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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ritualizing citizenship in fifteenth-century Barcelona

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Abstract

This article analyses the ritualistic aspects of medieval citizenship through the example of fifteenth-century Barcelona. The unique citizenship sources of Barcelona allow for a detailed study of the negotiations between urban dwellers and their institutions in the making of citizens. Accordingly, the article examines how the witnesses of citizenship candidates and municipal authorities framed these negotiations in terms of ritual by promoting a codified notion of belonging that helped them all navigate the ambiguities of status and identification.

Introduction

On 8 May 1414, the merchant Guillem de Montcofa received a citizenship charter from Barcelona. As part of the procedure, he gave a solemn oath swearing 'with his hands on the Four Gospels, to respect, accomplish, and fulfil each of the precedent clauses and not to contradict them under any circumstances'.[1] With these grave words, Guillem was essentially promising to remain in the city of Barcelona and to return the charter to the municipal authorities if he ever decided to abandon his residence within the city walls. In the early 1400s, a citizenship charter from Barcelona was a document that transferred to an individual the privileges that the monarchs of the Crown of Aragon had been granting to their most loyal city of Barcelona since the thirteenth century. Such privileges were mostly lucrative exemptions from taxes on the sale and consumption of products within the territories under the jurisdiction of the king of the Crown of Aragon. They were reserved to citizens, and this certification of citizenship depended on previous processes of inclusion within the social networks of the city.[2] During the last decades of the fourteenth century, an empowered municipal body (the Council of the

[1]'Et nichilominus juravit ad Sancta Dei Quattuor Evangelia manibus suis corporaliter tacta, predicta omnia et singula attendere et complere, tenere et observare et in aliquot non contrafacere', Historical Archives of the City of Barcelona (AHCB), 1C-V,4 *Registre*, fol. 31r.

[2]On the articulation between formal and informal forms of belonging in different contexts, see the inspiring works of T. Herzog, *Defining Nations. Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven and London, 2003); and S. Cerutti, *Étrangers. Étude d'une condition d'incertitude dans une société d'Ancien Régime* (Montrouge, 2012).

Hundred) acted on the frequent fraudulent practices that the uses of the charter promoted and devised new administrative mechanisms with which to identify legitimate citizens of Barcelona and grant the charter solely to them. The granting of citizenship charters thereafter combined the recording of citizenship oaths with the production of interrogations through which the councillors of the city appealed to the knowledge of the Barcelonese to certify the candidates' good habits as citizens. The *Informacions de la Ciutadania* constitute an archival collection that includes 391 citizenship interrogations (1395–1457) and two registers of citizenship oaths (1375–81 and 1413–25), that mirror these administrative efforts of the municipality and the mature conceptions of citizenship that underpinned them.[3]

The *Informacions* show how the administrative procedure of granting citizenship evolved. The first register of oaths is very short and lacks systematization. The second imposing volume (192 folios) includes a full copy of the citizenship privilege and a recording in chronological order of the oaths of all citizens who received the charter between 1413 and 1425 (593). Moreover, this second register covers a period that allows us to contrast citizenship oath records with citizenship interrogations. This analysis evinces the duality between candidates who were granted a charter upon making an oath, such as Guillem Montcofa (414/593), and those who were submitted to a prior inquisition on their habits and civic behaviour (179/593), which was duly noted in the corresponding record of the oath. Although this duality indicates that the merits of a citizen were not always clear, the *Informacions* do not reveal the motives that underlie these uncertainties. Foreigners, sailors, skippers and peasants were often submitted to prior inquisitions on their lives, while the giving of an oath seemed to be sufficient proof of citizenship for members of the wealthier merchant families of the city. However, a large majority of candidates (414) obtained their charters without further investigation. Among them were not only members of the elite but also modest merchants and a wide variety of craftsmen, such as tailors, candle makers, tanners, silversmiths, wool carders and drapers.[4] Although witnessing had by this time imposed itself over oaths as a means of proof, both in legal discourse and practice,[5] Barcelona seemed to sanction oaths as powerful proofs of citizenship. Yet, this quantitative predominance of citizenship oaths should not lead us to underestimate the value of the hundreds of citizenship interrogations that were conserved for the overarching period between 1395 and 1457. Adding complexity to the ritualistic nature of belonging, these citizenship interrogations convey the words of thousands of Barcelonese witnesses (an average of four witnesses per report) who *swore* to state the truth about their neighbours' and acquaintances' lives (*testimoni jurat e interrogat*). They portray how powerful *informal* citizenship was in the streets of Barcelona and show how the authorities negotiated with the citizenry to determine

[3]For a more detailed background on fifteenth-century Barcelona and an exhaustive description and analysis of the corpus of citizenship sources (the *Informacions de la Ciutadania*), see C. Obradors-Suazo, 'Immigration and integration in a Mediterranean city. The making of the citizen in fifteenth-century Barcelona', European University Institute Ph.D. thesis, 2015.

[4]Previous estimates in *ibid.*, 91–2.

[5]J.P. Lévy, 'L'évolution de la preuve, des origines à nos jours', in *La preuve II. Moyen Âge et temps modernes* (Brussels, 1965), 9–70; and *idem*, 'Le problème de la preuve dans les droits savants du Moyen Âge', in *ibid.*, 137–68.

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the habits and actions that were to be accepted as ultimate *proofs of citizenship*. This article reveals the ritualistic aspects of these negotiations to explore how ritual was integrated into the language of citizenship. As a sign of the greater sophistication reached by urban bureaucratic procedures in the later Middle Ages, the *Informacions* are also a window into the social experiences of citizenship that were observed, assessed and communicated by an audience of witnesses.[6] In representing the whole citizenry of Barcelona, witnesses viewed, uttered and thereby defined the citizen; they were the spectators and actors in the making of a citizen. Through the angle of ritual, this article investigates the roles played by both witnesses and municipal authorities in the making of citizens and the crafting of citizenship.

