

# 'THE MYTH OF THE PRIMITIVE ABORIGEN'. HISTORY AGAINST FICTION AROUND THE FEUDAL COLONISATION OF THE KINGDOM OF VALENCIA IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

ENRIC GUINOT RODRÍGUEZ  
UNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA  
SPAIN

Date of receipt: 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 2021

Date of acceptance: 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, 2021

## ABSTRACT

Denial and conspiracy theorist ideas also find room in the field of history. This is what we today call pseudo-history, which is generally undertaken by people without methodological training in the historical field and often inspired by political and/or religious prejudice. This article examines the arguments presented by a non-academic pseudo-historical trend in Valencia, which denies the process of migration, repopulation and colonisation of the Kingdom of Valencia, founded by King James I in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, after the conquest of Sarq al Andalus by Catalonia and Aragon. They argue for the social, human, cultural and linguistic continuity of a 'Valencian people and language' dating back to the Iberian and Roman periods, which during the Andalusi period remained as a 'Mozarab' majority that acted as a transmission belt for this Christian people and language to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The text examines two works written by different authors, and flags out their inconsistencies, lack of basic knowledge of medieval history and frequent internal contradictions, and emphasises the total lack of evidence, both written and archaeological, for their arguments, which are as a rule dismissed with expressions such as 'it is easier to think that...'<sup>1</sup>.

## KEYWORDS

Medieval pseudo-History, Historical revisionism, Kingdom of Valencia, Repopulation, Catalan language.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Pseudohistoria medii aevi, Negatio historica, Regnum Valentiae, Repopulatio, Lingua Catalanica.

There are revisionists of all stripes, and they have always been there. Revisionists and conspiracy theorists. This goes much beyond the current COVID world pandemic; there were no Nazi concentration camps in the 1930s and 40s; the moon landings were a Hollywood movie; the land does not move around the universe; the Arabas never invaded Visigothic Hispania in the 8<sup>th</sup> century; and, in the local Valencian version, there was no settlement of Catalan and Aragonese people in Sarq al Andalus during the reign of Jaume I, in the central decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and modern Valencian language, the name given to Catalan in Valencia, was not brought in by medieval immigrants.

It is true that, if we go back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, medievalists were undermined by a poor understanding of the available historical sources. At that time, these pathfinders of medievalism took an erudite approach that was just beginning to interrogate the documents. They were, in addition, pigeonholed by the prevailing positivist methodology, and aimed for the construction of identity-based nation states. The trends that dominated historical thought at the time almost forced them in this direction, hence the surprise of current generations when they read the ‘essentialist’ tone of the work written by medievalists in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. The histories of Germany, Italy, England, Spain and also Catalonia, Aragon, Castile and Leon, etc. were articulated around their respective national identities (Spanish, Catalanian or Valencian, and so on), all of which shared their two millennia-long Christian foundations.

In Spain, this model had considerable staying power, as it was assumed, taught, and disseminated by the political and academic establishment of Francoism until the late 1970s. It is well known that, during this period, the *statu quo* of medievalism gave great relevance to the unquestionable paradigm of the ‘*Reconquista y Repoblación*’, from Don Pelayo’s Covadonga to the conquest of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492. It is also relevant that, while acknowledging that these medieval kingdoms were ruled by kings, often the ‘people’ was allowed to play first fiddle, to the detriment of the nobility and, sometimes, even the Crown, always with Catholicism as their immutable, 2000-year long mark of identity.

In the context of Valencia, these historical arguments had their own local concerns, for instance the issue of the origin of the regional language. There were also arguments for the secular continuity of a ‘Valencian people’, whose identity, like that of the British, Germans, French, Spaniards and Catalans dated back to even before the Roman period. Concerning the religious issue, it was necessary to vindicate the Mozarabs, because it was inadmissible to think that a more or less significant sector of the Spanish, Catalan and/or Valencian people had renounced the only true religion, Christianity, and converted to Islam. The logical conclusion is that, if the ‘Valencian people’ had their own language, the *Valencià*, it must be just

---

1. This article is part of the Excellence Research Group “Desigualdad económica y movilidad social en la Europa Mediterránea (Siglos XIII-XVI)” (PROMETEO-2019-072), funded by the Regional Government of Valencia (Generalitat Valenciana.) and PGC2018-099275-B-100, “¿Crecimiento sin desarrollo?. Distribución de la riqueza, movilidad social y acción política en la Europa mediterránea (siglos XIII-XV)”, funded by Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad del Gobierno de España.



as old as all those other Romance languages and have its own name from the late Iberian and the Roman period.

It is also necessary to point out that philological work focused on Iberian languages (notably Catalan) also began in the context of the historical discourse that dominated the first two thirds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the historical paradigm of ‘*Reconquista y Repoblación*’. These philologists were not historians, so in these matters they limited themselves to follow the lead of their historian colleagues. And in this way, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they based their explanation of the linguistic differences among contemporary Catalans, Valencians, and Balearics on ancient ethnic and cultural distinctions: pre-Romanisation; the different degrees of Romanisation; the different degrees of Arabisation of different groups, specifically the *Muladis*, Christian converts to Islam; and the continued presence of Mozarabs in al-Andalus.

Medievalism was to undergo a profound historiographical shift in some universities in the late 1970s, which was to consolidate in the 1980s with the arrival of young researchers that opened new avenues of social and economic investigation based on the comprehensive examination of archival material. One of the consequences of this was the revision of the historical paradigm of ‘*Reconquista y Repoblación*’, especially concerning the medieval Crown of Aragon, so that by the 1990s and, especially in the opening years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a fairly homogenous discourse had emerged that challenges the traditional narrative, and replaces it with that of the feudal expansion in one of Europe’s southern frontiers, with enormous social, economic and political implications that amply transcend the issue of war and repopulation.

## 1. The survival of a ‘continuist’ current about the 2000-year history of the Valencian people and language

However, a current anchored in the traditional perspective—that of rejecting the impact of conquest and repopulation, minimising the arrival of Christian colonists, especially Catalonians, and arguing for the continuity of a secular Valencian culture and language, which persisted immutable not only through the centuries, but also through different social models (slave-society, Andalusi, Feudal) from the time of Iberian and Romans—continued existing in parallel to the progress being made in the academic knowledge of medieval Valencia. In this way, the Andalusi period was not seen as a rupture, because the Arabs and Maghrebi were also a minority in Valencia, a political elite, but the majority of the population, Mozarabs and *Muladis*, the ‘people’, partially changed their religion, but not their ‘Valencian’ culture and language.

If, as noted, the origins of this hypothesis lay with authors writing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, its renewal has a specific date, 1975, and came from university circles. Antonio Ubieto, at the time professor of Medieval History at the Universitat de



València, published *Orígenes del Reino de Valencia. Cuestiones cronológicas sobre su reconquista*, a work in two volumes, later reedited with significant changes.<sup>2</sup>

The content of this work is dominated by a few basic ideas: reconquest, repopulation, minimisation of the arrival of Catalan colonists, and, especially, continuity of a Romance ‘people’ and language (*Valencià*) in al-Andalus, which was the continuator of the Hispano-Roman people. Similarly, in the different editions Ubieto focused on arguing for the Aragonese nobility playing a foremost role in the conquest of Valencia and also on reducing, by different means, the number of Catalanian settlers in the *Llibre del Repartiment* and in later periods.<sup>3</sup> This was a direct response to the publication of various works that emphasised the importance of the ‘repopulation’ by Catalonians for the origins of the Kingdom of Valencia, and the idea that it was these settlers who had brought the language to Valencia. I am referring to Joan Fuster’s *Nosaltres els valencians* and Joan Reglà’s *Aproximació a la història del País Valencià*.<sup>4</sup> It was also a response to a second innovative aspect introduced by Fuster and followed by Reglà, who considered that the region was characterised by a historical dualism —part of the population of the former kingdom spoke Catalan and part Spanish— and that this has been a central factor in the history of the region from the Middle Ages to today.

Concerning who were those that spoke *Valencià* before the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Ubieto categorically rejected in the successive versions of his book, and with a review of the available documents and chronicles, that there were any Mozarabs left in the Valencia conquered by James I. As such, his interest was focused on finding evidence of the *Valencià* spoken by the Muslim population prior to James I’s conquest, although the only document that he could present in this regard was the *carta pobla* with which the Andalusí population of Vall d’Uixó surrendered to the monarch in 1250. This, however, had but little value as evidence, as the document is a translation from the Arabic carried out in 1385 in the kingdom’s

---

2. Ubieto Arteta, Antonio. *Orígenes del Reino de Valencia. Cuestiones cronológicas sobre su reconquista*. Valencia: Editorial Anubar, 1975: 2 vols. and Saragossa: Editorial Anubar, 1977: 2 vols. It must be considered that there is a second, expanded edition of the first volume, published in 1976 and a fourth revised edition published in 1981. The second volume was reedited in 1979.

3. We must also take into consideration the political context in which these books were published. The so-called ‘Spanish transition to democracy’ from 1976 to 1981, was in Valencia marked by a bitter confrontation between the right and the left with important implications for the issue of the identity, including the historical identity, of Valencian society. One of the main points of contention was the Valencian language and its historical origins, when these medieval origins and the ‘repopulation’ of Valencia by Catalonians was linked with the more or less Catalan identity of modern Valencians.

4. Fuster, Joan. *Nosaltres els valencians*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1962; Reglà, Joan. *Aproximació a la història del País Valencià*. València: L’Estel editorial, 1973. For Fuster’s book see Furió, Antoni. “Cinquanta anys de Nosaltres, els valencians”, *Sobre Nosaltres, els valencians*, Ferran Carbó, Francesc Pérez i Moragon eds. Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2013: 183-202.



*Batllia*,<sup>5</sup> as demonstrated soon afterwards by the Arabist Carme Barceló, as Ubierto himself admitted.<sup>6</sup>

From the 1980s onwards, especially after Ubierto’s death in 1990, this hypothesis was to survive only in non-university circles, turning into a veritable branch of pseudo-history. These notions are supported by amateurs moved by a conservative political ideology, sometimes close to the far-right, who identify themselves with an anti-Catalan form of Spanish nationalism, and whose aim is to deny any Catalanian origin for the Valencian culture and language. In recent years, this current mostly uses websites and social networks to express their opinion and, too often, insults. Periodically, they also undertake street protests against left-wing parties and social movements, especially when they are in positions of power in the regional government or Valencia’s city council.

Another branch of this current found room in cultural institutions during the transition to democracy in 1976-1980, being organised around two, by now centenary, local institutions, the *Real Academia de Cultura Valenciana*, dependent on the *Diputació Provincial de València*, and the private association *Lo Rat Penat*. In those years, both institutions came under the control of people that were close to the Francoist regime, and soon adopted an anti-Catalan stance, specifically against the use of *Valencià* in institutions and public schools. Afterwards, these institutions have undertaken the publication of most of the works that reproduce the pseudo-historical arguments about Valencian language and history. Their impact in the academic world has, however, been negligible, as they only include a handful of primary and secondary school teachers, and a few university lecturers whose field of study is unrelated to history, who publish their works outside the purview of university research groups and using private publishers.

We can only point out the somewhat more academic work by a high-school teacher, Leopoldo Peñarroja, author of two books on the Mozarabs of Valencia published in the early 1990s, and that of Desamparados Cabanes Pecourt, professor of Historiographical Sciences and Techniques at the Universidad de Zaragoza, who for years was Ubierto’s main collaborator. From the 1980s, her research trajectory has closely followed Ubierto’s ideas, arguing for the pre-eminence of Aragonese vis-à-vis Catalanian repopulation, both in terms of settlement and of their relationship with *Valencià*. At conferences she has always argued for the Iberian and Roman origins of *Valencià* as a separate language, but it must be pointed out that she has never focused any of her works on the issue or contributed with new documents about the Mozarabs or “*Valencian language*”.

