

# The Senyera: A Flag that made history

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Senyera (1), which in the Catalan language means "flag", is the name given in Catalonia, the Balearic islands, the Valencian Country (2) and the French Roussillon to their "national" flag and local varieties of the same, if any (3).

The word Senyera comes from the vulgar Latin signaria, which in turn comes from the term signum which means "standard" or "banner".

The origin of the secular Senyera, with its four blood red bars running vertically on gold dates as far back as time immemorial, that is, to the very origins of Catalonia, since according to the legend the origin of the making of the Catalan shield is ascribed to Count Wilfred I the Hairy, who was killed by a spear blow when fighting the Arab chief at Llerida, on August 11th, 897 A.D.

Legend has it that in between 873 and 874 Count Wilfred helped Charles the Bald, King of France and grandson of Charlemagne, to expel the Normans who had invaded the north of France. As it seems, Wilfred was wounded in one of the battles and the monarch, showing, thus, his gratitude went to visit his ally to his tent. Wilfred is said to have asked him for a coat of arms for his golden shield, upon which, Charles the Bald dipped his four fingers in the Count's blood and then drew them down his simple golden shield, telling him: "this will be, valiant and rash Count, your coat of arms" (4).

In spite of the fact that the above legend is by far the most popular and wide-spread among several others, a less-known legend has it that the bars or pales, used by the Catalan counts upon their shields would mean "union" and "conquest". Thus, a new bar, or pale, being added to the shield for every new kingdom or territory conquered.

The fact that the number of bars, or pales, was not uniform until the XIV century (5), gave rise to the common scholarly belief that it all depended on the number of "states" ruled by the monarch; and therefore it was thought that the shield of Peter I the Catholic (1196-1213) bore three pales because he was king of Aragon, count of Barcelona and master of Montpellier; James I (1231-1276) added a further pale upon conquering the kingdom of Majorca and the fifth one when he seized the realm of Valencia; Peter II the Great (1276-1285) had just inherited the realms of Aragon and Valencia as well as the county of Catalonia but he increased the number to four upon becoming king of Sicily, and so on. Again, this is all pure fantasy as it has never been proven by any official or royal decree, text or document whatsoever (6).

In between 1392 and 1395, the Dominican friar Joan de Montsó gave his version of the origin and symbolism of the paly coat of arms in a passage that he wrote dedicating his translation of Saint Bernard's Sermons to the Duke of Montblanch, the infante Martin of Aragon: "the glorious Jesus' Cross was made up of four poles or staffs which were all reddened by his precious blood, and for this meaning I think that your predecessors of the House of Aragon have taken the four red pales as their coat of arms and standard emblem, so that it can be said that they bear the four poles of Jesus' Cross in their heart" (7).

Furthermore, there is also a time-honoured tradition which claims that the red and yellow stripes in the Papal canopy and umbrella were granted to king Peter II the Catholic by Pope Innocent III when the former was crowned in Rome and enfeoffed his kingdom; although according to other scholarly sources (8) it would be the other way round, that is, it was the Pope who, in return for Peter II the Catholic's devotion and affection for the Roman Church, decided that he and his successors would thereafter bear the king's arms on the umbrella, one of the Pope's signs of status which was carried over him in the Middle Ages, and also on the "conopeum" or pavilion preceding the Holy Father.

If this is so and the grant in question actually took place, the Catholic Church has duly fulfilled her wish and promise through the centuries since, in effect, the Pope has unfailingly displayed the red and yellow striped pavilion and umbrella in the great ceremonies and solemnities. An armed nobleman riding a horse, among the entourage preceding the Pope, bore the emblem.

Be that as it may, the Senyera certainly predates most European flags in current use, the first proof of the existence of the Catalan arms appearing on a seal belonging to Count Ramon Berenguer IV of Barcelona, on a provençal document, as early as 1150 A.D.

