



Routes of Gothic

Gothic – a European art

Gothic was the predominant style in Europe during the 13-15th C. It succeeded Romanesque art and preceded the golden age of the Renaissance. It is thought to have originated in the Île-de-France and was known as *opus francigenum* till Vasari gave it the name which has endured. It evolved from the first Cistercian monasteries and the basilica of Saint-Denis (1144), to the great fully Gothic Cathedrals (Chartres, Reims, Cologne, Lyon, etc.) and to the typically English perpendicular, flamboyant style.

One of its characteristics is the structural development of the pointed arch. Another is the ribbed vault, which made it possible to build increasingly complex and lofty buildings. Gothic architecture is much richer than Romanesque in plastic and expressive resources. Its interest lies, not only in its architectural innovations —buttresses and flying buttresses, fascicled pillars, pinnacles, gables, spires, rose windows, etc.— but also in its new conception of space.

Gothic art emerged at a time when royal power was being consolidated and feudal bonds were loosening. This led to the appearance of a specifically urban social class, the bourgeoisie, and to the development of governmental and administrative institutions such as parliaments, city councils, guilds and other professional bodies. As a result, cities grew and trade flourished, both factors being decisive in the evolution of Gothic art. It was an age of new forms of religious devotion, introduced by the mendicant orders, of scholastic philosophy and of great encyclopaedic compendiums; of the founding of universities and the development of urban culture which was to give rise to humanism; of the works of Dante and Ramon Llull; of the cultural world of the court and chivalry; of the poetry of troubadours and of *Ars Nova* in music.

Thus it was the cities which provided the environment conducive to the development of Gothic art and, while cathedrals are the archetype of the style, it produced equally representative royal palaces, castles and mansions, as well as buildings to house institutions (hospitals, trade exchanges), bridges, city walls and even city planning. Initially the plastic arts were closely linked to architecture (sculptures to decorate the great façades, wall paintings, etc.). Soon, however, the quest began for individualized expression and refinement, as is apparent in painted and sculpted altarpieces, tombs, religious statues, choir stalls, gold and silverware, etc., many of which may still be admired in the great museums.



Lleida: cloister of the Seu Vella

Gothic art in Catalonia

Catalan Gothic style, while possessing a distinct personality of its own, belongs to the Mediterranean form of Gothic art, which was inspired by a slightly different spirit from that prevailing further north. The political expansion of Catalonia throughout the Mediterranean, which culminated in the 14th C., facilitated contacts with major centres of Italian art and kept Catalan Gothic art within a cultural environment where the values of classicism were still latent. Explicit proof of this is provided by the words of praise written by King Peter III the Ceremonious, the patron of important works of Gothic architecture, about the Acropolis in 1380: “the richest jewel in the world, such that all living kings of Christian peoples could create something similar”. The Catalan kings, however, were also attracted by the artistic splendour of the Courts of Paris and Burgundy, and, especially during the 15th C., considerable influence was exerted by the Low Countries and the Germanic world generally.

Catalan Gothic art was therefore an integral part of European trends while making an original and creative contribution of its own. The vitality of Catalan society is perhaps most visible in Catalan Gothic architecture, with its sense of proportion, its simplicity of form, its emphasis on breadth over height, the creation of compact volumes, the integration of structural elements, and so on. This style is not peculiar to Catalonia proper: it embraced the whole territory of the Kingdom of Aragon, particularly the other Catalan-speaking countries, such as Valencia and the Balearic Islands, but also Aragon itself, Sardinia and Naples.

The transition from Romanesque to Gothic lasted throughout the 12th and 13th C. It was not until the second half of the 13th C. that a fully Gothic style emerged in the fields of architecture and the plastic arts. Architecture reached full maturity in the veritable frenzy of building and renovation which began in 1300. *Linear* Gothic was outmoded when *Italian* trends in the plastic arts, especially painting, appeared and these remained highly fertile throughout the 14th C. *International* Gothic took over towards 1400 and was enriched, in its final stages, by Flemish, Germanic and Italian influences. Gothic art became firmly established in Catalonia, as is shown by the survival of Gothic tastes throughout much of the 16th C. and the use of Gothic techniques in architecture even later on.

The geography of Gothic art

The Catalan Gothic heritage covers virtually the whole country, though it is richer in some regions than others. The first distinction is between so-called Old and New Catalonia (*Catalunya Vella* and *Catalunya Nova*), which were resettled at different periods. In Old Catalonia, to the north of the traditional route to Aragon through the central highlands, settlement took place when Romanesque art was in full swing. Romanesque took root there and Gothic styles were not introduced until the end of the 13th C. when they had already reached maturity. In contrast, major building in New Catalonia got underway after the Christian conquest, which was completed in the mid-12th C., at the time of the transition between Romanesque and Gothic, when the Cistercians and the military orders were playing an important part.

The second distinction is between the cities and the countryside. The growth and prosperity of the cities caused earlier buildings to be replaced, as in the case of Barcelona Cathedral and many other churches which had become too small. It also led to the establishment of new civil buildings (trade exchanges, shipyards, city halls, royal palaces) and military constructions (city walls). The arrival of the mendicant orders was another factor. Dominicans and Franciscans established religious houses in major towns such as Vilafranca del Penedès, Montblanc, Tortosa, Balaguer, or Puigcerdà. In the countryside, however, with the exception of a few minor churches, Gothic art is mainly to be found in the great Cistercian monasteries, in the fortresses of the Knights Templar and the Hospitallers (Miravet, Ulldecona and Gardeny), in numerous castles and palaces (Vilassar de Dalt, Verdú, La Floresta, Peratallada, etc.), in hospices, and in spacious manor houses or *masos*.

The routes we propose follow the main thoroughfares in Catalonia. They offer a wide range of Catalan Gothic art, from important monuments and extensive tours of major cities and towns, to more modest buildings whose charm is often enhanced by beautiful scenery or other attractions. At the end is a list of the main Catalan museums with Gothic exhibits. It should be remembered that only the more important monuments and large city museums have fixed visiting hours. Many churches are closed for security reasons when no service is in progress and the key must be obtained from the town hall or a nearby house. Tourist Offices will be pleased to help you plan your visits.

Barcelona



Missal of Sant Cugat (1400)

Barcelona, one of the great cities of the Mediterranean, became the capital of Catalonia in the Middle Ages thanks to the political supremacy of the Counts of Barcelona over the other Catalan counts and especially to its flourishing sea trade. The kings of the confederated kingdom of Catalonia-Aragon, who normally resided in Barcelona from the 13th C. onwards, pursued a policy of territorial expansion with the support of a powerful oligarchy of patricians and merchants. By the 14th C., Barcelona was a major Mediterranean power and remained so throughout the 15th C., despite increasingly acute social and political crises.

The fact that the Gothic age coincided with this era of affluence accounts for the wealth of Barcelona's Gothic heritage. Much renovation took place at this time throughout Catalonia, more especially in the lively capital where it affected the Romanesque Cathedral, the churches in many districts both inside and outside the walls, ancient palaces, mansions and hospitals. New city walls were erected, premises were built to house the City Council and the permanent delegation of members of Parliament, while religious orders, attracted by the prosperity of the city, opened monasteries and convents.

The Gothic heritage is concentrated in the Ciutat Vella (Old City) within the former city walls, which were pulled down in the mid 19th C. during another period of economic and demographic growth. The Old City, with its maze of narrow streets, has preserved part of its medieval flavour. The area immediately surrounding the Cathedral, where the seats of the main public bodies are located, is known as the Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter). The name is somewhat inaccurate since it corresponds to the old Roman city and therefore also comprises important Roman remains, while many Gothic buildings are located in other parts of the Old City (Santa Maria del Mar, Drassanes, Llotja, etc.).

A good starting point for a tour of Barcelona's Gothic buildings is the Pla de l'Os, or Pla de la Boqueria, where the lively and popular Rambla meets the streets of Sant Pau, L'Hospital, La Boqueria and Cardenal Casañas. We follow the gentle curve of the latter street to the Plaça del Pi, overshadowed by the church of El Pi with its large rose window. From the Plaça de Sant Josep Oriol, where there is a monument to the playwright Àngel Guimerà, we walk along the narrow winding Carrer de la Palla, which has antique and secondhand book shops on either side, to the Plaça Nova, at the end of the wide Avinguda de la Catedral. Here one of the main gates to the old city still stands on what was once part of the Roman walls, protected by two cylindrical medieval towers. Next to it is the Palau del Bisbe and opposite, the modern Col·legi d'Arquitectes, adorned by a sgraffiti frieze designed by Picasso.

More remains of the Roman walls line the avenue, which leads to steps up to the main door of the Cathedral. A fine Gothic building, the Pia Almoina, stands on the Pla de la Seu. After a detailed visit to the spacious and majestic Cathedral, we leave by the Porta de Sant Iu, which opens onto the Carrer dels Comtes de Barcelona. On one side of this medieval street stands the Palau del Lloctinent, which was the home of the Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó for many years, while at the end is the Baixada de Santa Clara which brings us to the enchanting Plaça del Rei, enclosed by the splendid Gothic Palau Reial Major and its chapel of Santa Àgata which is well worth visiting, as is the Museu d'Història in the late Gothic Casa Padellàs.

We walk back up the Baixada de Santa Clara and along the Carrer de la Pietat, which skirts the Cathedral apse, to look at the restored Cases dels Canonges. We then proceed up the Carrer del Bisbe, which runs along the side of the Palau de la Generalitat, the seat of the Catalan autonomous government, a fine example of Catalan Gothic civil architecture. This brings us out onto the Plaça de Sant Jaume, the political hub of Barcelona and once the

meeting point of the main thoroughfares of the old Roman castrum. Before visiting the City Hall, it is worth making a short detour towards the Carrer del Call and the quaint narrow adjoining streets, which in the Middle Ages formed the Jewish quarter.

Opposite the Palau de la Generalitat, on the Plaça de Sant Jaume, is the Casa de la Ciutat (City Hall). The Saló de Cent inside and the façade overlooking the Carrer de la Ciutat bear witness to the splendour of the Middle Ages. Proceeding along the Carrer d'Hèrcules (a reference to the mythical founder of Barcelona), we come to the Placeta de Sant Just where, facing the fine Gothic church of Sant Just i Pastor, is a charming Gothic fountain. Close by is the Palau de la Comtessa de Palamós, now the Academia de Bones Lletres. We follow the Carrer de la Dagueria and Carrer de Jaume I to the Plaça de l'Àngel. We cross the bustling Via Laietana, which momentarily breaks the spell of the medieval atmosphere, and walk along the Carrer de la Princesa to the Carrer de Montcada, one of the most fascinating streets in Old Barcelona, flanked by mansions which are fine examples of Catalan Gothic architecture. Most are now museums (Museu Picasso, Museu Barbier-Mueller) or attractive shops and art galleries.

At the bottom of the Carrer de Montcada is the Carreró de les Mosques, the narrowest street in Barcelona, which brings us to the apse of the church of Santa Maria del Mar, known as the 'Cathedral of La Ribera' from the name of the former harbour district. Of all the creations of Catalan Gothic architecture, this is perhaps the most universally admired on account of the beauty and harmony of its proportions. The Carrer de l'Espasera brings us to the Plaça del Palau which faces the harbour and the popular district of La Barceloneta. In the middle of the square is an unusual fountain dedicated to the 'Catalan spirit', while on the right stands the Llotja, a remarkable Gothic building with a neoclassical façade, formerly the trade exchange and the former home of the Barcelona Stock Exchange.

West of the Llotja is the Plaça d'Antoni López. Our tour continues along the wide palm-tree lined Passeig de Colom, which runs parallel to the former Moll de la Fusta (timber quay) and the Marina. We cross the avenue half way along and walk up the Carrer Ample back into the Old City to admire the fine Gothic statue of the patroness of Barcelona, the Virgin of La Mercè, in the Baroque church of the same name.

At the end of the Passeig de Colom is the Plaça de la Porta de la Pau, the seafarer's entrance to Barcelona. In the middle of the square, at the end of the Rambla, stands one of the city's most familiar sights, the monument to Christopher Columbus, while on the western side are the Drassanes, medieval shipyards consisting of a series of Gothic halls whose elegance and spaciousness are ample proof of the power of the Catalan fleet in the Middle Ages. The building now houses the interesting Museu Marítim and adjoining it, on the side nearest the Avinguda del Paral·lel, is part of the restored 14th C. city walls.

We now stroll up the Rambla, Barcelona's most popular avenue, enjoying the lively atmosphere and the numerous attractions such as flower stalls and pet shops, until we reach our starting point, the Pla de l'Os. A short walk from here takes us along the Carrer de l'Hospital to the magnificent former Hospital de la Santa Creu, basically Gothic with later additions, whose elegant rooms now house the Biblioteca de Catalunya. Off the northernmost end of the Rambla, on the right-hand side, just before the Plaça de Catalunya, the old church of the Col·legiata de Santa Anna stands in a surprisingly quiet square with a monumental cross in Romanesque-Gothic transition style.

Our visit to the Old City is complete, but several interesting Gothic buildings remain to be seen elsewhere in Barcelona. There are two Gothic churches in the Eixample district (built in the 19th C. on plans by Ildefons Cerdà, following the demolition of the city walls): the parish church of La Concepció, on Carrer d'Aragó between Carrer del Bruc and Carrer de Llúria, and the church of Montsió, on the Rambla de Catalunya. Both churches were taken apart stone by stone to prevent their being destroyed by the urban renewal and subsequently rebuilt in their present locations, where they stand in contrast with the surrounding Modernist architecture.

Further from the centre, in Sarrià (now a residential district of Barcelona but until 1921 an independent borough), is the magnificent monastery of Pedralbes. Nuns of the order of Saint Clare still inhabit this fine group of walled buildings where several remarkable Gothic murals and sculptures are preserved. It is also worth travelling eastwards up the coast to see the remarkable late Gothic monastery of Sant Jeroni de la Murtra on the outskirts of the neighbouring city of Badalona.



City Hall

Main historic buildings

Casa de la Ciutat (Pl. de Sant Jaume). Home of the city council since the Middle Ages. Important parts of the buildings, on which work began in 1370, have been preserved. Later additions date mostly from the 19-20th C. Major features of the original main façade (1400-02) by Arnau Bargués, overlooking the Carrer de la Ciutat, are the windows, the large porch with vousoirs, and fine sculptures, including an archangel attributed to Pere Sanglada. The oldest part is the Saló de Cent (1st floor), where the Consell de Cent (the general assembly of the city council) met. The architect was Pere Llobet, and it is reminiscent of the Tinell, with diaphragm semicircular arches upholding a wooden panelled ceiling. The altarpiece known as *Retaul dels Consellers* (1444-45), the masterpiece of Lluís Dalmau, presently in the MNAC, comes from the former chapel.

Cases dels Canonges (C/ del Bisbe). Group of Gothic houses behind the Cathedral where the canons resided. Much restored in recent times. The bridge to the Palau de la Generalitat is a neo-Gothic recreation. Currently the official residence of the President of the Catalan Generalitat (autonomous government).

Cathedral (Pla de la Seu). The Cathedral replaced a Romanesque church and the original early Christian building. Work began in 1298. The author of the original plans is unknown, but in the 14th C. the master builders were Jaume Fabré (from Majorca), Bernat Roca and Arnau Bargués. Nave, two aisles and ambulatory, chapels between the buttresses, except two spaces which form a small transept.

Outside, two octagonal towers at either end of the transept. Main façade and spire built from 1885 onwards, on a design (1408) by the Carli master. Several interesting doorways: *Porta de Sant Iu*, *Porta de la Pietat* (relief, 1483-90, by Michael Lochner), *Porta de Santa Eulàlia* (mid-15th C. statue by Antoni Claperós), and *Porta de la capella de Santa Llúcia* (in the cloister). Outstanding features of the cloister (built in several stages and completed in the mid-15th C.) are the iron railings of the windows and



Cathedral



Church of El Pi



Monastery of Pedralbes



Carrer de la Pietat



Interior of the Cathedral

chapels and the keystones in the ceiling, especially that over the *lavabo* (1448), by Antoni Claperós, which represents Saint George. The windows over the aisles are set far back letting in only subdued light (only those over the chancel give direct light). Outstanding carved *choir stalls* (1394 onwards) mostly by Pere Sanglada. The wood was brought from the Low Countries. *Crypt of Santa Eulàlia* below the high altar with magnificent alabaster tomb (1327-29) by the Italian Master sculptor Lupo di Francesco from Pisa (1327). Other interesting *tombs* are those of *Sant Ramon de Peñafort* (14th C.), and of bishop *Sant Oleguer* (1406, by Pere Sanglada), located in the former *Sala Capitular* (chapter house), which is by the architect Arnau Bargués. Remarkable painted altarpieces: *Sant Gabriel*, an early work by Lluís Borrassà; *Sant Ambrós i Sant Martí* (1411-14), by Joan Mates; *Transfiguration*, a major work by Bernat Martorell (1445-52). Two exceptionally fine pieces of silverware (c. 1400) in the sac-

risty: processional monstrance (*custòdia*) on a silver chair (known as *Cadira del Rei Martí*). In the small Museu Capitular: *La Pietat*, an extraordinarily realistic painting (1490) by Bartolomé Bermejo done for the archdeacon Lluís Desplà, who is portrayed in it. Opposite the cloister, *Casa de l'Ardiaca*, built over the Roman Wall, with alterations by the aforementioned Desplà.

La Concepció (C/ d'Aragó, 305). Parish church in the Eixample (district built during the 19th C. Outside the former city walls). The church and cloister belonged to the Convent of Santa Maria de Jonqueres, in the Carrer de Jonqueres, which was abandoned in 1835 and transferred stone by stone to its present site in 1871-88. The original early 15th C. Gothic structure was respected, except for minor alterations. One nave and polygonal apse, chapels between the buttresses, cloister with elegant galleries of archways with capitals and columns made in Girona.

