both sides – the king of the Crown of Aragon strengthened his position as a Christian ruler and the leader of Occitan vassals, while the Pope gained an ally in the Mediterranean politics. However, the history took another turn. When in 1209 Raymond VI, excommunicated for protecting the Cathars, does a public penance, it is already too late to stop the war machine. The count of Toulouse took the cross himself, hoping that his personal involvement in the crusade would at least allow him to redirect the attack to the lands of the Trencavels. In July of that year, the crusaders conquered Béziers, leading to the most infamous episode of the Languedoc war of religion – a cruel massacre of the citizens, and then moved onto Carcassonne. Peter the Catholic attempted to save the lands of his vassal, Raymond-Roger Trencavel by negotiating an armistice with the Papal legate Arnaud Amaury, the abbot of Cîteaux, but to no avail. The city was taken and while the majority of the crusaded decided that the goals of the crusade had been met and returns home, Simon IV de

Montfort continued raiding the lands of the Trencavels, taking over further castles and fortifications. Faced with such situation, Peter the Catholic renewed his diplomatic efforts, conducting an active anti-crusade campaign in Rome and negotiating with the Papal legate in Languedoc. At the same time, further barons were seeking his protection and swearing fealty to him – such as Raymond Roger de Foix, Bernard IV de Comenge, Gaston VI de Bearn and Raymond VI of Toulouse himself. Even Simon IV de Montfort had to become the royal vassal in order to keep the conquered lands. Still, the efforts of Peter the Catholic to redirect the crusade to the Muslim lands in Iberia did not yield the expected results and the king, having no alternative, faces the crusader on the field of battle. The year 1213 was the peak of the Catalan dominance in Occitania and, at the same time, its end, since the last ruler of trans-Pyrenean ambitions, Peter the Catholic, died on September 12 during the battle of Muret. After this defeat, the only Occitan holdings remaining with the counts of Barcelona were Provence and Montpellier, passed to the French crown in 1246 and 1349, respectively.

Occitan-Catalan cultural environment

The efforts of the rulers of the house of Barcelona to create a political protectorate over trans-Pyrenean territories or directly annex them did not bring the expected results. Still, they created conditions for an expansion of Occitan court culture, assimilated by Catalan-Aragonese artists and flourishing even after the end of the Albigensian Crusade. Hence, the troubadour poetry is not just the original creation of the Occitan culture, but also an inspiration for the development of Catalan poetry, as the first Catalan poets were troubadours using *langua d'oc* and creating works in genres characteristic for troubadour poetry, such as *canso*, *tenso* and *sirventes*.

First troubadours reached the Catalan court very early, as proven by the parodistic census of troubadours, *Cantarai d'aqestz trobadors* by Peire d'Alvernha, composed between 1165 and 1173 (Cerdà Subirachs, 1996: 73). In it, the Auvergnat troubadour also lists Catalan poets, such as Guillem de Ribes, whose works are lost. This means that the text, in order to achieve its goals of mockery and parody, had to refer to characters recognized on both sides of the Pyrenees. Additionally, we are aware of 121 Catalan and Occitan troubadours active between the 12th and 14th century in the courts of Catalan nobility or directly under patronage of the house of Barcelona, including its cadet branches. We also have information of 25 Catalan lieges who directly influenced the works (or had been artists themselves) and spread of the troubadour tradition (Cabré, 2013: 219-296). Such huge interest in Occitan culture could not be just an effect of perpetuation, but rather assimilation of its tenets by aristocratic courts, vying for presence of the troubadours and adopting the system of courtly values.

Without a doubt the most vibrant period of development of the Occitan-Catalan cultural union was the reign of Alfons I (II) the Troubadour and Peter I (II) the Catho-