Although at the outset there was not a definite number of red bars or pales, as far back as the XIII century it tended to get fixed in four. The colours red and gold do not appear in the wax seals or stone reliefs but however it all makes us suppose that since the very beginning it was already red on a golden field, as it is indeed seen in the ribbons hanging from the seals, and so it is, in effect, stated in a document by Maria de Luna of 1396: "... two galleys which must not bear any flags, ensigns or standards whatsoever but those with the arms of the county of Barcelona, that is, yellow and red bars only".

As we have seen, it was originally the coat of arms of the Sovereign -- Counts of the Barcelona dynasty but through the marriage of Count Ramon Berenguer IV to Princess Petronilla of Aragon in 1137, it also became the arms of Aragon proper.

Some time earlier, however, the four red bars on gold had already been adopted by Provence when this territory passed on to the catalan dynasty in 1125 and after Ramon Berenguer III the Great married Dulcia, countess of Provence, this symbol was accepted by the Provençals as their own, and they still stick to it in the twentieth century.

And so does the Roussillon which became part of the Catalan-Aragonese Confederation in 1172 and has, since then, maintained the red and yellow flag up to date.

It was not until 1229 that the Senyera spread overseas when James I the Conqueror, the greatest-ever monarch in the history of the Crown of Aragon, conquered the island of Majorca, this being the first important step in the overseas expansion of Catalonia and the first great manifestation of Catalan naval power.

Soon afterwards, in 1238, he succeeded once more in the arduous task of conquering the powerful kingdom of Valencia. The original red and yellow flag hoisted by the Arabs as a sign of surrender, on September 28th 1238, is the oldest Catalan flag in existence (9). The monarch makes a moving reference to this event in Chapter 282 of his own Chronicle: "When I saw our Senyera up on top of the tower, alighted from my horse, turned eastwards, and my eyes shed tears; I knelt down and kissed the soil".

It was in the city of Valencia that Peter III the Cerimonious established in 1365, a permanent urban militia called "El Centenar de la Ploma" (the befeathered (10) hundred), a company of a hundred mounted cross bowmen - whose mission was to defend the Royal Senyera in combat and escort it in the civic festivities and celebrations.

Sicily, also, became part of the Catalan "Commonwealth" in 1284 (11). - The annexation of Sicily, conquered by Peter the Great in the wake of - the rebellion against the Angevine rule known as the Sicilian Vespers, was the second major step in the expansion of Catalonia and her invincible Senyera into the Mediterranean (12).

All three: Majorca, Valencia and Sicily (13) still maintain, as if in token of sentimental allegiance to the extinct Crown of Aragon, the common ensign, the millenarian Senyera, with minor variations. As do the islands of Minorca and Ibiza as well.

When the arabs had been vanquished back in the mainland and the Sicilian wars against the Angevins were over, the Catalan Company, a fierce force of stalwart and rash mercenaries, found employment thereafter in the Byzantine Empire but on condition that they would always fight under their own red and gold banners because "wherever they went, they wanted the - arms of their monarchs to reach out and because their red and gold ensigns were felt to be invincible (14).

After driving the Turks out of western Anatolia in aid of Emperor Andronic, and having reached Armenia in their free-booting raids (15), the Catalan Company created a short-lived state in the Gallipoli peninsula -- (1304-1307) in whose castle the captain of the Company, and writer of - his own Chronicle, Ramon Muntaner, ordered to make four flags for the - historic Battle of Gallipoli: "a huge flag of Saint Peter of Rome to be hoisted at the donjon (16), and a royal flag of Aragon, a royal flag of Sicily and Saint George's flag (17); all three to be carried into the - battle against the Greeks (18)".

The Catalan Company triumphantly moved on the Thrace after crushing her Greek foes and eventually established lordship over the Balkan duchies of Athens and Neopatria, taken from the Angevins in 1311 and 1319. Their capacity to overwhelm and thwart the Angevins, Genoese, Greeks, Turks and Alans (19), and the rate and range at which they could do so is a measure of the rising power of Aragon. She profited, also, from the ruinous - overthrow of Pisa by Genoa (1284) seizing Sardinia (1323).