---

5. Ubierto Arteta, Antonio. *Orígenes del reino...: I*, 192-193. Ubierto, however, always claimed that the Andalusí population of Valencia spoke in ‘*romanç*’, presenting a sentence in James I’s *Chronicle* in which the inhabitants address the king, as evidence: ‘*Senyor, queres lo tu així?. E nos lo queremos e-ns fiaremos en tu, e dat t-emos lo castello en la tua fe*’ (Ubierto Arteta, Antonio. *Orígenes del reino...: I*, 195). It is clear that said language is not the Catalan or Valencian of the time, which is probably the reason why Ubierto used systematically the term ‘*romanç*’, but not Valencian or Castilian-Aragonese.

6. Ubierto Arteta, Antonio. *Orígenes del reino...* (Edition 1981): I, 192.



Peñarroja, for his part, tried to demonstrate the continuity of the Mozarab population in Muslim Valencia, a social group which spoke a *Valencià* that dug its roots in Latin. In the two books published in the early 1990s, he hypothetically identified the Valencian Mozarab language based on an interpretation of Valencian toponymy and some of its features, which could not be of Arabic but of Latin origin.<sup>7</sup> The reason behind the use of such indirect methodology is that, to date, not a single written document or inscription in said language has been found. Arguments for an ancient language for which written testimonies are lacking are sometimes put forward by linguists. However, this methodology has generated some debate, and sometimes bitter controversies, between specialists, around the value of the phonetical evolutions detected in this way. The reason is that changes are detected on the basis of their reception by other coeval languages, such as Arabic, and on later documents in Catalan and Spanish post-dating the 13<sup>th</sup>-century conquest. For this reason, Peñarroja's linguistic arguments were heavily criticised by Carme Barceló Torres, Professor of Arabic at Universitat de València, and others,<sup>8</sup> and were generally dismissed by academic Arabists, as the bibliography shows.

Peñarroja's second book is dedicated to a few dozen documentary references that mention the presence of monasteries, bishops and Mozarab groups in Valencia between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Basically, these are references published by F. J. Simonet in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>9</sup> with the addition of a few more from chronicles and ecclesiastical records, generally from outside the region, like the *Poema del Mío Cid*, which always undermines their validity as evidence. In any case, they exist and must be subject to individualised analysis, and they have been critically analysed by Professor Barceló.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond the fact that his arguments contradict Professor Ubieto's within the revisionist conceptual field, the main problem with Peñarroja's hypothesis, as his volume makes clear, is that already pointed out by Ubieto in 1975: the absence of a single incontrovertible document that identifies such group of people in 1238 Valencia. What is more, the fact is that Peñarroja convincingly argues in his book that the last Christians of Valencia emigrated to Aragon in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, as

7. His doctoral thesis on the Valencian Mozarabs and Valencian language was supervised by Cabanes and read at Universidad de Zaragoza in 1988. Published in two volumes: Peñarroja Torrejón, Leopoldo. *El mozárabe de Valencia: nuevas cuestiones de fonología mozárabe*. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1990; Peñarroja Torrejón, Leopoldo. *Cristianos bajo el Islam: los mozárabes hasta la reconquista de Valencia*. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1993.

8. Barceló Torres, Carme. "Recensión de L. Peñarroja, El mozárabe de Valencia". *Al Qantara*, 13 (1992): 290-293; Barceló Torres, Carme. "Recensió de L. Peñarroja, El mozárabe de Valencia". *Llengua & Literatura*, 5 (1992-1993): 696-698; Galmés de Fuentes, Antonio. "Recensión de L. Peñarroja, El mozárabe de Valencia". *Aljamía*, 4 (1995): 62-63.

9. Simonet, Francisco Javier. *Historia de los mozárabes de España deducida de sus mejores y más auténticos testimonios de los escritores cristianos y árabes*. Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de la Viuda e Hijos de M. Tello, 1897-1903. A modern edition was published by Turner in 1983.

10. Barceló Torres, Carme. "Mossàrabs de València i "Llengua mossàrab"". *Caplletra: revista internacional de filologia*, 20 (1996): 183-205; Barceló Torres, Carme. "Mozárabes de Valencia y "lengua mozárabe"". *Revista de filología española*, 3-4/77 (1997): 253-279.



suggested by a chronicle that says that a group of monks had fled the monastery of Sant Vicent de la Roqueta, in Valencia.<sup>11</sup>

These ideas, which run against the grain of consolidated academic knowledge, have recently been revisited by X. Ballester’s subjective essay (rather than history book).<sup>12</sup> This author reproduces the basic ideas of the revisionist group: that during the Andalusi period (for Valencia, from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries), most of the population was constituted by Hispano-Roman Mozarabs; that this population spoke two local languages derived from Classical Latin, Spanish and *Valencià*; and, that these two languages were also spoken by the Andalusi population, both Arab and Muladi in origin, and that the geographical distribution of these languages in the region still persists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He continues by claiming that both communities (Mozarab and Mudejar), were a majority in the Kingdom of Valencia founded by James I in 1239, as the number of colonists to arrive to medieval Valencia from Catalonia and Aragon was small.

The aim of this book is to challenge some academic notions about the feudal colonisation of the Kingdom of Valencia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which he labels as the “‘repartimentist” thesis’ and the ‘repopulationist hypothesis’, the latter label being specifically targeted at E. Guinot’s *Els fundadors del regne de València*.<sup>13</sup> It must be emphasised that is an imaginative pseudo-historical work, which stands aloof of historiographical methodology and is full of subjective personal statements that, sometimes, take a rather offensive tone towards medieval history university lecturers. It betrays an alarming lack of historical knowledge and is based on absurd premises that lead to flagrant contradictions in its conclusions. To a large extent, the interpretation, for which no historical or archaeological evidence is presented, is based on the professor’s belief that the consolidated academic explanation of the Christian repopulation of the south of the Crown of Aragon in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as the expansion of feudalism in southern Catalonia, Aragon, the Balearic Islands and the Kingdom of Valencia are a fiction invented by local

---

11. Peñarroja, Leopoldo. *Cristianos bajo el Islam...*: 144-152. The text appears quite straightforward: asked when they think they could return to Valencia, the two monks responded, according to Peñarroja: “*Hermano, nosotros ya no tenemos esperanzas de volver allí, porque el rey Alfonso, conquistada Zaragoza, cercó con su ejército a Valencia para expulsar a los musulmanes. Y éstos, diciendo que el rey les había atacado por consejo y ruego nuestro, invadieron a medianoche nuestro cenobio y, saqueando nuestros bienes, nos expulsaron a todos con el abad y destruyeron el monasterio. El rey nos trajo consigo a esta tierra [a Saragossa] y nos distribuyó de dos en dos por varias Iglesias [brother, we have no hope of ever returning, because King Alphonse, after taking Saragossa, besieged Valencia with his army to expel the Muslims. And these, saying that the king had attacked them on our request, they invaded us at midnight and kicked us all out, including the abbot, and destroyed the monastery; the king brought us to this land of Saragossa and distributed us in pairs in various churches]*”, Peñarroja, Leopoldo. *Cristianos bajo el Islam...*: 151.

12. Ballester Gómez, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua valenciana. La hipótesis repoblacionista*. Saragossa: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2021. Ballester is Professor of Latin Philology in Universitat de València, and has no historical training.

13. Guinot Rodríguez, Enric. *Els fundadors del regne de València. Repoblament, antroponímia i llengua a la València medieval*. València: Eliseu Climent editors, 1999, 2 vols.



university-based medievalists who wish to bring forward a Catalanist agenda for economic, political and professional reasons.<sup>14</sup>

## **2. Medieval history cannot be written without the right training and sufficient understanding of the sources, the historical methodology and the available bibliography**

The statement that I make in this section's heading may look like an obvious point, but unfortunately history has always attracted curious people without the right training. This has never prevented them, in the past or now, to publish, sometimes with good and sometimes with bad intentions, whatever went through their heads. Often, as noted above, it is their ideological, political, and religious prejudices that move them to write things for which no historical evidence whatsoever exists. This is why we called them pseudo-historians.

In order to confront personal opinions that are frequently based on hypotheses that cannot be verified by other researchers, academic medievalists working in the former Crown of Aragon and the rest of professional historians has built a historical discourse which is taught at the university and which is based on three basic premises: first, there is no point in presenting simple explanations based on 'common sense'; second, the importance of chronology, because no historical explanation is possible without taking into consideration the notions of change and evolution; and, third, we must use the available sources and these must always be contrasted with the new evidence being provided by archivist and archaeological research.

Concerning simplistic explanations, it is not necessary to go into too much argument. History has left positivism, the simple copy of what documents say, often regardless of chronology, far behind. It is pointless to imagine explanations that simply extrapolate processes from one period to another. A good example of this is the Crown of Aragon in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, a period characterised by feudal expansion at the expense of al-Andalus, which resulted in the transition of the region from a Muslim tributary to a Christian feudal society. A far-reaching historical shift that demands careful study, and the consideration of the multiple variables that were part of this transition and of the construction of feudalism in conquered land in a late stage of the Middle Ages (*i.e.* not in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> centuries).

In general, people adhering to this so-called (but only descriptively) 'revisionist' trend that challenges the feudal repopulation and colonisation of the south of the Crown of Aragon have followed a largely positivist methodology, sometimes so much so that they merely reproduce the content of documents without the indispensable critical apparatus and context. But X. Ballester Gómez's latest publication has gone over all previous limits. The work not only lacks the most basic understanding of the medieval history of the Crown of Aragon, but also has the audacity to adapt the so-

---

14. Ballester Gómez, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 10-11.





called *Palaeolithic Continuity Theory* to it. Ballester's academic career has not only dealt with classical Latin, but also with Indo-European Neolithic languages. For years, he has been a member of a small group of philologists from several countries, who are incidentally not too well regarded, which has developed a hypothesis (they call it a thesis) that denies that Europe was invaded thousands of years ago by a wave of so-called Indo-European peoples which brought with them their culture, political and social practices and language, leading to a far-reaching historical process of change when they replaced and/or mixed with European Palaeolithic and Mesolithic groups. This invasion model, based on both archaeological and linguistic evidence, is currently accepted by most specialists and is taught at universities worldwide.

But no by this group of linguists directed until his death by the Italian Mario Alinei (1926-2018) and constituted by X. Ballester Gómez and half a dozen more linguists.<sup>15</sup> In short, they argue that there was no historical and linguistic change in Europe during that period because there was no invasion and colonisation, for which, they claim, there is no clear archaeological evidence; that the idea of colonisation is contaminated by political ideology; and, that these Indo-European invasions would be a unicum in world history(sic). Alternatively, they argue that the differences between different European languages predate the Neolithic, and for this reason they label their theory as *Palaeolithic Continuity*.<sup>16</sup>

The similarity between Mario Alinei's and Xaverio Ballester's methodology and explanation is remarkable. There were no migrations or the arrival of a new language, whose origins are older; those that speak of migrations do so for political reasons; the Catalanian and Aragonese migration would be unique in the history of the Iberian Peninsula; and the alternative explanation lies in secular continuity. This, despite the written and archaeological evidence for migration to the medieval kingdom of Valencia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

### *2.1. About sources in medieval history*

Concerning the sources, it seems unnecessary to say that they should be used as consistently as possible, and also that they should conform to the historical period, which is being examined, but given the arguments proposed by the revisionists of Valencian medieval history, a reminder may not be completely out of place. For instance, we cannot use recent documents to study the Middle Ages, as some of the proponents of Valencian continuity do. Statistics of people not born in the Valencian metropolitan area in the 1970s or a population census from the early 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot be used to investigate the names and surnames of a medieval population or

---

15. See their web: [www.continuitas.org/intro.html](http://www.continuitas.org/intro.html).

16. A brief and revealing explanation of this hypothesis is found in Wikipedia's entry for Professor Alinei. "Mario Alinei". Wikipedia. 10 September 2021 <[https://gl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario\\_Alinei](https://gl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario_Alinei)>.



their continuity in each territory or city for eight centuries, as some of the members of this group have done.<sup>17</sup>

Any sensible person with a modicum of general culture knows that various migratory episodes have occurred in the Iberian Peninsula after the Middle Ages, especially the migration of large numbers of people from the southern and central regions of Spain to Madrid, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Valencia. The two main such episodes were that which occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, after the First World War and the economic crisis that ended with the Great Depression, and the more numerically substantial, migration of rural people from Murcia, Castilla-La Mancha, Aragon, and Andalusia in the 1960s and 1970s. Both had an impact in Valencia, and substantially altered the surnames that can be found in population censuses over time.