Defining ritual and citizenship in the later Middle Ages

Exploring citizenship through a ritualizing lens means not only considering the role of civic rituals in the building of civic identities but also examining whether citizenship was construed and experienced as a ritual. However, both citizenship and ritual elude precise definitions and have given ground to theoretical and historiographical discussions that have disclosed the plural significance of both notions.

As medieval jurists had defined ritual as a custom or a tradition,[7] the restrictive definition of rituals as sacred ceremonies emerged only in the early modern period.[8] During the twentieth century, the social sciences revised the scope of rituals in the ordering of society. In contrast with microsociology, which identifies ritual with any repetitive human action,[9] historians have – particularly since the 1980s – been deeply influenced by different anthropological traditions when approaching rituals.[10] Exploring pre-modern rituals through their connections with symbols, ceremonials, and the sacred, historians have supported anthropologists' claims and insisted on the need for rituals to include emotion and dramatization to modify the meanings of daily life.[11] Without emotion, repetitive and formalized human interactions become codified actions rather than rituals.[12] Although close agreement

[6]I take the image of an 'audience of witnesses' from J.K. Taylor, *Fictions of Evidence: Witnessing, Literature, and Community in the Late Middle Ages* (Columbus, 2013), 2.

[7]N. Offenstadt, 'Le rite et l'histoire. Remarques introductives', *Hypothèses*, 1 (1998), 9; C. Gauvard, 'Le rituel, objet d'histoire', in O.G. Oexle and J.C. Schmitt (eds.), *Les tendances actuelles de l'histoire du Moyen Âge en France et en Allemagne* (Paris, 2003). Available online at http://books.openedition.org/psorbonne/20752, 9/21 (accessed 11 Nov. 2020).

[8]Gauvard, 'Le rituel', 9/21; Offenstadt, 'Le rite et l'histoire', 9. On the historical relevance of the early modern period for the conceptualization of rituals, see E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), 7–9.

[9]Offenstadt, 'Le rite et l'histoire', 10, which mainly refers to Erving Goffman and his *Interaction Ritual. Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (New Brunswick, 2005).

[10]For a critical and polemical approach to the anthropological analysis of pre-modern rituals, see P. Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual. Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton and Oxford, 2001).

[11]On the anthropological literature on rituals and their use by historians, see M. Fantoni, 'Symbols and rituals: definition of a field of study', in S. Cohn, M. Fantoni, F. Franceschi and F. Ricciardelli (eds.), *Late Medieval and Early Modern Ritual. Studies in Italian Urban Culture* (Turnhout, 2013), 15–34.

[12]Muir, *Ritual*, 2; Offenstadt, 'Le rite et l'histoire', 10–11.

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with anthropology may have delayed the attempt to fix the historical definitions of ritual,[13] Edward Muir and Richard Trexler fostered a field of study that has retraced a diversity of case-studies and contexts to unravel the multifaceted nature of pre-modern rituals.[14] In their search for the historicity of rituals, historians have more recently portrayed them as determinate social expressions and as *creative* processes that weave the interaction of social bodies.[15] Beyond codification, ritual thus acts on social links using symbols and standardization to contribute to the social order. As an aspect of social language, ritual is essentially performative; it creates and communicates meaning beyond modelling or representation.[16]

From within the fabric of social links, ritual manifests itself through standards and symbols, emotion and transformation, repetition and performance. These elements featured prominently in pre-modern forms of citizenship. As the institution in charge of defining the relationships between an individual and his or her community, citizenship in Europe was far from homogeneous in these times. It emerged in a plurality of forms that sealed the inclusion of different citizens into their urban communities,[17] mostly through performative and symbolic actions that used emotion, representation and repetition to construe belonging. These actions were practices that determined inscription within the fabric of the local – an inscription that was the primary pact of belonging for many and underpinned further institutional recognition.[18]

The *Informacions* disclose the intricacies of these pacts in pre-modern cities such as Barcelona, which allows us to analyse how citizenship and ritual, two defining elements of medieval urban life, nurtured one another. These sources provide two scales of analysis through which to offer a systematic rethinking of citizenship in terms of ritual. On the one hand, the bureaucratization of the procedure codified in writing the actions of a good, reputed citizen and thereby promoted a standardized image of this figure. This first scale of analysis appeals to ritual as a means to create standardized symbols for the community. On the other hand, the voices of *sworn* witnesses reveal the Barcelonese's conceptions of the obligations of every individual towards the citizenry.[19] Witnesses conveyed such conceptions through narratives that gave drama and intensity to the functions of the social

[13]Fantoni, 'Symbols and rituals', 18.

[14]In his *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1980), Richard Trexler frames social life in terms of ritual.

[15]Fantoni, 'Symbols and rituals', 20.

[16]Muir, *Ritual*, 5.

[17]In his seminal work on the history of citizenship, Pietro Costa described the plurality of forms of pre-modern citizenship: 'Non vi è *una* cittadinanza, ma una pluralità di condizioni suggestive differenziate e gerarchizzate. La cittadinanza non è uno *status* uniforme: I suoi contenuti sono determinati da parametri volta a volta diversi che danno luogo a complicate tipologie: cittadini originari o acquisiti, cives *ex privilegio* o *de gratia*, cittadini di antica o recente immigrazione; ancora: cittadini che abitano prevalentemente in città o cittadini residenti per lungo tempore fuori città, e allora dotati di minore tutela', P. Costa, *Civitas: Storia della Cittadinanza in Europa* (4 vols., Rome, 1999–2001), vol. I, 15. For a recent review of pre-modern citizenship, see M. Prak, *Citizens without Nations. Urban Citizenship in Europe and the World, 1000–1789* (Cambridge, 2018).

