

Barcelona, 1640: popular violence and the use of urban spaces during the revolt of Corpus Christi Day¹

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Introduction

On 7 June 1640, Feast of Corpus Christi, the viceroy of Catalonia, the Count of Santa Coloma, was found dead in the outskirts of Barcelona, close to the hill of Montjuïc. His death was the result of a popular revolt whose main actors were *segadors* (“reapers”), a segment of the peasantry that did not own land and were among the poorest in the region. This event, known today as the Corpus de Sang (“Corpus of Blood”), was one of the triggers of a war between the Spanish Crown and the principality of Catalonia, currently known as the War of the Reapers (1640-1652).²

In 1639, against the backdrop of the Franco-Spanish War, the Spanish troops (*tercios*) had been transferred to the Catalan border with France with the mission of recovering the fortress of Salses, in the Catalan county of Roussillon. After its reconquest in January 1640, the *tercios* were distributed and billeted in the north and east of Catalonia, where they were to spend the winter. Their maintenance fell largely to the population, who had to provide them with shelter and basic sustenance. This demand was imposed on a society that was impoverished and punished by constant shortages. This was compounded by the poor pay of the soldiers, which encouraged looting and abuse among the population. All this crystallised in a profound social unrest and an anti-military climate that ended up triggering a rural insurrection against the soldiers in May, which, in a few weeks, spread to the cities and lashed out at those responsible for the billeting: the royal ministers (Simon i Tarrés 2019, 35-116).

The Diputació del General, the institution in charge of upholding the Catalan constitutions, also opposed to the way in which the viceroy of Catalonia was billeting the soldiers in the principality. The *diputats* (“deputies”) saw in them not only the cause of popular unrest, but also a flagrant violation of the Catalan constitutions. These constitutions established in detail the goods and services that the population had to provide for the soldiers, and those that the Crown itself was responsible for but which, on the contrary, it was not paying for. This constitutional conflict was preceded by a long series of legal and political confrontations between the Diputació del General and the central government, all of which had in common the fiscal and military centralisation plans of the Count Duke of Olivares, Philip IV's favourite (Serra i Puig 1991, 3-65).

At a given point, villages began to refuse to billet troops: in April, the village of Santa Coloma de Farners, in the region of La Selva, refused to allow a *tercio* to enter. In response, the viceroy sent Monrodon, a royal official, to restore order; but his presence was not welcomed, and social unrest finally led to a popular riot that ended in his

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² Some of the main studies on this conflict include those carried out by Josep Sanabre, John H. Elliott, Eulogio Zudaire, Eva Serra i Puig (1969; 1991, 3-65), Antoni Simon i Tarrés (1999) and Xavier Torres Sans (2006). For a recent state of the art on the conflict, see the one carried out by Ivan Gracia Arnau.

assassination. The riot spread and the peasants from the surrounding areas joined forces. The soldiers, who were in a position of weakness, decided to retreat but before doing so they set a nearby village, called Riudarenes, on fire: everything was burnt, including the church in which the villagers had hidden their goods. Some days later the viceroy ordered the destruction of Santa Coloma de Farners as a punishment (Elliott, 419-425).

In May, a popular army comprised of 4000 peasants began harassing the *tercios*. On the 22nd of that month, a group of these peasants entered Barcelona carrying a large image of Christ before a black flag and headed straight for the royal prison to release the prisoners. By the beginning of June, the popular insurrection had spread to other towns like Vic and Girona (Elliott, 428-432). On 7 June, Corpus Christi Day, Barcelona became once again the main scenario of the insurrection. In this essay I aim to recover the agency of the protagonists of this particular instance of the popular insurrection. Through a thick description of the revolt, I will analyse the popular politics of the *segadors* that entered Barcelona on 7 June 1640. I will focus on their behaviour, especially on the acts of violence, understanding them as a tool of symbolical communication that allowed the *segadors* to express their political message.

Heresy in Catalonia?