Similarly, over the last forty years the medievalists working in the former Crown of Aragon have built their arguments on archival and archaeological research to a previously unknown extent, not on the basis of non-demonstrable assumptions. It is honest to say that the starting point for this trend could hardly be more favourable, owing to a crucial change in the history of documents in some countries in the Mediterranean basin. The maturity of feudalism from 1200 onwards involved urban, economic, cultural, and religious developments that brought the production of written documents to a previously unknown level. For instance, over 22,000 documents, issued either in Valencia or in other regions in the Crown of Aragon, but referring to Valencian settlements or residents of the Kingdom of Valencia founded by James I, and dated between 1233 and 1300 are known. By now, this wealth of documents has been read, catalogued, and edited. For the 14<sup>th</sup> century, we have approximately half a million documents, and several million for the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In Catalonia, Aragon, and Mallorca there are more documents than there are in Valencia.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, the cultural material evidence provided by archaeology in recent decades has become increasingly important, especially concerning processes of conquest, migration, expulsion, the substitution of population groups and, more generally, the construction of feudal society in the south of the Crown of Aragon in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. This methodology has confirmed what we knew from the written sources and has added new data about the settlement of Christian colonists and, especially, about the Muslim population during the Andalusí period (8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries), their settlement patterns, their use of domestic and productive spaces, the distribution of agricultural fields and *huertas* and, especially, their expulsion

---

17. The statistics of people not born in Valencia in the early 1970s were used by Antonio Ubieta. *Orígenes del reino...: 2*, 177-179. And X. Ballester repeatedly uses 21<sup>st</sup> century population censuses in his book *Los orígenes de la lengua...*

18. It is perplexing to realise that the only response that these works give to the fact that not a single document supports their pseudo-historical ruminations is that '*siempre podrá aparecer un documento nuevo que cambie la Historia*' ['a new document may always emerge that changes the History']. This could well be the case with the Neolithic, but not with the Late Middle Ages.



throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and not only during the years of James I's conquest (1233-1245).

### **3. How to explain the expansion of feudal society in the Crown of Aragon in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries**

A starting point for the issue at hand is that the migration of Christian colonists to the south of the Crown of Aragon, their social contact with the local Andalusi population, and the subsequent linguistic interaction cannot be analysed in isolation from the historical context, that is, Catalonia's and Aragon's society, and the implications of the imposition of a feudal social model by conquest.

In general, pseudo-history has difficulties to understand that individual events in a given year or period are related to earlier events, that there is an explanatory thread that helps to explain situations, and that what happens in that given period will affect later developments. Let us give a clear example of this: the conquest, colonisation, and construction of a feudal society in the Kingdom of Valencia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century is not an isolated event in the history of the Crown of Aragon and Europe. It is part of the long-drawn process of expansion of medieval feudal monarchies begun in the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century, involving economic, commercial, rural, and demographic growth, which was to last until the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In the specific instance of the Crown of Aragon, this dynamic crystallised in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries in territorial expansion at the expense of al-Andalus, phenomenon that cannot be examined without reference to parallel examples. Explanations need to be consistent.

The global process of construction of a new feudal society that implies not only the migration of tens of thousands of Christian colonists from all social classes, but their complex integration into a new political, economic, social, religious, and cultural milieu. The unfolding of a model of feudal relations between lords, on the one hand, and peasants and townspeople on the other, which is reflected in population charters. But we are also talking about the regulated settlement of the new population; their concentration in new towns and the foundation of new cities; the creation of municipal systems that operate virtually autonomously from the Crown; the establishment of the Crown's institutions; the formation of a new network of Christian institutions; the dissemination of the settlers' language; the use of new architectural and artistic styles; and, the rearrangement of space, both urban and rural; new settlement patterns, with the disappearance of Andalusi hamlets and the foundation of new towns; the reorganisation of cultivated areas; a new property structure; the creation of seigniorial demesnes; and, a different agricultural model and the breaking up of new lands. All that which medievalism has analysed through



thousands of monuments and archaeological remains comes together in the solid and consistent historical explanation that is taught in our universities.<sup>19</sup>

For all of this, what pseudo-historical revisionists must understand is that this issue of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Crown of Aragon is an axial phenomenon for medieval history. No less than the implantation of feudal society and its model of social relations over conquered territory, from which a large section of the Andalusí population was to be progressively expelled. The transition from a model of tributary society to a feudal one, as found elsewhere in the continent, with the added advantage that the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries generated a much richer documentary record than the 10<sup>th</sup> century, for example. For this reason, it cannot be argued that Valencia is an isolated example in Europe, and that the construction of feudal society, lords, feudal social relations and vassalage, charts, and feudal laws, fell to the pre-existing population, Mozarabs and Andalusí, who were ignorant of the material and mental mechanics of feudalism.

### 3.1. Migration and personal names in the south of the Crown of Aragon

One of the methods used in recent years to analyse the migration of Catalanian and Aragonese colonists to the areas of expansion of the new crown founded in 1137 is the study of the geographical distribution of anthroponymy. Although personal names were paid some research attention in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was generally undertaken from an erudite if not simply a genealogical approach. The study of medieval personal names, however, was to undergo a significant evolution in the 1990s with the coming together of different European, including Spanish, groups of specialists in the meetings organised by the Sorbonne professor Monique Bourin. Some of the resulting activities took place in Spanish universities, especially that in Valladolid, under the coordination of Pascual Martínez Sopena and other specialists.<sup>20</sup>

19. The bibliography for this is now very abundant, so only a handful of examples will be cited: Furió, Antoni. "Organització del territori i canvi social al País Valencià després de la conquesta cristiana". *Territori i Societat a l'Edat Mitjana. I*. Lleida: Universitat de Lleida, 1997: 131-166; Furió, Antoni. "Noblesa i poder senyorial al País Valencià en la Baixa Edat Mitjana". *Revista d'història medieval*, 8 (1997): 109-152; Torró, Josep. *El naixement d'una colònia. Dominació i resistència a la frontera valenciana (1238-1276)*. València: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 1999; García-Oliver, Ferran. *Terra de feudals. El País Valencià en la tardor medieval*. València: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1991; Bunrs, Robert I. *El Reino de Valencia en el siglo XIII (Iglesia y sociedad)*. Valencia: Del Cénia al Segura, 1982: 2 vols.; Guinot Rodríguez, Enric. *Los valencianos de tiempos de Jaime I*. València: Ed.Tirant lo Blanch, 2011.

20. Bourin, Monique, dir. *Genèse médiévale de l'Anthroponymie moderne*. Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 1989-1992, 2 vols.; Martínez Sopena, Pascual, ed. *Antroponimia y sociedad. Sistema de identificación hispano-cristianos en los siglos IX a XIII*. Santiago-Valladolid: Universidad de Santiago-Universidad de Valladolid, 1995; Bourin, Monique, ed. *L'anthroponymie. Document de l'histoire sociale des mondes méditerranéens médiévaux*. Rome: École Française de Rome, 1996; Bourin, Monique; Martínez Sopena, Pascual, eds. *Anthroponymie et migrations dans la chrétienté médiévale*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010.



The so-called 'anthroponomic revolution' of the 11<sup>th</sup> century was thus academically defined, leading to multiple studies throughout Europe. This development, however, was in no way limited to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries but covered the whole of the late medieval period. Briefly, this revolution involved the transition from single to composite names (Christian name + family name), the model that has survived to today. Obviously, the transformation was more complex than this, involving new features that have been thoroughly analysed and characterised by the specialists in each medieval territory.

In the case of the Iberian Peninsula, there are important regional differences, from Galicia and Portugal to Catalonia, but we can summarise it as follows: the changes began during the 12<sup>th</sup> century and can be said to be fully crystallised by the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, also in the Crown of Aragon. The process had remarkably similar features throughout the continent: it originates in the feudal class in France in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in Aragon, and it is grounded in the political and ideological wish to associate a toponym, that of the seigniorial demesnes, to a noble lineage. This phenomenon extended throughout the 12<sup>th</sup> century to other social classes, neither systematically nor formally, but following personal wishes, not least that to imitate the powerful. For this reason, it is first detected among urban groups, rural elites and only later, from the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, among craftspeople and the peasantry.

Another important aspect of the 'invention' of family names during this period is that there was not a single way to do it, and that the process was not directed by political authorities or institutions. In this way, the invention of family names was miscellaneous, and one of the tasks of medieval anthroponomy studies has been to systematise the different ways in which this was done to form name groups and compare them systematically. It is concluded that many non-nobles chose names that referred to the person's origins, as well as a wide variety of elements, such as names of animals, plants, and elements of physical geography (hills, rivers, the weather); physical and moral personal features were also used; in many cases, the family name involved the transformation of the name of the father (and rarely of the mother), in the family name of the children, that is, patronymics, which present significant regional variations (for instance, in Castile, Navarre and part of Aragon, the addition of the suffix *-ez*, *-iz*, *-oz* to the name of the father is frequent, *i.e.* Sánchez, Pérez, etc.); in other cases, the family name adopted the name of a trade, even if the following generations did not pursue this trade; finally, religious family names, names of saints, etc. were also adopted.

It is, finally, worth pointing out that most of these family names, especially those based on nicknames, trades, etc. generally linked with the language prevailing in their territory (I avoid the use of the term 'kingdom' because generally languages do not conform to political borders, both in the past and now), so that where Catalan was spoken the names of plants, geographical features, trades, etc. were drawn from that language; in Aragon Spanish was generally used, although in a sector of the Pyrenees of Huesca, Aragonese was preferred; Spanish in Castile; Galician in Galicia, and so on. In the case of the Crown of Aragon, since we encounter



closely related Romance languages, many of the words turned family names were similar in Catalan, Spanish, and even Aragonese and Occitan, so the root language is not always easy to establish, *e.g.*, Alegre, Abadia, among many others. But there are many that can be confidently attributed to a given language, such as Fuster/Carpintero, Coll o Puig/Montaña.

These studies have also detected changes over time. For instance, in the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> century more complex family names tended to simplify, with the suppression of the proposition 'de': *e.g.*, Guillem de Claramunt comes to be written down as Guillem Claramunt; and the loss of the 'sa' in many Catalanian family names, so that a Berenguer Saplana turns into Berenguer Plana. It has also been attested that the number of nickname-based family names increased over time, and that from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards they sometimes became the dominating family name in given areas or settlements.