[18]Cerutti, *Étrangers*, 18.

[19]On witnessing and community-building and the power of witnessing to reveal how members of a community conceived their communal obligations, see Taylor, *Fictions of Evidence*, 2.

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link.[20] Their testimonies show how belonging was understood in relational terms and they portray the good citizen as an actor who plays a role that they all knew well in the streets, squares and residences of Barcelona. These witnessing acts, albeit bureaucratic, sanction the public dimension of the links that made a citizen and describe them through emotional and performative metaphors that had a ritualizing effect. The following offers a detailed reading of the *Informacions* to approach how these two 'scales of ritual' unfold and determine the extent to which ritual used language to enrich the meanings of citizenship.

The templates of citizenship: Barcelona and the birth of the standardized citizen

In the 1400s, Barcelona hosted a vibrant merchant community that placed it at the centre of Mediterranean – and European – commercial exchanges. Barcelonese merchants were present in Flanders, North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean, whereas foreign merchants, most notably Tuscan, settled in a city that had become an important centre of redistribution from northern Europe to Constantinople.[21] Furthermore, Barcelona was a decisive political, social and economic actor within the Principality of Catalonia. As a royal city, it provided the crown with constant economic support. In return, Barcelona was allowed to develop its own municipal fiscal system and, in this way, assert its political autonomy by the last third of the fourteenth century.[22] Within the walls of the city, however, the Council of the Hundred and the oligarchy that ruled it struggled to govern a community that became increasingly troubled. Although the dynamism of the city ensured a constant flow of immigration from inner Catalonia, growing inequalities led to discontented popular movements and to the progressive polarization of the urban community into popular (the *Busca*) and oligarchic (the *Biga*) political parties that announced the tensions that would later disrupt the whole country during the Catalan Civil War (1462–72).[23]

The decades between the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries witnessed the consolidation of urban power and its autonomy while paving the way towards a conflictual society. This context triggered a reassessment of the relationships between the municipal authorities of Barcelona and the Barcelonese themselves and, therefore, a redefinition of the citizen. In earlier times, a citizen was to the authorities an inhabitant who deserved fiscal privileges (whose charter was fully copied in the municipal acts upon reception). The emergence of the *Informacions* materialized a renewed imaginary of citizenship that ritualized social links and placed them at the basis of the social and institutional negotiations that engendered a citizen.

[20]One view on witnesses' narratives inspired by the work of N. Zemon Davis in her *Fiction in the Archives. Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, 1987), 101.

[21]M. Del Treppo, *Els mercaders catalans i l'expansió de la corona catalano-aragonesa* (Barcelona, 1976); C. Carrère, *Barcelona 1380–1462. Un centre econòmic en época de crisi* (Barcelona, 1977), 114–41; M.T. Ferrer i Mallol, 'Els italians a terres catalanes', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 10 (1980), 393–465; M.E. Soldani, *Uomini d'affari e mercanti toscani nella Barcellona del Quattrocento* (Barcelona, 2010), 20.

[22]P. Ortí i Gost, 'El Consell de Cent durant l'Edat Mitjana', *Barcelona. Quaderns d'Història*, 1 (1991), 21–48.

[23]For the social and political upheavals of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Barcelona, see C. Batlle i Gallart, *La crisis social y económica de Barcelona en el siglo XV* (Barcelona, 1973).

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The first element of this ritualization lies in the *standardization* of a citizen, which was arranged through the formulaic clauses, questions and answers that structured the *Informacions*. The notaries of the city and the witnesses themselves conceived of a *template of citizenship* that generated a model of the citizen through regularity and repetition. As rituals themselves,[24] this template was flexible, adapted to a diversity of circumstances and evolving over time. The process of standardization was not immediate; there were hesitations about how to portray the citizen, and these hesitations can be retraced through the early *Informacions* in which witnesses were loosely interrogated not only about the origins of their ties with candidates but also about the residential situation and the family of the candidates. It was only in 1407 that a real template based on one major question began to structure citizenship reports more systematically. Witnesses were now confronted with the following question: 'asked whether he [the witness] knew or had heard that [name of the candidate] is a citizen of Barcelona, that is, that he has his own domicile in the city in which he lives continuously with his whole company, as it is expected from a true citizen'.[25] Witnesses could freely answer this question by generally portraying the citizen and giving details about his or her residence,[26] his or her family in the city, his or her contributions to civic services and his or her intention to remain. Most importantly, the template itself clearly placed stable and continuous residence at the core of the understanding of citizenship.[27]

In time, this template of citizenship evolved to take a different form. By the 1430s, citizenship interrogations were no longer structured by one major question focused on the continuous residence of the candidate but were built around a few more specific questions. To be sure, this alternative form of template existed in earlier years but was used only on rare occasions, mostly with foreigners who had recently settled in the city.[28] However, it became increasingly common from the

[24]Both Samuel Cohn and Marcello Fantoni insisted on the need to perceive ritual as a flexible analytical category in their introductions to *Late Medieval and Early Modern Ritual. Studies in Italian Urban Culture* (Turnhout, 2013), 6, 29.

[25]An example in original Catalan is as follows: 'E primerament fou demanat si sab o hoyt dir que en Johan de Torralba, mercader qui está en lo carrer Bonayre, assats prop la mar, **sia ciutadà de Barchinona, çò és, que hic tinga sa propia habitació en la qual estiga e habit continuament ab tot son domicili, segons de ver ciutadà se pertany estar e habitar**.' Extracted from the citizenship interrogation of the Aragonese merchant Joan de Torralba. AHCB, 1C-V,3 (5 Jan. 1412).