lic. Troubadour poetry, intended for proficient and properly educated ears, was popular in the Catalan and Occitan courts, however troubadours also visited Castille and Italy. Yet the tastes and customs of these two former regions spread the idea of *fin'amor*. The preserved *partiment* (of 1170) of king Alfons, composed in cooperation with one of the greatest troubadours of his era, Giraut de Bornelh, when the royal had been only sixteen, proves not just the proficiency of the ruler in *art de trobar*, but also a cultural involvement beyond the political necessities. Still, the activities of troubadours in 11th and 12th century require in-depth studies and our knowledge in this area still is not complete (Cabré, Martí, 2019: 5-7). The earliest collections containing not just poetic works, but also *vidas* and *razos*, i.e. biographies and anecdotes regarding troubadours, come from late 13th century and, what is especially important, do not order their contents per artists' origins, treating them as representatives of a one, whole artistic commune. Additionally, such division would be difficult to create due to linguistic similarities between Catalan and Occitan. Even in 12th and 13th century, the similarities were so great that in case of text originating in the border region it is hard to determine the language they had been written in (Cerdà Subirachs, 1996: 64-65).

A fuller documentation of Occitan-Catalan relations pertains to the period after the fall of the South, especially the efforts to preserve (in Catalonia) and later to revive (in Languedoc) the troubadour tradition. Originating in the 13th century, collections of Occitan grammar, intended for poets, with added lectures on composition rules and a glossary of rhymes, show that both Catalan and Italian artists studied the lyric language of troubadours, treating it as another determinant of the constantly progressing genre. The most important treatises are *Razós de trobar* by Raimon Vidal de Besalú, *Doctrina de compondre dictats* by an unknown author (attributed to Jofre de Foixà) and *Regles de trobar* by the same author²⁰, with the addition of two anonymous works from the Ripoll 129 manuscript (Marshal, 1972: LXVI-LXXIX). The existence of the aforementioned texts is a proof of the attachment to the poetry tradition treated as a valuable heritage that should be preserved and continued, it would be hard to justify the need of their creation otherwise.

The cultural community of both regions was still alive in the 14th century, as proven by poetic relations of infant Pere of Aragon (1305-1381), a poet, patron of arts and son of James II the Just, with Occitan artists. For example, already in 1324 Occitan troubadour Ramon de Cornet dedicated *Doctrinal de trobar*, a treatise on grammar and poetry, to the young infant, also praising him as an experienced and proficient troubadour. However, infant Pere was not the sole representative of this specific poetic commune. In 1323, Toulouse saw the creation of Consistori del Gay Saber poetic association (also known as Sobregaya Companhia). Its goal was reinstating Occitan as a language of poetry. Each year the association organized a contest of poetry, called Jòcs Florals. This

²⁰ *Regles de trobar* was created due to a special request by James II the Just when he was still the king of Sicily.

idea of celebrating *fin'amor* quickly traversed the Pyrenees – similar contest for troubadours was held in Lleida already in 1338, and in 1393 the Consistori de la Gaya Sciència was created in Barcelona. The poets of the 14th century expanded the traditional repertoire, introducing new themes and formal devices, such as parallelism borrowed from Galician and Portuguese poetry, yet they still identified themselves as descendants of the common heritage originating in the 11th and 12th century.

Conclusions

The initiatives that are supposed to break Catalonia away from Spain have been conducted for many years, inciting numerous emotions, but also controversy. One of the most frequent allegations is the accusation of the attempt of creating a myth of the Greater Catalonia, i.e. falsifying the historical memory. The complex past of the County of Barcelona and the Crown of Aragon, mainly the fragmentation of rule, as well as the extent of conquests and relations between the different branches of the house of Barcelona can facilitate the manipulation of history. Still, a conscientious analysis of the source documents and the cultural heritage proves, at least in relations to the period described herein, the historical and cultural distinctiveness of Catalonia and Castille, often emphasized by the Catalans. One could of course wonder if the turn towards the past observed nowadays in Catalonia does not lead to its idealization. Is it not a kind of substitution, thanks to which a difficult goal, i.e. independence, is being replaced by the 'independence in the past', manifested by the glorification of the political successes of the Catalan rulers? Both phenomena are certainly taking place partially; it is enough to take a look at the cultural offer of the Catalan institutions. Yet, in case of a nation without a state, a nation that tries to retain its own identity, is memory not the only solution?