On the other hand, in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries toponym-based family names were much more common than today, as clearly reflected in lists of residents of Aragonese towns. The reason is that many family names were adopted not in the place of origin of a person, but when they decided to emigrate, so that their toponym-based family name consolidated with the addition of the proposition 'de': *e.g.*, Ramon de Tarragona or Sancho de Saragossa. Similarly, many emigrants were known as 'the Valencian', 'the Catalanian', 'the French', 'the Spaniard', depending on the place to which this person arrived. But I want now to highlight the comparison of these family names in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

This, which was studied by Carlos Laliena in Aragon, Lluís To in Catalonia, Antoni Mas in Mallorca, and A. Rubio, M. Rodrigo and myself in Valencia,<sup>21</sup> and later by many other researchers in other regions, is not an exercise in erudition, or not even only an attempt to track migrations in Europe and the Crown of Aragon in the Middle Ages. In my case, my interest was with the study of the family names of immigrant settlers, and the languages they brought with them, an attempt to contribute historically to the debate of the origins of the Catalan spoken in much of the medieval Kingdom of Valencia, a debate that has engaged philologists and historians from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The primary idea was to assess if the 13<sup>th</sup>-century autochthonous population of Sarq al Andalus, both Andalusis and the hypothetical Mozarab population, spoke *Valencià* before James I's conquest between 1233 and 1245, as was held until the 1970s. The second step, given the lack of archaeological and written evidence for this linguistic phenomenon, was

---

21. Laliena Corbera, Carlos. "Los sistemas antroponímicos en Aragon durante los siglos XI y XII", *Antroponimia y sociedad. Sistemas de identificación hispano-cristianos en los siglos IX a XIII*, Pascual Martínez Sopena ed. Santiago-Valladolid: Universidad de Santiago-Universidad de Valladolid, 1995: 297-326; Tó Figueras, Lluís. "Antroponimia de los condados catalanes. (Barcelona, Girona y Osona, siglos X-XIII)", *Antroponimia y sociedad...: 371-394*; Mas Forners, Antoni, "L'onomàstica com a mitjà per a l'estudi de l'origen dels colons de Mallorca en el segle XIII", *XVI-XVII Jornades d'antroponímia i toponímia*. Palma de Mallorca: Universitat de les Illes Balears, 2005: 65-104; Rubio Vela, Agustín, Rodrigo Lizondo, Mateu. *Antroponímia valenciana del segle XIV. Nòmnes de la ciutat de València, 1368-69 i 1373* (prologue by Germà Colon. València-Barcelona: Institut Interuniversitari de Filologia Valenciana-Abadia de Montserrat, 1997; Guinot Rodríguez, Enric. *Els fundadors del regne de València...*



to focus in the languages brought in by repopulating colonists in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a process established by the historical science in the 1970s and 1980s.

And as languages are spoken by people, the reasoning is straightforward: let us identify the greatest possible number of Christian colonists arrived during this period based on lists of new settlers in the recently created Kingdom of Valencia. In order to minimise the deleterious effects of the incomplete nature of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century record, I decided to compile and publish not only the list of names of the colonists who settled in approximately 50 Valencian localities, from Morella and Vinaròs to Oriola, in the early colonisation period in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but also lists dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, whenever possible: These are sometimes the earliest known lists of residents, and were generally produced with fiscal purposes. These lists, some of which post-dated the earliest ones by one and a half centuries, were also valuable in that they indicated what people had managed to settle long-term, and thus allow me to compare long survivals and changes undergone since the early *Repartiment* in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century.

Similarly, since most documents do not specify when an immigrant arrived in Valencia, I decided to use the patronymic methodology developed in the 1990s to track migratory movements in the Middle Ages, like Carlos Laliena had done for Aragon in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Lluís To for Catalonia and Pascual Martínez Sopena for Castile-León. Therefore, in addition to the long lists of colonists settling in Valencia I needed similar lists from Catalonia, Aragon, Navarre and Occitania to establish parallels and differences, and compare the anthroponomy of the first 150 years of the Kingdom of Valencia with these. This comparative study allowed me to identify family names and link them with other regions, mostly Catalonia and Aragon. Especially, the vast majority of toponym-based family names had links with Catalonia and Aragon, whereas in these regions most family names were local in character. This, put together, is suggestive of migration.

Based on this identification and on the different origins of family names inspired by nicknames, personal names, trades, etc. in each kingdom's language (Catalan, Castilian, Aragonese), I calculated the percentage of settlers from these regions to arrive to Valencia. It is necessary to emphasise one aspect that superficial readers of my book have criticised, despite the fact that my conclusions are crystal-clear: my study establishes trends and approximate percentages, *not* personal genealogies of specific individuals. It is perfectly possible that someone called Guillem de Vic came to Valencia from Aragon and someone called Eximén de Terol did so from Catalonia. But what seems impossible is that all or most people with Catalan or Aragonese names came from the other kingdom, especially because 13<sup>th</sup>-century lists of residents in Catalonia and Aragon demonstrate that most people in these kingdoms had local family names, often from the northern districts, which clearly points to an early process of migration in the 12<sup>th</sup> century or short-range migratory movements.

The conclusion of this study is that in most areas there were more colonists with a Catalan name than with an Aragonese name, and Navarre and a few Castilian names can also be found. Overall, about two thirds of names were Catalan, but in



areas near the Plana de Castelló, Morella and Vinaròs, they accounted for 90% of colonists. In the repopulated areas in the modern province of Teruel, except in Ports de Morella, the proportions were reversed, in localities such as Alpont, Xèrica, etc. There was not a neat division in migration: Catalonians in the coast and Aragonese in the interior, but majorities and minorities that mixed and formed combined families in the following generations, so that a few years later they were no longer Catalonians or Aragonese, but Valencians.

From that point on, the interpretation of the philological meaning of these family names enters a new field of research that does not affect the fact of their migration to Valencian lands in the south of the medieval Crown of Aragon. They have to do with the Catalanian language in Catalonia and with Castilian and Aragonese in Aragon, in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, and have nothing to do with Mallorca and Valencia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, because these names did not emerge, as the revisionists hold, in these territories during the Andalusi period.

#### 4. The pseudo-historical trend of the revisionist group

After this, further arguments appear redundant, because the revisionist explanations produced by associates of the *Real Academia de Cultura Valenciana* lack this methodological support, use of the sources and general understanding. It is necessary, however, to point out the historical errors and some of the inconsistencies in which they fall time and time again. For instance, they keep using the term *Reconquista* in its most out of date and ideology-driven sense, as a fight against a foreign invader. In several passages of his book, X. Ballester continues using it as a process of liberation from the Islamic domination, or the '*yugo islámico*'.<sup>22</sup>

##### 4.1. The rejection of the violence of conquest

In the specific case of Valencia, there is a tendency to minimise the acts of violence between Christian settlers and the Andalusi population, now *mudejar*, who were forcefully made subjects of a Christian feudal state. This is not innocent: what they aim for is to reduce to the minimum the impact of the arrival of Christian settlers, so as to be able to argue that these (and the invisible Mozarabs), were the majority population group in the Middle Ages.<sup>23</sup>

However, this matter has been thoroughly researched in recent years. We must distinguish between the earliest period of control over the region following James I's conquest between 1233 and 1245, and the long period of resistance posed by

22. 'Islamic yoke'. Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 10 i 13.

23. Gómez Bayarri, José Vicente. "La transición del mundo musulmán al cristianismo en el Reino de Valencia". *Serie histórica (Academia de Cultura Valenciana. Aula de Humanidades y Ciencias)*, 8 (1991): 1-183; Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 22 i 99-100 among others.





Andalus/Mudejar in the following two decades, until the 1280s, already during the reign of Peter the Great, when a number of semi-autonomous Muslim districts still existed in the southern half of the kingdom. Obviously, this was not a struggle against great armies, but against rural communities that responded to the violent attitude of many of the Christian colonists, who were, to a large extent, moved by their wish to capture Muslims and sell them as slaves, legally or otherwise. Slavery was part and parcel of feudal colonisation, as J. Torró has shown for Valencia and A. Mas for Mallorca.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4.2. *The substitution of population*

Another recurrent argument in revisionist works is to reject the significant arrival of Christian colonists to Valencia and the rest of the south of the Crown of Aragon. A. Ubieto already argued that Catalan colonists only accounted for 5% of the population of the kingdom in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a figure not supported by any evidence. This goes together with denying that significant groups of Andalus inhabitants were expelled so that their land could be distributed among Catalan and Aragonese settlers.<sup>25</sup>

These arguments are unsupported by the written or the archaeological evidence, but they have been repeated systematically by members of the revisionist group, such as A. Cabanes, V. Gómez Bayarri and X. Ballester, all of whom are members of the *Real Academia de Cultura Valenciana*.<sup>26</sup> For instance, referring to the city of Valencia, again without documentary proof, Ballester writes that, following the conquest in September 1238, half of the pre-existing population remained (he does not say whether they were Andalusis or Mozarabs), and that this is demonstrated by the fact that: *‘obviamente, es más sencillo pensar que aproximadamente [más de] la mitad de la población ya residente permaneció en la Ciudad, permaneció en sus casas, antes que suponer que más de la mitad de la Ciudad quedo vacía y además sin ser objeto de distribución alguna’*.<sup>27</sup>

24. Torró Abad, Josep. “Colonització feudal i resistència andalusina al regne de València: la frontera meridional, 1238-1277”. *Butlletí de la Societat Catalana d’Estudis Històrics*, 8 (1997): 133-141; Torró Abad, Josep. “Las sociedades de cabalgada y el apresamiento de cautivos (c. 1230- c. 1330)”, *La violencia en la sociedad medieval*, Esther López de Ojeda, ed. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2019: 45-83; Mas Forners, Antoni. *Esclaus i catalans: esclavitud i segregació a Mallorca durant els segles XIV i XV*. Ciutat de Mallorca: Leonard Muntaner editor, 2005; Jover, Gabriel; Mas, Antoni; Soto, Ricard. “Colonització feudal i esclavitud: Mallorca 1230-1350”. *Recerques: Història, economia i cultura*, 52-53 (2006): 19-48.

25. Ubieto Arteta, Antonio. *Orígenes del Reino de Valencia...*: II, 154.

26. Cabanes Pecourt, Desamparados. “Aspectos demográficos de la conquista: población pre-existente y repoblación en la ciudad de Valencia”, *En torno al 750 aniversario: antecedentes y consecuencias de a conquista de Valencia*. València: Generalitat Valenciana, 1989: vol. 1, 303-318; Gómez Bayarri, José Vicente. *Disposiciones forales sobre cristianos, sarracenos y judíos*. Valencia: Real Academia de Cultura Valenciana, 2015: 13; Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 81 and 99.

27. ‘Obviously, it is easier to think that over half of the existing population staid in the city, in their houses, instead of assuming that half the city was vacated and not subject to any distribution’. Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 81.