Drassanes (Pg. de Josep Carner). Medieval shipyards near the port which, together with the nearby Llotja (trade exchange), are eloquent proof of the importance of the Catalan fleet and sea trade during the Middle Ages. They are the largest and best preserved shipyards from this period in the world. Built on the site of earlier shipyards at a time when Catalan power in the Mediterranean was at its height (14th C.). Simple, functional design consisting of a series of long parallel halls, facing the sea, with characteristic diaphragm arches holding up the roof. Now the home of the Museu Marítim, which contains a reproduction, made in the shipyards themselves, of the galley commanded by John of Austria at the Battle of Lepanto (1571). Next to the Drassanes is a stretch of the medieval *city walls*, including a square tower and gate (Portal de Santa Madrona, or de La Drassana). This is the only surviving portion of the third set of fortified walls (the first was Roman, and the second was built in the 13th C. along the Rambla). It enclosed the old Raval district and was built in the second half of the 14th C. on the orders of Peter III the Ceremonious. The rest was pulled down for development in 1854.

Hospital de la Santa Creu (C/ de l'Hospital). Hospital founded in 1401 when the City's Council decided to merge the various old city hospitals. Usual layout: wings surrounding a central courtyard, with galleries or archways reminiscent of a cloister. Spacious rooms on the upper floors with diaphragm arches holding up a wooden ceiling. Later additions include Renaissance features and new buildings: *Casa de Convalescència* (Baroque, 17th C.), *Col·legi de Cirurgia*, now *Acadèmia de Medicina* (neo-Classical, 18th C.). Medical services were transferred at the beginning of the 20th C. to the Modernist Hospital de Sant Pau by Domènec i Montaner. The building now hous-

Cathedral: chair, known as *Cadira del Rei Martí*

es the Biblioteca de Catalunya and other cultural and academic institutions. A traditional fair —*Fira de Sant Ponç*— which is held on the Carrer de l'Hospital is a reminder of the former merchants of medicinal herbs.

Llotja (Pl. d'Antoni López). Former trade exchange of Barcelona merchants, built in the 14th C. opposite the port at a time when Catalan trade in the Mediterranean was at its height. Rebuilt in neoclassical style at the end of the 18th C. but the main Gothic structures inside were preserved. Work began soon after 1350 under the direction of Pere Llobet. 1392 marked the completion of the large *Sala de Contractacions*, by the architect Pere Arvei: single spacious hall consisting of a series of large semicircular arches on polylobed columns supporting a wooden ceiling. It was used as a centre of commerce and also for celebrations and entertainment. In 1971, another Gothic room, the *Sala dels Cònsols*, was discovered.

La Mercè (Pl. de la Mercè). Baroque church of the former Convent of Mercedarians (order founded in Barcelona in 1218 during the reign of James I), built on the site of the earlier Gothic building. A restored Gothic statue of the Virgin (1360-70) —*Mare de Déu de la Mercè*, the patroness of Barcelona— attributed to the sculptor and goldsmith Pere Moragues, is venerated here.

Carrer de Montcada. Street in the old district of La Vilanova de la Mar, built in the 12th C. when a member of the noble Montcada family obtained building permission. Its straightness contrasts with the rest of the district. In the 14th-15th C. powerful noble families built important mansions there, some of which have been converted into museums. Most of them display the structure of Catalan civil Gothic architecture: *façade* with a large porch with *voussoirs*, windows with mullions, tower or *mirador*, and inner courtyard with stairs to the main floor, which often has galleries

Cathedral: detail of the altarpiece of the *Transfiguration*, by Bernat Martorell

Carrer de Montcada: Palau Aguilar (Museu Picasso)



Palau Reial Major: Saló del Tinell

of archways. Paintings (1280) in linear Gothic style showing the conquest of Majorca, now in the MNAC, come from the handsome 15th C. *Palau Aguilar*. This mansion, with the adjoining *Palau del Baró de Castellet* (15th C.), now houses a significant part of the *Museu Picasso*. The *Palau dels Marquesos de Llió* (13-14th C., altered) was the home of the *Museu Tèxtil i d'Indumentària*. Inside the *Palau Dalmau*, a masterpiece of Baroque architecture (17th C.), is a 15th C. Gothic chapel with vaulting decorated with sculptures showing angels playing musical instruments. An important art gallery occupies the *Palau dels Cervelló*.

Montsió (Rambla de Catalunya, 117). Parish church of the Eixample district which, like the Concepció, came from a monastery in Old Barcelona. The former *Santa Maria de Montsió*, belonging to Dominican nuns, was transferred (1882-88) stone by stone since plans for renovating the Old City involved its de-

original *façade* overlooking the Carrer del Bisbe. The handsome sculptures on this side (1418), including the *medallion of Sant Jordi*, are youthful works by Pere Joan, who also designed the stairway to the upper floor with its extraordinarily graceful gallery of columns, and the *chapel of Sant Jordi*, whose *façade* is decorated by delicate flamboyant tracery (1427-34). In the chapel are remarkable ornaments and treasures, including a silver *statuette of Sant Jordi* (1420-30) and various 15th C. embroidered cloths, notably the *antependium of Sant Jordi* (c. 1450), by Antoni Sadurní. The *Pati dels Taroners*, a courtyard surrounded by an original gallery with gargoyles, is part of the Gothic-style enlargements done in the 16th C. By the end of the same century, the Renaissance style was adopted for the construction of the new wing facing onto the Plaça de Sant Jaume.

Palau Reial Major (Pl. del Rei). Palace of the Kings of Catalonia-

Aragon, built onto the Roman walls. The main surviving parts are the chapel and the great hall. Bertran Riquer began work on the *chapel of Santa Àgata* in 1302 on orders from James II. The structure is very simple: single nave with polygonal apse and richly panelled wooden ceiling on diaphragm arches. The side chapels were built during the reign of Peter III the Ceremonious and Martin I the Humane. Inside is the *altarpiece of El Conestable*, one of Jaume Huguet's finest works (1464-65). It was commissioned during the civil war against John II by the High Constable Peter of Portugal, who then occupied the Catalan throne and has been identified as the beardless king in the centre panel. The *Saló del Tinell* (1359), the great hall of the palace, was built by Peter III under the direction of Guillem Carbonell. The king consulted astrologists to ensure that the first stone was laid on a propitious date. Important celebrations and ceremonies have taken place in this spacious room,



Drassanes: Museu Marítim

whose ceiling is supported by six diaphragm arches. Fragments of late 13th C. linear Gothic *paintings*, showing episodes from the conquest of Majorca by James I, have been preserved. The great tower, mistakenly called *Mirador del Rei Martí*, was built in the 16th C. In the Plaça del Rei are: *Casa Padellàs*, late Gothic with later alterations, home of the *Museu d'Història de la Ciutat*, and *Palau del Lloctinent* (16th C.), which housed the Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó for many years. Across the Placeta de Sant Lu and through the

quiet and pleasant former *palace gardens* is the entrance to the *Museu Marès*, a rich collection of medieval exhibits occupying former Palace outhouses.

Pedralbes (Pl. del Monestir). *Santa Maria de Pedralbes*, monastery of nuns of the order of Saint Clare, founded in 1326 by Queen Elisenda de Montcada, the third wife of James II, where religious life still continues. The church, cloisters and outhouses, which were built in quick succession, present great unity of style and constitute one of the best examples of Catalan Gothic architecture at its peak, in the reign of James II. The *church* is simple in style, having a single nave, chapels between the buttresses and a polygonal chevet. Queen Elisenda of Montcada retired to the monastery on the death of her husband and in the chancel, to the right of the high altar, is her magnificently carved tomb with a recumbent figure dressed in regal robes. On the other, almost identical side of the tomb, located in the cloister, she is clothed in her nun's habit. The columns and capitals of the first two storeys of arches in the impressive *cloister* were made in specialized workshops in Girona. The separate *chapter house* was built in 1416 by Guillem Abiell. Also opening onto the cloister is the small, but extremely elegant and beautiful *Chapel of Sant Miquel*, a cell or oratory, decorated with Italian style paintings (1343-46) by Ferrer Bassa. The monastery is surrounded by *walls*. Open to the public to temporarily showcase part of the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection (now at the MNAC), the entire monastery is now a museum.

El Pi (Pl. del Pi). One of the oldest parish churches in Barcelona, also called *Santa Maria dels Reis*, which, with its bell tower, constitutes one of the most characteristic sights in the Old City. The inhabitants of this bustling district



Palau de la Generalitat: Sant Jordi by Pere Joan

molition. The church and cloister are fine examples of 14-15th C. Gothic architecture. Religious life continued until 1947, when the community moved to Esplugues de Llobregat, taking the cloister with them, and the church became a parish church.

Palau de la Generalitat (Pl. de Sant Jaume). Group of buildings that form the seat of Catalonia's foremost political institution: the Generalitat or autonomous government. One of the finest examples of Catalan civil Gothic architecture with interesting Renaissance features. Begun in the early 15th C., when the permanent delegation of members of parliament, known as the *Diputació del General* or *Generalitat*, had become a permanent institution requiring premises of its own. The early stages of the building were directed by the architect Marc Safont, who designed the



Palau de la Generalitat: gallery of columns



Santa Maria del Mar: interior of the basilica

—mostly tradesmen— undertook the building of a new church, with royal protection, around 1305, at a time of prosperity and of urban renewal. Building was completed in 1391. The single nave has chapels between the buttresses and the magnificent adjoining *bell tower* (late 14th C.) is eight-sided. The large *rose window* in the façade is similar to that at Sant Cugat, while the doorway resembles that of Sant Iu in the Cathedral. An *altarpiece* (1455) by Jaume Huguet, presently in the MNAC, comes from the Revenedors chapel. It was commissioned by the guild of *revenedors* (retail grocers) who had premises on the square.

Pia Almoïna (Pla de la Seu). 15th C. alms house, the Pia Almoïna, where food was handed out daily to the poor of Barcelona. Altarpiece now in the MNAC, *Sant Sebastià* (1417-18) by Joan Mates, came from here. It is now the home of the Museu Diocesà de Barcelona.

Sant Jeroni de la Murtra (Camí de Sant Jeroni, Badalona). Former Hieronymite monastery in a secluded valley at the foot of a hill in the city of Badalona. Founded in 1416 it enjoyed royal protection, especially from John II and Ferdinand II. The Emperor Charles V and King Philip II of Spain stayed there. After the secularization of religious orders in 1835, it was abandoned and fell into ruins. The handsome late Gothic *cloister* with its great myrtle still stand (around 1475 master Jaume Alfonso was working on it). It has thick pillars alternating with fine stone columns from Girona, beautifully sculpted keystones and brackets, and a Gothic-type *fountain* (1573) in the middle. The ruined *church* was Gothic in structure with Renaissance features.

Sant Just (Pl. de Sant Just). Church built mostly in 1342-60 on the site of an earlier one. Bernat Roca, who also worked on the Cathedral, was involved in the



Church of La Mercè: the Virgin of La Mercè



Monastery of Pedralbes: paintings by Ferrer Bassa



Santa Anna: cloister

building. Single nave, polygonal apse and chapels between the buttresses in characteristic Catalan Gothic style. Altar dedicated to Sant Feliu, which retained the old privilege of 'testament sacramental' (a form of testament restricted to citizens of Barcelona). In the surrounding district of Sant Just, formerly inhabited by nobles and craftsmen, is a *Gothic fountain* built by the Fiveller family in 1367 and the *Palau de la Comtessa de Palamós* (now the Acadèmia de Bones Lletres), fine courtyard with 13th and 14th C. features.

Santa Anna (C/ de Santa Anna). Church belonging to the former monastery of the military order of the Holy Sepulchre, later a collegiate church, at the edge of the area enclosed by the old city walls. Strangely secluded despite its location in the hub of the city, close to the Plaça de Catalunya. Built mostly in the 13th C. at the time of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic, though the oldest part

dates back to the 12th C. The porch and cloister (14-15th C.) are fully Gothic, as are the chapter house and various chapels.

Santa Maria del Mar (Pl. de Santa Maria). Church of La Ribera district. One of the masterpieces of Catalan Gothic architecture on account of the harmonious blending of the whole structure and the beauty and balance of the proportions which give an impression of simplicity. Formerly the centre of the bustling district of La Vilanova de la Mar, outside the city walls but close to the harbour, where dock workers and porters lived alongside the merchants and nobles of the Carrer de Montcada, and craftsmen whose various callings are reflected in the names of the streets. The nearby Plaça del Born was used for festivals, tournaments and fairs. It was the local residents who decided to build a new church to replace the old one. Two architects —Berenguer de Montagut and Ramon Despuig— were entrusted with the job, which took from 1329 to 1383, when the last vault was completed. The church has three aisles, an ambulatory and chapels between the buttresses. Outstanding features of the exterior are the polygonal apse and the main façade with its fine doorway and two octagonal towers. The great rose window was remade after an earthquake in 1428 but significant remains of the Gothic glass have survived. The inside owes its look of airy spaciousness to the extraordinary slenderness of the octagonal pillars and to the carefully calculated proportions (the width of the nave is double that of the side aisles, the height of the latter is the same as the overall width of the church, and so on). It was restored after the Civil War (1936-39) and the bareness of the architecture highlights the unequalled compactness and simplicity of the forms and volumes. Inside is the tombstone of the High Constable Peter of Portugal.

From Maresme to the Pyrenees via Selva, Vallès and Osona



Missal of Sant Cugat (1400)

This is the longest of our suggested tours, taking us from Barcelona and the coastal region of Maresme as far as Cerdanya and Urgell, in the heart of the Pyrenees. Because it is so long, parts of the route consist of optional side trips which, however, are highly recommended.

After driving through the attractive resort of the sunny and colourful Maresme coastline, we come to the Tordera river. On top of the nearby range of hills, like a ship surveying the lush vegetation of the plain, stand the imposing ruins of Palafolls castle. On the eastern side of the plain is the tourist resort of Blanes, where remarkable Gothic buildings are located. We continue eastwards along one of the most beautiful stretches of the Costa Brava, past Lloret de Mar and the entrancing coves of Sant Francesc and Santa Cristina, till we reach picturesque Tossa de Mar, with its old quarter, encircled by towers and walls, overlooking the infinite blue of the Mediterranean.

From Blanes we turn inland up the Tordera river to Hostalric, which straggles along a ridge, surrounded by towers and fortifications, as though keeping watch over the pre-coastal valley. More Gothic works can be admired a little further on in Breda, where traditional pottery is made. Beyond the nearby pass of N'Orri, the road climbs towards the desolate hilltop ruins of Montsoriu castle. The last part of the ascent must be made on foot, but both castle and panorama are sufficiently attractive to warrant the effort.

We head for Arbúcies and then follow the twisting but scenic road along the tree-clad foothills of the Montseny (called poetically the 'amethyst mountain') to Viladrau. Our next stop is the fine Gothic manor at Montrodon on the road to Taradell in the borough of Tona. A little way north lies Vic, the capital of Osona, which possesses an important Gothic heritage, most of it in the Museu Episcopal. Vic also enjoys an active cultural life and is known for the mysterious atmosphere created by the mists which often shroud it in winter.

In the north-eastern corner of the Plana de Vic, high on the Collsacabra plateau, is the village of Tavertet, where a fine Gothic statue can be admired. The road to Tavertet, via Roda de Ter and Santa Maria de Corcó, goes through attractive scenery and Tavertet itself commands a fine view over the blue waters of the Sau reservoir and Les Guilleries hills.

Proceeding north from Vic along the C-17, we reach Montesquiu castle,

on the opposite bank of the Ter, almost hidden amid leafy vegetation. Still further north is the imposing Romanesque monastery of Ripoll with its equally remarkable Gothic cloister galleries. From Ripoll, two side trips can be made. The first, in a north-easterly direction, takes us to the nearby monastery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses with its exceptionally fine cloister and handsome altarpieces. Amid the lush greens of the Pyrenean landscape, we reach Camprodon, where we can admire the picturesque Pont Nou, other Gothic works and charming Modernist chalets. A pleasant excursion can be made to the secluded village of Beget to see the 14th C. altarpiece in the outstandingly beautiful Romanesque church and listen to the rush of water amid a setting of gulleys, ledges and small bridges.

The second side trip from Ripoll goes up the Freser valley along the N-152 and over the high Toses pass, which affords spectacular views over the fertile Cerdanya plain, surrounded by peaks which are often snow-capped. At the summer holiday resort of Alp there is a noteworthy Gothic mural painting in the church. Puigcerdà, the capital of Cerdanya, lying in the midst of the plain, possesses a Gothic church (Sant Domènec) with an eight-sided bell tower. Visitors can also make a pleasant trip across the lake or climb up to the Mirador to enjoy the view over the Segre river, which flows through fields before disappearing in the distant 'Forat de la Seu'.

At Llívia, near Puigcerdà, there are other remarkable Gothic buildings. Further west, we make a stop at the parish church of Bellver de Cerdanya. Our next destination is La Seu d'Urgell, a city with several Gothic works and an entrancing medieval atmosphere which, once a week, particularly in the Carrer Major, is broken by the multicoloured bustle of market day. From La Seu we can travel westwards to see the church of Santa Maria and other interesting Gothic features at Castellbò.

From Ripoll, we take the C-17 back towards Barcelona. A right turn at Sant Quirze de Besora brings us to the little village of Lluçà where the monastery, a gem of Romanesque architecture, contains remarkable Gothic paintings. Our route continues via Prats de Lluçanès and Avinyó before turning eastwards. On the road that winds down from the plateaus of Moià and Collsuspina, the Romanesque monastery of L'Estany, with its fine Gothic tombs, is a good place to stop. Beyond Centelles we reach Sant Martí de Centelles, overshadowed by the ruins of its ancient castle which stands on top of a huge rock and commands a fine view.

A quiet, winding road takes us to Sant Feliu de Codines, lying on top of an open ridge. Further east, at L'Ametlla del Vallès, is the interesting manor of Mas Draper, while a group of buildings known as La Doma, containing certain Gothic features, stands alongside the main road near La Garriga. At this point we find ourselves once again in the colourful Mediterranean coastal region, with its bustling atmosphere and radiant skies. Beyond Les Franqueses del Vallès, amid fields dotted here and there with clusters of umbrella pines, are several masies (farmhouses) with mullioned windows. Before heading back to Barcelona, we round off our trip by a visit to Sant Pere de Vilamajor, slightly to the east, which has some Gothic features, and to Can Bordoï, at Llinars del Vallès, where Gothic remains from the excavations at Castellvell can be admired.



Bellver de Cerdanya

Main historic buildings

Alp. Residential village in Cerdanya, now known primarily on account of the nearby ski resorts of La Molina and Masella. In the parish church there is a fresco (1300) of Saint Christopher.