In recent years, historians have begun to tackle the Catalan crisis not only as a political and social conflict, but as a religious one too. During the winter of 1640, the popular insurrection rapidly gained a religious dimension after several churches were sacked and burnt, turning the peasant mobilisation into a war against heretical soldiers (Simon i Tarrés 2003, 125).

News of the burning of the church of Riudarenes in La Selva and of others such as Montiró in L'Empordà spread quickly, as leaflets were printed describing all acts of sacrilegious violence in detail. An account of events published that summer explained how the profanation in Riudarenes had happened:

[...] And they burnt the parish church and all the sacred vessels: four silver holy chalices with each paten, and one of them made of gold; some silver censers; [...] a baptismal font; [...] two candlesticks; a golden monstrance for keeping the Blessed Sacrament; a ciborium; a reliquary; [...] a large golden cross usually carried during processions; a statue of Saint Martin; [...] the tabernacle [...]; two chrismatories, one of them made of silver and the other one to keep the holy oils; they also stole and burnt all the liturgical ornaments required for mass and church services [...] (Ettinghausen, vol. 1, 74).

The desecration of the church of Montiró, where the monstrance was found burnt and some consecrated hosts turned black due to the fire, was described in similar terms (Torres Sans 2017, 226-229). The emphasis placed on the violence used against churches and liturgical objects sent a clear message: these horrific events were not collateral damage from billeting but had been committed by heretics. Moreover, some of the soldiers among the *tercios* billeted in Catalonia came from territories where there was a known Lutheran presence, which made the claim of heresy an actual threat to the Catholic communities (Busquets i Dalmau, 69-70).

In the context of the Catholic Reform, the worship of the Blessed Sacrament had been reinvigorated in the Catholic Church. The Eucharist had become the centre of the Tridentine religiosity, and so the burning of the Blessed Sacrament struck the very heart of Eucharistic piety; the royal soldiers were not only looting and mistreating the population, but they were also corrupting the social body.

The ecclesiastical response to these sacrilegious acts was unequivocal. In a solemn baroque ceremony at the cathedral of Girona in May, the bishop, dressed in a black cape, excommunicated, anathematised, and cursed the *tercio* of Leonardo Moles for having set the church in Riudarenes on fire, the Blessed Sacrament included. Several weeks later, he did the same to the *tercio* of Juan de Arce, in this case for burning the church in Montiró (Busquets i Dalmau, 82-83). Philip IV protested that Catalan clerics were alerting locals of a holy war against heresy, and royal ministers from Madrid began to accuse the Catalan clergy of exaggerating the abuses committed by soldiers and of inventing heretical and sacrilegious acts (Torres Sans 2015b, 74).

The clergy certainly reinforced the confessional connotations of the conflict and its providential and apocalyptic dimension (Torres Sans 2015b, 83-86). Both regular and secular clergy played their part –with their sermons, but also taking up arms– in turning the crisis into a just war against heresy. It is in this light that we should understand several anonymous providential texts that appeared between February and July 1640. For example, a set of letters signed in May by an unknown *Lo Mre. de Camp català* (“Catalan Marshal”) that demanded reinforcements to face down the sacrilegious soldiers and that, according to Xavier Torres Sans (2015a, 2), reflected the political and religious wishes of the people.

Punishing the traitors

June was harvest time, and hundreds of *segadors* from around Barcelona were flocking to the city in search of work, some of whom had fought against the royal soldiers. Their arrival in early June flustered the viceroy, who asked the city council (the Consell de Cent)³ to forbid them from entering, a decision that was not taken in the end (Elliott, 445-446).

One of the Catholic Church’s biggest religious festivals, the Feast of Corpus Christi, was due to be celebrated on 7 June. This day, devoted to worshipping the sacrament of the Eucharist, the essence of the Tridentine Mass, was a celebration organized by the ecclesiastical authorities, but with a very important popular element; thousands of people participated in an annual procession that departed from the cathedral and passed through the main streets of Barcelona. This made the city difficult to control and provided the perfect setting for a revolt.