Although having received its investiture from Pope Boniface VIII in 1297 in compensation for the promised cession (never effected) of Sicily to - the Angevins, the Aragonese did not set foot on Sardinia until 1323. A - historic passage worth mentioning in this respect is that of James II -- himself, befallen in 1323 and narrated in the famous Bernat Desclot's -- Chronicle, which describes allegorically the secular importance of the - Senyera in former times: "when the fleet was about to set sail and leave the harbour of Port Fangos for Sardinia, King James II bade farewell to the expeditionary forces with a famous harangue beginning like this: - "Son, I give thee our old flag, the flag of the Principality of Catalonia, which has a unique privilege: that never ever, wherever our royal flag has been, it never was defeated or thwarted (20)".

However, Sardinia was not fully occupied until 1326, when the Pisans -- abandoned the city of Cagliari, and through Ramon Muntaner's Chronicle we learn that "when the nobleman Berenguer Carros and the King's Company entered the castle, they hoisted a large royal standard in the tower of Saint Pancras and smaller banners and pennons on every other tower. And by the grace of Our Lord, when the said flags and banners were being run up the wind would not blow, but when they were fully hoisted, a south

west wind started blowing, the finest in the world, which unfurled every flag and pennon, and it was indeed the most beautiful sight that can be offered for those who do love the Crown of Aragon: and for the rest a reason for wrath and sorrow".

Curiously enough, Sardinia has also faithfully retained through the ages not the widespread 'mediterranean' red on gold (as have Aragon, Catalonia Roussillon, Provence, Majorca, Minorca, Ibiza, Valencia, Sicily, Foix, -- etc.) but the less-known Aragonese flag of Alcoraz with the four Moors' heads and Saint George's Cross, ascribed to the island by king James II of Aragon (21).

In between 1300 and 1450, the Senyera would wave unchallenged throughout the Mediterranean and reach the Greek Parthenon and the gates of the Bosphorus Sea. The red and yellow flags fluttered unrivalled over Catalonia, Valencia, Aragon proper, the Balearic islands, Provence, Montpellier, -- Roussillon, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, the islands of Pantelleria, Djerba and Qerqena, Calabria, Naples, Malta, Gozzo, Slavonia, Albania, the duchies of Athens and Neopatria, the principality of Morea, the Gallipoli peninsula and the easternmost island of Castellorizon. The whole Mediterranean had, in fact, become a Catalan lake, a real 'mare nostrum' -- where the Confederation's vessels and galleys ruled the waves; so much so that Admiral Ruggiero Di Lauria (22) boasted in his reply to the emissaries of the king of France that "...not only galleys or vessels, but what is more: not even the fish will dare to cross the Mediterranean unless they bear the arms of Aragon on their tail (23).

When Ferdinand II succeeded to the crown of Aragon in 1479, the union of Aragon and Castile was finally achieved. But it was, however, a union of crowns and not of kingdoms. In size, institutions, traditions and language (24), the two kingdoms differed greatly, and although they quartered their arms (25), both kingdoms retained their own flags. Even after the dynastic merger in 1516 under Charles I (the famous Holy Roman Emperor Charles Quint) there was not a common ensign and the Emperor used to -- adopt, as his own personal flag, the one he deemed best from any of his various kingdoms in Spain or the Netherlands, and so we know through several tapestries that the red and yellow Senyera was the flag under which the Emperor himself led the great maritime expedition against the Muslims in the conquest of Tunis in 1535.

However, both king Charles I (1516-1556) and, previously, his father -- Philip I, Duke of Burgundy, who was Regent of Spain in 1506, favoured the emblem of the crossed branches or red saltire on white of Burgundy and Spanish Flanders. And so popular did it become that even the red and gold Senyera was sometimes charged with the Burgundian Cross, namely, in the famous Battle of Saint Quentin (1557) and the naval battle of the Terceras islands (1582). As late as 1677-1678 the Cortes of Aragon decided "that the flags of the Companies shall bear the crossed branches of Burgundy in the best place, and a further emblem out of the various in the Aragon /proper/ coat of arms shall be added so that the said flags can be distinguished from those of Catalonia (26)".