L'Ametlla del Vallès. Residential town with houses and second homes in Modernist and more contemporary styles. Mas Draper was one of the most important manors in the region, as is apparent from its architectural structure (though built mostly in the 16th C., it is still in the Gothic tradition) and from the adjoining tower.

Beget. Small Pyrenean village with a very beautiful Romanesque church containing a famous Romanesque sculpture known as the *Majestat de Beget*. Below the sculpture is a small 14th C. Gothic alabaster altarpiece made in Sant Joan de les Abadesses which was originally surmounted by the seated Virgin now located elsewhere in the church. Also worthy of note is the collection of Baroque altarpieces.

Bellver de Cerdanya. Village in Cerdanya, on the banks of the Segre, now a residential and tourist resort. Unpretentious parish church in the Catalan Gothic tradition. Parts of the 13-14th C. walls still stand.

Blanes. Attractive coastal resort at the southern tip of the Costa Brava with a small fishing port and marina. Around 1400 the great architect Arnau Bargués was working on the palace of the Cabrera family in Blanes, while simultaneously engaged in building the Palau del Rei Martí at the monastery of Poblet and Barcelona Cathedral. Some walls belonging to the palace have been preserved, as has the adjoining church, now a parish church. Another characteristic feature is the Gothic fountain, one of the best preserved in Catalonia.

Breda. Small agricultural and industrial town on the eastern slopes of the Montseny, especially known for its pottery. Several remarkable buildings cluster around the former Benedictine monastery of Sant Salvador de Breda. Work on the Gothic church (now the parish church) began at the beginning of



Tossa de Mar



Blanes

the 14th C. (before 1337) but the façade is 16th C. Of note are several Gothic tombs, the 13th C. wing of the cloister, the interesting courtyard in the abbot's house and the magnificent Lombard Romanesque bell tower, 32 m. high.

Camprodon. Village near the Pyrenees in a valley at the source of the Ter. Several important medieval buildings and residential area with Modernist houses. In the Vila de Dalt, Romanesque church of the monastery of Sant Pere and 14th C. Gothic church of *Santa Maria*. The former *Convent church of El Carme* is from the same period. Interesting mansions with Gothic elements, such as the town hall (*Casa Consistorial*) and *Can Ribes*. The most characteristic feature is the bridge across the Ter (*Pont Nou*) which was rebuilt in the 14th C. It has a large central arch and keep, and is joined to the *Cerdanya Gate* in the old walls.

Castellbò. Pyrenean village near La Seu d'Urgell. In the Middle Ages, seat of the Viscounts of Castellbò, who ruled over a large area. Noteworthy *collegiate church of Santa Maria* in Romanesque Gothic transition style. Ancient manor houses, including *Cal Gra-*

mont, which housed the Viscount's treasury and notary, and other picturesque spots. Now part of the borough of Montferrer i Castellbò.

L'Estany. Former monastery of canons of which the church and a remarkable Romanesque cloister remain. Also several Gothic tombs, among them that of the abbot Berenguer de Riudeperes (1316-29) who was responsible for the construction of several monastery outbuildings. Graceful Gothic alabaster statue of the Virgin (*Mare de Déu de l'Estany*, 14th C.). Some parts of the *cloister* were built in the Gothic period, though they blend well into the overall Romanesque style.

Les Franqueses del Vallès. Former agricultural town which has undergone great changes owing to the proximity of Granollers. In the surrounding area are interesting *masos* (manor farmhouses) with characteristic mullioned windows (*Torre de la Seva* at Marata and *Can Màrgens* at Llerona) which are a reminder of the prosperity the area enjoyed in the late Middle Ages.

La Garriga. Long established spa town with hot springs at the foot of the Montseny range. Near the main



Beget



Llívia

road is an attractive group of buildings known as *La Doma*. The church, a blend of Romanesque and late Gothic (16th C.), contains a late 15th C. *altarpiece* dedicated to Saint Stephen. There are also remains of Roman villas, a Romanesque church (*Santa Maria del Camí*) and fine examples of Modernist architecture.

Hostalric. Town built on a spectacularly steep slope of basalt rock above the Tordera river on the old Roman road which was the traditional route to France. Much of the walls, which were built to protect the strategic site, still stand. Seat of the former important dynasty of Viscounts of Cabrera. The walls and eight round towers date mostly from around 1400. At one end stands the large castle which was fortified in the 18th C. in the style of Vauban.

Llinars del Vallès. The castle known as *Castellvell* or *Castell del Far*, once the seat of an important barony, was much altered in the 14th C. and destroyed in an earthquake in 1428. However the site has recently been excavated and may be visited. Interesting pottery plates and utensils from the castle are on show in the small museum



Camprodon

at *Can Bordoí*, a handsome manor house in *noucentista* style. The original castle was replaced by a large Renaissance palace known as the *Castellnou* (1558).

Llívia. Pyrenean village, enclave of Spanish territory in France since the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659). Founded by the Romans, it was the first capital of Cerdanya until replaced by Puigcerdà. Several interesting medieval buildings. Of special note in the old quarter are a 15th C. cylindrical tower (*Torre de Bernat de So*) and the *parish church* which, though built in the 16th C. century, is Gothic in style. The museum houses the famous *Farmàcia de Llívia*, with apothecary's jars and implements, as well as a 13th C. figure of Christ.

Lluçà. Former monastery of canons of which a fine church and Romanesque cloister remain. It contains items of Gothic architecture and sculpture. Also a collection of *wall paintings* (now preserved on canvas), notably a figure of Christ in majesty, corresponding to the last phase in the development of linear Gothic style, on which the coat of arms of Ponç Saserra, who was the prior when the paintings were done (1352-71), can be seen.

Montesquiu. Small village in the Ter valley dominated by *Montesquiu castle*, the residence of the lords of Besora, a large Gothic fortress with mullioned windows and crenellated walls which has been much restored in recent years.

Mont-rodon. Old *manor house* belonging to the borough of Tona but located in an enclave in the borough of Taradell. Partly Romanesque but entirely renovated at the beginning of the 15th C. Main features of the massive building are the large windows divided by tall mullions. In the chapel is a Gothic statue of the *Virgin* and a *sarcoph-*

agus (1338) of the Mont-rodon dynasty who played an outstanding role as churchmen and knights in Catalan history.

Montsoriu. Old fortress perched high on a hill overlooking the valley of Arbúcies (to which borough it belongs) at the foot of the Montseny. *Montsoriu castle* was the property of the important dynasty of the Viscounts of Cabrera. At the end of the 13th C. the chronicler Bernat Desclot described it as one of the most beautiful and noble castles in the world. The ruins are certainly imposing. The three walled precincts and remains of 13th and 14th C. outbuildings with diaphragm arches supporting the roofs can still be seen.

Palafolls. *Castle*, again belonging to the Cabrera family, built on high ground near the coast on the border between Selva and Maresme. The impressive ruins (13-15th C.) of the three enclosures, towers and walls, are visible from the N-II road.

Puigcerdà. Capital of Cerdanya lying in the midst of the sunny valley of the Segre. Important town since the Middle Ages, currently a residential and tourist resort. The late 13th C. former *Convent church of Sant Domènec* is the most important Gothic building. The structure of the façade, based on arcades, corresponds to a model which later became quite widespread in Catalonia. The roof over the nave rests on a wooden framework supported by diaphragm arches. In one of the side chapels is a set of *wall paintings* (2nd quarter of the 14th C.) in the linear Gothic style that is very common in the region. They represent the Tree of Life and episodes from the life of Saint Peter the Martyr. The *bell tower*, the sole remaining feature of the old church which was demolished, has the characteristic eight-sided structure of major Catalan Gothic bell towers, though the crown is Baroque.



Puigcerdà: detail of wall paintings, convent church of Sant Domènec



La Seu d'Urgell: Museu Diocesà, altarpiece of Abella de la Conca

Ripoll. Town known mainly for its former Benedictine monastery, a masterpiece of Catalan Romanesque architecture with a famous doorway and cloister. The monastery played an important part in the resettlement of Old Catalonia. The sculptor Jordi de Déu was involved in building the east, south and west galleries of the *lower cloister*, which date from the Gothic period (1390), though they blend harmoniously into the Romanesque whole. Around the cloister are keystones, fragments of altarpieces and other 14-15th C. works.

Sant Joan de les Abadesses. Town which grew up around the former Benedictine monastery of Sant Joan, later taken over by Augustinian canons, an important work of Catalan Romanesque architecture with remarkable apses which contains the famous group of sculptures, the *Santíssim Misteri*. New buildings were added after the earthquakes in 1428, notably the simple but elegant *cloister*, begun in 1442. Fine Gothic sculptures by a group of mid-14th C. specialists in alabaster have been preserved including the *altarpiece of Santa Maria la Blanca* (1343), that of *Sant Agustí* and the *tomb of Blessed Miró* (1345). The small adjacent museum contains Gothic paintings and sculptures, as well as works in precious metals, fabrics, and an important collection of embroidery. The nearby abbot's palace has a small 15th C. *cloister*. The *bridge* over the Ter is a careful reconstruction of the old Gothic bridge.

Sant Martí de Centelles. Small country town overshadowed by the *Centelles castle*, which belonged to an important Catalan noble family. Stretches of crenellated walls, the Romanesque chapel and other parts of both levels of the building still stand. It was mostly built around 1466, during the civil war

against John II, as a residence for the High Constable Peter of Portugal, though he never lived there.

Sant Pere de Vilamajor. Country village at the foot of the Montseny where a palace was built for the Counts of Barcelona during the high Middle Ages. Nowadays only a fine isolated Romanesque bell tower remains. The 16th C. *parish church* is among the most representative examples of a type of architecture which is very widespread in the Vallès Oriental and Maresme area: late Gothic buildings with ribbed vaulting whose main attraction is their great simplicity.

La Seu d'Urgell. Small Cathedral city in the Pyrenees, capital of Alt Urgell, lying in the Segre valley. Seat of a diocese from ancient times. Until the 11th C. it was also the seat of the earldom of Urgell which originally had its centre in the nearby fortified village of Castellciutat. The present town grew up around the magnificent Romanesque Cathedral. In some of the streets in the old quarter, such as the Carrer Major and Carrer dels Canonges, which were built up in the 13-14th C., there are old mansions with large Gothic windows and beautiful arches. Also in the old town is the early 15th C. Gothic church of *Sant Domingo* and next to it the Dominican Convent which is now a 'parador'. A chapel adjoining the Cathedral houses the rich medieval collections of the interesting Museu Diocesà d'Urgell.

Tavertet. Picturesque village on top of a spectacular cliff overlooking the Ter valley and the Sau reservoir. Its old stone houses and traditional character have been preserved. In the Romanesque parish church is a lovely 15th C. alabaster statue of a seated *Virgin with Child* in the same style as that

of the main altarpiece in Vic Cathedral.

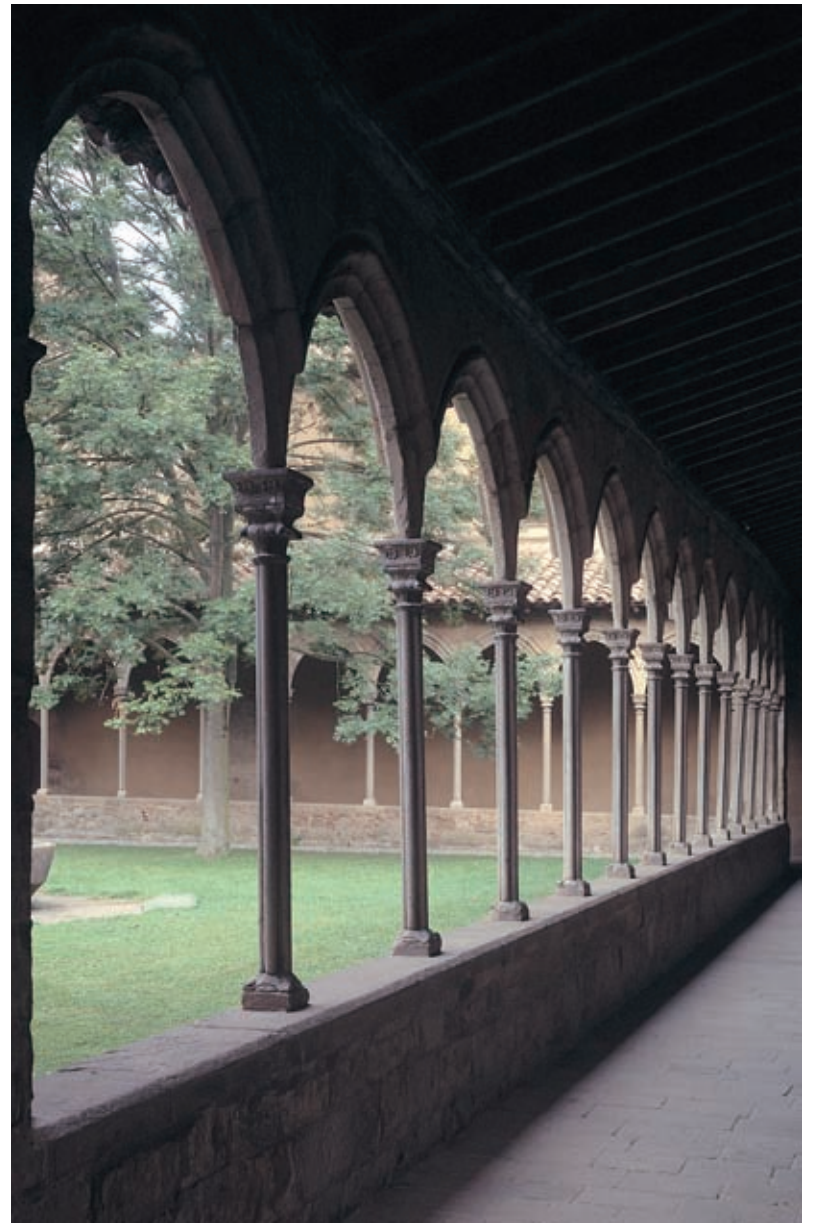
Tossa de Mar. Attractive coastal town on the southern Costa Brava where modern tourist developments stand alongside interesting remains from the past. The 14th C. *walls* with their towers constitute the most characteristic feature. Inside the walls is the once prosperous old town (*Vila Vella*) whose charm is still apparent. Remains of the early 15th C. *parish church*. Former *Governor's Palace* (15th C. Gothic) housing an interesting museum with finds from excavations



Vic: pottery. MEV



Vic: cloister of the Cathedral



Sant Joan de les Abadesses: cloister

at a nearby Roman villa and a good collection of contemporary paintings by artists associated with Tossa de Mar (Chagall, Benet, Sunyer).

Vic. Cathedral city with a rich artistic heritage and interesting historic monuments which is also an active centre for trade with a market drawing customers from a very wide area. 14th C. additions to the old Romanesque Cathedral (of which the crypt and bell tower remain) include the handsome *cloister*, begun around 1320 under the direction of Ramon Despuig and finished at the end of the century. Prime features are the elegant tracery of the arcades and the outside gallery. It was altered at the beginning of the 19th C. when the present Cathedral was built. Noteworthy are the great Gothic *grille* (1427) by Joan Puig which stood before the high altar of the old Cathedral and the exceptional *altarpiece* (1420-26), surmounted

by the figures of the Virgin and Saint Peter, which is the masterpiece of the sculptor from Girona Pere Oller. In front of the altarpiece is the *tomb* (again by Oller) of canon Bernat Despujol (c. 1434) who commissioned the altarpiece.

Some of the houses on the market square (Plaça del Mercadal), with its attractive archways, have features of Gothic inspiration. The *Casa Consistorial*, which retains part of the 14-15th C. structure, is of particular note. The *Hospital de la Santa Creu* contains several 16th C. Gothic rooms. Significant parts of the walls, built in the times of Peter III the Ceremonious, have been preserved, as have some of the *bridges* into the city, the *Pont d'en Bruguer* being the most remarkable. A visit to the *Museu Episcopal*, which houses magnificent Romanesque and Gothic collections, is a must.

From Barcelona to Solsonès up the Llobregat valley and back via the central plateaus of Anoia and Penedès



Missal of Sant Cugat (1400)

This route takes us from Barcelona to the Pyrenean foothills, offering a wide variety of Gothic and other buildings and works of art, as well as a range of attractive scenery.

We leave Barcelona by L'Arrabassada road, enjoying the splendid views over the city. We drive through pine woods to Sant Cugat del Vallès

where the beauty of Gothic art is especially evident in the great rose window in the monastery façade. The road to El Papiol and its medieval castle commands wide views over the Llobregat valley. Further up the river we come to Martorell, to admire the legendary Pont del Diable and the interesting museums of ceramics. Our route continues through hilly country to Terrassa, where the Gothic charterhouse of Vallparadis and the exceptionally fine altar pieces in the Visigothic-Romanesque churches leave a lasting impression.

We take the C-16 as far as the Gothic bridge and castle at Castellbell i el Vilar. Prior to this, however, a detour can be made via Monistrol to the great Benedictine monastery of Montserrat, with its black Virgin, which stands on flat ground against a background of spectacular rock pinnacles and contains many fine works of art including several in Gothic style.

Returning to the Llobregat valley, we proceed through Sant Vicenç de Castellet to the medieval bridge at El Pont de Vilomara, and to nearby Rocafort, where there are fine Gothic tombs in the parish church. A mountain track takes us to the quaint village of Mura. There we join the road to Talamanca, where there is another Gothic tomb and a castle that has undergone some rather imaginative restoration. The Romanesque monastery of Sant Benet de Bages, on the road to Manresa, has some Gothic features, while the most outstanding of several Gothic buildings in Manresa, the capital of Bages, is the church of La Seu, one of the most representative creations of Catalan Gothic architecture.

Slightly to the north is the Gothic church of Sant Pere at Santpedor. As we continue up the Llobregat valley, the silhouette of Balsareny, with its rectangular crenellated castle, is visible from afar. A popular race of carriers takes place once a year on the slope up to the castle. We leave the Llobregat and continue westwards to the mining town of Súria in the nearby Cardener valley. Here the quaint medieval quarter clustering on the hilltop around its partly Gothic castle, is concealed from the road by rows of houses.