[26]While some of the rights associated with citizenship (such as political representation) were reserved to men, women could, as social and economic agents of the city, practise citizenship and be recognized as citizens. The *Informacions de la Ciutadania* show that they could also apply for citizenship charters in Barcelona, often together with their husbands and sons but also on their own, as widows, for example. On female citizenship in the medieval city and regional disparities at this regard, see M. Howell, 'Citizenship and gender: women's political status in northern medieval cities', in M. Erler and M. Kowaleski (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1988), 37–60; J. Kirshner, 'Genere e cittadinanza nella città-stato del Medievo e del Rinascimento', in G. Calvi (ed.), *Innesti. Donne e genere nella storia sociale* (Rome, 2004), 21–38.

[27]In other cities of the Crown of Aragon, such as Perpignan, property rather than residence was placed at the basis of citizenship. P. Daileader, *True Citizens. Violence, Memory, and Identity in Medieval Perpignan* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 2000), 32–7.

[28]First documented in 1413, this alternative template was used in 50 reports for the 1407–30 period, for which a total number of 270 reports have been conserved. Most of these 50 reports (44) indeed refer to foreign candidates who come from other Catalan localities.

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late 1420s and had become the normative template of the *Informacions* by 1430. Witnesses were first asked whether the candidate had a domicile in the city (*tinga casa ne alberch*) and were then guided to elaborate on the habits of the candidate through other questions, such as the span of time that the candidate had been living in the city, his or her marital status, the nature of his or her stay in the city (whether their housing was owned or rented) and his or her origins. The shift in the template from a question that strictly equated citizenship to continuous presence in the city to a more precise understanding of the actions that certified civic life points to the administrative evolution of the procedure, and this shift showed the extent to which the *Informacions* themselves had been a theatre of negotiations where Barcelona and the Barcelonese agreed on the terms of citizenship. The standard citizen who emerged from these negotiations was, however, far from uniform. Witnesses always had the opportunity to emphasize the efforts of candidates in complying, despite their limitations, with the standard requirements, while specific clauses were created to normalize the urban experiences of more uncertain candidates, such as young merchants, serfs, peasants and the poor. Under the broad umbrella of the standard citizen, that is, the inhabitant (truly) committed in some way to the community, a language of codes permitted the emergence of social norms of citizenship that afforded most, if not all, candidates the opportunity to develop and manifest their own legitimate forms and proofs of belonging. Social (and linguistic) conventions made the *laws of citizenship* available to all citizens.[29] From mere spectators of citizenship practices, the witnesses in the *Informacions* became actors in the social staging of citizenship; through their depositions, they *uttered* the diverse ways in which one could be a citizen and approved them on the public stage. Overall, the *Informacions* empowered an audience of witnesses to sanction many different citizens and to represent the diversity of the Barcelonese citizenry. They did this by using emotional and representational tools that explicated the different ways that good and true citizens had to perform citizenship through a stable residence, family attachments, legal, social and economic independence, economic and military commitment and, most pertinent to this study, attendance at civic and religious rituals.

Memory and oblivion: the performing citizen

'As the principal actor in rituals, the people control the keys of memory – which are those of oblivion. Memory and oblivion: These two essential poles determine the social link, and as such their existence is revealed as necessarily ritualized.'[30] In her inspiring essay on the uses of ritual in historical analysis, Claude Gauvard places the social link at the core of social life and conceives it in terms of memory and oblivion. In this way, she insists on the collective and individual agencies that generalized ritualized behaviours through which community values were fostered and (fragile) peaceful relationships protected. The *Informacions* show how the

[29]Inspired by Claude Gauvard's thoughts on the language of honour in Gauvard, 'Le rituel', 11/21.

[30]'Parce que le peuple est l'acteur principal des rituels, il détient bien, en dernier ressort, les clés de la mémoire qui sont aussi celles de l'oubli. Mémoire et oubli: ces deux pôles sont des marqueurs essentiels du lien social et leur existence se révèle nécessairement ritualisée', Gauvard, 'Le rituel', 15/21.

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narratives of citizenries depended on this fine balance between the elements that should be remembered and *reproduced* and those that were better hidden and forgotten. Through memory and oblivion, witnesses came to mix performance and emotion in their representations of the good and true citizen of Barcelona. Their depositions therefore became illocutionary (and perlocutionary) acts that enriched the scope and possibilities of conventional citizenship practices.[31]

Among the practices of citizenship, a stable residence was of the utmost importance. In the thirteenth century, King Peter the Great's privilege *Recognoverunt Proceres* sanctioned that anybody living continuously within the walls of the city for one year and one day was to be considered a citizen of Barcelona.[32] However, witnesses in citizenship interrogations evaluated candidates' stable residence in ways that were not restricted to temporal criteria. Some candidates were accepted as citizens after having lived in the city for decades, whereas others were depicted as having recently settled in the city. Since a stable residence concerned not only the past residence of the candidates but, more importantly, their intention to remain in the city, witnesses narrated candidates' residential conditions by using resources other than the mere calculation of days, months and years. They appealed to their memory and recollections to underscore candidates' relocations to and within the city. Some recounted how they had witnessed the candidate purchasing or renting a habitation. This recollection was a particularly valuable resource that allowed candidates to optimize the symbolic strength of the witnesses that they had chosen. Even more than written documents themselves,[33] oral testimonies that attested to the production of such documents displayed and proved the daily functioning of urban social networks and the intricate role played within them by both candidates and witnesses.[34] Through their depositions, witnesses narrated the moment when these documents were produced, which created imminent proof of the candidate's presence in the city. These types of witnessing acts were therefore especially interesting to candidates with weaker cases, such as the young merchant Joan Samaler, a native from Perpignan who had been living in the city for only a few months when he requested a citizenship charter. Since he had decided to purchase his own residence in the city four weeks before his request, he brought as citizenship witnesses all those who had contributed to this important move: a witness to the signature, the intermediary Ramon Hospital; the former owner of the house Pere Artaguil; and the notary who had supervised the contract and conserved it. All of them

[31]Speech acts theory has defined the power of language by distinguishing the illocutionary (performative) force of statements from their consequential effects (perlocution). J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1962), Lecture VIII, 94–107.