The Senyera had, in the meantime, been maintained as the particular ensign of each and every 'member country' of the Crown of Aragon up to the coming of the Bourbons and the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1715). -- This was the last time that troops rallied under the red and yellow banners. After Philip V's victory over the archduke Charles at Almansa (1707) the 'fueros' or local privileges of the kingdoms of Valencia and Aragon proper were abolished, the property of the rebels confiscated and the captured red and gold flags sent to Madrid by the victors as was trophies. Later on, Catalonia (1714) and Majorca (1715) were also deprived of their 'self-governing' privileges and integrated into Spain. Soon after Barce-

lona's surrender "on September 15th 1714, at three o'clock in the afternoon, forty-two war flags along with those of the Guilds, the renowned flag of Saint Eulalia and Saint George's flag were taken away from the Town Hall by as many mounted soldiers, carrying one each, and handed them over to the duke of Berwick who had them sent to the Shrine of Our Lady of Atocha in Madrid and they were lost forever and no longer seen (27)".

It may be said in passing that the basic red-yellow-red Spanish flag dating back to a royal decree of 28th May 1785 is thought to have been elected by king Charles III among a large number of flag designs (28) because this was the Catalan-Aragonese red and yellow flag, taken to Naples by Alphonse IV the Magnanimous, which he had previously seen when he was king of that territory. And the same applies to the two-red-bars-on-gold Spanish merchant navy flag used from 1785 to 1927 which, in turn, gave rise to the merchant navy flag of the Italian Duchy of Lucca used from 1824 to 1847.

The government of Catalonia established by Napoleon I in 1810 made an official use of the Catalan red and yellow emblem along with the Napoleonic imperial eagle.

In the XIX century the four-red-bars-on-gold symbol was adopted by the regionalistic and nationalistic movements of Catalonia, Valencia and Majorca, thus blooming on newspaper headings, gonfalons and pennants of choral societies, emblems of political parties and also Modernism used and abused the said symbol as an ornamental motif in buildings and other artistic works. As early as 1870, the Senyera was the only one flag present in a huge demonstration of the Catalan people against the military draft, organized by the Federal Democratic Republican Party in Barcelona (29). In 1914, the 'Mancomunitat' (administrative union of the four Catalan provinces) officially adopted it as its emblem (30), and so did the 'Generalitat' of Catalonia (the Catalan legislative assembly) of 1931. As a result, the Catalan Parliament passed a bill in 1933 whereby: "the flag of Catalonia is the traditional four red bars running horizontally on gold".

Once again, when the Spanish civil war was over in 1939, the Senyera, a permanent symbol of liberty and home rule, became an unlawful flag and thereafter went through a very difficult period of prohibitions and persecutions.

As from 1970 the Senyera is 'tolerated' (by the Central Government, that is partially allowed to be showed around, and therefore the people of Catalonia, the Balearic islands, Valencia and Aragon proper waved it massively in their respective nationalistic gatherings and demonstrations in 1976, 1977, 1978 and so on. Early in 1979, the Senyera is officially recognized by the interim Catalan Legislative Assembly and given official approval by Spanish Organic Law of 18th December 1979, thus appearing in the Official Gazette of the Spanish State.

Soon afterwards, the Senyera, with slight variants, was also officially recognized as the traditional flag of Valencia (July 1st 1982), Aragon proper (August 10th 1982) and the Balearic islands (February 25th 1983) in an act of vexillological restitution and/or devolution to the former member countries of the extinct and dreaded Crown of Aragon, which in this way return to their vindicated red and yellow medieval origins, regaining their common ensign, the Senyera, which is, by far, the first and foremost symbol of their distinctive self-identity.

In August 1977, the Senyera was already fluttering (legally) together with the Spanish flag on top of the Catalan fishing fleet, and the very Adolfo Suarez, president elect of the Spanish Government, made a -- cruise on board of the yacht 'Miss Areca' along the Costa Brava with -- a Catalan flag hoisted on the mast of the said boat, thus sanctioning the step taken by the Barcelona Provincial Federation of Fishing Guilds a few days earlier.

On September 3rd 1981, the Senyera waved for the first time on the main façade of all the Civil Service buildings in Catalonia along with the -- Spanish flag. This decision was adopted in the course of a previous meeting, held in August, between the Government Delegate in Catalonia and the four Catalan Civil Governors.