On that day, the *segadors* gathered in La Rambla, the street that separated the institutional and religious heart of the city from the suburbs, namely El Raval, at 9 a.m., while the *consellers*, *diputats* and bishops of Barcelona, Vic and Urgell attended mass. However, the ceremony was interrupted by the early stages of a riot. An accident had taken place in Carrer Ample, one of the city’s most important avenues, which had caused a *segador* to be injured by a servant of Monrodon, the royal minister who had been killed in Santa Coloma de Farners (Parets, 361). The news had quickly spread throughout the city, so the *segadors* mobilized in their masses from La Rambla to the palace of the viceroy with the intention of storming and burning it. The *segadors* had taken logs with them and placed them against the palace door while shouting “Long live the Holy Mother Church, long live the King, and death to the traitors!” (DGC, vol. 5, 1037) and “Long live the Homeland and death to the traitors!” (Parets, 361).

³ The Consell de Cent was Barcelona’s local government. It was ruled by five *consellers* (“counsellors”, i.e. the city council representatives), supported by an assembly of 100 elected representatives. Although it was a local institution, it was one of the most important in Catalonia, together with the Diputació del General. On the day of the revolt, the *conseller en cap*, the head of the institution, was Lluís Joan de Calders.

Friars from the convent of Sant Francesc were the first to attempt to prevent the fire. First, they marched barefoot in procession up to the palace, where they set down the large crucifix they were carrying. The symbol did not have the intended effect, so they marched in procession once again, this time carrying the Blessed Sacrament under a canopy, which they placed on an improvised altar in front of the flames. The friars' intervention, together with the arrival of the *consellers*, *diputats* and bishops, finally placated the *segadors* (Parets, 362).

Frightened by the situation, the viceroy fled the palace together with his son and a group of noblemen and servants. They crossed several bulwarks and defensive towers until they reached the dockyard within Barcelona's city walls, where they assumed they would be safe from the *segadors*. If the situation worsened, they planned to board a galley that was approaching Barcelona that morning.

The *segadors'* attempts to raid the palace of the viceroy failed and they were taken to La Rambla by the authorities. A few minutes later, however, the crowd recognized the house of Gabriel Berart, a priest and royal minister. He had been a judge in the royal council in Catalonia (the Reial Audiència) since 1631 and had been involved in the impressment of people to fight against the French Crown. According to craftsman Miquel Parets (364-365), he was one of the most hated royal ministers in Barcelona.

The *segadors* tore the doors down, entered the house and searched for the judge, only to discover that he had fled. They did not leave the house, but instead tried to destroy it. The *segadors* began to set fire to it in the same way they had tried to set fire to the viceroy's palace. Nevertheless, this time it was the neighbours in the vicinity who warned of the dangers of burning the house: the fire could spread and cause a real catastrophe. The *segadors* stopped and, instead, took all his belongings and threw them out of the windows to be destroyed by a huge bonfire on La Rambla (Calders i de Ferran, 57).

As numerous studies have shown, popular violence during revolts usually took a similar form to the punishments used on convicts by justice. By imitating these practices, those who participated in popular violence aimed to legitimize their actions, as if they were acting in the name of an absent justice (Benigno, 105-108; Crouzet, 168-169). The house-destruction ritual was a punishment in early modern Europe used against those charged with treason against the king. It sometimes followed their public execution and in many cases the house was replaced by a monument recalling the reasons for his crime. In this way, the name of the criminal and his family was marked by infamy forever and, at the same time, the rest of the population was warned of the consequences of transgressing the law. About 30 episodes have been identified in Western Europe during early modern times in which the authorities have ordered the destruction of a convict's house (Friedrichs, 601). However, there are countless times when popular violence has been at the centre of this punishment against the authorities.

The house-destruction ritual has been identified in many popular revolts in Europe. In June 1520, in Burgos, in the context of the revolt of the Communities of Castile, the crowd destroyed the house of the procurator in the Parliament after knowing he had participated in the approval of a new and unpopular tax (Oliva Herrer, 36-37). The popular revolt in Évora in August 1637 and the uprisings in the cities of the Alentejo Region against the imposition of new taxes in Portugal took shape mainly in the burning of the houses of the royal officials (Oliveira, 440-443). During the revolt in Naples led by Masaniello in 1647, the crowd destroyed the palaces of Neapolitan collaborators of the Spanish Crown (Burke, 14; Hugon, 77-88).