[32]'quicumque qui steterit in Barchinona per unum annum et unam diem quod habeatur pro cive et non potest peti a domino de cuius dominius fuit oriundus', F. Udina Martorell, *Privilegios reales concedidos a la ciudad de Barcelona* (Colección de Documentos Inéditos del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, vol. 43) (Barcelona, 1971), 11–12.

[33]Medieval jurists defended the stronger probative nature of oral testimonies over that of written documents. Lévy, 'Le problème de la preuve', 154.

[34]On the stronger credit given to oral testimony over written proof and, more precisely, the symbolic strength of witnesses declaring on the production of written documents, see D.L. Smail, 'Témoins et témoignages dans les causes civiles à Marseille, du XIIIème au XVème siècle', in J. Chiffoleau, C. Gauvard and A. Zorzi (eds.), *Pratiques sociales et politiques judiciaires dans les villes de l'Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge* (online) (Rome, 2007) (accessed 29 Oct. 2021). Available at http://books.openedition.org/efr/1831.

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mentioned in their statements how they participated in the contractual moment of the purchase.[35]

Witnesses' memory as spectators of civic life was also at play when they recalled how much candidates had brought to the city. In this way, they pictured their effort to transfer to these Barcelonese houses the hearths that they shared with their families. Transforming streets into stages, moves from beyond the walls to the beating heart of the city could be *theatricalized* in citizenship testimonies. 'Guillem Miró has come here with the intention of staying until the end of his life, and this seems quite convincing since the aforementioned Guillem keeps bringing beds, boxes and other things he might need every day',[36] recalled the silversmith Joan Vergés when testifying on behalf of a new neighbour. In a similar style, the builder Francesc Palagrí stated that he had recently rented a house to the candidate Francesc Sastre, a peasant from the village of Olessa de Montserrat. Since then, he could see how the candidate 'moves things from his village of Olessa de Montserrat into here [Barcelona] every day'.[37] In witnesses' depositions, theatricality was used in a large array of social situations to make up for the potential weaknesses that the candidates might have had. In 1433, Bernat Ferrer, an honoured citizen of Barcelona, requested a charter. His witnesses knew well that he lived between Barcelona and his landed properties in the town of Mataró. His performance of citizenship, therefore, did not relate to his stable residence. Rather, it rested on his own convictions, for he paraded his citizenship by publicly claiming the exemptions from which he believed he was supposed to benefit. '[H]e [the witness] has seen many times how officers wanted to confiscate the merchandise he [Bernat] was taking in and out of the city, and Bernat would deal with them by saying he was a citizen of Barcelona', as stated by the sailor Gabriel Arnau.[38] Furthermore, Bernat staged his honourability by riding his horse in the streets of the city, as the scribe Andreu d'Olmella had sharply perceived: 'Interrogated whether Bernat lives here as any other citizen of Barcelona, and he, the witness, said that he has seen him many times in Barcelona, on foot as well as on a horse.'[39]

These examples show witnesses presenting themselves as passive viewers of the social spectacle of citizenship. However, seeing, hearing and remembering were recognized as active sources of knowledge through which social links were created and strengthened. Through their knowledge, sight and hearing, as much as through their public depositions, witnesses empowered themselves as makers of the community:[40] 'My lord, my sight is rather poor and I cannot discern anybody, but I often *hear* Berenguer, as well as his wife and his daughter, in this neighbourhood, and I cannot say anything else', confessed the blind peasant Pere Canyes

[35]AHCB, 1C-V,4 (20 Jan. 1427).

[36]'lo dit Guillem s'en és vengut ací ab coratge d'habitar hic totemps de sa vida e appar ver semblant car tot dia se pobla lo dit Guillem de lits et de caxes e de so que ha necessari', AHCB, 1C-V,3 (22 Mar. 1415).

[37]'e veig que tot dia fa tirar roba de la dita vila d'Aulesa ací', AHCB, 1C-V,3 (2 Jan. 1412).

[38]'ha vist moltes vegades que les gardes li volien fer embarch en les robes que hic metia e hic trahie que·l dit Bernat se spatxant a les dites gardes per ciutadà', AHCB, 1C-V,5 (18 Sep. 1433).

[39]'Interrogat si sap que·l dit Bernat habit axí com altra ciutadà en Barchinona. E dix ell testimoni que moltes vegades lo veu anar per Barchinona axí a peu com a cavall', AHCB, 1C-V,5 (18 Sep. 1433).

[40]For the contrast with the hierarchies of knowledge stated by jurists, who were strict in valuing witnessing *de visu* over *de auditu*, see Lévy, 'L'évolution de la preuve', 50.