As we drive up the Cardener, the forbidding outline of Cardona castle suddenly rises before us. Within the castle precincts, Romanesque is the dominant style, but the town possesses several noteworthy Gothic buildings, foremost among them the handsome parish church of Sant Miquel. Anyone interested in folklore should visit Cardona in September to enjoy the lively atmosphere in the town square during the annual festival which features the correbou (bull chase) and the cargolera (snail festival).

We continue along the very good C-55 road through pinewoods to the Solsonès plateau. The capital, Solsona, has considerable character and atmosphere, the main attractions being the Gothic Cathedral and Palau Episcopal, while the hilltop village of Castellvell adds a picturesque note to the landscape.

Those with a little time to spare will find it worthwhile to travel north to Sant Llorenç de Morunys, not merely because of the important Gothic altarpieces in the parish church and the chapel of La Pietat, but to enjoy the charm of the town itself, set amid mountainous scenery, and the fine views from the road.

From Solsona we turn southwards again along the road to Torà. We drive through Castellfollit de Riubegrós to Calaf, in Segarra, where the lofty bell tower of the Gothic church looks out over the handsome, irregular shaped square with archways. A left turn beyond Copons, on the road to Igualada, will take us to Rubió to admire an exceptionally fine 14th C. altarpiece.

From Jorba we can cut across to Sant Martí de Tous to see the Gothic cross and the recumbent figure on the tomb of the noble Bernat. We then continue down the Anoia river, beyond Igualada, to La Pobla de Claramunt, the starting point for a trip down the charming Carme valley to the hamlet of Santa Càndia where, high on the slope opposite the exquisite little Gothic church of the same name, stands what was originally Orpí castle and is now the village centre.

From La Pobla we go on to Capellades, where we turn towards Vilafranca del Penedès. Both landscapes and architecture now take on a more Mediterranean look. At Sant Pere de Riudebitlles we admire the outstanding Gothic palace of Llo before leaving the Vilafranca road in the direction of Guardiola de Font-rubi and Cal Miret. This brings us to Sant Martí Sarroca, where there is a parish church with an exceptionally fine Romanesque apse and a splendid Gothic altarpiece inside, as well as a neighbouring castle with Gothic features.

Vilafranca del Penedès, the capital of Alt Penedès, has several handsome Gothic buildings and the museum contains Gothic exhibits. The original Museu del Vi reminds us that Penedès is an important wine-growing area. Justly famous pastries are also made in the town. A possible side-trip from Vilafranca takes us eastwards, via Avinyonet, to Olesa de Bonesvalls, where the remarkable Gothic Hospital de Cervelló stands close to the road.

South-west of Vilafranca is the church of L'Arboç, which contains 14th C. wall paintings, while not far away is the romantic-looking, partly Gothic fortress of Castellet, towering above the waters of the Foix reservoir. From here a twisting, scenic route takes us to Vilanova i la Geltrú, a lively town on the coast with a tradition for good eating, to see the remarkable Gothic castle of La Geltrú.

Vilanova, the capital of Garraf is just 8 km from the beautiful tourist resort of Sitges. Here, on the promontory, behind the parish church, are two museums housing rich and varied collections which include works in Gothic style: Cau Ferrat and Maricel. The neat, sunny Mediterranean town of Sitges is also a good place to forget for a while the pursuit of art treasures and enjoy a stroll along the sea-front promenade and through the white-washed streets.

Returning to Barcelona the C-32 takes us to Gavà where we can visit the Gothic shrine of Bruguers and Eramprunyà castle in a setting of red sandstone, as well as Torre-roja and Torre del Baró at Viladecans. We drive amid factories and market gardens to Sant Boi de Llobregat where there are works of Gothic art, before crossing the Llobregat and seeing Cornellà castle, our last stop before completing the route.



Cardona

Main historic buildings

L'Arboç. During the Middle Ages this village had the second largest population in Penedès and it has maintained its cultural and economic vitality. The present 16th C. parish church contains elements of the previous Gothic building, such as wall paintings in full linear Gothic style from the 1st half of the 14th C. depicting the Tree of Life and the life of Saint John.

Balsareny. Town in Bages near the Llobregat. Above it to the north rises a solid, rectangular 14th C. castle, a well preserved and restored building which has always been inhabited throughout the centuries. Prime features of the outside are the handsome doorway, large Gothic windows and crenellated walls. The rooms are set at regular intervals around the courtyard, which has a gallery with archways. In a letter to the queen, John I relates how the lord of Balsareny castle, Andreu de Peguera, served some excellent wines to him here. A carriers' race (Festa dels Traginers) is held here every year.

Calaf. Town with a well known market held in the handsome square with archways. The parish church, with its single large nave and bell tower, rises above the housetops. Though built in the 17th C. (it was consecrated in 1639) it clearly belongs to the Gothic tradition with ribbed vaulting inside and an outside reminiscent of 14-15th C. buildings.

Cardona. Town in Bages in the Cardener valley near a large deposit of salt (Muntanya de Sal) which has been mined since Roman times. Above the town, on the summit of a sheer pine-covered hill, stand the imposing castle, now 'parador', and Sant Vicenç, a former monastery of regular canons, which possesses one of the finest Catalan Romanesque churches. Beside the church is a small Gothic cloister belonging to the monastery of which only the recently restored arcades remain. The castle was built in various stages. Some of the rooms inside, which have pointed arches supporting the ceilings, were part of a palace belonging to the Cardona dynasty.



Manresa



Balsareny: castle

The town itself has preserved its medieval layout, as well as *mansions* with Gothic features and structures, and the *walls* with their towers and gates. The beautiful Gothic *parish church of Sant Miquel* (consecrated in 1398) has a single nave and side chapels, and a remarkable doorway on one side. Below the chancel is a spacious crypt in which an alabaster statue of the Virgin (*Mare de Déu del Patrocini*), brought from Marseille by the Counts of Cardona in 1423, is venerated. A series of 14th C. mural paintings presently in the Museu de Solsona came from here, as did several altarpieces (1403-10) by Pere Vall, a painter from Cardona, one of which is in Solsona and the other in the MNAC. Near the town is the unfinished 15th C. *bridge* over the Cardener.

Castellbell. Town belonging to the borough of Castellbell i el Vilar, located close to the Llobregat at



Castellbell

the foot of the Montserrat range. On top of a crag overlooking a bend in the river stand the remains of the austere Gothic *castle*, while below it is the characteristic hump-backed silhouette of the five-arched bridge (*Pont Vell*) over the Llobregat, one of the best preserved of several Gothic bridges in Bages (others at Manresa, Sallent, Monistrol, El Pont de Vilomara).

Castellet. Former feudal *castle*, documented from the 10th C., perched high above the Foix reservoir in the borough of Castellet i la Gornal. Rebuilding was undertaken in 1925 in the light of the Romantic criteria of 19th C. architecture but the result is attractive. The imposing cylindrical towers are 12th C. while the square towers and barbican on the eastern side must be considered Gothic (14th C.).

Castellfollit de Riubegrós. Town which grew up at the foot of a now ruined but still impressive fortress. The restored Romanesque priory also has Gothic additions. The remarkable *altarpiece of Sant Pere i Sant Andreu*, related to the Italian style of Pere Serra and presently in the MNAC, comes from here. One room in the castle contains interesting early 14th C. *graffiti*.

Cornellà de Llobregat. Former country town which is now part of greater Barcelona. In the old centre is a Gothic *castle* (altered after the 15th C.) with rooms opening onto a square courtyard and towers at the corners.

Gavà. Former agricultural town near the Llobregat delta, now industrialized. The ruins of *Eramprunyà castle*, once the seat of an important barony, rise up on the mountainous side of the borough. Parts of the impressive walls of both precincts still stand. Below



El Pont de Vilomara

the castle is the *shrine of Mare de Déu de Bruguers* which, though Romanesque, has Gothic additions and where a 14th C. Gothic *statue* is venerated.

Manresa. Capital of Bages, located in the heart of Catalonia, a town of great economic and cultural vitality since the Middle Ages. The outstanding *collegiate church of Santa Maria*, known as '*La Seu*' (the Cathedral, though in fact it does not enjoy that status), stands on high ground above the town, thus revealing to great effect the purity of its architecture. It was begun around 1322 under the supervision of the master builder Berenguer de Montagut, who was also responsible for Santa Maria del Mar in Barcelona, and by the end of the 14th C. it was virtually complete. The façade is neo-Gothic. La Seu is one of the most representative works of



Montserrat: Llibre Vermell

Catalan Gothic architecture. The design of the buttresses, which are open on the inside, is particularly original and highlights the spaciousness of the nave. Inside are several remarkable works, notably Pere Serra's masterpiece, the *altarpiece of L'Esperit Sant* (1393). The predella includes a magnificent panel by Lluís Borrassà depicting the *Burial of Christ*. Another exceptional work is the *altarpiece of Sant Marc* (1346) by Arnau Bassa, which is characteristic of the Italian trend in Catalan Gothic painting. In the *Tresor de la Seu* (collection of precious items) is a splendid 14th C. *antependium* embroidered in Florence by Geri Lapi. Other buildings with Gothic features include the *Convents of Santa Clara* and of *Les Caputxines*. Though much restored, the *Pont Vell* over the Cardener remains a magnificent example of a Gothic bridge. In the 14th C. much green and purple patterned *pottery* was produced in Manresa and many fine specimens can be admired in the *Museu Comarcal*.

Martorell. The town of Martorell is located at the intersection of several highways which converged at the recently restored bridge (*Pont del Diable*), close to the modern motorways, which has certain Roman features and a Gothic structure. A visit to the museums provides a broad overview of the history of Catalan, and indeed of Spanish, ceramics, including interesting



Martorell: Pont del Diable

pieces of medieval pottery. The *Museu de l'Enrajolada* (or *Museu Santacana*) also houses the remains of medieval buildings in Barcelona, demolished in the 19th C., which were collected and preserved by the founder.

Montserrat. Benedictine monastery, shrine of the Virgin Mary (*Mare de Déu de Montserrat*) which is the religious heart of Catalonia and an important centre of culture. The mountain on which it stands, with its distinctive rock formations, has become a symbol. The *basilica* is Gothic in style, though built in the 16th C. and much altered in the 19th C., when the apse was added and the *façade* remodelled. The galleries of the old *cloister* are the most characteristically Gothic feature. Known as the Julius II cloister on account of the future pope of that name, Cardinal della Rovere, who was the



Vilafranca del Penedès: Sant Francesc, detail of the altarpiece by Lluís Borrassà

commendatory abbot when it was built (1476) and whose coat of arms with oak leaves appears in various places. In the enclosed part of the monastery several Gothic *tombs* have been preserved. However the sculptures done by Pere Moragues while Jaume de Vivers was abbot (c. 1375), notably a *Via Crucis*, have been lost. In the large library there are several Gothic *codices*, among them the famous *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat*, which contains many interesting items including pieces of vocal music with the corresponding choreography. Works in precious metals and an important collection of modern Catalan paintings are to be found in the *museum*.

Olesa de Bonesvalls. In the small hamlet of *L'Hospital de Cervelló* is a former hospice for travellers and pilgrims, founded in 1262 by the Cervelló family near the old road from Barcelona to the Penedès region. The layout is typical of most rural hospices, with rooms set at

regular intervals round the courtyard and an adjacent chapel. The buildings, mostly 13-14th C., are in a good state of conservation.

Orpí. Small village in the Òdena valley built round the old castle. *Santa Càndia*, the chief village in the borough, has a beautiful late 14th C. *church* where restoration work has again brought to light all the graceful simplicity of the architecture. A statue of Santa Candia stands in the attractive side porch.

El Papiol. Small town near the Llobregat above which rises the silhouette of the old *castle*, a handsome recently restored building with medieval features from the 10th C. onwards. Inside are the 14th C. tombs of several members of the Despapiol dynasty. The *rectory* is also Gothic.

El Pont de Vilomara i Rocafort. Borough in Bages, near Llobregat, consisting of two villages: Rocafort is the older, while El Pont de



Solsona. Interior of the Cathedral



Sant Martí de Tous

Vilomara grew up around the 14th C. Gothic *bridge* ('pont') with nine arches which was rebuilt in the 17th C. following a flood. In Rocafort parish church is the *sarcophagus* of Pere de Sitjar (1354) by Berenguer Ferrer, with a reclining sculpture and fine relief work.

Rubió. Small hamlet, virtually uninhabited, clustering around the now ruined Rubió castle and the *church of Santa Maria*, an interesting building in spite of the simplicity of its architecture. Inside is an important late 14th C. *altarpiece* bearing the coat of arms of the Boixadors family which is attributed to the anonymous 'Rubió Master', an important figure in the Italian trend of Catalan Gothic painting. The predella is in the MEV.

Sant Benet de Bages. Magnificent former Benedictine abbey in the borough of Sant Fruitós de Bages with an outstanding Romanesque church and cloister. New outbuildings were added in the 14-15th C., notably the *Palauet* (the first abbot's palace, later converted into a guest house) and the new *chapter house*. The fortifications of the monastery were built on orders from Peter III the Ceremonious. In the cloister are numerous Gothic *tombs*. The Caixa de Manresa has restored it and turned it into an art and cultural centre.

Sant Boi de Llobregat. Originally an agricultural town, now industrialized. The parish church contains a splendid painted *panel* by Lluís Dalmau, commissioned in 1448, which was the central part of an *altarpiece* dedicated to Sant Baldri, the patron saint of the town. In the old quarter are several 15-16th C. *mansions* with Gothic-type features including *Can Barraquer*, where the Catalan patriot Rafael Casanova died in 1743.

Sant Cugat del Vallès. Former Benedictine abbey, one of the most important in Catalonia, consisting of a large group of basically Romanesque buildings. However, when work on the *church* was resumed in the 2nd half of the 13th C. after a long interruption, it was finished in Gothic style, the great *lantern* being characteristic of so-called transition architecture, while there are pointed vaults over the aisles. The most significant feature is the *façade* which has a large rose window in the centre with stained glass made in 1343. The structure is similar to that of the church of El Pi in Barcelona or Tarragona Cathedral. There are Gothic *tombs* in the chapter house and a particularly charming *altarpiece of Tots els Sants*, by Pere Serra.

Sant Llorenç de Morunys. Small town in Solsonès set in beautiful scenery at the foot of the Port del Comte mountains. The layout of the town is largely medieval and parts of the surrounding walls with their



Sitges: Cau Ferrat

beautiful gates have been preserved. Inside the Romanesque parish church, which belonged originally to a Benedictine priory, are important works of art from later periods including the Gothic *altarpiece of L'Esperit Sant* (c. 1400) by Pere Serra and another *altarpiece* (1450) by Francesc Solives in the *La Pietat chapel* in which the donor, the merchant Joan Piquer, is portrayed.

Sant Martí de Tous. Village in Anoia, near Igualada dominated by a huge *castle*, which has been recently restored and is surrounded by gardens, and by the *parish church*, inside which is a *sarcophagus* with a beautiful reclining figure of Bernat de Tous (c. 1335). In the square is a Gothic *monumental cross*.

Sant Martí Sarroca. Agricultural village to the north of Vilafranca. Castle with Gothic features, much restored in modern times. Magnificent Romanesque church—formerly the castle church—restored by Puig i Cadafalch, which contains a splendid early 15th C. Gothic *altarpiece* by the painter Jaume Cabrera dedicated to the Virgin.

Sant Pere de Riudebitlles. Small agricultural and industrial town in the northern part of the wine-growing region of Alt Penedès. *Palace of the Marquis of Llo*, splendid 14th C. Gothic manor house with a symmetrical *façade*, an attractive doorway with vousoirs and two rows of mullioned windows. The old Romanes-



Terrassa: Santa Maria, detail of the altarpiece by Jaume Huguet



Sant Cugat del Vallès: monastery

que church doorway has been preserved.

Santpedor. Agricultural and textile-manufacturing town. The walls of the old quarter and the square with archways have been preserved. Late Gothic *church of Sant Pere*, with a Romanesque *façade* and later additions. Inside is an unusual 14th C. alabaster *statue of Saint Michael*.

Sitges. Tourist resort on the Garraf coast. Active cultural centre especially since the days of the 'luminist' school of painters when Santiago Rusiñol settled there (1891). Rusiñol built his home on the site of a group of old fishermen's houses, using items from Sitges castle, which had been demolished. Inside he installed his collection of wrought iron from which the building takes its name, *Cau Ferrat* ('iron lair'). It also contains a number of Gothic sculptures and paintings, as well as ceramics,

some interesting furniture, and modern Catalan paintings. Nearby are the two buildings of the *Museu Maricel*, built over the 14th C. Hospital de Sant Joan, which also comprises features from various other buildings, including the staircase from Solivella castle. It houses the Pérez Rosales collection containing works such as the 14th C. alabaster figure of the Virgin from Sant Miquel del Fai, paintings by Ramon Desorrents, Pere Serra and Jaume Cabrera, and Gothic paintings from Aragon.

Solsona. Important town from medieval times. Bishopric since 1593, when the former church of the monastery of regular canons was converted into a *Cathedral*. Built onto an earlier Romanesque church (of which the apse and bell tower remain), it is basically Gothic with some later additions. The single nave with its polygonal apse was built between the 14th C. and 17th C. and, in keeping with southern Gothic tradition, lets in little light. The adjoining neoclassical Bishop's Palace, which contains earlier Gothic features from the monastery of canons, houses the rich medieval collections of the *Museu Diocesà*. In the old quarter, part of the 14th C. *walls* with their handsome *gates*, a number of 15th C. *fountains* and some noteworthy Gothic *buildings* such as the 15th C. *Hospital d'en Llobera* or *Casa Aguilar*, with its large portico, have been preserved. The *Castellvell de Solsona*, with Gothic chapel and rooms, rises above the city, in the borough of Olius.

Súria. Town in Bages, in the Cardener valley, which has undergone many changes since potash mines were discovered there in 1912. The layout of the old quarter has kept its medieval look. The houses cluster around the old church and *castle*, inside which is a room with Gothic arches.