According to William Beik (50-51, 61), in the behaviour of the masses during popular revolts in 17th-century France one can observe a "palpable desire to punish the

offending authority for misdeeds perceived as a violation of trust". This desire, which he defined as the culture of retribution, would have been performed through different acts of violence such as the "ceremonial tearing of papers and smashing or burning of possessions, almost as if the act of pulverizing itself was therapeutic". In words of Peter Burke (18), the popular violence during revolts was a tool to express, organize and legitimate political messages against the authority.

The destruction of Gabriel Berart's belongings was both a way of exposing him publicly as a traitor to the community and a way of symbolically punishing him for failing to fulfil his duty. Through a series of spontaneous but coordinated acts of violence against his belongings, La Rambla became the scene of an act designed to expel and degrade Gabriel Berart.⁴ This same procedure was repeated in 10 further houses. No royal ministers were found in any of them but, again and again, their belongings were discarded onto the city streets and squares before being burned.

Guerau Guardiola was the royal treasurer in charge of preserving the royal estate of Catalonia, and his home was the next target. The same pattern was repeated; all his furniture was thrown onto a huge bonfire in Plaça Santa Anna, near one of the city's main gates (Parets, 365-366). The same ritual was repeated at the home and carriage house of García Álvarez de Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca, who was Captain General of the Royal Galleys and a member of one of the main Castilian noble families and had had a long career in the Royal Navy: in this case, his home was completely destroyed (Parets, 366-367). Also victims of popular violence were the home of Monrodon on Carrer Ample; the homes of Felip Vinyes, Rafael Puig, Jaume Mir, Lluís Ramona, Pablo Jolis and Josep Massó, all members of the Reial Audiència (DDG, vol. 5, 1039; Pasqual de Panno, 139); and the home of Miquel Joan de Magarola, a regent of the Council of Aragon, the court institution that directly counselled the king on the governance of the territories of the Crown of Aragon, to which Catalonia belonged (Pellicer de Tovar, 513-519). The palace of the viceroy remained protected by three companies that the Consell de Cent set up after the initial incident.⁵ But it was the viceroy himself who finally fell victim to mob violence.

In the afternoon, just before the house-destruction of the Marquis of Villafranca, the *segadors* were surrounded by a group of cavaliers in the service of the Marquis who tried to protect the building. His home was in the suburb of El Raval, the city's least-populated area and the main location for convents and charitable institutions. It was during this confrontation that the *consellers* arrived in an attempt to ease the conflict and prevent tragedy. One of them, Josep Massana, stumbled and fell, which led the *segadors* to believe that one of the cavaliers had brought him down. This fake news spread throughout the city and, in a matter of minutes, all of Barcelona came to believe that one of their *consellers* had been killed (Rubí de Marimon, 269).

Both the *segadors* and Barcelona's inhabitants quickly moved in their masses to the dockyard, where they set fire to and demolished the gates. As chaos set in, the viceroy, who was hiding there, decided to flee with nobles, cavaliers, and soldiers to Montjuïc, a hill located outside the city limits, in the hope of embarking on a galley. However, he did not reach the ship and was assassinated by the crowd.

The *consellers* were notified of the viceroy's death at 9 p.m. A company of shoemakers was sent by the Consell de Cent to recover the corpse and take it to the church of La Mercè, in the inner city (Rubí de Marimon, 273). The shoemakers found

⁴ Gabriel Berart was later found hiding in a church, where he was murdered by the *segadors*. Along with the Viceroy, he was the only royal minister to be killed during the revolt.

⁵ AHCB, *Misceláneas históricas y políticas sobre la guerra de Cataluña desde el año 1639*, ms. A-51, 64.

the corpse at 11 p.m. that night, chest uncovered, stomach with stab wounds and feet touching the water (Parets, 369).⁶ The body was lifted onto a ladder and transported to the church by four men. Once at the entrance to the church, they placed the ladder on the floor and lifted the viceroy's corpse by the limbs to drag him into the building (Parets, 370).