Bibliography

- Aurell i Cardona M. (1998), *Les noces del comte; matrimoni i poder a Catalunya (785-1213)*, Barcelona.
- Balcells A. (2009), *Història de Catalunya*, Barcelona.
- Benito P. (2017), *An Intense but Stymied Occitan Campaign*, [in:] *The Crown of Aragon: A Singular Mediterranean Empire*, edit. F. Sabaté, Leiden–Boston, pp. 92-124.
- Bradbury J. (1998), *Philip Augustus: King of France 1180-1223*, London-New York.
- Cabré M. (2013), *La lírica d'arrel trovadoresca*, [in:] *Dels orígens al segle XIV. Història de la literatura catalana, 1. Literatura medieval (1)*, edit. À. Broch, L. Badia, Barcelona, pp. 219-296.
- Cabré M., Martí S. (2019), *Les Corts Catalanes i els manuscrits trovadorescos*, "Plecs d'història local", No. 174, pp. 5-7.
- Canal Sánchez-Pagín J.M. (1989), *Casamientos de los condes de Urgel en Castilla*, "Anuario de estudios medievales", No. 19, pp. 119-136.
- Cerdà Subirachs J. (1996), *Els trobadors en la tradició i afaiçonament de la cultura catalana*, [in:] *El somni d'Occitània*, Barcelona.

- Cheyette F.L. (1988), *The 'Sale' of Carcassonne to the Counts of Barcelona (1067-1070) and the Rise of the Trencavels*, "Speculum", No. 63, pp. 826-64.
- Cingolani S. (2015), *La formació nacional de Catalunya i el fet identitari dels catalans (785-1410)*, Barcelona.
- Cluzel I. (1957-1958), *Princes et troubadours de la maison royale de Barcelone-Aragon*, "Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona", No. 27, pp. 321-373.
- Corpus des Troubadours (2020), *El projecte*, <https://trobadors.iec.cat> [access on: 1.10.2020].
- Del Monte A. (1955), *Peire d'Alvernhe. Liriche*, Tori.
- Ferrer i Mallol M.T., Riu M, Benito P. (2009), *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques de Catalunya i de la Corona catalanoaragonesa a l'edat mitjana, Vol. 1.1. Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques amb Occitània, França i els estats italians, 1067-1213* Barcelona.
- Ferrer i Mallol M.T., Riu M, Benito P. (2018), *Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques de Catalunya i de la Corona catalanoaragonesa a l'edat mitjana, Vol. 1.2. Tractats i negociacions diplomàtiques amb els regnes peninsulars i l'Àndalus (segle XI-1213)*, Barcelona.
- Fontana Lázaro J. (2014), *La formació d'una identitat: Una història de Catalunya*, Eumo.
- Gaunt S. et al. (2000), *Marcabru: A Critical Edition*, Cambridge.
- Gillingham J. (1994), *Richard Cœur de Lion*, London.
- Harvey R. (1999), *À propos de la date de la première 'chanson de croisade': 'Empereur, per mi mezeis' de Marcabru (PC 293.22)*, "Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale", No. 42(165), pp. 55-60.
- Kolsen A. (1910), *Sämtliche Lieder des Trobadors Giraut de Bornelh*, Halle.
- Marshall J.H. (1972), *The Razos de trobar of Raimon Vidal*, London.
- Salrach J.M. (1978), *El procés de formació nacional de Catalunya: segles VIII-IX*, Barcelona.
- Wąsowicz H. (2016), *Chronologia średniowieczna*, Lublin.
- Zimmermann M. (1989), *En el orígens de Catalunya*, Barcelona.

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to discuss the originality of the Catalan literature at its beginnings in relation to the poetry of the Occitan troubadours, and to explain why some Catalans today do not feel connected to the Castilian heritage. The paper presents the Occitan-Catalan political and cultural relations in the time between 993 and 1213, with particular emphasis on the 12th century when the Great Occitan War took place. The historical Occitania at that time was divided into numerous principalities affected by constant internal struggles. That unstable political situation encouraged powerful neighbours – as the rulers from the House of Barcelona – to attain their domination over the region. The successful military and diplomatic engagements of the Catalan sovereigns allowed them to create a relatively homogeneous Occitan-Catalan community based on cultural similarity and feudal dependence.

Keywords: House of Barcelona, Catalan Occitan campaign, Occitan-Catalan cultural circle, Counts of Barcelona, Great Occitan War

Article submitted: 8.10.2020; article accepted: 6.11.2020.