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when interrogated about the habits in the city of his neighbour Berenguer Desmas.[41] Through his deposition, Canyes was able to appeal to his weakness to firmly integrate the candidate and himself into the daily life of the community to which they both belonged. The *Informacions* gave witnesses the opportunity to turn shared experiences into *performative memories* that stated the candidate's bond to the community while also strengthening their own. Such mechanisms were in play, for example, when the blacksmith Joan Mastort evoked his remembrance of the young candidate Antoni Berenguer being breastfed in Barcelona.[42] Similarly, clauses such as 'we were both baptized in the same baptismal font' allowed witnesses to picture their confidence in the candidate's truthful citizenship while displaying their own intimate ties within the community through imagined memories that were most likely forgotten.[43]

Another stance of ritualization lies in the role of family in the narration of the citizen since family ties enabled witnesses to portray a citizen in *emotional* terms.[44] The relationship between family and citizenship was apprehended in multiple ways by the Barcelonese and went beyond marriage to a Barcelonese woman within the walls of the city. Thus, when asked whether the candidate had wives and children, witnesses took the opportunity to use their recollections to describe the richness of Barcelonese households, which included not only wives and children but also parents, uncles and aunts, cousins, brothers and sisters – kin who had been obtained in Barcelona or brought from the Catalan countryside or beyond. Family in the city emerged from the *Informacions* as a space of love and care and the best channel for witnesses to explore how emotional relationships contributed to shaping the morality of a citizen. The notary Berenguer Alamany displayed in his testimony the details of the life of his client, the merchant Joan Bartalot. In his words, Joan had long wanted to establish himself on his own in Barcelona, but he had been living for a long time with his father-in-law, the furrier Oliver Borrassà, with whom he was in business, because Borrassà had no other children and needed his support.[45] The young sailor Gabriel Salvador had long provided for his whole family, that is, his sick father, his mother and his three sisters. After his father's death, witnesses recalled, he had become the sole head of a destitute family that 'had little from the things of this world'. However, he had recently managed to settle marriage arrangements for two of his sisters and remained devoted to his mother's care.[46] Effort, love and tenderness became citizenship values to the extent that they were perceived through the pitiful and admiring eyes of the Barcelonese. They

[41]'e dix sènyer, jo son fort defallent de la vista per que jo no puix affigurar nagú mas sovintment hoyg lo dit Berenguer parlar e així mateix madona sua e sa filla e en aquesta ciutat e en aquest veynat e als noy sé', AHCB, 1C-V,3 (31 May 1408).

[42]AHCB, 1C-V, 3 (11 Sep. 1419): 'més ha de XIIII anys que·l coneix e l'ha vist mamar'.

[43]See, for example, the citizenship report of the wool dresser Felix Barra, specifically the testimony of Pere Pujol. AHCB, 1C-V,3 (28 Dec. 1407): 'més ha de 20 anys que jo·l conech car en II som estats batejats e unas fonts'. This clause is found in two other cases throughout the *Informacions*.

[44]On the role of family networks in the making of the citizen in fifteenth-century Barcelona, see C. Obradors-Suazo, 'Making the citizen, building the citizenry. Family and citizenship in fifteenth-century Barcelona', in J. Colson and A. Van Steensel (eds.), *Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe* (Abingdon and New York, 2017), 41–58.

[45]AHCB, 1C-V,3 (3 Feb. 1416).

[46]AHCB, 1C-V,3 (1 Jun. 1407).

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commiserated with their neighbours, whether they shared streets in the most humble areas of the city, such as Gabriel Salvador's witnesses and neighbours, or whether they were all part of dynamic merchant communities. Ramon Alter's witnesses praised the efforts and intelligence of this Provençal merchant: 'I would pray to God so that every citizen in Barcelona would be like him.' They also pictured him as a lonely father and a widower who took care of his little daughter assisted by a servant and a wet nurse who lived with him.[47]

Together with memory, oblivion and silence were part of the linguistic acts with which witnesses narrated social links and imagined a good citizen. This fact was particularly true when testifying to serfs' citizenship reports. At a time when tensions between discontented peasants and feudal lords in the countryside were increasing, the position of serfs within the walls of the city became extremely delicate. The city of Barcelona and many of its oligarchs were feudal lords themselves. In this context, serfs were accepted as citizens with extreme suspicion: charters were granted to those who could certify that they had duly redeemed themselves before settling in the city and requesting the charter. For fugitive serfs, it was necessary to prove that their lords had not been publicly seeking for them during the last year.[48] This situation turned citizenship charters into cherished proof of redemption for serfs who had come to the city, as no citizen could be in a servile condition. Citizenship witnesses could use their testimonies to protect with their discretion the candidates whom they knew to be serfs but believed to be good citizens. The peasant Ramon Carbonell was close to the candidate Joan Sunyer whom he had known 'for more than XVIII years since they both had been baptized in the same font'. This point notwithstanding, he seemed to have only heard that Sunyer was a serf to Lord Bernat de Cruïlles and could not say anything about whether the candidate was being pursued by his lord.[49] Tailor Antoni Amill understood citizenship as an act of socialization, as suggested by his witnesses, who all recalled how often they met at his place in Barcelona to eat, drink and enjoy themselves (*haver plaer*). In these meetings, Amill had admitted that he was a serf, a *remensa*. None of his friends, however, seemed to have heard or knew whether he had ever been pursued by his lord.[50]

Bartolus of Sassoferrato believed that the *cives comitatenses*, that is, the peasants who settled in the city as citizens,[51] could never acquire the civil dignity of those *cives civitates* who were born within the walls of the city, and Francesc Eiximenis compared all people of servile condition to cats and dogs – necessary to urban life but unworthy of it.[52] The good and true citizen was born to serve and to

[47]AHCB, 1C-V,3 (16 Mar. 1406): 'e plagués a Déu que tots quants ciutadans hic ha en Barchinona fossen aytals'.

[48]For more context on the position of Barcelona and the Barcelonese oligarchs regarding the acceptance of serfs within the citizenry, see Obradors-Suazo, 'Immigration and integration', 119–28.

[49]AHCB, 1C-V, 3 (7 Dec. 1417).

[50]AHCB, 1C-V, 4 (5 May 1425).