On May 30th 1981, on the day of the National Homage to the Armed Forces held in Barcelona, the Spanish army paraded in front of the Royal Family and members of the Government and Staff along a Catalan-Spanish beflagged promenade for the first time in history.

In modern times, the Senyera has been used officially by the French and Spanish armies, that is, by the French battalion of infantry Régiment - de Bearn (1684-1763) and, currently, by the Staff (31) of the Spanish - Army Brigade of paratroopers. The former, an infantry colour, was charged with the white Cross of the Armagnacs, following the basic pattern for the French infantry introduced in the XVII century, and the latter, a guidon, is charged with the arms of Aragon proper framed by Saint -- John's eagle, yoke and arrows.

Nowadays, the red and gold paly emblem is present in the national coat of arms of Spain and Andorra, as well as an endless number of Spanish, French and Italian cities, counties or provinces (32).



NOTES:

- (1) : The word SENYERA is pronounced "sen-YEH-rah", the accent falling on the second syllable, to rhyme with the word 'terror'.
- (2) : The old kingdom of Valencia, popularly known as the Valencian Country and officially under the name of COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA (Valencian Community), is integrated by the provinces of Alicante, Valencia and Castellón.
- (3) : Such variants do exist in the Valencian Country and the Balearic islands, where there is a special flag for each island: Majorca, Minorca and Ibiza, as well as a common ensign encompassing all three.
- (4) : This legend, the most wide-spread among several others, had traditionally been thought of as the true story of the centuries-old -- Catalan shield, as it was already reported for the first time -- in the LLIBRE DELS FETS DE ARMES E ECCLESIASTICHS DE CATALUNYA -- (The book of the feats of arms and ecclesiastical acts of Catalonia) written by Bernard Boades in 1420, and, later on, by Pere Antoni Beuter in the SEGUNDA PARTE DE LA CRONICA GENERAL (Second Part of the General Chronicle) published in Valencia in 1538.
- (5) : It was Peter III the Ceremonious who definitively adopted, at least from 1343, the four-paled emblem, which will henceforth everlast --

through the Trastamara dynasty and their successors, the Spanish monarchs, who often quartered it with that of Sicily and many others.

- (6) : The said theory has recently been proved wrong by the Catalan heraldist Martí de Riquer in his lengthy, painstaking research - work CATALAN HERALDRY, Barcelona, 1983.
- (7) : Martí de Riquer, ANALECTA SACRA TARRACONENS (A, XXII, 1949, p. 228.
- (8) : J.R. Vila, DE ARMORIA, Volume IV, Book I, page 5. And also Baluzi, GESTA COM. BARC., Chapter XXIV: "Et Dominus Papa attendens - affectionem et devotionem quam erga Ecclesiam Dominus Rex habebat, concessit ei, ut tam ipse quam sucesores sui in papillione - sen tenda quae ante Dominum Papam eum equitat deportatur portet ipsius Domini Regis signum".
- (9) : This ancient flag known as 'the Pennon of the Conquest' was preserved in the Monastery of Sant Vicent de la Roqueta up until -- 1838 when it was transferred to the Valencia City Hall Archive.
- (10) : They wore a coat of mail and a white woollen surcoat charged -- with the red Saint George's Cross both back and front. They also wore an ornamental feather on their helmet and hence their - name. They also had a flag of their own: Saint George's flag, - which was one of the Catalan-Aragonese "national" flags, namely, the Crown of Aragon's military flag. This mounted guard - was abolished by Philip V in 1711 soon after the for-reaching - Battle of Almansa.
- (11) : The Catalan "Commonwealth" consisted of the essential nucleus of the three "inseparable" states: Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia, - the intermittent members: Majorca, Sicily, Sardinia and Naples, which finally ended up by reuniting the Confederation, and other minor "foothold" states in the Aegean Sea: the duchies of Athens, Neopatria, etc.
- (12) : Later on, the Angevins were defeated by admiral Ruggiero Di Lauria at the harbour of Malta in 1283, and both the islands of Malta and Gozzo were incorporated into the Crown under the red-barred flag. And so were the Tunisian islands of Djerba and Qerqena in - 1284.
- (13) : Strictly speaking, Sicily maintained her traditional flag up to 1817. In 1943, however, soon after the Anglo-American occupation of the island, an important pro-independence movement -M.I.S. or Movimento per l'Indipendenza della Sicilia- was formed with British and American acquiescence, whose flag was exactly that of - Catalonia, Aragon and so on, except for the fact that it bore - the traditional Sicilian Triquetra on a blue canton. This political Movement disappeared later in 1946.  
  