In the same way as with the house-destruction ritual, corpse dragging was a specific punishment used by justice on criminals (Ruff, 103). In Catalonia, this was the punishment doled out, for example, to bandits. On 16 September 1616, eight bandits were executed by hanging in Barcelona. Two of them were subsequently dragged through the streets and their corpses dismembered (MNA, vol. 9, 334). At other times, it was the method used to transfer them from prison to the scaffold. On 4 December 1638, three men accused of murder and robbery were whipped, dragged through the city, hanged, and quartered (MNA, vol. 12, 302). Dragging the body of the viceroy was intended to degrade, judge, and punish him as a traitor. The craftsman Miquel Parets could not resist explicitly stating the dishonour of such treatment: “and, by taking him [the viceroy] off the ladder, he was dragged as if he had been a bandit” (370).

Purification and repair of the social body

The *segadors* encountered opposition as they wreaked havoc in the homes of the royal ministers. Just as the friars from the convent of Sant Francesc had walked in procession to prevent the *segadors*' destruction of the palace of the viceroy, several groups of friars and priests repeated the same religious ritual throughout the day, not always successfully.

Friars from the Discalced Carmelite convent of Sant Josep on La Rambla made an unsuccessful attempt to stop the crowd from raiding Gabriel Berart's home by walking outside the temple and carrying the Blessed Sacrament (Adam de la Parra, 75 r.). Guerau Guardiola was no more fortunate, even though as many as three processions from three different churches walked through Plaça Santa Anna, including priests from the church of Nostra Senyora del Pi and the collegiate church of Santa Anna and friars from the convent of Mare de Déu del Bonsuccés.⁷ The friars from the convent of La Mercè repeated the Blessed Sacrament ritual that had been carried out when the *segadors* raided Rafael Puig's home but, as before, their presence failed to dissuade the *segadors* from unleashing their violence (Rubí de Marimon, 268; Adam de la Parra, 76).⁸

The fact of the matter is that the *segadors* believed God to be on their side; it was not their duty to stop committing violence in the presence of sacred images, because they were acting in the name of God. On one occasion, when the priests were begging the *segadors* to stop storming Guerau Guardiola's home, they replied that “since [the royal ministers] had not punished the church burners, they wanted to burn them [...] for

⁶ Hours later, the Viceroy's body was subjected to a forensic analysis to determine the causes of his death. After examination by surgeons, it was established that the stab wounds had been inflicted post-mortem, and that the Viceroy had previously died from a severe blow to the head. The official version defended by the Consell de Cent would be that the Viceroy had died as the result of an accident when he stumbled and hit himself against the rocks of Montjuïc.

⁷ BNE, *Relación de lo sucedido en Barcelona el día de Corpus Cristi y los días siguientes*, ms. 18.433, 98.

⁸ The performance of religious rituals by friars and priests was a common strategy to disperse riots. However, they did not usually work, as indicated by Peter Burke in his study on Naples in 1647, when the archbishop, Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Jesuits, and Theatines all came out in procession and failed to stop the uprising led by Masaniello (Burke, 11–12).

Holy Faith and the Homeland” (Parets, 366). Fire, the purifying element par excellence, played a central role in the violence perpetrated by the *segadors*.

Gabriel Berart’s belongings that were thrown onto the bonfire on La Rambla did not consist of furniture alone, but also included bags of gold and silver coins, linen and silk tapestries, gold carriages, curtains, bookshelves, and books. All kinds of objects were thrown onto the fire, all of them associated with the idea of luxury (Parets, 363). In the case of Guerau Guardiola’s belongings, the fire in Plaça Santa Anna was fed with blankets, silver-decorated coffers, silver braziers, upholstery, silks, copper furniture, doors, windows, trunks, desks, tapestries, and beds (Parets, 363-364; Adam de la Parra, 75 r.). The *segadors* did the same with the other ministers’ belongings; thus, members of one of the most excluded sectors of society burned the most highly valued objects. In other words, these were not acts of looting, but something else with a highly symbolic content.