[51]J. Kirshner, 'Civitas sibi faciat civem: Bartolus Sassoferrato's Doctrine on the Making of a Citizen', *Speculum*, 48 (1973), 694–713, at 704.

[52]P. Evangelisti, '*Ad invicem participandium*. Un modelo di cittadinanza proposto da Francesc Eiximenis, frate francescano', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome*, 125 (2013), 5/31, http://mefrm.revues.org/1466 (accessed 2 Feb. 2021).

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commit exclusively to the city. However, the *Informacions* show that what mattered to the Barcelonese was the capacity to act as a man with no other bounds than those imposed by civic life. As a result, the narratives of citizenship that they created imagined a citizen who *seemed* free and was able to fulfil the civic duties that were expected from any citizen.

Rituals within the ritual? The festive citizen

Through their testimonies, witnesses themselves became actors in the social spectacle of citizenship. Their narratives captured the diversity of candidates, and they adapted them to the criteria of the standard citizen. Dramatization, emotion, sharp memory and convenient forgetfulness helped witnesses portray citizens as individuals who were living stably in the city and being economically active, devoted, committed to the city and morally good. Through language, the Barcelonese created an image of citizenship that placed social links at the core of urban belonging and resulted in the emergence of true and *trusted* citizens. Overall, an aura of ritual developed around citizenship, which materialized as much in the oath that witnesses gave before testifying (*per lo sagrament que fet he*) as in the solemn promise of newly certified citizens to remain forever within the walls of Barcelona.

Thus far, I have been concerned with how the power of ritualization was woven into the very fabric of citizenship performances; what remains to be examined is the role of ritualistic festivities in the making of citizens and the definition of citizenship. From the immediacy of the urban scene, candidates, witnesses and authorities identified attendance at rituals as a crucial citizenship practice. However, ritual was only narratively included in witnesses' citizenship testimonies in the cases in which candidates were highly mobile, that is, forced by their personal and professional circumstances to live between Barcelona and their landed properties in other areas of Catalonia. Under these circumstances, involvement in ritual practices was presented by witnesses as a persuasive alternative to a stable residence. Since glassworkers such as Francesc Satorra or Pere Pujalt had their workshops in the locality of Bigues, a few miles away from Barcelona, they often had to leave their residences in the city. Their witnesses, however, did not forget to note that these candidates would always be sure to be present for the major urban festivities, the so-called *festes anyals* (Easter, Pentecost, Christmas and a local festivity – in the case of Barcelona, Saint Eulàlia on 12 February). The weaver Pere Ponç, who had known Francesc Satorra for two years when testifying to his citizenship, admitted that 'he has a workshop of his own in Bigues, close to Granollers, and he comes and goes, but there is always a woman keeping his house in Barcelona, and he always comes back for the *festes anyals*, to celebrate them with his wife and his children in the city'.[53]

This strategic appeal to rituals was seldom integrated into citizenship narratives: it appeared in 26 instances of the 391 reports that constitute the *Informacions*. These few cases, however, profile in precise terms the features of the *festive* citizen.

[53]'ha ·I· forn seu propi a Bigues, prop Granollers e va e vé però tostemps té una dona en lo dit alberch qui está e habita aquí continuament e aximateix ell, qui totes festes anyals s'en vé tenir festes ab sa muller e ab sos infants', AHCB, 1C-V,3 (3 Jan. 1407).

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They appear as mobile individuals who often travelled for professional reasons and had a second residence beyond the walls of the city. Some were craftsmen and merchants, but the majority were peasants (15), who owned small properties in the surroundings and whose principal motive for applying for citizenship was the tax exemptions that it provided when accessing the Barcelonese markets. More importantly, the scarcity of mentions of the candidates' presence in the rituals of the city should not blur the fundamental connection between rituality and belonging. Rather, the fact that rituality was only mentioned when stable presence was in doubt suggests how central the participation in rituals was to citizenship practices, because it was perceived as the most convincing alternative to the principal measure of a citizen: residence.

Attendance at rituals as a means of citizenship proof insisted on the physical *presence* of the good citizen. For example, during the festivities of Santa Eulàlia, the patron of Barcelona, citizens and inhabitants were called to illuminate their windows at night to preserve order in the city, as Barcelona opened its gates to people coming from beyond its walls to receive the plenary indulgences that were promised from Rome.[54] The umbrella of religious pardon promoted a powerful performance of civic service and identification.

Processions such as those organized for Corpus Christi and on the more extraordinary occasions of royal entrances call for an analysis of the social scope of rituals, considering, for instance, the agency of craftsmen as festive citizens. These performances cannot be captured from the *Informacions*. However, as Miquel Raufast has shown in his studies, craftsmen found in these processions the perfect stage from which to assert their civic relevance, both socially and politically.[55] Being in charge of dances and theatrical performances, craftsmen started to parade at the precise moment when the king, entering the city, pronounced his oath and promised to keep and respect the privileges of Barcelona. On behalf of the whole citizenry, craftsmen were thus responsible for solemnizing the ritual that guaranteed the continuity of citizens' legal sustenance. Artisanal professions paraded afterwards throughout the city and followed the order dictated by social and economic predominance, that is, the most relevant and prestigious professions marching closest to the king – or the host – in the celebrations of Corpus Christi.

As with all the other citizenship practices, every citizen found his or her way (according to his or her capacities) to comply with civic ritual. They were all able (even mobile candidates) to be present at major festivities, to attend regular mass on Sundays as some witnesses detailed when noting the presence of candidates in the *festes anyals*, and perhaps to illuminate their windows on the eve of Saint Eulàlia. Some of them had the opportunity to perform their political and social relevance in public processions. Honoured citizens could choose to display their power in exclusive ceremonies, such as in tournaments, in which only a few participated, to be seen by the whole reunited citizenry. In May 1400, for

[54]This practice is documented from the second half of the fifteenth century. See, for example, AHCB, *Registre d'Ordinacions*, 1B-IV, vol. 7, fol. 83v (8 Feb. 1452).

