

## SUMMARY

The main goal of the CRISES project was to reconstruct, at a regional scale, the chronology and topography of food shortages and famines that cyclically struck the territories that would come to be known as Catalonia, from early eleventh to mid-thirteenth century, the initial date of this vast period being determined by the availability of adequate written sources. This descriptive inventory ought to establish the beginning and end of each cycle, as well as its high point, the geographical area it affected and its relative intensity, and allow us to connect them with the crises that affected the rest of Western Europe.

The scarcity of narrative sources (annals, chronicles) in Catalonia has been avoided through an alternative methodology, which implies a systematic inquiry and a statistical approach to a significant part of the documentary evidence preserved for the eleventh to the thirteenth century.

Both tasks have constituted the main assignment undertaken by a team of researchers formed by the lead researcher himself, predoctoral researchers Joel Colomer, Jérémy Capmartin and Pol Serrahima, and dr. Francesc Rodríguez Bernal.

Broadly, more than 20.000 documents (scrolls, cartularies and inventories) from ecclesiastic archives, both monastic and Episcopal, as well as from those of the military and aristocratic orders and from the royal archive have been examined. We have worked on unpublished and also on printed sources (see Annex 1 Sources and bibliography).

Approximately, a quarter of the consulted sources did provide direct or indirect information on food dearth and famine. Typologically, those can be divided into three main groups:

- a. Land market and credit. Sales and loans of lands in *rem valentem* or in kind, in amounts of wheat and barley in some cases specifically because of famine (*propter necessitatem famis*).
- b. Public and private charity and assistance. The following have been considered: a) donations *pro victu et vestitu* made by free peasants or great landlords to ecclesiastical institutions in order to perpetually secure a daily food ratio for themselves or their relatives; b) the foundation of almshouses (*almoines*), hospitals, shelters and nursing homes for the care of the poor and the sick.
- c. Testamentary documentation (1400 acts before 1230). We took into account: a) bequests in kind (cereals) made to churches, fraternities, relatives, friends, *nutritii prebendarii*, servants, serves and slaves; b) bequests in kind or in money to poor people or widows, especially those destined to buying bread or sustaining a determined number of poor people; and, c) bequests in kind or money to hospitals, shelters and nurseries.

Testamentary documentation is especially rich from the mid-eleventh century, and represents adult mortality among members of wealthy social groups. Thus, it has also been taken into account to determine periods of exceptional mortality and to calculate relative or differential mortality and morbidity rates among adult population in each of the crises. To do that, we have taken into account, separately: a) wills, as previous evidences of high mortality; b) sacramental publications of wills, as certain evidences of mortality. Nevertheless, the analysis of such information, and that of the relationship between food crises and mortality crises will be undertaken later, despite it had been contemplated in the initial project.

Statistical treatment of the compiled data has been a fundamental part of the research method. The information collected has been placed in a chronological table with a monthly precision, and we have separated and assessed data directly related to crises as an economical issue (fundamentally, data from land market and credit), as well as its significance (kind and value of the transferred goods, way of exchange, number of documents, kind of documents, etc.), direct references to famine, information related to charitable policies aimed to relieve the effects of famines and, finally, data related to adult mortality (Annex 2).

## CONCLUSIONS

Observations made in Catalonia allow us to assert that, despite what had been stated by the historiography from the works Wilhelm Abel and Edouard Perroy, food crises were already usual in the central middle ages, before the year 1300. Between the year 1000 and 1200, 45 food crises struck Catalonia, some of them lasting up to six years. The free-from-crisis intervals add up only to the 60 percent of the period.

Besides, research has allowed us to point out significant differences between food crises when it comes to their duration, geographical range and socio-economic impact. Not all of them can be defined as famines, as only the most important ones fall into this category. On the other hand, despite most of the episodes can be related to supraregional crises affecting the north of Europe or the Western Mediterranean, some crises have a strictly regional range. One must point out that great differences exist when it comes to the duration of the crises.

The analysis of this set of factors has allowed us to approach the relative severity of the crises and to point out three periods during which famines were particularly important between the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the thirteenth: the reign of Ramon Borrell (996-1017) and the beginning of that of Ramon Berenguer I (until 1060); the end of the eleventh century (from the food dearth of 1082 and the famines of 1094-96 and 1099); and, especially, the period that goes from 1146 to 1194-1196, when food crises and famines became more frequent, long and serious, accordingly to the general situation in Western Europe.