But no, it is not 'easier' because later documents are clear about the substitution of populations in the main towns and villages and also in some rural districts. In Tortosa, Lleida and the Lower Aragon<sup>28</sup> the material and written evidence come together to support this important process of expulsion, not only in the immediate aftermath of the 1233-1245 conquest, but until the 1280s, after the so-called 'second revolt' of Valencian Mudéjares in 1276-1278. Evidence for this are abandoned hamlets that were not reoccupied afterwards, the settlement pattern of Christian colonists favouring their concentration in towns and not disperse hamlets or farmsteads, as the written documents also confirm. These facts are confirmed by archaeology, which has identified multiple abandoned hamlets throughout the region. In addition, the written documents that record the distribution of land to Christian colonists in many Valencian towns, especially sales and lease contracts dated to the first century after the conquest (1233-1333), attest that there were neither Muslim nor Mozarab families in these areas, living alongside the new Catalanian and Aragonese settlers.<sup>29</sup>

One well-known result of these expulsions is the foundation of *villesnoves*, towns with a regular layout under royal or seigniorial jurisdiction, often operating as market towns, in which new settlers concentrated. One example that is particularly well known is that of Castelló de la Plana, founded by James I in 1259 based on an early distribution of land in the castle of the Magdalena and the hamlets of Benirabe and Benimahomet. The documents that record these events are available, as is the testimony of the local council in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, which explains the town's origins.<sup>30</sup> For this reason, X. Ballester's insistence in denying this foundation and claiming that Castelló was a major city inhabited by thousands of Mozarabs and Muslims before James I, that barely any colonist arrived at that time, and that most of the former population staid after the conquest, is frankly embarrassing.<sup>31</sup>

For its part, urban archaeology in the city of Valencia and other 13<sup>th</sup>-century Andalusi towns/*mudun* has repeatedly attested the substitution of population in Valencia, Dénia, Xàtiva, etc., sometimes even shocking cases of abandonment, for instance in Dénia, as authoritatively published by Josep Antoni Gisbert.<sup>32</sup>

---

28. Virgili Colet, Antoni. *Ad detrimentum Yspanie. La conquesta de Turtusa i la formació de la societat feudal (1148-1200)*. València: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona-Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2001; Sabaté Curull, Flocel. *Història de Lleida. Vol. 2. Alta edat mitjana*. Lleida: Pagès editor, 2003; Laliena Corbera, Carlos. *Sistema social, estructura agrària y organización del poder en el Bajo Aragon en la edad media (siglos XII-XV)*. Teruel, Instituto de Estudios Turolenses, 1987 (Second Edition, 2009).

29. Torró Abad, Josep. "Sobre ordenament feudal del territori i trasbalsaments del poblament mudèjar.: La Montanea Valencie (1286-1291)". *Afers: fulls de recerca i pensament*, 7 (1988-1989): 96-124; Torró Abad, Josep, "Expellere sarracenos". *Expulsions, reassentaments i emigració dels musulmans del regne de València després de la conquesta cristiana (1233-1348)*", *Poblacions rebutjades, poblacions desplaçades: (Europa medieval)*, Flocel Sabaté ed. Lleida: Universitat de Lleida, 2019: 71-103. The same process has been attested in Mallorca, Tortosa, Lleida and Saragossa, among others.

30. Guichard, Pierre; Sánchez Adell, José. "La carta puebla de Benimahomet y el poblamiento de Castellón en el siglo XIII". *Boletín de la Sociedad Castellonense de Cultura*, 60 (1984): 352-370.

31. Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...: 173-175*.

32. Gisbert Santonja, Josep. "Arqueología árabe en la ciudad de Denia: estado de la cuestión y perspectivas de investigación", *I Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española: actas*. Huesca: Diputación General de Aragón.



Archaeology is also clear in the city of Valencia, with the substitution of household accoutrements, such as table wares and kitchenware, which from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century onwards betray a cultural change between Islamic and feudal eating habits. In parallel, we can also refer to the systematic destruction of Muslim cemeteries in the districts of the Carme de València (Roterros), la Boatella (Mercat Central), etc., which were turned into *huertas*.<sup>33</sup>

### 4.3. About the concept of 'Repopulation' in medieval Valencia

Concerning the issue of 'repopulation', different interpretative criteria, and arguments, exist in the revisionist field, although they all share the same conclusion: that the arrival of colonists from Catalonia was negligible. In this way, J. V. Gómez Bayarri and D. Cabanes often use the traditional concept of the 'repopulation' of Valencia by Christians from the Crown of Aragon, arguing that they indeed organised the political, economic, and religious life in the kingdom, but they also claim that most of them were of Aragonese origin, based on the land allotments made in Valencia's *Llibre del Repartiment*.<sup>34</sup>

X. Ballester, however, has gone a few steps further down the pseudo-historical path, by simply denying that any significant number of settlers, from both Catalonia and Aragon, arrived to Valencia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century at all, totally contradicting the arguments of his colleague Desamparados Cabanes. He also claims that medievalist research about population charters, the foundation of towns and the allocation of land, the previous expulsion of their existing inhabitants, all of it, is the result of a misinterpretation, an invention resulting from a poor reading of the sources. He claims, in fact, that most of the people that feature in these documents, the beneficiaries of the population charters, were the Mozarabs that had already been there during the Andalusi period, as well as the Andalusis themselves, as some of the so-called population charters were written for them. According to his logic, no Christians could repopulate what was already populated (sic). In order to demonstrate this, he uses several chapters to clarify the meaning of the Latin word '*populare*', to explain, for the benefit of the medievalists, what a population charter is, and to argue that the Crown of Aragon applied the same model of 'repopulation' implemented in the north Douro valley in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>35</sup>

---

Departamento de Educación y Cultura, 1986: III, 181-200.

33. Martí, Javier, Roca, Lourdes. "Obra pública y espacio doméstico en la urbanización del sector meridional de Madīnat Balansiya", *Historia de la Ciudad, IV: Memoria urbana*. Valencia: Colegio de Arquitectos de Valencia, 2005: 53-68; Pascual Pacheco, Josefa. "La necrópolis islámica de l'Almoina (Valencia): primeros resultados arqueológicos", *III Congreso de Arqueología Medieval*. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1992: II, 406-413.

34. Cabanes Pecourt, María Desamparados. "La repoblación de los aragoneses en Valencia", *Bajar al reino: relaciones sociales, económicas y comerciales entre Aragon y Valencia: siglos XIII-XV*. Esteban Sarasa ed. Saragossa: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2017: 13-30.

35. Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 169 and following.



His approach is perhaps best characterised by his argument that the ‘repopulation’ idea is a manipulation by ‘Catalanist’ scholars, because the first to use it in Spain was the Valencian philologist Manuel Sanchis Guarner in 1933 (sic), who was therefore the ‘inventor’ of the meaning of the term as the arrival of people to a depopulated area. This concept would later be pursued by his ‘minions’ (sic),<sup>36</sup> including, naturally, the father of the ‘Guinotista theory’ or ‘Guinotista hypothesis’.<sup>37</sup> Merely a few sentences suffice to dismiss the enormous work undertaken by the field of medievalism around the issue of the repopulation throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 4.4. About population charters and ‘pressura’ in the Late Middle Ages

X. Ballester also takes a reductionist approach to this type of document and the information that they provide, because his aim is to ‘demonstrate’ that most of the places that were granted a population charter kept their existing population and language. In order to argue this, he uses the works published by J. M. Font Rius in the 1960s on Catalanian population charters and franchises, but without realising that this author used the term to group a range of medieval documents which, referring to different social and economic realities, mark the foundation, but also the renovation and/or confirmation of a human group, sometimes peasants, but also urban populations and even Mudejares, from a wide social and legal perspective. This is the same concept used by M<sup>a</sup>. Luisa Ledesma in Aragon and myself in Valencia.<sup>38</sup>

In the same vein, he goes on to explain what the ‘real’ repopulations are, and to ask medievalists to apply his ideas in the Crown of Aragon. However, any specialist soon realises the chronological, social, and political incoherence of his ‘alternative’ view, because he presents the example posed by Ávila and its hinterland in the 11<sup>th</sup> century as the model to study the repopulation of the Kingdom of Valencia in the 13<sup>th</sup>. What is more: he does so based on information drawn from an encyclopaedia

36. Expression used by Professor Ballester to refer to the publications of the university-based medievalists that work on the Crown of Aragon Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 157.

37. ‘On the other hand, we have already challenged the term and concept [repopulation] in previous pages, concept and term used by Guinot in its most traditional sense, but expanding its semantic field—that is, making it more flexible and therefore, potentially increasing the scope of the error—by making this repopulation last for a good deal longer. In this case, a repopulation hypothesis, we are before an ultra-repopulation hypothesis’ (*‘Por otra parte, ya hubimos impugnado el termino [de repoblació] y consecuentemente el concepto de repoblación en capítulos anteriores, concepto y termino que empero Guinot sigue en su concepción más tradicional, dilatando su semántica en cierto sentido —es decir, haciéndola más dúctil e incrementando potencialment sus deficiencias—al prolongar la repoblación durante bastante más tiempo. En este caso más que una hipótesis repoblacionista tenemos, podría decirse, una hipótesis requeterrepoblacionista [sic]’*), Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 167.

38. Font Rius, Josep Maria. *Cartas de población y franquicia de Cataluña*. Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1969-1983: 3 vols.; Ledesma Ramos, Maria Luisa. *Cartas de población del reino de Aragon en los siglos medievales*. Saragossa: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1991; Guinot Rodríguez, Enric. *Cartes de poblament medievals valencianes*. Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, 1991.



published in instalments in 1999, the *Nueva Historia de Castilla y León*.<sup>39</sup> And this is not simply a confusion, for he argues that repopulations are best studied in this context because ‘poseemos sobre aquellos una gran información y una casuística en principio más variada’<sup>40</sup> than in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Valencia. Other examples posed are the case of León in 856, Zamora in 894, and the repopulation of Astorga and Amaya by King Ordoño, Toro and Burgos by Alphonse III, etc. (sic).<sup>41</sup>

A last demand concerning this issue is for medievalists to begin studying the repopulation methods used in the Douro valley, which medievalists studying the 13<sup>th</sup> century have not considered. He refers to the *pressura* and the *scalio* as private forms of private land occupation, according to him spontaneous and uncontrolled, which could alter our perspective of Christian migration to Valencia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>42</sup> He accuses medievalists of presenting a hierarchical explanation of land distribution and colonisation in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a process directed by the feudal powers, the monarchy, the Church and the nobility. But he fails to understand that this is in fact what characterises the process in the 1200s, after the strengthening of the power of the Crown and the widespread ‘seigniorialisation’ of the new Kingdom of Valencia and Mallorca slightly earlier. In this process, the Crown first distributed land among the nobility and, in a second stage, settlers arrived after agreeing the cession of land and houses in writing, because these were fully matured feudal societies, unlike the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> examples with which he wants us to compare them.

---

39. ‘True repopulation, and not simply the distribution of land ownership among the victorious host, involves a more complex and detailed organisation than a mere list of settlements. For instance, the repopulation of Ávila in the 11<sup>th</sup> century was officially entrusted by Alphonse XI of León (1040-circa 1109) to his son-in-law Raymond of Burgundy (1070-1107), and numerous details about it are known thanks to the so-called *Chronicle of the Population of Ávila*, which was probably written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century’ [‘Las verdaderas repoblaciones y no el mero reparto de tierras entre huestes victoriosas comportan una organización más compleja y detallada que la mera lista de asentamientos otorgados. Por ejemplo, la repoblación de Ávila en el siglo XI fue encargada oficialmente por Alfonso VI de León (1040-circa 1109) a su yerno Raimundo de Borgoña (1070-1107) conociéndose numerosos detalles gracias a la denominada Crónica de la Población de Ávila, redactada posiblemente en el siglo XIII....’]. Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 61 and 75. The work cited is a popular work entitled *Nueva Historia de Castilla y León*, Cristina Granda Gallego, Margarita Cantera Montenegro, Jesús Cantera Montenegro, eds. Madrid: Editorial Páramo, 1999.

40. ‘the record and casuistry are in principle richer’. Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 169.

41. Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 169.

42. [What the historians have traditionally referred as repopulation ... in fact covers a wide variety of practices. However, for the new Kingdom of Valencia, the immigration theory presents a much more simplistic perspective by simply considering a regulated practice with the arrival of foreigners to a totally deserted location, and under the official direction of the authorities’ [‘El fenómeno tradicionalmente denominado repoblación por los historiadores... encubre en realidad numerosas y variadas modalidades. Sin embargo, al menos para el nuevo reino de Valencia la teoría inmigracionista ofrece una imagen del fenómeno mucho más monolítica y simplificada al considerar en la práctica que se trata siempre de una ocupación ordenada y reglada de un lugar totalmente despoblado y realizada por gente venida desde fuera del reino y cuyo asentamiento cuenta con la sanción oficial por parte de las autoridades’], Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 171.