The current Sicilian flag still preserves the traditional colours having a red over yellow field charged with the well-know Triquetra in the centre.
- (14) : RAMON MUNTANER'S CHRONICLE. So much so that when captain Bernat de Rocafort and a part of the Catalan Company did not acknowledge King Frederic II of Sicily's authority and joined the troops of Charles of Valois, they kept fighting all time under their beloved and revered red and yellow standards. The fact that they - rebelled and fought their King under the same flag is a historic

event which shows that the Senyera meant more than a royal symbol to the Catalonian people.

- (15) : According to RAMON MUNTANER'S CHRONICLE, the Iron Gates or Cilicia Gates (Pylae Ciliciae) past the Taurus is the easternmost point - reached by the Senyera in their forays and incursions.
- (16) : We must bear in mind that king James II became Standard Bearer of the Catholic Church in 1297.
- (17) : The red cross on white Saint George's flag was the military flag of the Catalan-Aragonese Empire; one of the "national" flags along with the quartered per saltire Sicilian flag, the Aragon proper - flag of Alcoraz, granted to Sardinia by James II, and the almighty red and gold Senyera.
- (18) : RAMON MUNTANER'S CHRONICLE. Chapter CCXIX.
- (19) : Venice had always been Aragon's ally or neutral friend.
- (20) : It is obvious that in spite of the fact that there were no national flags in the Middle Ages, the Senyera --an exception to the rule-- was not only the king's emblem, but it had already become the country's flag, too. So connected was the red paly emblem with the Crown of Aragon that when the unsuccessful Peter V (the Portuguese who wanted to substitute John II) proclaimed himself king - of Aragon and minted coins with this title (in between 1464 and - 1466), he, naturally, used the four-paled emblem, as did René I - d'Anjou who followed suit.

Also, some time earlier, in 1288, three Aragonese noblemen offered to acknowledge Charles of Anjou as their king but on condition that he may not use, anywhere, any symbols of his own but for the "signum regni Aragonum" -and inasmuch as the Holy Seat gives her approval as it is stated in another clause therein-. The document in question, issued at Mallén, on 24th June 1288, reads: "Item - quat dictus Rex Aragonum habeat semper in scuto, vexillo, sigillis ac aliis locis omnibus ubi signa sua pingenda seu ponenda sint, signum regni Aragonum, scilicet: bastones, unum aureum et alium -- rubeum, nullo alio signo eisdem apponito vel adiuncto".

It is, therefore, crystal clear that the red and gold bars, the - arms of the kingdom of Aragon, should be the future king's arms - borne on his shield, coat of arms, standard, seals and so forth - in place of any other symbol whatsoever. (Quoted in "La Bandera de Aragón", by Guillermo Fatás Cabeza and Guillermo Redondo Veintemillas, p. 17-18, Zaragoza, Spain, 1978).

- (21) : Nevertheless, the Catalan-speaking Sardinian city of Alghero (pop. 50,000) still maintains, nowadays, the red and gold Senyera as her official municipal flag; locally known under the sentimental name of "la bandera de la Confederació" (The Confederation's flag).
- (22) : Peter II the Great nominated Ruggiero Di Lauria admiral on April 23rd 1283 trusting him with the defence of Sicily against the Angevins. Shortly afterwards, on July 8th 1283, he crushed Charles of Anjou's fleet at the harbour of Malta, seizing the island. This and other similar actions by the Catalonian vessels made Charles of Anjou undertake a great naval offensive against Sicily under his son's command (Charles II the Lame) but Ruggiero Di Lauria - surprised and thwarted the Angevin fleet at the Bay of Naples on June 5th 1284 where the very Charles II the Lame was taken prisoner.