Terrassa. Seat of the ancient bishopric of Egara, founded in the 5th C. and restored in 2003. Three very interesting Visigothic-Romanesque churches, mainly 12th C. but with certain 6-7th C. features. Inside the *church of Santa Maria* are two masterpieces of Catalan Gothic painting originally done for the church of Sant Pere—the *altarpieces of Sant Pere* (1411) by Lluís Borrassà and of *Sants Abdó i Senén* (1460) by Jaume Huguet—as well as the mid-15th C. *altarpiece of Sant*

Miquel by Jaume Cirera and Guillem Talarn and fragments of mural paintings (c. 1300) in the apse. Nearby is the old castle and charterhouse of *Vallparadís* (Gothic with earlier features) which now houses a section of the Museu de Terrassa. The recently restored *church, cloister and chapter house* date back to the time when the Carthusians moved there, in 1344.

Viladecans. Agricultural town, now an industrial city, which has drawn many residents from other parts of Spain. In the old quarter is the 14-15th C. *Torre del Baró*, a large fortified Gothic mansion now much restored. On the outskirts is the manor house of *Torre-roja*, a small castle with a central porticoed courtyard and an attractive four-storey bell tower with Gothic windows, also much restored.

Vilafranca del Penedès. Capital of the rich wine-growing *comarca* of Alt Penedès. Important town since the Middle Ages. Gothic *basilica of Santa Maria* with a single nave, polygonal apse and chapels between the buttresses. Building began in 1285 and it was consecrated in 1484. Modern neo-Gothic additions include the finishing touches to the *façade*. Opposite is the *Palau Reial*, where King Peter II the Great died in the same year in which work began on Santa Maria. The Palace, an austere building from the first period of Catalan Gothic architecture, houses the art collections of the *Museu de Vilafranca*, which include several Gothic exhibits, as well as the *Museu del Vi* (wine museum). In the former *Convent of Sant Francesc* is the collection of stone sculptures including several fine *tombs*, notably those of Bertran de Castellet, Hug de Cervelló and other nobles. The Catalan parliament (*Corts Generals de Catalunya*, 14th C.) met in the Convent in 1359 and 1367. It also contains an *altarpiece* dedicated to the *Virgin and Saint George* by Lluís Borrassà (c. 1400). The 14th C. church of Sant Joan is in the very sober style of the Order of Hospitallers who built it.

Vilanova i la Geltrú. Coastal town, capital of Garraf, formed by the merger of the two formerly independent towns which give it its name. The old *castle of La Geltrú*, restored at the beginning of the 20th C., is a solid Gothic building with a spacious central courtyard.

Biographical notes on leading Gothic artists

Aloi de Montbrai (14th C.). French sculptor (from Montbray, Manche), known as *master Aloi*, active in Catalonia and Valencia, documented 1336-82. Carried out royal commissions, including the tombs at Poblet (with Jaume Cascalls) and gallery of portraits of members of the House of Barcelona for the Palau Reial Major (lost). His best works are in Girona, where he moved to be near the alabaster quarries at Beuda, but he had workshops in Barcelona at the Font dels Arcs, at a place called 'Alipades'.

Bargués, Arnau (? - Barcelona 1413). One of the most representative Catalan Gothic architects. Took part in a meeting held in Girona in 1386 to discuss whether the Cathedral should be continued with a single nave. Master builder of Barcelona Cathedral. In charge of the construction of the Palau del Rei Martí at Poblet, the Palau dels Cabrera in Blanes, and the façade of Barcelona City Hall.

Bartomeu, master (13th C.). Sculptor considered to have introduced 'fall Gothic' to Catalan sculpture. Worked in his home town of Girona and in Tarragona, where he did the sculptures on the Cathedral façade, notably the magnificent Virgin on the transom (1277) which shows French influence. Designed the original funeral monument (1291-95) to Peter II the Great at Santes Creus.

Bassa, Ferrer (14th C.). Painter and miniaturist, active in Barcelona (workshop on the Carrer de la Cucurulla). Worked for Peter III the Ceremonious on decoration for the Royal Palace chapels in Barcelona, Saragossa, Lleida, Majorca and Perpignan. His finest works are the paintings (1343-46) for the Sant Miquel cell at the monastery of Pedralbes, which reveal direct knowledge of Italian painting and constitute a blend of the styles of the great masters of Siena and Florence. Responsible for the spread of Italian influence in Catalan Gothic painting. Collaborated with his son **Arnau Bassa** who died, probably from the Black Death, in 1349 and who continued to work in a distinctly Italian style. Works at Manresa, in the museums of Barcelona and Vic, and in the USA (Cambridge, Baltimore and New York).

Bermejo, Bartolomé (? - after 1498). Painter from Cordoba. Lived in Valencia and Aragon and probably also in the Low Countries, since paintings bear direct traces of Flemish influences. The last stage of his career —from 1486 onwards— was spent in Barcelona, where he painted *La Pietat Desplà* (1490), considered his masterpiece, and designed stained glass for the Cathedral.

Bernés, Pere (2nd half 14th C.). Valencian silversmith in the service of Peter III the Ceremonious. Works in the main cities of the realm (Barcelona, Valencia, Majorca, Perpignan, etc.), including moulds for royal seals and the coronation sword. His best known works (1370-80) are part of the altarpiece on the high altar at Girona Cathedral and the crosses attributed to him at the Museu de la Catedral, also in Girona.

Borrassà, Lluís (? - Barcelona 1425/26). Painter from a long line of Girona artists. Settled in Barcelona in 1383, where he received numerous commissions from all over Catalonia, some from the Kings. Took part in preparations for the coronation ceremonies held in Saragossa. His work-

shop was highly productive and his numerous collaborators and disciples included two slaves: Lluç (a Tartar) and Jordi (a black). He introduced international Gothic style to Catalan painting.

Cascalls, Jaume (14th C.). Sculptor and master builder from Berga. His earliest known work is the altarpiece (1345) at Cornellà de Confluent in Northern Catalonia (the Roussillon). He married the daughter of the painter Ferrer Bassa. The royal tombs at Poblet, ordered by Peter III the Ceremonious (1349), were begun by him in collaboration with master Aloi, though Cascalls did the greater part of the work. From 1360 he combined this task with that of directing the construction of the cloister and bell tower at the Seu Vella in Lleida, a city on which he left his mark. Considered the leading figure of the Catalan school of Gothic sculpture which developed from the mid-14th C.

Dalmou, Lluís (? - after 1460). Painter from Valencia. He spent the last stage of his career in Catalonia in the service of Alfons IV the Magnanimous at whose command he travelled to Flanders, probably on some diplomatic mission. His masterpiece, the altarpiece of *Els Consellers* (signed and dated 1445), shows direct knowledge of the works of Van Eyck and he is one of the main representatives of the Flemish trend in Catalan Gothic art.

Déu, Jordi de (14-15th C.). Sculptor of Greek origin, also known as Jordi Joan. Slave and disciple of Jaume Cascalls, whose work he continued. Active 1361-1418 at Lleida, Poblet, Tarragona (where he had a house on the Carrer de la Boqueria), Cervera and, at the end of his life, Barcelona, where he collaborated with his sons Antoni and especially Pere Joan, who was an excellent sculptor.

Ferrer, Jaume (15th C.). Name of two painters, probably father and son, *Jaume Ferrer I* and *Jaume Ferrer II*. Mainly active around Lleida, where they introduced international Gothic style. The former was the leading painter in Lleida in the first third of the 15th C. The works of the second, documented 1430-61, reveal a combination of naturalism and fantasy which is highly characteristic of contemporary tastes.

Fonoll, Reinard (14th C.). English master builder and sculptor, active in Catalonia in 1332-73. Worked on the cloister at Santes Creus, at Montblanc and at Tarragona. Other sculptures attributed to him are of more doubtful authenticity.

Huguet, Jaume (Valls c. 1415 - Barcelona 1492). Painter. Represents the golden age of Catalan Gothic painting. Adapted features of Flemish art and the Italian Quattrocento to the tastes of contemporary Catalan society (resplendent gilts and profuse ornamentation). By 1448 he had settled in Barcelona. Following the death of Bernat Martorell, a neighbour of his uncle and guardian, Pere Huguet, his reputation grew. From then onwards his output increased, as did his influence on other artists.

Joan, Pere (c. 1395 - after 1468). Possibly the foremost sculptor in 15th C. Catalonia. Son of Jordi de Déu. Worked in Barcelona on the Palau de la Generalitat, where his maturity as an artist is already visible. Commissioned by bishop Dalmou de Mur to make an altar-

piece for the high altar in Tarragona Cathedral. When the bishop was transferred to Saragossa, he commissioned another for Saragossa Cathedral. In 1450 he entered the service of the court of Alfons IV the Magnanimous in Naples and collaborated with Guillem Sagrera from Majorca on the Castelnuovo. His best works, notably his reliefs, reveal a sensitivity akin to the sculptors of the Italian Quattrocento.

Martorell, Bernat (Sant Celoni, ? - Barcelona, 1452). Painter, son of a butcher. Known for a long time as the 'Sant Jordi master' on account of the magnificent altarpiece of Saint George now at the Art Institute in Chicago. Went to live in Barcelona where, after the death of Lluís Borrassà, his workshop (in the Framenors district) became the leading one in the city. His customers were guilds, confraternities, public officials and churchmen from all over Catalonia. Also excelled at drawing and miniatures.

Moragues, Pere (14th C.). Sculptor and silversmith, active in Catalonia and Aragon. His early works were religious statues. Later he worked in stone, his main achievement being the tomb of the archbishop of Saragossa, Lope Fernández de Luna (1379). In latter years he concentrated on silver. The monstrance he made for his patron Peter III the Ceremonious (Corporals de Daroca, 1384) is one of the finest pieces of medieval silverware. He was master builder of the cathedral in Tortosa (1382).

Mur, Ramon de (? - c. 1435). Painter. Documented 1412-35. Known for a long time as the 'Guimerà master' on account of the altarpiece from this village (MEV) which is his masterpiece. He had workshops at Tàrraga and Montblanc and the bulk of his output was for the Conca de Barberà-Urgell-Segarra region. Worked in international Gothic style.

Oller, Pere (14-15th C.). Sculptor. Trained under Pere Sanglada on the choir at Barcelona Cathedral. At Poblet he made the tomb of Ferdinand I of Antequera (of which scattered fragments remain). He also worked round Girona (probably his home town). His masterpiece is the altarpiece (1420-26) for the high altar at Vic Cathedral, which features his characteristic squat figures. More concerned with detail and ornamentation than with expression.

Sanglada, Pere (14-15th C.). Sculptor, active around 1400. Lived in the Sant Just district of Barcelona. His major works are the carved figures on the choir stalls in Barcelona Cathedral, begun in 1394, on which he collaborated with several other artists (the misericords show particularly remarkable powers of imagination). He often worked with the architect Arnau Bargués (eg. on Barcelona City Hall). He travelled to Flanders and was instrumental in introducing international Gothic style in Catalan sculpture. His style is refined and elegant.

Serra, Pere (second half 14th C.). Painter. Brother of Francesc and Jaume Serra, considered the most important of the three. Much of his large output was done in Catalonia, but he also worked in Aragon (Saragossa), around Valencia (Segorbe) and in Sicily (Syracuse). His paintings, full of small, graceful figures, are in Italian-type style. He was the teacher of Lluís Borrassà.





From Tarragona to the Ebro valley via the Gaià, Francolí and Montsant valleys



Missal of Sant Cugat (1400)

This attractive route runs through the Tarragona region, amid pleasant land and seascapes, and affords the opportunity to visit a wide selection of Gothic and other historic buildings. From Tarragona, with its characteristic Gothic Cathedral, we drive north-east up the coast to the interesting castles of Tamarit and Altafulla where ogival forms are found side by side with

Cornudella to the picturesque ruins of the Carthusian monastery of Escaladei, which has some Gothic features and stands below the towering rock faces of the Montsant range. It was the monastery of Escaladei which undertook the resettlement of the surrounding Priorat region.

The road winds slowly up the Montsant valley, amid vineyards and clumps of pines growing on slate ground, to Cabassers, where an exceptional 15th C. altarpiece is located. Crossing the river beyond the medieval bridge, we climb through rugged scenery with great horizontal slabs of rock and caves, to the more inviting setting of La Palma d'Ebre.

Finally we reach the Ebro valley where the ruins of Flix castle and the town itself with its church of Santa Maria, rise above a wide sweep of the river. We drive on down the slow flowing Ebro (one of the largest rivers in the Iberian peninsula), through the Pas de l'Ase, where the waters pick up speed, as far as Móra la Nova. From here a rewarding 10 km side trip takes us to Tivissa, where the interesting original Gothic architecture of the church must be discovered inside the Renaissance extensions and where, from La Baranova, one can enjoy a view over the green fields of the Ribera d'Ebre plain.

On the way from Móra d'Ebre to Gandesa via Benissanet and El Pinell de Brai, our main stop is at the ruined castle of the Knights Templar, which towers above the village and river at Miravet. We drive through rugged scenery to the more pleasant Terra Alta plain, overlooked by the capital Gandesa, where there are mansions with Gothic features and other buildings of interest. The road climbs up through Bot to Horta de Sant Joan, where the parish church stands in attractive surroundings. Just outside the village, amid scenery reminiscent of Montserrat, lies the Convent of Sant Salvador.

We now follow the Ebro to the city of Tortosa, which has an outstanding Gothic Cathedral and a great many other buildings in the same style. Around Amposta there are keeps, such as La Carrova. Uldecona, further south and virtually on the border with Castelló, is well worth visiting on account of the various Gothic buildings, notably the parish church.

On our way back to Tarragona up the Costa Daurada we can make a brief stop at L'Hospitalet de l'Infant, where there is a hospital founded in the 14th C. One can also make a trip inland towards Montbrió del Camp and Riudecanyes to admire the few Gothic features and the panoramic view from the hilltop monastery of Escornalbou. The road continues amid the orchards of Baix Camp till we reach the bustling city of Reus overlooked by the tall bell tower of the Gothic church of Sant Pere. A short way inland from Reus we can inspect the interesting Gothic and Renaissance buildings at La Selva del Camp and not far from the popular and historic shrine of Paredelgada, surrounded by hazel groves and fruit orchards. Finally, from Reus our route returns to its starting point in Tarragona.

characteristic keeps from the same period.

Turning inland along the road to Salomó and Montferri, we come to a Gothic monument of vital importance: the monastery of Santes Creus. On the way here, anyone with time should make a detour through Valls to see the remarkable Gothic statue of the Virgin of La Candela, to watch the traditional human towers built by the castellers and to taste the local culinary speciality of calçots (grilled onion shoots).

The exceptionally impressive monastery of Santes Creus stands amid white poplars on the banks of the Gaià and is worth visiting in detail. Our route continues through El Pla de Santa Maria and the Cabra pass to Montblanc, the capital of the Conca de Barberà region, which has a picturesque and well-kept medieval quarter with fine Gothic buildings surrounded by spectacular city walls.

Just 5 km from Montblanc is L'Espluga de Francolí. The Gothic church of Sant Miquel and the old hospital both stand on the square. Visitors should sample the local biscuits (rifaclis and carquinyolis). Close to L'Espluga is the great Cistercian monastery of Poblet, one of the most remarkable groups of medieval buildings in the western world, whose elaborate Gothic style radiates serenity.

After this, the road winds slowly up through attractive mountain scenery to the enchanting Vila Vermella ('red-stone village') of Prades at an altitude of 1,000 m. Through the gates in the medieval walls we enter a square with archways containing a Romanesque-Gothic parish church and an attractive fountain. The route continues over the L'Albarca pass and through



Escornalbou

Main historic buildings

Altafulla. Coastal village which grew up around the attractive and well preserved castle with loopholes, towers and crenellated walls. Though basically Gothic, it was restored and renovated in later periods.

Amposta. Town near the mouth of the Ebro where an important command of the order of Hospitallers was located in the Middle Ages. The tower of La Carrova, on the right bank of the river, lies within the extensive borough boundaries, which take in part of the Ebro delta. It is a typical 14th C. medieval keep with large Gothic windows and vaulting. On the opposite side of the river, in the borough of Tortosa, stands the tower of Camp-redó from the same period. These two twin towers guarded the entrance to the estuary.

Cabassers. Agricultural town in the valley of the river Monsant which is spanned by the interesting 14th C. Pont Vell ('old bridge') with its three arches and characteristic pointed shape. The parish church contains most of the early 15th C. painted altarpiece of Santa Maria, attributed to the 'Cabassers Master', who was close to Lluís Borrassà.

Escaladei. Former charterhouse, the first to be founded in Catalonia and in Spain (1167), the ruins of which stand in an attractive setting at La Morera de Montsant in Priorat. Of special note are the 12-13th C. Romanesque church and various neoclassical features. There are also remains of two 14th and 15th C. Gothic cloisters.

Escornalbou. Former monastery of regular canons (Franciscan Convent from 1580 onwards) in Riudecanyes, near Reus. Restoration was undertaken in 1910. Mostly Romanesque, though some parts are 13-14th C. with Gothic features. Artists who worked on the monastery included Pere Oller and Master Aloi.

L'Espluga de Francolí. Agricultural town known for its waters and because of the proximity of Poblet. Medieval remains include the fine church of Sant Miquel (1294-1365; single nave, ribbed vaulting, and polygonal apse with chapels). Op-



Tarragona: Cathedral cloister



Poblet: interior of the church

posite it stands the handsome 14th C. *hospital* containing an attractive open courtyard with stone arches.

Flix. Town located on a wide bend in the Ebro river, home of an important electrochemical industry. During the Middle Ages Flix *castle* played an important part in controlling navigation on the river. Though repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt, it still has some medieval features. The *parish church* is a fine example of the survival of Gothic building techniques into the 16th C. (part of the 13th C. church still stands).

Gandesa. Capital of the wine-growing *comarca* of Terra Alta. Church with a famous Romanesque doorway by sculptors belonging to the School of Lleida. Mansions which, despite alterations, conserve Gothic features: *Presó* (former house of the Hospitallers), *Casa Consistorial*, etc.

Horta de Sant Joan. Village which belonged to the military orders of the Templars and Hospitallers in the Middle Ages and became well-known in more recent times because of its connection with Picasso, who painted early Cubist works there. Parts of it have retained considerable character. Fine Renaissance town hall. 14-16th C. Gothic *parish church* (stonecutters' marks are visible on the stones in the beautiful sanctuary). In a picturesque setting on the outskirts is the former Franciscan Convent of *La Mare de Déu dels Àngels*, or *Sant Salvador d'Horta*. The church has a 14th C. Gothic doorway and atrium, the latter containing funeral urns.