#### 4.5. *The implantation of a feudal society*

Finally, the limitations of this revisionist group to explain the operation of the feudal society that conquered, distributed and settled Sarq al Andalus in the 13<sup>th</sup> century are clear. Concerning Ballester, perhaps because he is accustomed to the study of proto-historical societies in Classical Antiquity, he is not aware of the characteristics of the Late Medieval Crown of Aragon. For instance, in his book he repeatedly treats the distribution of land grants to nobles, knights, peasants and craftsmen equally. They are all put in the same bag, and their settlement and residence in Valencia and their mutual social relationships are treated on the same level, while the crucially different status of Christian settlers and Andalusi/Mudejar groups is dismissed. This is important, because none of the statements made in the book about the identity of the beneficiaries of the *Llibre del Repartiment*, following Ubieto, Cabanes and Gómez Bayarri, take into consideration that some of them were nobles and knights, many of whom did not come to reside in their new land, in contrast with the *'riffraff'*, as he calls them, the veritable protagonists of the Catalanian and Aragonese colonisation of Valencia.

His very concept of medieval seigniorial rights and feudal social relations is mistaken. For instance, X. Ballester goes into long arguments to discuss whether if the lord of a land was from Aragon, all his vassals must also speak Castilian-Aragonese, and vice versa with Catalanian lords. He gives the example of the Aragonese Artal de Luna and the donation of the castle and towns of Paterna and Manises by James I. Ballester gives a couple of genealogical references to demonstrate that this noble was Aragonese through and through, reaching the conclusion that it is impossible that Catalanian and Aragonese settlers brought their Romance languages to Valencian lands within the frame of colonisation in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, because the lord was from Aragon, but *Valencià* had been spoken in Paterna for centuries.<sup>43</sup>

The case is that his obsession with the idea of whether in the 13<sup>th</sup> century lords in the Crown of Aragon 'forced' his vassals to speak his own language, and fighting such a notion, makes him waste many pages of the book in comparing lists of Aragonese and Catalanian nobles that received demesnes in the *Repartiment* of Valencia, and the charters granted by the Crown, the nobility and the Church in this period. This aspect has been subject of study, from an institutional perspective for decades, but has nothing to do with the language spoken by the colonists that migrated to Valencia.<sup>44</sup>

---

43. 'Let us say that the first entries in the document regarded as key by the repopulationists themselves contradict their arguments. For a theory, it is not a very way to start' [*Digamos que ya el primero de los registros contenidos en el documento esgrimido como clave por los propios repoblacionistas contradecía ab ovo y flagrantemente su tesis. Para una teoría no era el mejor comienzo...*], Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 104 and 145-146.

44. He has chapters entitled 'Discrepancies between language and the origin of lords' [*Discrepancia entre lengua y origen de señoríos*] [by origin he means that the king had granted the land to an Aragonese or Catalanian lords, but this is not well explained]; 'The discrepancy language-lords in figures' [*La discrepancia lengua-señoríos en cifras*]; 'The discrepancy between language and origin of charters'



Another evidence of the lack of training by the people that indulge in pseudo-history is that they fail to use the correct historical terminology. Often, these works betray a poor understanding of feudal medieval societies, for instance with the use of terms specific to earlier or later historical periods. For instance, the terms ‘lord’ and ‘vassals’ are incorrectly used, and a deficient understanding of the social relations implied by feudalism are showcased by their use of the term proletariat, or simply *riffraff*, to refer to the urban and rural popular classes.<sup>45</sup> This is also made manifest by the terminology used to refer to seigniorial and alodial or emphyteutic property in the Late Middle Ages, which fails to identify correctly the legal and economic categories of the peasantry, etc.

#### 4.6. *The false division of the repopulation process: Catalonians in the coast and Aragonese in the interior*

Another example of the false claims made by X. Ballester is that he argues that in my book *Els fundadors del regne de València* I continue defending a dual process of repopulation in Medieval Valencia, in which the Catalan colonists settled near the coast and the Aragonese ones in the interior regions, as most authors had erroneously held during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is clear that he has not understood my book and the work of other university-based medievalists, which abandoned this idea thirty years ago. The names of these colonists make it clear that both Catalanian and Aragonese settlers came to all regions, both in the interior and the coast. The regional differences are only a matter of overall proportions during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries: in most regions of the new kingdom most settlers were from Catalonia, while the colonists that arrived to the nearby regions in Teruel and Cuenca came mostly from Aragon. Ontinyent, Albaida, Bocairent, Cocentaina and Alcoy are not exactly in the coast.

Furthermore, he accuses medievalists of saying that this distribution (Catalan-coast/Aragonese-interior) was compulsory. That Catalan-speakers were given land in the coast and Aragonese-speaking ones in the interior, and that both were forbidden to settle in the wrong region. Said accusations are followed by a diatribe to fight these false arguments, vigorously and over several chapters, without citing a single university-based researcher. He even asks if we think that the Aragonese were

---

[‘Discrepancia entre lengua y origen de los fueros otorgados’]; ‘Charters-language: final conclusions’; [‘Fueros-lengua: la proyección final’]. Ballester, Xaverio. *El origen de la lengua...*: 108-117.

45. ‘It may be convenient to emphasise the different bias of the immigrationist theory, through which those noble aristocratic warriors, the elitist fathers of the nation, were replaced in the repopulationist ideas by humble people, farmers and craftsmen, the proletariat. The epic of the conquering knights is replaced by a migration *riffraff*’ [‘Quizá sea pertinente subrayar el diferente sesgo social de la teoría inmigracionista por la que aquellos nobles, guerreros, señores y señorías, aristócratas padres elitistas de la patria y protagonistas de la teoría repartimentista, son ahora substituidos en el ideario repoblacionista por gentes humildes, plebeyos agricultores y artesanos, por las fuerzas del proletariado. La épica de los caballeros conquistadores es substituida por la crónica de una *chusma* emigratoria’], Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 159.



stupid enough to meekly accept only land in the interior, which is less productive than the coastal irrigated properties.<sup>46</sup>

#### 4.7. *The falsehood about the forced change of language of the Andalusí local population*

Another falsehood is his statement that university-based researchers hold that the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Kingdom of Valencia witnessed the forced linguistic conversion of Muslims —and he adds Mozarabs and Jews too— by Christian colonists directed by James I's government, Catalan being imposed as the only language. Andalusí groups, and the alleged Mozarabs, were compelled to change the language they spoke (nothing is said about the parallel imposition of Spanish in some districts). In addition, this would have had to be enforced in a very short time because, according to him, documents from Alcoy dated to 1263 and from Segorbe from 1251, the language of the Andalusí and/or Mozarabs (this is unclear), was *Valencià* in the former and Spanish in the latter.<sup>47</sup> And that this, from the point of view of the history of languages is impossible: that Catalanian and Aragonese colonists could not teach Spanish and Catalan to the Andalusí and Mozarabs so fast for them to write it to the perfection reflected by the documents from Alcoy and Segorbe; that this would have been an extraordinary occurrence.<sup>48</sup>

In fact, this argument is easily answered: the 13<sup>th</sup>-century documents that he cites were not written by Mozarabs or Andalusí, but by Catalanian and Aragonese colonists, as university-based researchers have been saying for many years now. That the pre-existing inhabitants changed their language, willingly or otherwise, is a fallacy. It is just that things in the Kingdom of Valencia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century are the opposite of what he says. We may recall Robert I. Burns's research about the foundation by the Dominicans in the 1250s and 1260s of two schools of Arabic in Valencia and Xàtiva, so that their preachers could evangelise among Andalusí

---

46. 'Against what would seem reasonable, there is not a single document to prove that such a peculiar organisational principle was followed: Aragonese-interior; Catalanians-coast, nor the language of the new settlers is suggestive of such separation' [*Contra lo que cabría esperar, no existe documento histórico alguno que contemple detalle organizativo tan importante como lo hubiese sido tal insólita distribución territorial —aragoneses, interior; catalanes, costa— según el habla de los llegados ni avale segregación lingüística alguna*]; 'Strangely, the earliest secure documents indicate that the tacit prohibition for the Aragonese to go [in large numbers] to the coast was broken at the first opportunity, with Aragonese colonists moving in mass to the coastal territories' [*Extrañamente la tácita prohibición de que los aragoneses se dirigieran [mayoritariamente] a la costa se habría infringido con la primera documentación sólida y segura, la cual presenta a los aragoneses dirigiéndose en aluvión hacia los territorios costeros*], Ballester, Xaverio. *El origen de la lengua...*: 75 and 87, respectively. 47. Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 38-44.

48. 'Such an extraordinary event as the radical change of language of a whole population would surely have required considerable organisation on the part of James I, but in the vast records issued by this king's chancellery there is not the slightest reference to this' [*...un hecho tan extraordinario como el drástico cambio de lengua para toda una población hubiese requerido seguramente una explícita organización por parte de Jaime I, pero en toda la vasta documentación diplomática y cancelleresca concerniente al reinado de este monarca no hay la mínima referencia a ello*], Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 74.





and Mudejares in Valencia.<sup>49</sup> Unsuccessfully, as it happens, at least in terms of conversions. Why would these preachers need to know Arabic if the 'Saracens' had been speaking in *Valencià* or Spanish for centuries?

#### 4.8. *The falsehood about the long duration, nearly two centuries, of the process of the 'birth of Valencià'*

A final falsehood, followed by an attack on arguments that have never been posed by medievalists, is his claim that in *Els Fundadors del regne de València* I argue that *Valencià* emerged in the new kingdom after a long genesis spanning 1233 and 1421, and that this is demonstrably false, as shown by a court document from Alcoy in this language, dated to 1263.

His arguments make no sense because they are based on a false premise. Nowhere in my work do I write about this long process of emergence of *Valencià*. Much to the contrary, as the conclusions repeatedly state, the 'Valencian languages or dialects' (not in a philological, but geographical sense) emerged with the first generation of settlers, with the coexistence in the same settlements of colonists from different areas in the Crown of Aragon. The technical term that I employ is 'crucible'. Colonists speaking different varieties of 13<sup>th</sup>-century Catalan, Aragonese and Spanish mixed in the same places, leading to a process of levelling out that has been analysed from a philological point of view. The Valencian dialects thus appeared with the birth of the second generation of colonists, all within the 13<sup>th</sup> century, that is, during a single generation.

Apparently, this author is again mistaken, resulting in incorrect conclusions. The source of this seems to be that in my book, to illustrate that the place names of many settlements did not change in the *longue durée*, I added the earliest full fiscal lists, which date to the late 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. But this does not mean that there was a 150-long linguistic transition.

## 5. About Valencian Mozarabs in the 13<sup>th</sup> century

This group of authors that wish to 'revise' the issue of the medieval repopulation of the Crown of Aragon, and of the whole Iberian Peninsula, is based on the premise that in al-Andalus the Mozarabs —Christians that came under Muslim rule in the 8<sup>th</sup> century— were the predominant group in numerical terms all the way to the Christian conquest. They also claim that these Arabised Christians (Mozarabs, that is, also from a linguistic perspective) not only held on to their Christian faith, but also to their respective languages, which developed from Latin between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the

---

49. Burns, Robert I. "L'afrentament cristiano-musulmà: el somni de la conversió en el segle XIII", *Moros, Cristians i Jueus en el Regne Croat de València*. Valencia: Eliseu Climent editors, 1987: III.