## CARHAMORT PROJECT

Between 2009 and 2012, Pere Benito has been the lead researcher of the project “Carestía, hambre y mortalidad en la Cataluña medieval: explicaciones y representaciones de las crisis de ciclo corto y los malos años en la historia” (CarHaMort), funded by the Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación of the Spanish Government. The main goals of this project complement those of the CRISES project: we expect to construct a regional chronology of late medieval crises, evaluate the different factors that caused them, as well as the way they developed and ended, and to study political action endorsed by the public powers in order to stop them.

The project has taken in two grant holders who are working on their PhD at the University of Lleida. Pol Serrahima Balius is working on a PhD entitled, “Mercado de cereales, gestión pública del aprovisionamiento y crisis alimenticias en Barcelona bajo los Trastámara (1412-1516)” (“Cereal market, public policies of provisioning and food crises in Barcelona under the Trastamaras, 1412-1516”; this PhD is co-directed by Antoni Riera Melis, University of Barcelona). Xavier Sanahuja Anguera is working on a PhD entitled “Fabricación y circulación de moneda local en la Cataluña de los siglos

XIII-XVI" ("Production and circulation of local coins in Catalonia, thirteenth to sixteenth century"; co-directed by Miquel Crusafont).

#### "FAMINES" PROJECT (UNIVERSITÉ LIBRE DE BRUXELLES-UNIVERSITAT DE LLEIDA)

Pere Benito is also partenaire in the research project "Famines 400-1350", submitted by Professor Jean-Pierre Devroey (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and researcher Alexis Wilkin (FRS-FNRS) to the call of the Fonds de la Recherche Fondamentale Collective at the FRS-FNRS in Belgium. The goal of this project is to create a free access database of Latin, Arab and Byzantine sources for the study of early medieval famines. To define the methodology, the international seminar "Handling Ancient and Medieval Sources about Famines (Latin West, Arab, Slav and Byzantine World): 100 BC – c. 1340 AD" was held on September 27 and 28, 2012, at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Pere Benito was the scientific coordinator of this meeting, alongside with the lead researchers of the project.

#### CONSOLIDATED RESEARCH GROUP IN MEDIEVAL STUDIES "SPACE, POWER AND CULTURE"

Since his incorporation at the University of Lleida, Pere Benito has been a member of the Consolidated Research Group in Medieval Studies "Space, Power and Culture" (2009-2013), directed by Flocel Sabaté, Professor of Medieval History at the University of Lleida. The team is recognized and funded as a "consolidated research group" by the AGAUR Agency of the regional government (Generalitat de Catalunya). The researcher has participated in most of the activities organized by this Group. He is a member of the Scholar Council of the scientific meetings "Comtat d'Urgell", held annually at Balaguer, and he has also been a member of the scientific committee of the International Medieval Meeting (2011 and 2012).

#### PROFESSIONAL REINTEGRATION OF THE RESEARCHER

The Marie Curie Reintegration Grant was essential to allow the researcher's reintegration in the Spanish system of science and technology. When coming back on September 2008 from the Paris University, having ended his Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship, the researcher joined the University of Lleida through a research contract under the programme Ramon y Cajal, jointly financed by the Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación of the Spanish government and the University of Lleida. Under this programme, the receiving centres acquire the compromise of creating a vacancy with the researcher's profile once the five-year contract has ended and the evaluations have been passed. The Marie Curie Reintegration Grant allowed the researcher to create a research team of his own into the Consolidated Group he had joined to.

Besides, the researcher has completely fitted in the History Department of the University of Lleida. He has been its Secretary from February 2010 and has taught up to 80 ECTS credits per year to undergraduate students of History and Social Education in the Faculties of Letters and Education Sciences. He will also teach at a joint Master's Degree on European Medieval Identity organised by six Spanish universities. Because of his teaching experience, the Spanish agency ANECA and the Catalan agency AQU have credited him as aggregate and tenured professor, a prerequisite to be able to apply for permanent positions as university professor.