L'Hospitalet de l'Infant. Town near the coast, south of Baix Camp, which grew up around the former *Hospital del Coll de Balaguer*, a hospice for travellers founded in the first half of the 14th C. by Queen Blanche of Anjou and her son Prince Peter. The building, which is in bad condition, is typical of large Catalan Gothic hospices: rooms with diaphragm arches and wooden ceilings arranged round a courtyard with an adjoining chapel. There were also keeps, one of which still stands.

Miravet. Small town on the bank of the Ebro below the imposing hulk of *Miravet castle* which occupies a strategic spot overlooking the river at the entrance to the narrow gorge known as Pas de Barrufemes.

Already a key fortress under the Arabs, following the Christian conquest it became an important command of the Knights Templar, the last redoubt of this order in Catalonia, and was later taken over by the Hospitallers. It is a prime example of medieval military architecture. Most of the buildings are from the 13th C., the period of transition from Romanesque to Gothic. Besides the walls and the powerful, impregnable-looking towers, there is a fine church with rooms above it, a courtyard and a large room known as the 'stable room'. It affords a strikingly beautiful panorama. The Generalitat has undertaken significant restoration work there.

Montblanc. Important town in medieval times, lying at the heart of Conca de Barberà of which it is the capital. The walls surrounding the old town were built on orders from Peter III the Ceremonious in the second half of the 14th C. One of the best preserved fortified towns in Catalonia. The layout of the streets corresponds basically to the medieval concept of a city. Several interesting *noble mansions*, one of which houses the Arxiu-Museu de Montblanc. The most interesting of the religious buildings is the *church of Santa Maria* with a single nave, chapels between the buttresses and a Baroque façade. The English master, Reinard Fonoll, was involved in building it. Inside are a Gothic statue of the Virgin (*Mare de Déu del Cor*) and a 14th C. stone *altarpiece*. The *church of Sant Miquel* is older and simpler with a wooden roof supported by diaphragm arches. The *church of the former Hospital de Sant Marçal* has the same layout. Outside the walled precincts, near the old Lleida road, is the *Hospital de Santa Magdalena*, once the most important in the town. Its most characteristic feature is the late 15th C. cloister. The *Gothic bridge* over the Francolí is on the same road and further along it is the *Convent de la Mercè* (or *del Miracle*) with a 14th C. church. On the opposite side of the town is the *Convent de Sant Francesc* whose church, built around 1300, has been restored. The *shrine of La Serra* is also located outside the walls. It has various Gothic features and contains a beautiful 14th C. statue of the Virgin (*Mare de Déu de la Serra*, the patroness of the town).

Poblet. The monastery of Poblet, lying in attractive woodland scenery in Conca de Barberà be-

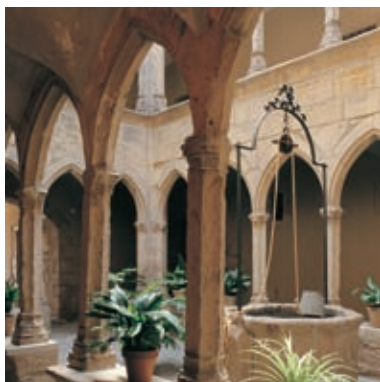


Poblet: cloister



Santes Creus: Palau Reial

tween Vimbodí (the borough to which it belongs) and L'Espluga de Francolí, is one of the most important groups of medieval monastic buildings in the western world. It belongs to the Cistercians, who founded it around 1150 thanks to a donation from Count Ramon Berenguer IV aimed at resettling lands recently reconquered from the Moors. The *church* and *refectory* are in Cistercian style (12th C.). The *cloister* and adjoining buildings, the *chapter house* and the present *library* are 13th C., as is the *monks' dormitory* where the system of a wooden roof supported by diaphragm arches, which is characteristic of Catalan Gothic architecture, is used with great skill. In the 14th C., royal protection over the monastery was increased. The *walls* with their magnificent *Royal Gate* flanked by two large polygonal towers were built. Around 1400 the *Palau del Rei Martí* was constructed, as was the great *church lantern*, which was restored. In the midst of the 15th C. Alfons IV the



Montblanc: Santa Magdalena



Montblanc: city walls



Santes Creus: one of the capitals in the cloister

Magnanimous had the *chapel of Sant Jordi* built. However, the most eloquent expression of the relationship between the House of Barcelona and the monastery is provided by the *royal tombs* inside the church. It was Peter III the Ceremonious who chose Poblet as the royal burial place. Leading Catalan sculptors of the day, such as Master Aloi, Jaume Cascalls, Jordi de Déu and Pere Oller, took part in the long task of building the tombs. They were rebuilt in modern times by Frederic Marès. The Catalan kings buried at Poblet are: Alfons I the Chaste (1154-96), James I the Conqueror (1208-76), Peter III the Ceremonious (1319-87), John I the Lover of Kindness (1350-96), Martin I the Humane (1356-1410), Ferdinand I of Antequera (1380-1416), Alfons IV the Magnanimous (1396-1458), and John II (1398-1479). The main *altarpiece* is a Renaissance work by Damià Forment and the church doorway is Baroque. Monastic life was resumed in 1940. It was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1991.

Prades. Former centre of an important medieval earldom linked to the Catalan-Aragonese crown. Known as the '*Villa Vermella*' ('red town') on account of its interesting historic buildings in Triassic red stone: parts of the walls, two 14th C. gates with vousoirs, a charming square with archways and a *parish church* in Romanesque-Gothic transitional

style with later additions (the oldest parts are in the nave). The monumental cross is 13th C.

Reus. One of the most lively and dynamic cities in New Catalonia which developed mainly from the 18th C. onwards. The only thing remaining from the Middle Ages is the 13th C. *castle of El Cambrer* in which a number of rooms with Gothic arches are preserved. The *priory church of Sant Pere* is an ambitious building by master Benet Otger from Lyon begun in 1512 but Gothic in style, with a single nave and chapels between the buttresses.

Santes Creus. Important former Cistercian monastery set in a secluded valley near the Gaià in the borough of Aiguamúrcia, in the northern part of the Tarragona region. The layout corresponds closely to the Cistercian model, the various buildings clustering around the cloister while the church is located to the left. The architecture ranges from Cistercian (late transition Romanesque) style to full Gothic. One of the oldest parts is the *church* (1174-1225) which has ribbed vaulting, a large Gothic window in the façade and a rose window over the chevet preserving part of the medieval stained glass. Near the chancel are several fine *tombs* inside graceful Gothic temples. That of Peter II the Great (1240-85) was made by the sculptor known as Master Bartomeu in 1291-95 from a large slab of Roman porphyry, while on that of James II



Tarragona: detail of Cathedral door



Tarragona: Cathedral door knocker



Tarragona: Cathedral, main altarpiece (detail)

(1267-1327) are the reclining figures (c. 1315) of the king and his wife Blanche of Anjou by Francesc de Montflorit. The mostly 14th C. *cloister* contains the tombs of noble families. Of note are the flamboyant tracery and the imaginative decoration on the impost and capitals by the English master Reinard Fonoll. Other buildings of great interest include the *chapter house*, which contains the tombs of various abbots, the *monks' dormitory* on the upper floor, with diaphragm arches, and the *royal palace* near the real cloister, built from 1276 onward by Peter II. In the Bernat Calbó Square (Calbó was abbot in the days of James I), is the *abbot's palace* (1640), of which the charming small front cloister has been preserved.

La Selva del Camp. Village in the Tarragona region which was important in the Middle Ages. An interesting group of Renaissance buildings have been preserved. The layout of the old town dates back to the Middle Ages and significant parts of the 14th C. walls still stand. To the north are the remains of the *castle*. The small *church of Sant Pau* and *chapel of Santa Llúcia i Sant Jaume* are both Gothic.

Tamarit. Former *castle* and mansion on a hill overlooking the coast, now part of the borough of Tarragona. The walls and keeps were built from 1363 onwards to provide protection from pirates. The group of buildings, which includes a Romanesque church and later constructions, was restored in 1916 by the American art collector C. Deering under the supervision of the painter Ramon Casas. Nearby are other 14-16th C. keeps such as those of *En Segur*, *Mas d'en Sorder*, *Mas Cosidor*, *Mas de la Creu* and *Torre de la Móra*, the last on the headland of the same name.

Tarragona. Already an important city in Roman times when it was the capital of Hispania Citerior. Many Roman remains: amphitheatre, theatre, walls, circus, etc. Ancient bishopric which, in the Middle Ages, became the metropolitan archdiocese of Catalonia. The *Cathedral* stands on top of the hill where the old city was located, on the site of the great Roman temple of which part of the walls and other items remain. It is one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in Catalonia. Begun in 1171 (though not completed until the 14th C.), it is in transition Gothic style. The layout comprising three aisles and a transept, is Romanesque, but the ceiling has Gothic ribbed vaulting. Above the transept is a large and beautiful lantern. The two sides of the *façade* are Romanesque while the central, unfinished part, is totally Gothic with a large rose window and beautiful sculptures. The Virgin on the transom and the Apostles are by Master Bartomeu (late 13th C.), the first of the great Catalan Gothic sculptors. The *cloister* also

belongs to the first stage of building, with clear traces of the Romanesque tradition and magnificent door into the Cathedral, but the *chapels* opening onto it are later. The remarkable *chapter house* now houses part of the Museu Diocesà. Fine polychrome statue of the Virgin (*Mare de Déu del Claustre*).

Various works of art can be admired *inside* the Cathedral. In the chancel is the *main altarpiece* (1426-33) by the great sculptor Pere Joan. The subtlety of his art is especially clear in the *predella* depicting scenes from the life of Saint Tecla, a theme also represented on the marble antependium. To the right is the *tomb* of the patriarch and archbishop John of Aragon, an outstanding 14th C. sculpture probably by an Italian master. The *Capella dels Sastres* ('tailors' chapel') forms a homogeneous whole whose main feature is the altarpiece by master Aloi completed by paintings and figures on the upper part. A group of late 15th C. sculptures, the *Sant Sepulcre*, is located beside the choir. The 14th C. coffering in the *sacristy* is also of note.

Round the Cathedral are other fine buildings: the *Cambreria* on the Pla de La Seu, with its courtyard; the former 12-15th C. *Hospital de Santa Tecla*, on Les Coques avenue; and the *Casa del Degà* on the Carrer de les Escrivanies which has embedded tombstones with ancient inscriptions (two in Hebrew). On the Carrer de la Merceria there are Gothic *archways* and more mansions line the Carrer Major. The *old buildings* around the Plaça del Pallol have Gothic features. The Roman and Gothic worlds blend in the former *Praetorium* or medieval *Castell del Rei* which was fitted up as royal palace in the 14th C. with the addition of a large Gothic room (an annex of the Museu d'Història de Tarragona). Rising from the long stretch of Roman walls along the

Passeig Arqueològic is the 14th C. *Torre de l'Arquebisbe* which was built on a Roman base.

Tivissa. Village in a mountainous region overlooking the Ebro valley. During medieval times it was of some importance and walls were built round it from which one fortified gate has been preserved. The *parish church*, which was enlarged in the Renaissance and Baroque periods, has a Gothic chancel with ribbed vaulting (13-14th C.) and a fine Renaissance *façade*. The *sacristy* contains a small museum with gold and silverware.

Tortosa. Cathedral city at the beginning of the Ebro delta, capital of Southern Catalonia. Already important in Roman and Arab times. Many important historic monuments, especially in Gothic and Renaissance styles.

The *Cathedral* is a basic work of Catalan Gothic architecture. It was begun in 1347 and the main altar was consecrated in 1441, after which the work progressed more slowly. It was designed by Master Bernat d'Alguaire, though the Cathedral archives contain parchments showing that alternative plans were drawn up, an unusual procedure for the period which makes them of great value. There are three aisles, a double ambulatory and chapels between the buttresses of the nave. The design of the chevet is similar to that of *La Seu* in Manresa, the buttresses being left open so that only tracery separates the chapels of the apse. There are several beautiful works of art inside: *main altarpiece* (1351) in triptych form (unusual in Catalan Gothic altarpieces), with sculptures inside and Italianstyle paintings outside; *altarpiece of the Transfiguration* (2nd half of the 15th C.) made in the workshop of Jaume Huguet with very graceful figures and rich ornamentation; *baptismal font*



Miravet



Altafulla



Tamarit

bearing the coat of arms of the antipope Benedict XIII; *pulpits*; and the *tapestry of the Last Supper* and *Crist de Palau* carved in wood. The *cloister* has all the simplicity of Catalan Gothic architecture, with galleries of undecorated arcades. The inner walls contain many *stone tombstones*. Both the outside of the Cathedral (Baroque *façade*) and the inside contain interesting features in later styles. Beside the Cathedral stands the magnificent early 14th C. Gothic *Bishop's Palace*, which has a characteristic *courtyard* with projecting stairs and arcades on the first floor. The *chapel* is a small masterpiece and the entrance is decorated with fine sculptures. Other religious buildings with Gothic features are the former *Convent de Santa Clara* in the upper town, with its beautiful cloister, and the former *church of Sant Domènec*, now the Museu-Arxiu Municipal.

On a promontory overlooking the city stands the most remarkable civil

building in Tortosa, the fortress known as *La Suda*, built by the Arabs and converted into a royal residence in the days of James II (13-14th C.) with the addition of new rooms and fortifications. Stretches of the walls and some towers remain and it has now been converted into a 'parador'. Other noteworthy civil buildings include several palaces (*Oliver de Boteller* —to which a Gothic fountain is adjoined—, *Despuig* and *Oriol*), all of which are late Gothic and have undergone rebuilding. The interesting trade exchange (*Llotja de Mar* or *Porxo del Blat*, 1369-73), now in the city park, bears witness to Tortosa's trading role in the Middle Ages.

Uldecona. Town in the extreme south of Catalonia, once the centre of an important community of the order of Hospitalers. The still imposing old *castle* on the outskirts is a fine example of the architecture of the military orders in Catalonia, with a walled enclosure, circular tower and solid 13th C. fortified palace alongside the church of Els Àngels. In the town, besides several mansions and other buildings of note, there is the *parish church of Sant Lluç* (1373-1421). It has one large nave and chapels between the buttresses in characteristic Catalan Gothic style, as well as an attractive side doorway. The *Casa de la Comanda* also in the town, has an interesting Gothic *façade*.

Valls. Town in the Tarragona area, capital of Alt Camp, commercial and agricultural centre with an established industrial tradition. Despite its importance in medieval times, few historic buildings remain. The late 16th C. *parish church* by Bartomeu Roig is a clear example of the long survival of Catalan Gothic architecture. A restored Gothic statue of the Virgin (*Mare de Déu de la Candela*, the patroness of the town) is venerated here. Jaume Huguet, the most important of the Catalan Gothic painters, was born in Valls around 1415.



Tortosa: Cathedral

From Lleida to the Val d'Aran through the Urgell plains, Noguera and the Pallars mountains



Missal of Sant Cugat (1400)

The works of Gothic art on this attractive route are set amid a variety of landscapes, ranging from the broad Lleida plain with its leafy orchards and its non-irrigated areas of almond and olive groves, to the wild mountainous scenery further north.

After visiting the outstanding Gothic buildings in Lleida, we follow the right bank of the Segre to Soses and Seròs, where the melancholy ruins of the

Trinitarian monastery of Vinganya (now being gradually restored) stand beside the road to La Granja d'Escarp. We cross the Segre, leaving the early Christian archaeological excavations at El Bovalar to our right, and go on through Maials and the shrub-covered Llardecans hills to Torrebesses where we can admire the beautiful Gothic altarpiece of Sant Joan and the small, well set-out museum of ethnography and folklore.

A track towards Granyena comes out onto the road to El Soleràs and Castellans which affords wide views over arable land round Juneda. The archways and medieval mansions of Juneda provide a foretaste of those at nearby Les Borges Blanques, the capital of Garrigues, where visitors should stroll round the charming and elongated Plaça Major. This town produces some of the finest olive oil in the world and the characteristic smell of olive presses hovers in the air. Not far to the east is the imposing Gothic manor house of La Floresta and the adjoining church of Sant Blai.

A short distance along the main road to Montblanc is the fine 14th C. church of Vinaixa, inside which are several beautiful altarpieces. From here it is worth going on to see the quaint medieval parts of the village of L'Albi. Further along the main road, the turning to Tarrés and Fullela takes us to L'Espluga Calba, clustering at the foot of the great façade of the old castle of the Knights Hospitallers. We are now on the border between Garrigues and Urgell and we take the Maldà road as far as the monastery of Vallbona de les Monges, another masterpiece of Gothic architecture, where the stillness of the cloister further enhances the fine tracery of the windows.

Proceeding east along the banks of the Corb, we reach Guimerà, one of the most characteristic medieval villages of inland Catalonia where, below the Gothic church, a maze of quaint old streets winds down the hillside. We continue eastwards through the spa of Vallfogona to Santa Coloma de Queralt where one should take a leisurely walk from the interesting parish church through the streets and the squares with their archways, savouring the old-time atmosphere.

Follow the main route north to Talavera, where there is a beautiful Gothic tomb, and thence to the walled city of Cervera, the capital of Segarra, stretching along the Les Savines pass. An idea of the architectural

qualities of the town can be had by walking along the gently curving Carrer Major towards the Paeria, admiring the outstanding Gothic church of Santa Maria.

There are Gothic buildings in Tàrraga, the capital of Urgell, west of Cervera, and a Gothic parish church and castle in Verdú, not far to the south, where traditional black pottery pitchers for keeping water cool are still made.

After visiting Anglesola, near Tàrraga, we proceed along the main road to Bellpuig d'Urgell, where there are two Gothic cloisters. The road northwards to Tornabous runs through land irrigated by the Urgell Canal, before reaching Agramunt. Here, in addition to admiring the remarkable Gothic monuments, we can enjoy other lesser attractions: the local nougat (torró) and chocolate (xocolata a la pedra).

We now travel in a westerly direction to Montgai, before turning north to the interesting Gothic parish church at Cubells, perched above the road from Lleida to La Seu d'Urgell and commanding a fine view over the Noguera Pallaresa river valley. 10 km away, on the banks of the great Pyrenean river, the Segre, is the important town of Artesa de Segre. Before beginning our ascent into the mountains, we can take two interesting side trips: one down the Segre to Alòs de Balaguer to see the altarpiece of Sant Feliu, and the other across the Segre, through Alentorn, to Vilanova de Meià, which lies at the heart of pleasant secluded countryside and has a handsome Gothic parish church. An unusual market, at which quails, pheasants and partridges are sold, is held here in November for the feast of Saint Martin.