8<sup>th</sup> centuries, including the Portuguese, the Spanish, the Catalan and the *Valencià*. In this way, Mozarabs were the most numerous social group in the regions of New Catalonia, Tortosa and Lleida, and in the southern half of the Kingdom of Aragon (from Saragossa and the Ebro valley to Teruel), until the mid- or second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, as well as in the Balearics and the new Kingdom of Valencia until their conquest by James I in the 1230s. In combination with their argument that barely any Catalonians and Aragonese colonists came, this means that the southern half of the Crown of Aragon, from the Ebro River southwards, in the Late Middle Ages was mostly populated by the successors of these Mozarabs.<sup>50</sup>

The thing is that none of these authors have been able to present archival documents or archaeological evidence to demonstrate the presence of Mozarabs in these territories from the mid-12<sup>th</sup> and through the 13<sup>th</sup> century. For this reason, they only support their argument in 20<sup>th</sup>-century historical and philological bibliographic references, some of which are, no doubt, prestigious, always predating the 1980s, when the field of medievalism in the former Crown of Aragon underwent a profound transformation with the progressive arrival of new historiographical trends from Europe and the systematic investigation of archives. It is also worth pointing out that these authors, by avoiding any reference from the last three decades, have dismissed changes undergone by the interpretation of ‘Mozarabs’ and the ‘Mozarab languages’ in the field of Catalan philology because of our increased understanding of the historical process.<sup>51</sup>

As noted above, the first comprehensive attempt to find the trace of the Mozarabs in Valencia was L. Peñarroja’s, who revised the data compiled by F. J. Simonet in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The latest reference corresponds to that alluding to the monks of the monastery of Sant Vicent de la Roqueta in Valencia, who fled to Aragon to escape the persecution of the Almoravids in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century. Not a single document dated to between this event and 1233 is presented.<sup>52</sup>

Recently, X. Ballester has argued for the Mozarab origin of the bearers of a dozen names featuring in the *Llibre del Repartiment de València* (1237-1249), because of the presence of a Valencian toponym in the family name. For reasons of space, I shall only refer to his first example: Adam de Paterna, whom James I granted the Castle of Segart in 1249.<sup>53</sup> What he seems to ignore is that Adam de Paterna was

50. It is worth pointing out that Professor Antonio Ubieto, who was always more serious when it came to look at archival records, always rejected the continuity of Mozarabs in Valencia until the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

51. For instance, Colon Doménech, Germà. “Visió romàntica sobre alguns “mossarabismes” del català”, *Actes del Novè Col·loqui Internacional de Llengua i Literatura Catalanes*. Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 1993: II, 253-299; Colon Doménech, Germà. “El mossarabisme, encara: la instrumentalització ideològica del romanç andalusí”. *Caplletra: revista internacional de filologia*, 51 (2011): 135-142; Veny Clar, Joan. “Els pseudomossarabismes”. *Caplletra...*: 183-203. See also a criticism of the historiographical tradition of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Catalan philology in Sistac, Ramon. “Dels límits del concepte lingüístic de mossàrab. A propòsit del romanç andalusí de la Catalunya nova”. *Caplletra...*: 143-155.

52. Peñarroja, Leopoldo. *Cristianos bajo el Islam...*: 144-152.

53. This shows that at least in 1249 there are donations to individuals that were not foreigners to the new kingdom, but local: from Paterna (Valencia) [‘...testimoniando así que al menos para el año 1249 hay donaciones a individuos no procedentes de fuera del nuevo reino sino locales: de Paterna (Valencia)’], Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes*



not from Valencia, but an Aragonese called Adam de Castellar, who arrived with Artal de Luna (first lord of Paterna), and first *alcaide* of the town. This is well known following a study by Robert I. Burns,<sup>54</sup> who demonstrated with solid documentary evidence that Adam was not a Jew, as had been argued, that he used both names and that he loaned the king money between 1240 and 1260, taking the castle as security.<sup>55</sup>

Therefore, since no more historical or archaeological evidence can be presented for these alleged Mozarabs in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, he falls back on ‘common sense’: since so few colonists arrived, there must have been many Mozarabs in late medieval Valencia. He claims that the fact that no documents exist is explained by the lack of conflict between Mozarabs and the Catalanian and Aragonese colonists, because the locals spoke *Valencià* and Spanish, so they all understood one another. Similarly, they cannot be identified in the documents through their family names because these were virtually identical to those of the Catalonians, as both languages were similar.

About this last point, it is worth recalling that the model followed by Christian names in al-Andalus was drastically different from the European model that develops from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, within the framework of nascent feudalism. The personal name was Arabised, following the *nisba* model, and often only family names remained in Romance, as research has abundantly demonstrated.<sup>56</sup> In contrast, the double name system was characteristic of the Christian kingdoms and feudal society. And since al-Andalus did not witness a feudal revolution, and the feudal system did not develop, there was no anthroponomic revolution and the double name system did not become widespread. Therefore, for Ballester to claim

*de la lengua...*: 123. Donació al *Llibre del Repartiment del regne de València*, edition by Maria Desamparados Cabanes and Ramon Ferrer Navarro. Saragossa: Editorial Anubar, 1979: II, 88 (reg. 539).

54. Burns, Robert I. “Jaume I i els jueus”, *Jaume I i els valencians del segle XIII*. Valencia: Eliseu Climent editors, 1981: 163-165.

55. Another error in his dozen or so examples is the identification the family name Castellar as referring to a Valencia toponym. He claims that this was a hamlet in the modern term of Valencia, but he seems to ignore that this was founded in the Marquis of Castellar in the 1860s to drain and sow rice just outside the Albufera. Another ‘Mozarab’ is Garcia Petri de Figuerola, who received the hamlet of Burjassot from James I on 1 August 1237. He also does not know that on 17 July 1258 the king exchanged Burjassot for several properties in the Aragonese Nocito valley, where this person was from. ACA, Cancelleria, registre 9, f. 56r. There are also a couple of misreading of the toponymic family name.

56. Aguilar Sebastián, Victoria; Rodríguez Mediano, Fernando. “Antroponimia de origen árabe en la documentación leonesa (siglos VIII-XIII)”, *El Reino de León en la Alta Edad Media, t. VI*. León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1994; Aillet, Cyrille. “Anthroponymie, migrations, frontières: notes sur la “situation mozarabe” dans le nord-ouest ibérique (IXe-XIe siècle)”. *Annales du Midi*, 261 (2008): 5-32; Losa, António. “Moçarabes em território português nos séculos X e XI: contribuição para o estudo da antroponimia no “Liber Testamentorum” de Lorvão”, *Islão e arabismo na Península Ibérica. Actas do XI Congresso da União Europeia de Arabistas e Islamólogos*, Adel Sidarus ed. Évora: Universidade de Évora, 1986: 273-290; Martínez Sopena, Pascual. “L’anthroponymie de l’Espagne chrétienne entre le IXe et le XIIe siècle”, *Antroponimia y sociedad. Sistemas de identificación hispano-cristianos en los siglos IX a XIII*, Pascual Martínez Sopena ed. Santiago-Valladolid: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela - Universidad de Valladolid, 1995: 63-85; Molénat, Jean Pierre. *Campagnes et Monts de Tolède du XIIe au XVe siècle*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1997.



that the name of the Christian inhabitants in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Valencia and later were the name of Mozarabs that already inhabited the region in the Andalusi period, and not those of Catalanian and Aragonese colonists, is absolute nonsense and makes no historical sense whatsoever.

Finally, we may also emphasise the fact that archaeology, especially developed in the city of Valencia, has found not a single piece of material evidence of the houses, churches, and cemeteries of the alleged Mozarab population.

In conclusion, from the social, cultural, religious, and political points of view, the same questions asked by professor Ubieto in 1975 remain unanswered.<sup>57</sup> If such a society existed, how did they integrate in the new feudal model planted by the Crown of Aragon in Valencia? How did they interact with the ecclesiastical network of the new colonists? Why did they keep the Hispanic ritual instead of taking part in the far-reaching Gregorian reform? This conflict has been thoroughly studied for the case of Toledo in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, but not a single document exists about it in the cathedral of Valencia.

## 6. About the language of Andalusis (and ‘Mozarabs’) in the south of the Crown of Aragon, and the reception of Catalan and Aragonese Spanish

The second major issue for the revisionist group is linguistic in nature. They claim that in the whole of the southern Crown of Aragon, from Saragossa and Lleida to Mallorca and Valencia, the currently spoken languages, Spanish and various Catalan dialects, are the direct Latin-derived heirs of the languages spoken by the Hispano-Roman population in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. These languages are and were different, and they argue that this is the result of the influence of the local Iberian languages (what linguists call the ‘substratum’) that predate Romanisation in Lleida, Tortosa, Saragossa, Teruel and Valencia.

In this way, Ballester claims that in the south of the Kingdom of Aragon, in the modern province of Teruel, Spanish could not have been brought in by 12<sup>th</sup>-century immigrants, because in that case the people of Teruel would speak Pyrenean Aragonese, and not Spanish.<sup>58</sup> Concerning Catalonia, he makes a similar argument,

---

57. Ubieto Arteta, Antonio. “¿Mozárabes en Valencia?”, *Orígenes del Reino de Valencia*, t. I. Valencia: Anubar Ediciones, 1975: 105-122.

58. The only evidence he gives for this is an article written by a high-school teacher, José V. Gómez Bayarri: ‘Daroca (1142), Alcañiz (1157), Albarracín (1168-1170) ... were repopulated by people from the Pyrenees, ... against what the repopulationist theory holds [i.e., university-based researchers] in none of these places high-Aragonese was imposed. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same argument holds for Tortosa: people from Tortosa should speak ... eastern Catalan, as it fell within the sphere of expansion of Barcelona and Tarragona, but this is not the case’] [*se repoblaron con gente que descendieron de los Pirineos [...] las ciudades de Daroca (1142), Alcañiz (1157), Albarracín y Teruel (1168-1170), sin embargo y contra lo que por analogía postularía aquí la hipótesis repoblacionista, en ninguno de estos lugares se impuso el altoaragonés. Mutatis mutandis, el mismo razonamiento es válido para Tortosa: “la zona de Tortosa debía hablar [...] catalán oriental,*



but in this case by opposition, by rejecting that the expansion southwards of Old Catalonia and the granting of population charters in New Catalonia involved not only the settlement of colonists in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but also the arrival of the Catalan language.<sup>59</sup>

According to the revisionist ideas, the indigenous population continued speaking these local languages after the arrival of the Muslims in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. And this includes Muladis, converts to Islam as well as Christian Mozarabs all the way to the Christian conquest in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since the arrival of Catalonian and Aragonese colonists at that time was negligible, most of the population of the south of the Crown of Aragon, as far as Valencia, was constituted by these Mozarabs, who absorbed the few colonists that did arrive without these being able to affect the local characteristics of the local language.

In addition, Ballester claims, since there were villages in the new Kingdom of Valencia in which Spanish-Aragonese was spoken in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and still is, that this linguistic division is not the product of the ‘repopulation’ or the arrival of new languages brought in by colonists, but to linguistic frontiers that already existed in the Iberian period, and which have lasted for over two millennia. In fact, he also denies that, after the expulsion of the Moriscos from the Kingdom of Valencia in 1609 there was any movement to repopulate villages from which the inhabitants had been expelled by force.<sup>60</sup>

But on what are these statements, which are surreal from a historical perspective, based? Like with the Mozarabs, the only source are a few authors who investigated this hypothesis in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In parallel, they accuse the whole body of historians and philologists working in public universities in the former Crown of Aragon of a conspiracy.