[55]M. Raufast Chico, '"E vingueren los officis e confraries ab llurs entremeses e balls". Una aproximación al estamento artesanal en la Barcelona bajomedieval, a partir del estudio de las ceremonias de entrada real', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 36 (2006), 651–86.

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instance, the treasurer of the city (*clavari*) noted in his records that he had paid the painter Berenguer Laupart for his services. Laupart had prepared beautiful red curtains for the decoration of the *Plaça del Born*, where certain honoured citizens, on behalf of the city (*per aquesta Ciutat*), were to celebrate a tournament to honour the first entrance of Queen Maria into Barcelona.[56]

Bringing together the agencies of municipal authorities, candidates and witnesses, ritual (ritualization and rituality) became one of the cornerstones of medieval citizenship. While ritualized relationships within the local communities of knowledge that emerged from the *Informacions* allowed for the official recognition of the multiple ways in which the Barcelonese could create belonging, thereby ensuring to many the *right* of being a citizen, rituality turned urban life into a spectacle by publicly staging the hierarchies that ruled the citizenry. In Mervyn James' words, the rituals of citizens and the ritualization of citizenship promoted the *social wholeness* of the citizenry while leaving space for the *social differentiation* of the citizen.[57]

Conclusions

In the footsteps of Claude Gauvard, this article has aimed to use ritual as a tool of historical analysis to reinterpret the meanings and uses of medieval citizenship. It has examined the interactions between citizenship and ritual by exploring the presence of ritualistic elements in the language of citizenship, which came into being through the combination of bureaucratic templates and sworn witnesses' voices in the *Informacions de la Ciutadania*. To introduce the angle of ritual in the analysis of this material renews our understanding of medieval citizenship in two fundamental ways. The example of Barcelona underpins the relevance of reputation in the making of a good citizen and the importance of solidarity networks in the evaluation and recognition of such a reputation.[58] However, claims that the procedure of the *Informacions* served to ritualize citizenship help to reveal the sociability of citizens by understanding it not so much in terms of networks as in terms of strong social links that were shaped through memory and oblivion and, most importantly, valued for their representational power and emotional associations. Furthermore, material such as the *Informacions* displays an advanced sophistication in the bureaucratic procedure of citizenship acquisition, while interpreting it as a ritual in terms of its power to standardize the citizen and create symbols of identification around this figure helps also to define the agency of the municipal authorities in building the citizenry. As suggested by Tamar Herzog,[59] an interest in the supervision of citizenship negotiations might indicate the need of municipal authorities to exert deeper control over a conflicted community, while an increase in the demand for citizenship certifications might be mirroring the tensions within

[56]AHCB, *Clavaria*, 1B-XI, 24, fol. 185v: 'cortines de tafatà vermell de que foren ornats los cadaffals qui deuran ésser fets en la plaça del Born de aquesta Ciutat per recullir certs honrats ciutadans d'aquesta Ciutat que per aquesta Ciutat deven tenir taula de junyir'.

[57]M. James, 'Ritual, drama and social body in the late medieval English town', *Past & Present*, 98 (1983), 4.

[58]Obradors-Suazo, 'Immigration and integration', most relevantly chapters III, V, VI and VII.

[59]T. Herzog, 'Maarten Prak's *Citizens without Nations* and the legal history of Spain', *TSEG-The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History*, 17 (2020), 91–100, at 99.

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a community in which citizenship rights and duties were unclear. Fifteenth-century Barcelona fits such a description. The ideal solidarities pictured by the *Informacions* should not hide the effects of recurrent epidemics, wheat scarcity and rising fiscal pressure on a society that was becoming increasingly polarized and in which the traditional power and influence of the oligarchy that ruled the Council of the Hundred had already been (violently) opposed.[60] In this context, the tools of ritual sanctioned and promoted by the authorities through the *Informacions* could have aimed at further reinforcing the power of Barcelonese's spaces of sociability by providing a frail citizenry with stronger structures – as ritual meant structure.[61] Through the *Informacions*, the authorities found their place in the negotiations that created the citizenry without changing the nature of a citizenship that was understood in terms of performances. The *Informacions* helped the Barcelonese and their authorities certify and guarantee this performative nature of citizenship – and they did this through the power of language.

This article has identified the close connections between citizenship and ritual in the late Middle Ages. Like a ritual, citizenship standardized and modelled; it could be emotional and, most importantly, relied on daily performances that ensured the inclusion of various modes of citizen action in the ritualized spectacle of citizenship. As ritual, however, citizenship went beyond representation. A creative process,[62] it modified the meanings of daily life by generating, as a social experience, belonging to the civic community.[63]

Since some scholars claim that ritual gives new meaning to human behaviour,[64] the example of fifteenth-century Barcelona demonstrates how ritualized citizenship placed the focus of belonging on social links by using language, performance and symbols to reproduce standardized (and diverse) citizens. The stage of Barcelona suggests how the mechanisms of a ritualized citizenship preserved the delicate balance between formal and informal institutions and allowed them all to negotiate their agencies in the shaping of urban communities that were frail and endangered by conflict and polarization.

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[60]Batlle, *La crisis*, especially 31–164.

[61]James, 'Ritual, drama and social body', 6.

[62]Fantoni describes ritual as a 'creative process' in opposition to 'a representation of a process', Fantoni, 'Symbols and ritual', 20.

[63]In parallel with the considerations of some authors regarding the power of ritual to modify the meanings of daily life, see Offenstadt, 'Le rite et l'histoire', 11.

[64]Muir, *Ritual*, 7.

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