From Artesa de Segre we must drive nearly 60 km, over the panoramic Comiols pass, to Tremp, the capital of Pallars Jussà, in the middle of the Noguera Pallaresa valley on the right bank of the river. Tremp, which boasts several Gothic works, notably a large and beautiful statue of the Virgin (Mare de Déu de Valldeflors), is the starting point for our long trip to the heart of the Pyrenees. First we explore the quaint medieval district of nearby Salàs de Pallars, before driving up the Noguera and through the Collegats gorges to see the works of Romanesque and Gothic art at Sort, the capital of Pallars Sobirà. We climb further into the Pyrenees, after having visited the village of Son, near València d'Àneu, over the breathtaking pass of Port de la Bonaigua into the Val d'Aran to visit the churches of Vielha, Salardú and Arties, which have interesting Gothic features. It is a long drive but the magnificent scenery alone would make the trip worthwhile.

The road back to Lleida from Tremp runs below the sheer stone walls of the Terradets gorges. The old road along the limestone rock faces of the Montsec range takes us to Àger, where we make a stop before crossing the high Àger pass and beginning the descent through Fontdepu to the highly interesting Gothic monastery of Bellpuig de les Avellanes.

The road continues to wind slowly down right to the entrance to Balaguer, the beautiful capital of Noguera, whose spacious Plaça del Mercadal and important Gothic buildings warrant a leisurely visit. From here we continue westward to Castelló de Farfanya to see the castle and castle church, as well as the parish church of Sant Miquel, which has been restored in the light of contemporary taste.

From Alfarràs, further west, we come to Algerri where we take a side road to Albesa to see the altarpiece. Back in Alfarràs we proceed a little way down the Noguera Pallaresa to the Gothic parish church at Almenar which towers above the town and acres of orchards irrigated by the Catalunya i Aragó and Pinyana canals. The last 20 km of our tour from Almenar back to Lleida run through orchards and irrigated fields.



Àger

Main historic buildings

Àger. Old village in the centre of a sunny valley south of the Montsec. Reinforced ruins of the Romanesque church of the former collegiate of Sant Pere and remains of the Gothic cloister. The present parish church is also in Gothic style. Items of sculpture from those and other buildings in the town, which originally had an important castle and walled enclosure, can be seen in the Museu Diocesà de Lleida and the MNAC.

Agramunt. Agricultural and industrial town near the Urgell canal. Capital of the earldom of Urgell in the Middle Ages. Fine historic buildings remain. Large Romanesque church doorway, the main feature of which is a fine set of sculptures around the central figure of the Virgin which, according to the inscription, was commissioned by the village weavers in 1283. The top of the bell tower was made in the 14th C. and recalls the great lanterns at Poblet and Vallbona.

Albesa. Agricultural village in southern Noguera. In the parish church is a noteworthy late 14th C. altarpiece in polychrome stone depicting the Virgin, considered the prototype work of a group of sculptors from the School of Lleida.

L'Albi. Agricultural village in Garrigues. The remains of the castle tower over the old centre, where fragments of the 14th C. walls still stand and the medieval atmosphere still pervades several spots, such as the covered passageway of the Carrer del Call.

Almenar. Agricultural village in Segrià. 14th C. parish church with lantern, three aisles, octagonal chevet, and late Romanesque façade by the School of Lleida. 18thC. neoclassical additions to the façade and bell tower. Old 15th C. monumental cross in the Plaça de Soldevila.

Alòs de Balaguer. Village in Noguera at the foot of a castle built on top of a cliff overlooking the Segre of which the imposing walls, a round tower and pointed arches remain. The parish church contains the fine stone altarpiece of Sant Feliu in a style characteristic of the School of Lleida which was probably made up of sculptors engaged



Lleida: Seu Vella



Castelló de Farfanya: Sant Miquel, detail of the stone altarpiece

on the Seu Vella in Lleida at the end of the 14th C. A second stone altarpiece is in Santa Maria in Balaguer.

Anglesola. Agricultural village near the Urgell Canal where part of the walls, some fine old mansions and porticoed streets have been preserved. The present 17th C. church contains sculptures from the earlier church: two Romanesque apostles on the façade and a 14th C. polychrome stone statue of Saint Paul on the high altar. There was also a magnificent early 14th C. altarpiece with a figure of the Virgin, now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, USA.

Arties. Attractive village in the Val d'Aran. The simple late Romanesque parish church (12-13th C.) has elements which foreshadow Gothic style, as do many village churches in the Val d'Aran and the borough of Naut Aran. In the church of Arties are a number of panels from the 15th C. Gothic altarpiece, while others are in the Museu Diocesà de Lleida. Gothic chapel of Saint Joan, rebuilt in 1385 and restored in modern times.

Balaguer. Capital of Noguera, in a strategic position near the Segre. Already an important town in Arab times, later the centre of the earldom of Urgell. Handsome church of Santa Maria overlooking the town: single nave and chapels between the buttresses in typical Catalan Gothic style. Remarkable solid polygonal bell tower on one side. Building began in 1351 on the ini-

tiative of Peter III the Ceremonious, who was born in Balaguer, but was not completed till nearly two centuries later. The old centre preserves many remains of the surrounding walls as well as several medieval-type streets and squares with archways. Outside the centre, at the end of the former bridge, is the Convent of Sant Domènec which was built at the instigation of the enterprising Count Ermengol X of Urgell. The interesting cloister (2nd quarter of the 14th C.) contains arcades of a type first developed in the Convent of Sant Francesc in Palma de Mallorca.

Bellpuig d'Urgell. Former centre of a feudal domain of the Cardona family, one member of which, Ramon Folc de Cardona Anglesola (c. 1522), was Viceroy of Sicily and Naples. His mausoleum in the parish church is an extraordinary Renaissance work. The Convent of Sant Bartomeu (begun 1507) was built at his instigation. It has an interesting cloister which is a good example of late Gothic style, and another much simpler one with pointed arches.

Bellpuig de les Avellanès. Former abbey of premonstratensian canons in the south of the Àger valley in the borough of Os de Balaguer. It maintained considerable vitality over the centuries, was the burial place of the Counts of Urgell (13-14th C.), and in the 18th C. became an important centre for historical studies. A Romanesque clois-



Lleida: Seu Vella: door of the Apostles

ter and several important Gothic features remain, such as the dormitory and chapter house and the wide church sanctuary (14th C.), now part of the modern building. After the secularization of Church property (1835), it changed hands several times and the early 14th C. counts' tombs, which are some of the earliest creations of full Catalan Gothic sculpture, were sold (they are presently in The Cloisters in New York). The abbey has been recently restored by the Marist Brothers.

Les Borges Blanques. Capital of Garrigues, a basically agricultural comarca known for its excellent olive oil. Noteworthy mansions with features of Gothic inspiration and interesting Plaça Major with wide arcades.

Castelló de Farfanya. Village that grew up around an important fortress of Arab origin and enjoyed the protection of the Counts of Urgell. It has kept much of its character and some beautiful historic

buildings. Imposing towers and stretches of wall belonging to the castle overlook the village. Beside the castle is the former church of Santa Maria (1340/1400), with a polygonal apse and large bell tower. On the doorway are the coats of arms of Peter of Urgell who had it built. In the formerly walled village is the 13th C. late Romanesque parish church of Sant Miquel with later additions. Restored in 1987, it contains a magnificent very late 14th C. stone altarpiece by the School of Lleida dedicated to Santa Maria which comes from the castle church. The other painted and sculpted altarpieces, one by Jaume Ferrer, have been moved elsewhere. Interesting Renaissance and Baroque buildings.

Cervera. Capital of Segarra. Foremost among the historic buildings is the former university, the only university in Catalonia from 1726 to 1842, which is neoclassical with a Baroque façade. Fine Catalan Gothic church of Santa Maria, with three aisles, ribbed vaulting, and a polygonal apse with chapels. Begun early in the 14th C., it was consecrated in 1358. The stained glass in the chevet, some of which has survived, was made by Colí de Maraya at the beginning of the next century. In the chapels are the late 14th C. sarcophagi of two merchants called Ramon Serra, one by Jordi de Déu and the other attributed to Pere Moragues, as well as that of Berenguer de Castellort, the founder of a hospital. Characteristic Catalan Gothic octagonal bell tower. Sizeable parts of the walls built by Peter III the Ceremonious still stand. The Town Hall, adjoining the church, has a fine Baroque façade (17-18th C.). The great Gothic archways inside the old market have been brought to light, as well as the Gothic chapel of Santa Eulàlia.

Cubells. Agricultural village in Noguera which possessed an impor-

tant castle in the Middle Ages. Part of the walls remain, as does the church (Santa Maria del Castell) with a magnificent late Romanesque doorway by the School of Lleida. 13-14th C. Gothic parish church of Sant Pere with a single nave and pointed vaulting. Inside is a 13th C. Gothic alabaster figure of the Virgin (Mare de Déu de la Llet) which was in the castle chapel, and an interesting 15th C. pulpit. The noteworthy altarpieces have been moved: the altarpiece of Sant Pere, painted by Pere Serra, has been divided up among various museums and collections (the alabaster figure of the saint is in the Museu Marès), while the stone altarpiece of Santa Úrsula, signed and dated by Joan Reixac in Valencia in 1468, is in the MNAC, and the stone altarpiece of Sant Bartomeu, also by the School of Lleida, is in the Museu Diocesà d'Urgell.

L'Espluga Calba. Village in Garrigues where a command of the order of Hospitallers was established



Balaguer



Arties



Cervera



Lleida: cloister of the Seu Vella

in the 15th C. The *castle façade*, which has doorways with voussoirs and Gothic windows, is almost intact.

La Floresta. Village in Garrigues. From its foundation in the Middle Ages it belonged to the powerful Cardona dynasty who, in the 13-14th C., converted the *castle* into a large stone mansion house with several mullioned windows. It also includes the *parish church of Sant Blai* and a keep.

Guimerà. Walled village in Urgell, above the Corb river, at the foot of a now ruined castle. Picturesque maze of quaint narrow streets with beautiful medieval buildings. The most important building is the *church*, which was begun in the 14th C. It formerly contained an important painted altarpiece (1402-12, now in the MEV) by Ramon de Mur, who for a long time was known as the Guimerà master. On the outskirts are the ruins of the former monastery and Gothic church of *Santa Maria de Vallsanta*.

Juneda. Agricultural and industrial town with interesting medieval elements, notably the *archways* on the *Carrer Major*, the Gothic *Lamarca gate* and several old *mansions*.

Lleida. Capital of the western inland regions of Catalonia, built on a promontory above the Segre where the silhouette of the Old Cathedral is clearly visible. The many historic monuments bear witness to its important past.

The Old Cathedral (*Seu Vella*) was one of the most ambitious building projects in medieval Catalonia and had a considerable impact on the surrounding area, attracting artists from elsewhere who set up workshops which subsequently grew in importance. Work on the Cathedral began in 1203 and proceeded at a good pace until the 15th C. Though the design of the church is late Romanesque, the great lantern and the vaulting over the nave are Gothic in design. Full Gothic style is seen in the 14-15th C. *bell tower*, which is 60 m high, and in the magnificent 14th C. *cloister* which is both an atrium and a belvedere, affording a view over the city and plain. The wide cloister arches have exceptionally elaborate tracery. The façades have 13th C. Romanesque doors by the so-called School of Lleida, as well as a Gothic door, the *Porta dels Apòstols*, with interesting 14-15th C.

sculptures that have been partly destroyed. Inside is the *Montcada chapel*, with 14th C. funeral sculptures of the Montcada family, other 15th C. *funeral monuments* (Gallart, Barutell), fragments of the former *main altarpiece* by Bartomeu Rubió, the linear Gothic *Calvari* painted on the walls of the *chapel of Santa Margarida*, and other works.

Near the Seu Vella, on the hill called Puig del Castell, stands part of a medieval fortress, the *Castell del Rei*, built mainly in the 14th C. over the old Arab Suda, from where the walls ran out round the city. The first building in the *old quarter* worthy of mention is the 13th C. Romanesque *church of Sant Llorenç*, to which new aisles and a graceful bell tower were added in the 14th C. It houses a good collection of Gothic sculptures and stone altarpieces by the School of Lleida (2nd half of the 14th C.), as well as a figure of the Virgin (Mare de Déu dels Fillols), from the Old Cathedral. The *church of Sant Martí*, a simpler building to which chapels were also added in the 14-15th C., temporarily houses the Proemium collection, a part of the Museu de Lleida Diocesà i Comarcal which it shares with the Palau Episcopal. The remarkable city hall —*La Paeria*— was begun in the 13th C. (a row of Romanesque windows on one façade still remains) but was built in several stages. It contains an interesting museum, as well as a *Gothic altarpiece* (1440) by Jaume Ferrer II from the former chapel.

Opposite the neoclassical Catedral Nova ('New Cathedral') stands the remarkable 15-16th C. former *Hospital de Santa Maria* with a square ground plan and design characteristic of the models developed by Catalan Gothic civil architecture. Central courtyard and austere stone façades with a beautiful niche containing a statue of the Virgin at the main entrance. The building is the home of the Institut d'Estudis Ilerdencs and houses the archaeological section of the Museu de Lleida.

On a hillock on the outskirts stands *Gardeny castle* which, following the reconquest of Lleida by Ramon Berenguer IV (1149), became an important command of the Knights Templar (later of the Knights Hospitallers). This solid crenellated building is a fine example of military architecture and has a Romanesque church (*Santa Maria de Gardeny*).



Lleida: Paeria

Salardú. Lovely town in the Val d'Aran, capital of the large Naut Aran borough. Several interesting late-Gothic mural paintings have been recovered (1994-1999) in the Romanesque-Gothic transition parish church of Sant Andreu (12-13th C.), which also contains a splendid Romanesque image of Christ. The late-16th C. murals feature: Christ Glorified and the four Evangelists (around the apse); the Fathers of the Church (central arch of the presbytery); and various saints (arches and columns).

Salàs de Pallars. Village in Pallars Jussà, where an important equine fair was formerly held. Old quarter with a medieval atmosphere, surrounded by part of the old fortifications, *gates* and *towers* and containing some handsome *mansions*. Church with certain Gothic features.

Santa Coloma de Queralt. Town in Conca de Barberà. Capital of the important medieval barony of

Queralt. Parts of the 14th C. walls, especially the gates, still stand. The medieval layout of the old town has survived, with charming streets and squares with archways. There was once a large Jewish community. The most noteworthy building is the *parish church of Santa Maria* with a single nave and chapels between the buttresses. Building began in 1331 and the bulk of the work was undertaken in the 14th C. Inside is a stone *altarpiece* dedicated to *Sant Llorenç* (1386-7), possibly the finest work of the sculptor Jordi de Déu. The *church of Santa Maria de Bell-lloc*, outside the walls, has some late Romanesque features (such as the doorway, by the School of Lleida) and others that are fully Gothic. Inside is the 14th C. *tomb* of Pere de Queralt and his wife by Esteve de Burgos and Pere Aguilar.

Son. Tiny village in the borough of Alt Àneu in Pallars Sobirà county, northeast of Aiguestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park. The



Guimerà

Church of Sant Just i Sant Pastor is a magnificent Romanesque building housing a splendid late-15th C. Gothic altarpiece.

Talavera. Small farming village in southern Segarra. The *church* contains a 14th C. funeral monument representing the reclining figures of a knight in military apparel and a lady, probably members of the local noble family of So.

Tàrrega. Town of considerable economic and cultural activity where important fairs and markets are held. Capital of Urgell. The most noteworthy mansion, the 13th C. palace of the Marquises of La Floresta, has a Romanesque façade very similar to that of the Lleida city hall or Paeria. Inside is a beautiful monumental cross (*Creu del Pati*, c. 1430), attributed to the sculptor Pere Joan, a replica of which stands in the Plaça Major. Also of interest is the 14th C. *church of Sant Antoni*, which once belonged to the Hospital. The sculp-



Santa Coloma de Queralt: Santa Maria de Bell-lloc, tomb



Tàrraga

tures on the façade come from the former parish church.

Torrebeßes. Small agricultural village. The area known as La Vileta contains interesting historic buildings: large *castle-palace* with Gothic features, built at various periods, and *mansions* with Renaissance and Gothic elements. In the Romanesque parish church is a 14th C. stone *altarpiece* by the School of Lleida dedicated to Saint John the Baptist.

Tremp. Capital of Pallars Jussà, in the centre of the wide Tremp valley through which the Noguera Pallaresa flows. Already an important town in medieval times. In the days of Peter III the Ceremonious, it was enclosed in walls. Some of the towers have survived such as the *tower of La Sagristia* next to the *collegiate church of Santa Maria*. Though still Gothic in style the church was built in the 17th C. and is the shrine of a magnificent large late Gothic statue of the Virgin

(15th C.) with rich gilt and polychrome ornamentation (*Mare de Déu de Valldeflors*).

Vallbona de les Monges. Monastery of nuns set in attractive countryside in southern Urgell near Conca de Barberà. Along with Poblet and Santes Creus, it forms a trilogy of major Catalan Cistercian houses and, like the other two, enjoyed the protection of the House of Barcelona. Several interesting buildings. The 13th C. *church* is a faithful replica of Cistercian models. The ribbed vaulting and *great lantern* similar to that at Poblet were added at the beginning of the following century. The *cloister* reveals a succession of styles, from the galleries of semicircular Romanesque arches to the ogival windows decorated with tracery. The best preserved of the surrounding buildings is the *chapter house*. The museum contains several fine works of art, especially sculptures: a 14th C. Virgin (*Mare de Déu del Cor*) by Guillem Seguer, another



Vallbona de les Monges: vault

(*Mare de Déu del Claustre*), and a third (*Mare de Déu de la Misericòrdia*, 14th C.), attributed to Pere Joan. Also numerous tombs and sarcophagi, belonging to the House of Barcelona and other noble families, as well as tombstones of various abbesses.