Natalie Z. Davis was one of the first historians to study religious violence in popular riots. She focused on how Catholic and Protestant beliefs guided and informed their violent actions, and how the significance of these beliefs accounted for their actions, which up until then had been regarded as blind fury and irrational and passionate violence against bodies and objects. According to her, religious violence was aimed at purifying a community that had been polluted by heretics and, therefore, it was a violence designed to defend the sacred and was usually accompanied by rituals to repair the social body (Davis, 59-60).

In this case, as a matter of fact, the *segadors* were careful not to throw any images or figures of saints onto the fire and organized guards to stop people from stealing anything from the bonfires (Parets, 363). All of these particular details and security measures lead one to believe that the *segadors*’ violence against the royal ministers’ belongings certainly had an important religious component. Popular violence aimed to purify the social body of the corruption it had suffered from the sacrileges committed by the royal soldiers. It was a ritual of purification that could only succeed if everything, including all the gold and silver, was burnt. Their intention was to remove all polluted and polluting objects from the traitors. Thus, the theft of any of those objects would have caused the purification process to be interrupted and risked spreading contamination.

These pious acts culminated in the afternoon, at the time the Corpus Christi procession should have been moving through the streets of Barcelona. After the fake news about the death of the *conseller* had spread through the city, and just as the mob was attacking the dockyards, a group of *segadors* remained at the home of the Marquis of Villafranca, where they found a clock on which stood a monkey-shaped artefact. It was a golden statuette of a monkey with an internal mechanism to move its eyes, arms, and legs. The *segadors* considered the monkey to be an idol that had trapped the evil of the Marquis within it. As people began gathering in the square, the *segadors* mounted the monkey on a stick and began an improvised procession through Barcelona’s main streets and squares.⁹

The procession with the idol was intended to humiliate the Marquis of Villafranca, who had fled Barcelona just one day earlier to escape the *segadors*. Thus, the punishment that had begun with the assault on his home continued. That monkey became the demonic effigy of the Marquis and was paraded through the streets of Barcelona to make him pay for the treachery he had committed against the community.

⁹ In early modern times, the monkey represented the attributes of lust, vanity, and other vices (Tervarent, 373-374; Morgado, 72).

However, this was not the only intention, as revealed by sources that describe the whole procession in detail.

All liturgical activities relating to the Feast of Corpus Christi had been cancelled due to the riots. However, the official procession was replaced by a popular, improvised one; after finding the idol at the home of the Marquis of Villafranca, the *segadors* took the route traditionally used for the Corpus Christi procession every year (figure 1). In keeping with tradition, they departed from the cathedral and reached Carrer Ample, close to the church of La Mercè, before returning to the cathedral, via the church of Santa Maria del Mar, the city's second most important church and an icon of the merchants' quarter. On this occasion, however, the procession ended at the Inquisitorial tribunal, next to the cathedral, where the idol was handed over to the inquisitors, who were asked to judge it and burn it in a public bonfire. Threatened by the violent context, the inquisitors accepted the idol and promised to examine it (Rubí de Marimon, 271-272; Melo, 123; Adam de la Parra, 75 v.; Assarino, 147-148).¹⁰