---

*al quedar dentro de la órbita de influencia y expansión de Barcelona y Tarragona; sin embargo, tales premisas no se cumplen” Ballester, Xaverio. Los orígenes de la lengua...: 62. His source is Gómez Bayarri, José Vicente. La lengua valenciana hasta Jaime I. Particularidades del proceso histórico. Valencia: Diputació Provincial de Valencia, 1998: 164.*

59. ‘Population charters in Catalonia. On the other hand, should population charters automatically mean a true repopulation and, therefore, potentially, a linguistic repopulation, then most of Catalonia would have been linguistically repopulated too, owing to the numerous extant population charters in this territory ... should the immigrationist theory be correct, and given this abundance of population charters in Catalonia, it should also argue for the linguistic repopulation of this territory’ [‘*Cartas de población en Cataluña. Por otro lado, si las cartas de población llevaran de modo automático aparejada la existencia de una verdadera e integral repoblación y en consecuencia potencialmente una repoblación lingüística, entonces también casi toda Cataluña habría sido repoblada lingüísticamente, habida cuenta de las numerosas cartas de población existentes también para este territorio [...] la teoría inmigracionista, de ser cierta y habida cuenta de la existencia de numerosas cartas de población en Cataluña, debería suponer también alguna suerte de repoblación lingüística para este territorio...*’], Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 166.

60. ‘Therefore, if population charters proved repopulation of people and languages, we should have to argue, against all evidence in the Valencian case, that linguistic repopulation extended over the 17<sup>th</sup> century, e period in which population charters were still being issued’ [‘*Así pues, si las cartas pueblas fueran documentos probatorios de una repoblación de gentes y lenguas, cabría considerar, contra toda evidencia, que en el caso valenciano el fenómeno de la repoblación lingüística se extendió hasta el siglo XVII, período hasta el que se extienden las cartas pueblas valencianas*’], Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 167.



For many years, university-based medievalists and Arabists have been able to present solid, reasoned and, crucially, consistent with the social reality of the speakers of medieval languages in the Iberian Peninsula, evidence for the generalisation of Arabic dialects in al-Andalus from the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards and for the fact that, from the 12<sup>th</sup> century on, no Romance language was spoken even in the rural areas of al-Andalus. In Arabists working in the universities of Valencia and Alicante have demonstrated categorically that this was the case in Valencia, including Mikel de Epalza, Maria Jesús Rubiera and especially Carme Barceló, who has compiled documentary and epigraphic evidence of the use of Arabic in the Kingdom of Valencia from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the expulsion of the Moriscos.<sup>61</sup>

However, the revisionist group insists on tracing evidence for the ‘Romanisation’ of Valencian Andalusis. For instance, a recent contribution, which draws from previous works published online by amateurs, tries to present a few Muslim family names featuring in the *Llibre del Repartiment de València* as not Arabic- but (pre-conquest) Latin-based, for example ‘*Mahomat Allobrecati, Abdala Lobrecati, Mahomat Abinferrí*’ and a few similar spellings. What we must remember is that the presence of Latin words in parts of the *nisba* (‘personal names and family names’) of some inhabitants of al-Andalus between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century has been known for a long time. Indeed, the name of some of the so-called Muladi converts had this characteristic. It is again impossible to go into a comprehensive historiographical review, but one important feature of these groups was their interested but sincere conversion, not only to the Islamic religion but also to all Islamic cultural parameters, especially if they could be identified with Arabic features.<sup>62</sup> That is, the faith of the converted implied a thorough process of Arabisation, so it is obvious that this group did not keep their original Latin language throughout the Early Middle Ages.

The last historical nonsense advocated by this group is their claim that Christian documents written in Valencia in Catalan or Spanish (depending on whether most settlers in a given district were Catalanian or Aragonese) in the 13<sup>th</sup> century were not written by colonists. That they are not the official documents issued by the Crown, the municipalities created by James I or the notaries of the Templars, for instance, but documents issued by the Mozarab population that had lived there from before the feudal conquest.

Specifically, X. Ballester presents the books from the court of Alcoy, created in 1263, and the agreement endorsed by the noble Eximén Peres d’Arenós about the land boundary and water distribution rights between the terms of Segorbe and Altura, dated to 1251, as testimony of the language of the Mozarabs, *Valencià* in the

61. Barceló Torres, Carme. *Minorías islámicas en el País Valenciano: historia y dialecto*. Valencia: Universitat de València, 1984; Barceló Torres, Carme. “La llengua dels sarraïns valencians”, *Llengües en contacte als Regnes de València i de Múrcia (segles XIII-XV)*, Jordi Colomina, ed. Alacant: Universitat d’Alacant, 1995: 13-27; Epalza, Mikel de. “La islamización de Al-Andalus: mozárabes y neo-mozárabes”. *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos*, 23 (1985-86): 171-179.

62. Laliena Corbera, Carlos. “La antroponimia de los mudéjares: resistencia y aculturación de una minoría étnico-religiosa”, *L’anthroponymie. Document de l’histoire sociale des mondes méditerranéens médiévaux*. Roma: École Française de Rome, 1996: 143-166.



former case and Spanish in the latter.<sup>63</sup> In both instances the question is obvious: how could the Mozarabs or Andalusis from Segorbe and Alcoy apply, barely four or five years after the arrival of Christian colonists (1248 in Segorbe and 1258 in Alcoy), the legal and institutional principles of the monarchy and feudal municipalities, as these documents reflect? These were the same notarial principles and formulae being used at this time at the Crown of Aragon, and more relevantly still, they apply the legislation, even in the wording of the lawsuit, of the *Furs de València*, the Roman Law-based code that James I had given the colonists in Valencia. It is attested and is well known that when Mozarabs existed in al-Andalus, they never constituted municipalities, because the Andalusi state and society never used this urban institution. The legal system used by Mozarabs, for example in Toledo until the 11<sup>th</sup> century, was the old Visigothic *Fuero Juzgo*, while the Andalusis used the *Suna* and the *Xara*.

The books from the court of justice of Alcoy for the period 1263-1265, like those, dated to immediately after, from Cocentaina, as well as those, which he does not cite, from the city of Valencia, have been paid a good deal of attention by university-based Catalan philology, and this has resulted in multiple conferences, articles, and doctoral theses. The reason for this is that they stand as a fine example of different languages interacting in a migratory framework, and are a rich linguistic source, both concerning the Catalan of the early colonists and the linguistic convergence and contact of Catalan, Spanish and Aragonese in these towns.<sup>64</sup>

The reality studied by medievalists, philologists and historians of language in the former kingdom of Valencia is that, during the Late Middle Ages and until the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609, the kingdom witnessed a diversity of languages, Catalan/*Valencià*, Spanish/Aragonese and Arabic, apart from the Latin used by the authorities as the official language, which dismantles the idea of a human and linguistic dualism. The origins of these Romance languages lie with the migrant colonists arrived with the repopulation process in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, in the book *Els fundadors del regne de València* I put forth a reasonable explanation of the genesis of *Valencià* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and of its possible links with western Catalan, explanation that can probably be extrapolated to the Spanish-Aragonese spoken in a score of villages in the Valencian interior. The presence of colonists of different origins in the same villages and districts in the 13<sup>th</sup> century probably meant that first- and second-generation colonists still spoke their original languages, Catalan, Spanish, and Pyrenean Aragonese (which is different from the Spanish spoken by other Aragonese), all of which probably subdivided into various accents, lexical peculiarities, etc. based on the provenance of the speakers.

63. Ballester, Xaverio. *Los orígenes de la lengua...*: 33.

64. *Llengües en contacte als Regnes de València i de Múrcia (segles XIII-XV)*, Joan Colomina ed. Alacant: Universitat d'Alacant, 1995; Ponsoda, Jordi. *J. El català i l'aragonès en els inicis del Regne de València segons el Llibre de Cort de Justícia de Cocentaina (1269-1295)*. Alcoi: Editorial Marfil, 1996; Diéguez, Maria Àngels. *El Llibre de Cort de Justícia de València (1279-1321): estudi lingüístic*. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2001; Gómez Casal, Rosa. *Aproximación a la historia lingüística del Alto Palancia entre los siglos XIII y XVI*. Sogorb: Ayuntamiento de Segorbe, 1988.



But after a short time, two or three generations at most, all within the 13<sup>th</sup> century, this coexistence, including the birth of children, led to linguistic cross-breeding between colonists (let us keep genetics out of this, please), which was further exacerbated by the arrival of more Christian colonists who also contributed their language; there were also important loans from Arabic in some districts (the differences in the agricultural and irrigation-related lexicon in the Maestrat, l’Horta and the Ribera are remarkable, for example). Ultimately, this process led to a linguistic ‘evening out’, using Alarcos’s terminology,<sup>65</sup> which set up the fundamental features of the Valencian speech in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

### 6.1. In defence of historical reason

Once we get to this point, the only thing that can be said, loud and clear, is that history is not a matter of opinion, of hypotheses that cannot be supported by the evidence. As an academic discipline, it has been decades since we overcame the positivist and merely descriptive approach of simply repeating what the documents said. A scientific imperative for this new perspective is the construction of historical explanations which are as consistent as possible with the historical sources available, whatever their nature, not only archival documents but also archaeological evidence, artistic expressions, etc. In this regard, the historical discipline has evolved in parallel with the physical and natural sciences, trying to argue and test the historical explanation of past societies, ideas and thoughts, always with the aid of the sources.

It is true that the human and social sciences cannot aspire to laboratory-level testing, like the physical and natural sciences. But it is also true that considerable strides have been taken in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries to revise, perfect, and adjust the historical methodology. And it is also true that not all human and social sciences have advanced at the same pace, owing to methodological differences. The interpretation of the ideological, cultural, and psychological features of the characters and events described in a novel can be much more flexible than historical interpretation, for example. This has to do with the profile of each discipline.

What does exist in the historical discipline, like in the rest of human and social sciences, and in the physical sciences, is the ideology of researchers. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Europe and the world witnessed the birth of historiographical schools that reflected these cultural and political ideologies. And there also exists the academic will to revise and correct the drifts into which said ideologies have driven the construction of historical explanation.

The will of university-based historians to apply a rigorous method in their explanations, and to revise received wisdom, is clear. The way to do so is not to present hypotheses that cannot be proven, but to insert new evidence and data in the existing discourse and, therefore, recast it as required to reach consistent, and

---

65. Alarcos, Emilio. “La constitució del vocalisme català”, *Estudis Lingüístics catalans*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1983: 57-78.





completer and more diverse, explanatory models in which previously unknown facts can be fitted.

Hence the academic practice of citing the documents from which the information being incorporated to the historical discourse has been drawn, to confirm that the information being provided has not been built from thin air. The historical science has left simply copying facts or data written in a piece of paper or parchment far behind, producing more complex explanations that consider the context of past historical agents.

To use an example that is related to medievalism, it is not enough to say that there was a conquest, a distribution, and a repopulation of the south of the Crown of Aragon in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. We must explain, in the most consistent way possible and using myriad interconnected data, why it happened; why was there a war of conquest; why a large proportion of the pre-existing Andalusi population were brutally expelled; why the people from the north migrated to the south of the Crown of Aragon; why a feudal society replaced the Andalusi one; because there always will be angles that require clarification. These explanations need to be complex, because simple explanations explain nothing: 'Spain carried out a *Reconquista* of the Motherland, which had been invaded by Muslims'; or 'the war against al Qaeda began in 718 in Covadonga', as publicly stated in public by the once Spanish prime minister, Mr José María Aznar.<sup>66</sup>

---

66. Quoted by Sabaté, Flocel. "Frontera peninsular e identidad (siglos IX-XII)", *Las Cinco Villas aragonesas en la Europa de los siglos XII y XIII: de la frontera natural a las fronteras políticas y socioeconómicas (foralidad y municipalidad)*, Esteban Sarasa, ed. Saragossa: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2007: 47-94 (54-55).