- (23) : a) When the French started to invade Catalonia in 1285, Peter II the Great called Ruggiero Di Lauria and his craft back to Barcelona in order to prevent the French vessels from catering their army by sea. He arrived at the port of Barcelona on August 24th and some days later, on September 3rd, he played havoc on the French navy at the Bay of Rosas, upon which the French ended -- their crusade and withdrew their troops from Catalonia.

Following this crushing defeat, the King of France sent two emissaries, namely, the Count of Foix and Ramon Roger, who asked for a truce on his behalf (which admiral Ruggiero declined) threatening the admiral if he didn't accept, upon which, Ruggiero Di Lauria bragged before the emissaries that "I will have a hundred -- galleys made, equipped and manned so that the King of France will not dare to face me anywhere at sea, not even with a thousand -- galley, and what is more, I think that not only galleys or vessels but not even the fish will dare to cross the sea unless they bear the arms of Aragon on their back, thus showing our noble King of Aragon and Sicily's safe-conduct" (BERNAT DESCLOT'S CHRONICLE, - circa XIV century).

b) Relative to the importance that the colours red and yellow - had in the Mediterranean Sea, it is curious, in this respect, - the fact that the war flag or "standard of battle" of the galleys of the Order of Malta (a sort of 'sea police' against the infi--dels) should be a variant of the Catalan-Aragonese red and gold striped Senyera.

- (24) : Except for Aragon proper, the territories of the Crown of Aragon were mainly Catalan-speaking. Catalan (or Catalonian), a member of the Latin family of languages, is, at present, the mother -- tongue of some eight million people, and it is spoken in the old principality of Catalonia (the modern Spanish provinces of Barcelona, Gerona, Tarragona and Lerida), the old kingdom of Valencia (the provinces of Valencia, Alicante and Castellon), a narrow - strip of eastern Aragon, the Balearic Island (Majorca, Minorca - and Ibiza), the Republic and Andorra (where it is the official - language), the old French province of Roussillon (now the Department of Pyrénées-Orientales) and the city of Alghero in Sardinia, covering roughly 60.000 square kilometers or 23.250 square miles.
- (25) : Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile quartered their own coat of arms with the Castilian canting arms of the lion and castle and the red-yellow paly emblem of the Crown of Aragon, -- whose form was adopted by all their successors up to the coming of Philip V of Bourbon.
- (26) : "FUEROS Y ACTOS DE CORTE DE EL REINO DE ARAGON, HECHOS POR LA SACRA, CATOLICA Y REAL MAJESTAD DEL REY DON CARLOS II, NUESTRO SEÑOR, EN LAS CORTES CONVOCADAS EN LA CIUDAD DE CALATAYUD Y PRORROGADAS A LA DE ZARAGOÇA Y EN ELLA FENECIDAS EN LOS AÑOS DE MDCLXXVII Y MDCLXXVIII".
- (27) : LLUIS DOMENECH I MONTANER, "Ensenyes nacionals de Catalunya". -- Col.lecció Costa Brava, Barcelona, Spain, 1936..
- (28) : Proposed to him as replacements for the white flags previously - displayed on Spanish vessels.
- (29) : FELIX CUCURULL, "Les banderes", Diari AVUI, 27/5/1976, Barcelona, Spain.

- (30) : But once again the Senyera was forbidden under Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship in between 1923-1930. In those days, the Senyera being banned, demonstrators rallied under the blue and red striped flags of the Barcelona Football Club (the most important soccer team in the capital city of Catalonia). A curious anecdote, no doubt, which illustrates the prohibition and persecution of the centuries-old Senyera under the different regimes.
- (31) : Or "First Command Headquarters".
- (32) : Also in the Papal arms borne by Honorius IV (1285-1287), Clement V (1305-1314), John XXII (1316-1334), Pius V (1566-1572), Benedict XIV (1740-1758).