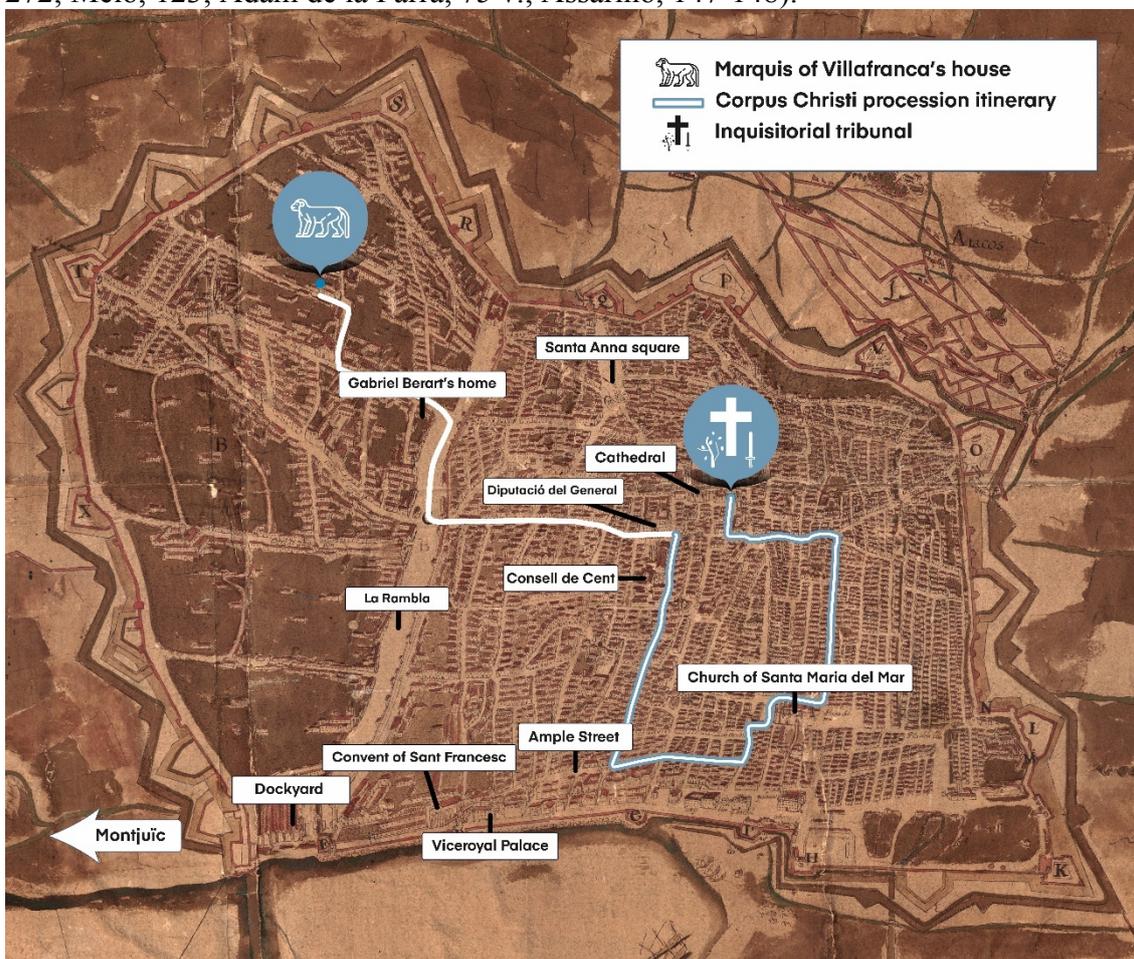


Figure 1. This map shows the approximate route that the *segadors* took to go from the house of the Marquis of Villafranca to the entrance of the Inquisitorial tribunal, next to the cathedral. The itinerary of the Corpus Christi procession is shown in blue. Source: prepared by the author using a map of Barcelona from 1697 (AHCB, C02.02 Sub-collection of general city plans, register 20096).

The Corpus Christi procession was traditionally organized by the authorities and was carried out in accordance with a strict precedence-based protocol. Elites used their prominent position to make a symbolic show of their social status. Popular sectors

¹⁰ This action could have been interpreted as a sign of respect for and recognition of the religious tribunal, but also as a reminder of their duty and of the side they were expected to take.

actively participated in this procession because they identified with and recognized themselves in the performance. The ceremony was designed to reaffirm Catholicism's opposition to heresy, and as a mechanism to bring the social body together. In the 17th century, processions had become a common means of confronting heresy in the Catholic world like carrying out penance and burning rituals (Diefendorf, 42-48).

On 7 June 1640, however, a process of public space appropriation took place. Instead of a formal procession, people in arms followed the route of the Corpus Christi procession without any kind of protocol based on social precedence. None of the authorities were summoned to participate, not even deeply respected ecclesiastical authorities. The *segadors* used a space charged with solemnity to strengthen the significance of the revolt, which, in their eyes, was sanctioned by God. This popular procession aimed to reconcile the temporal and spiritual worlds; it was a moment of communion with Christ. In the streets of the Corpus Christi procession, the *segadors* reasserted their damaged Catholic identity and rebuilt what they believed was broken due to the heretical soldiers, the idolatrous Marquis, and the complacent royal ministers. This improvised procession represented a culmination of the community purification process and a rite to repair the social body.

The *consellers* finally expelled the *segadors* from Barcelona by lying to them; they promised to join the *segadors* in their holy war against heresy. On 10 June, the *conseller en cap*, Lluís Joan de Calders (the head of the Consell de Cent) called all men to arms "with the objective of killing the enemies of the Catholic faith and expelling them from Catalonia" (DGC, vol. 5, 1039). A group of *segadors* led by the *conseller en cap* was organized to fight against the sacrilegious soldiers.

However, when they were outside the city, the *segadors* realized that the *conseller* actually intended to leave and return to Barcelona. The *segadors* then kidnapped him and forced him to follow them until they arrived in Granollers, a village in El Vallès, where the village authorities finally managed to release him from captivity (Rubí de Marimon, 277-278; Melgar, 60-61). The *segadors*, who had been betrayed by the *conseller*, began to destroy and burn the palaces of the royal ministers and Catalan cavaliers located in the outskirts of Barcelona. Some days later, rumours that the *segadors* intended to enter Barcelona on St. John's Day and finish the work they had started began to circulate (Rosso, 466-467).

In late June and early July, two letters signed by an unknown *Capità General del Exèrcit Christià* ("Captain General of the Christian Army") were sent to the Consell de Cent and the Diputació del General. These letters accused the authorities of passiveness toward the sacrilegious soldiers; both institutions were invited to join the Christian Army. The letter continued by stating that, if this did not happen, they would feel God's wrath again, just as they had experienced it on the Feast of Corpus Christi (Torres Sans 2015a, 6-8).

Popular violence spread to many other Catalan villages and cities throughout the summer. The popular outbreak, however, was finally redirected and stifled by the Catalan authorities due to the beginning of war; in August, the court in Madrid ordered an army to be sent to pacify Catalonia and restore royal justice. In September, the Catalan institutions decided to resist, with arms, the arrival of the troops and join forces with France. Over the next 12 years, Catalonia would become the scene for a battle between the Habsburgs and the Bourbons.

Conclusion

On 7 June, Barcelona formed the backdrop for a series of ritualistic acts expressed through collective violence. The *segadors*, who had come from the outskirts of Barcelona, entered the city in search of justice after several months of clashes with the

sacrilegious royal soldiers. The *segadors* punished and degraded the traitors –the viceroy and his royal ministers– through a series of violent acts against their person and belongings. Acts of violence such as the destruction of the houses of royal ministers and the dragging of the viceroy. Acts of violence that reproduced those carried out by the judiciary against convicts and their belongings and which now were used to provide popular action with legitimacy and thus vindicate an absent justice.

They later purified the polluted community by burning all the traitors' belongings, including gold and silver objects, and taking care not to throw any religious images into the fire. The bonfires were controlled by armed groups of *segadors* to prevent anyone from stealing anything and to ensure that the purification ritual was not interrupted. The *segadors* concluded the ceremony with a popular procession. It took the route of the Corpus Christi procession and was intended to repair the corrupted social body. This ended with the handing over of an idol found in the house of the Marquis of Villafranca to the Inquisitorial tribunal.

The *segadors'* violence targeted the viceroy and the royal ministers, who were responsible for letting the sacrileges perpetrated by the royal soldiers go unpunished. The *diputats* and *consellers* were left unharmed throughout the revolt and, in fact, acted as peacemakers between the *segadors* and their victims. A situation that could change, however, if the Catalan authorities did not obey the demands made on them by the crowd.

Abbreviations

AHCB: Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona
 BNE: Biblioteca Nacional de España
 DGC: Dietaris de la Generalitat de Catalunya
 MNA: Manual de Novells Ardits

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