Verdú. Agricultural village with an established tradition for pottery

(black clay pitchers). Formerly also well known for its livestock fairs. The *castle*, a large mansion with fortifications from various periods, belonged to the abbots of Poblet who were lords of the village and contains a beautiful Gothic room. The *parish church* reflects the transition from Romanesque to Gothic architecture and contains some fine Gothic sculptures. Interesting features of the façade are the doorway by the School of Lleida and the rose window. In the MEV are two altarpieces from Verdú, one an excellent work (143234) by Jaume Ferrer II.

walls, has been preserved. The *parish church*, built at different periods, has an interesting 14th C. Gothic doorway surmounted by sculptures depicting the Epiphany, as well as other Gothic features (chapels and the base of the bell tower). Inside is a polychrome sculpture of the Virgin (*Mare de Déu del Puig de Meià*) which came from the old castle.

Vinaixa. Agricultural town in Garrigues. *Parish church of Sant Joan Baptista* in late Romanesque style built by R. Piquer, a master builder from Balaguer, at a time (1302-18) when Gothic had become widespread throughout Catalonia. Single nave, semicircular apse and pointed barrel vault reinforced by transverse ribs. Fine doorway with molded archivolts, similar to that in the cloister in La Seu at Lleida. The church once contained important altarpieces painted by Ramon de Mur and Bernat Martorell (now in the Diocesan Museum of Tarragona and the MNAC). Fragments of several sculptures (1340) by Guillem Seguer are still in the church. Another beautiful Gothic building is the *Casa de Poblet* (so called because the town belonged to the monastery of Poblet). The quarries in the area provided the materials used to build parts of Poblet, including the Palau del Rei Martí.

Vielha. Capital of the Val d'Aran, a Pyrenean *comarca* occupying a valley which opens to the west towards the Atlantic and has a personality quite different from the rest of Catalonia. The language, Aranese, is a form of Gascon. The *parish church of Sant Miquèu* is in transition style with Gothic elements: beautiful doorway with pointed arches and sculptural decoration; bell tower (1510) with the pointed crown that is characteristic of most of the valley's churches; and, over the high altar, fine 15th C. *altarpiece of Sant Miquèu*, an anonymous work attributed to the 'Vielha Master' with links to Pere Garcia de Benavarri. The church also contains fine Romanesque works. In the Museu dera Val d'Aran are interesting Gothic exhibits such as the panels from the *Vilac altarpiece* by the Vielha Master. Near Vielha, in the borough of Vielha e Mijaran, is the interesting *parish church of Betren* which has a doorway with archivolts similar to that at Vielha (the theme of both is the Last Judgment).

Vilanova de Meià. Village in Noguera which was important in medieval times. The old quarter, with a Gothic gate from the old



Vallbona de les Monges: cloister and great lantern

From Girona To Empordà via the Fluvià Valley



Missal of Sant Cugat (1400)

The attractions of this quiet and pleasant route are many: the gently rolling countryside where the houses blend into the scenery; the rarity of greens, ranging from the lush, brilliant hues of the natural vegetation to the paler shades of the crops; and the ever-present yet distant backcloth of the Pyrenees.

Our first visit is to the Gothic features of the major monuments in Girona. Next we travel along the Ter valley to Sarrià before taking the pleasant road to Banyoles, the capital of Pla de l'Estany, which offers both a good selection of Gothic works of art and a nearby lake, the beauty of whose calm waters is admirably set off by the surrounding vegetation.

The winding road westwards to Mieres enters Garrotxa, running along the foot of the Finestres hills to the captivating medieval village of Santa Pau. Gothic art is not the only reason for choosing this route to Besalú via Santa Pau: it also takes us through Olot and the surrounding area, where the attractive scenery inspired a well-known school of landscape artists. The road down the Fluvià river to Besalú affords the opportunity to see one of the most spectacular bridges in Catalonia, as well as other works of Gothic art.

Not far away are the alabaster quarries at Beuda, which were worked from the 14th C. onwards and supplied the raw materials for many, great Gothic works. We continue across the pleasant Empordà plain to Figueres, the capital of Alt Empordà. The Gothic works here are few but of high quality and Figueres has other attractions such as a dynamic cultural life, an interesting Museu Comarcal, and the surrealist Dalí Theatre and Museum which draw large numbers of visitors.

Within a radius of 5 km north east of Figueres are two very interesting spots. The first is Vilabertran, which has several remarkable buildings and

a famous silver cross. Further on, across the Muga, in the medieval village of Peralada, is the Gothic church of the Convent del Carme as well as a magnificent and richly furnished castle which has recently been converted into a luxurious casino.

A short drive through flat arable land takes us to Castelló d'Empúries. In the Middle Ages, Castelló was the seat of a powerful and often warlike earldom, and this accounts for its many fine historic monuments, including several in Gothic style. Our route continues southwards, starting the Empordà Marshes Natural Park with its rich wild life. Beyond Sant Pere Pescador and Viladomat, we reach Sant Martí d'Empúries, a quiet village with a Gothic church and various other Gothic buildings. Not far off, on the gently curving shore of the sunny gulf of Roses are some important Greek and Roman excavations.

Still further south, the castle of Bellcaire d'Empordà, rises impressively in the centre of the village. In the town of Torroella de Montgrí, our next stop, there are some remarkable Gothic buildings, while on the outskirts the crenellated ruins of the castle stand on the summit of the bare, grey mountain of Montgrí.

Pals, south of Torroella, has a well preserved medieval quarter. After admiring the various monuments, one should leave the upper end of the walled precinct to enjoy the near-idyllic view from the esplanade of El Pedró over Baix Empordà, the coastline and the Medes islands.

At the entrance to La Bisbal d'Empordà (the one time residence of the bishops of Girona, 4 km from Pals along the main road via Torrent) is a right turn to nearby Vulpellac, where another remarkable castle is situated. Further along the same road we come to Canapost and then to Peratallada, where there are more outstanding medieval monuments with fine Gothic features. Peratallada also has an established reputation for good food.

Returning to Canapost, we turn north to visit the remarkable medieval quarter of Ullastret. From the interesting, well-maintained Iberian excavations nearby there is a pleasant view over the old lake. Beyond Ultramort we come to the village of Verges, partly encircled by walls with picturesque towers. In Holy Week an ancient and intriguing procession, including a *Dansa de la Mort* ('dance of death'), takes place in the streets.

From Verges, heading towards Girona, we can visit Púbol castle, near Rupià, made famous by Dalí and Gala to round off our Gothic tour through Girona.



Peralada: cloister of the convent of El Carme

Main historic buildings

Banyoles. Town set amid beautiful scenery near the large lake to which it gives its name. Tourist resort and nautical sports centre. The Benedictine monastery of Sant Esteve, around which the town grew up, preserves part of the old Gothic buildings. Of special note is an altarpiece (1437-39) dedicated to the Virgin (*Mare de Déu de l'Escala*), one of the finest Catalan works in international Gothic style, painted by Joan Antígó (the 'Banyoles Master'). It formerly contained the splendid casket of Sant Martí which was badly damaged in the theft of silver saint statues in 1980. Other Gothic buildings of interest are the church of Santa Maria dels Turers and the *Pia Almoina* which now houses the Museu Arqueològic Comarcal. The former, built between 1269 and 1333, originally had a single nave with a polygonal chevet though side aisles were added later. The later has a fine 14th C. cloister.

Bellcaire d'Empordà. Small town in Empordà where the Counts of Empúries resided from the end of the 13th C. to 1322. Castle palace built by Ponç V (c. 1300) on a square ground plan with towers at the corners and the chapel jutting out, which is extremely simple. On the edge of the town is the original Romanesque parish church of Sant Joan, a very interesting building.

Besalú. Village which was the centre of an independent earldom in the high Middle Ages (912th C.) and has preserved many fine historic buildings, most of them Romanesque. The Gothic bridge over the Fluvià, built in the 14th C. on top of an earlier structure, is one of the foremost Catalan medieval bridges. Some of the eight arches have been restored and it is reinforced by solid defensive structures. The only church with Gothic elements is *Sant Vicenç* but there are several 13-14th C. mansions. Part of the Jewish synagogue and baths (*mikvé*) have also survived.

La Bisbal d'Empordà. Pottery manufacturing capital of Baix Empordà with a busy market. The name recalls the links with the Bishops ('bisbes') of Girona who governed it. They resided in the castle palace which has some Romanesque and some Gothic features (notably 14th C. buildings such as the keep). The outside was



Besalú



Girona: altarpiece and canopy of the Cathedral

remodelled in the 16th C. A gate from the walls built between 1280 and 1302 also stands. Some of the *mansions* in the old quarter have Gothic style windows and other features and there is a Gothic bridge (*Pont Vell*) over the Daró river which was renovated in 1606.

Castelló d'Empúries. Town close to the central part of the gulf of Roses coastline, lying amid marshland at the mouths of the Muga and Fluvià rivers. Capital of the earldom of Empúries from the 11th to the 14th C. and important trading centre. The magnificent *basilica of Santa Maria* (known as the 'Cathedral of Empordà') was built as part of the counts' unsuccessful attempt to establish a bishopric here. Though work started in the early 14th C. (the high altar was consecrated in 1316), at the beginning of the 15th C. the façade was still not finished. Noteworthy features include: the sculptures on the doorway and the tympanum (the Epiphany and the Apostles), attributed to Pere de

Sant Joan; the cylindrical pillars along the nave (unusual in Catalan Gothic architecture), and the beautiful but unfinished alabaster high altar (1485) by Vicenç Borràs. The church possessed other works of art, including those in the small adjoining museum and the magnificent mid-15th C. *altarpiece of Sant Miquel* by the so-called 'Castelló d'Empúries Master' (MAG). One of the chapels contains the 14th C. tombs of the Counts of Empúries. Beside the church are the remains of a large openair trade exchange. Other Gothic buildings and features in the town include the old *Llotja de Mar* ('maritime trade exchange', now the town hall), the *Casa Gran*, and the seven-arched bridge (*Pont Vell*) over the Muga built in the 14th C. and renovated in the 15th C.

Figueres. Modern capital of Empordà, active economic and cultural centre which was a hotbed of republican and federalist ideas in the 19th C. The layout and buildings are basically 19th and 20th C. The *parish*

church of Sant Pere, the only noteworthy Gothic building, has a single nave and chapels between the buttresses. Building started in 1378 at the instigation of Peter III the Ceremonious. The sanctuary and bell tower are neo-Gothic additions. Figueres is also the home of the famous Museu-Teatre Dalí, Museu del Joguet and Museu de l'Empordà.

Girona. Important city which was once the centre of one of the great medieval Catalan earldoms and of a powerful diocese. Its long history has left a rich heritage and the old city is a veritable museum of medieval architecture. The present *Cathedral*, which replaced the earlier Romanesque building, was begun around 1312. Though the original plans provided for three aisles, only one was built (the widest Gothic nave in Europe, 22,9 m), a clear illustration of the preference of Catalan Gothic architects for large, unified spaces (the technical difficulties of building it gave rise to meetings of architects



Girona: single nave of the Cathedral

from all over Catalonia in 1386 and 1416). Inside are several interesting works such as the 14th C. silver and enamel *altarpiece* and *baldachin* over the high altar on which Pere Bernès worked, the finest creation of medieval Catalan silversmiths; several noteworthy *tombs* of bishops (eg. Bernat de Pau) and counts of Barcelona (Ramon Berenguer II and Ermessenda, made by Guillem Morell in 1385); lovely *stained glass* windows; tombs in the Romanesque cloister where there is also a late 13th C. group of sculptures (*Mare de Déu de Bell Ull*) by Master Bartomeu. The cloister, the magnificent bell tower and various other features are Romanesque, while the main façade is Baroque. There is an important museum (Tresor de la Catedral).

Leaving the Cathedral by the *Porta dels Apòstols*, we come to the large *Bishop's Palace*—now the Museu d'Art de Girona—part of which is Gothic (throne room) and part Renaissance. Further on, alongside the La Pera stairs, is the *Casa de la Pabordia*. Near the big staircase on the Plaça de la Catedral is a large 15th C. mansion, the *Pia Almoïna*, which housed a medieval charitable institution. The Call or Jewish quarter, the home till the Jews were expelled in 1492 of one of the largest and most active communities in Catalonia, was situated on the Carrer de la Força which opens onto the same square. It seems that the synagogue was located in the present Centre Bonastruc Ça Porta.

Beyond the *Sobreportes gate* on the other side of the Cathedral is the handsome *church of Sant Feliu*, a former monastery of canons and collegiate church, built in several stages. The fine apse and characteristic truncated bell tower (crowned in the 16th C.) are Gothic, as is the vaulting inside, though the ground plan is Romanesque. Inside is a superb reclining *figure of Christ* (1350) by Master Aloi and the Gothic *tomb of Sant Narcís* which was made at the beginning of the 14th C. just after the famous miracle of the flies during the French invasion. Among the many interesting items inside the church is a collection of early Christian sarcophagi (3-4th C.) embedded in the chancel.

Near the city walls, south of the Cathedral, is the remarkable *Convent of Sant Domènec*. The Gothic church, consecrated in 1339, has a single nave and a Gothic cloister with columns and capitals made by sculptors from Girona from special nummulitic stone whose use subsequently spread throughout Catalonia. The convent and the neighbouring Àligues building are now part of the Universitat de Girona. The *walls* which protected the city during the historic sieges it suffered contain medieval features, especially in the upper part. Peter III the Ceremonious had them reinforced in 1362 and the work was not completed till the end of the century, when the *Cornèlia tower* was built. The *Gironella tower* dates from 1412.



Girona: street in the Jewish quarter



Girona: said statue of Sant Carlemany. MCGG



Girona: Pia Almoïna



Vilabertran: silver cross



Figueres: church of Sant Pere



Santa Pau: Firal dels Bous



Castle of Torroella de Montgrí



Peratallada



Pals

The *Carrer dels Ciutadans*, which was the most elegant of the main streets in medieval Girona, was lined by large mansions, the most remarkable of which are the *Fontana d'Or* (built on Romanesque foundations and well restored) and the much altered *Casa de la Ciutat* ("town hall") on the *Plaça del Vi* with its medievaltype archways. Other mansions restored or built in Renaissance or Baroque times still reveal late Gothic features and by walking through Old Girona one discovers many spots with a medieval atmosphere.

Pals. Village in attractive scenery near the mouth of the Ter between the ranges of Montgrí and Begur. The well preserved old quarter has a distinctly medieval air. It is encircled by remarkable *walls* and the most noteworthy features are the tower of the old castle (*Torre de les Hores*), the *church* (mostly 15th C. despite its simplicity), and a number of mansions and characteristically medieval spots.

Peralada. Village with a rich heritage derived from its long history. It contains places and buildings of considerable beauty, including the *Plaça Major*, where it is believed that the great chronicler Ramon Muntaner was born in 1265. The *castle* was much altered in the 16th C. when it was converted into a private residence. However, some medieval features were preserved (the 13-14th C. bases of the *towers* and the *walls* on the northern side). It was enlarged at the end of the 19th C. and given a totally French appearance and now houses a casino. Of great interest is the *Convent of El Carme*, built from 1347 onwards to replace the original building outside the walls. The church corresponds to a design which Catalan Gothic architecture developed with originality: a single nave, polygonal chevet and wooden roof resting on diaphragm arches. The cloister is from the same period. The Convent houses a museum which possesses important collections of glass, ceramics and paintings, as well as items of Gothic sculpture. A splendid *silver cross* is preserved in the parish church.

Peratallada. Village containing one of the most important and noble-looking groups of medieval monuments in Empordà, once the property of the Cruïlles family. Most of the foremost buildings date from the 12-14th C. The church, outside the walls, is Romanesque. The *castle* has 12-13th C. elements while

parts of the adjoining castle, such as the large windows in the *façade*, are more markedly Gothic in style. There are a number of interesting *mansions* and the three *walled enclosures* which formerly protected the village are in a good state of conservation.

Púbol. Small Baix Empordà village in the borough of La Pera, near La Bisbal. Magnificent Gothic-Renaissance palace, which the painter Salvador Dalí converted and decorated according to his own extravagant style and gave as a gift to his wife Gala (who was buried in the crypt in 1982). Open to the public since 1996 under the name of the *Gala-Dalí Castle*, this is, along with Cadaqués and Figueres, a key point on the Dalí Route. The chapel was formerly adorned by an important altarpiece by the painter Bernat Martorell, now in the Museu d'Art de Girona.

Sant Martí d'Empúries. Small village with a medieval appearance located on a rocky headland that was once an island to the north of L'Escala. Further south lie the famous Greek and Roman ruins of Empúries. Capital of the earldom of Empúries in the high Middle Ages (9-11th C.) until replaced by Castelló d'Empúries, it remained a fortress and was sacked and destroyed in various wars, notably in 1468. A large part of the old *walls* and the *castle* have been preserved, as has a fine *church* (150738) in full Gothic style.

Santa Pau. Village in the volcanic region of Olot, in an area of great geological interest and natural beauty (Jordà beech wood). The buildings in the *Vila Vella* ('old town') evoke medieval times, especially the pretty square with archways, known as the *Firal dels Bous*. The main building is the 13-14th C.

castle, now much altered. The *church* was built between 1427 and 1430.

Torroella de Montgrí. Close to the Empordà coast at the foot of the Montgrí mountains. One of the most important towns in the area in the Middle Ages, it has preserved several historic buildings. The handsome Gothic *parish church*, was built during the first decades of the 14th C., though the vaults were not finished till around 1600. It has a single nave and chapels between the buttresses. Beside it is the former much restored royal palace, known as *El Mirador*, with a Gothic gallery. There are also remains of the *walls* and old mansions with Gothic and Renaissance features. Towering above the town, on top of the Muntanya de Santa Caterina, is *Montgrí castle*, an imposing but unfinished fortress with solid, regularly shaped outside walls. James II

had it built in 1294 in a show of force against the rebellious Count of Empúries, but it was abandoned not long after.

Ullastret. Village which has conserved all the charm of the Middle Ages. It is also famous for the nearby Iberian settlement of Ullastret, one of the most interesting Iberian archaeological sites in Catalonia, which has been well excavated and has a small museum. A large part of the village *walls* have been preserved along with 13-14th C. defensive structures designed to protect the castle, of which nothing remains. Some of the houses which clustered around its base still have fine Gothic and Renaissance windows. The 14th C. Gothic *trade exchange*, where fairs and markets were held, is also of special interest.

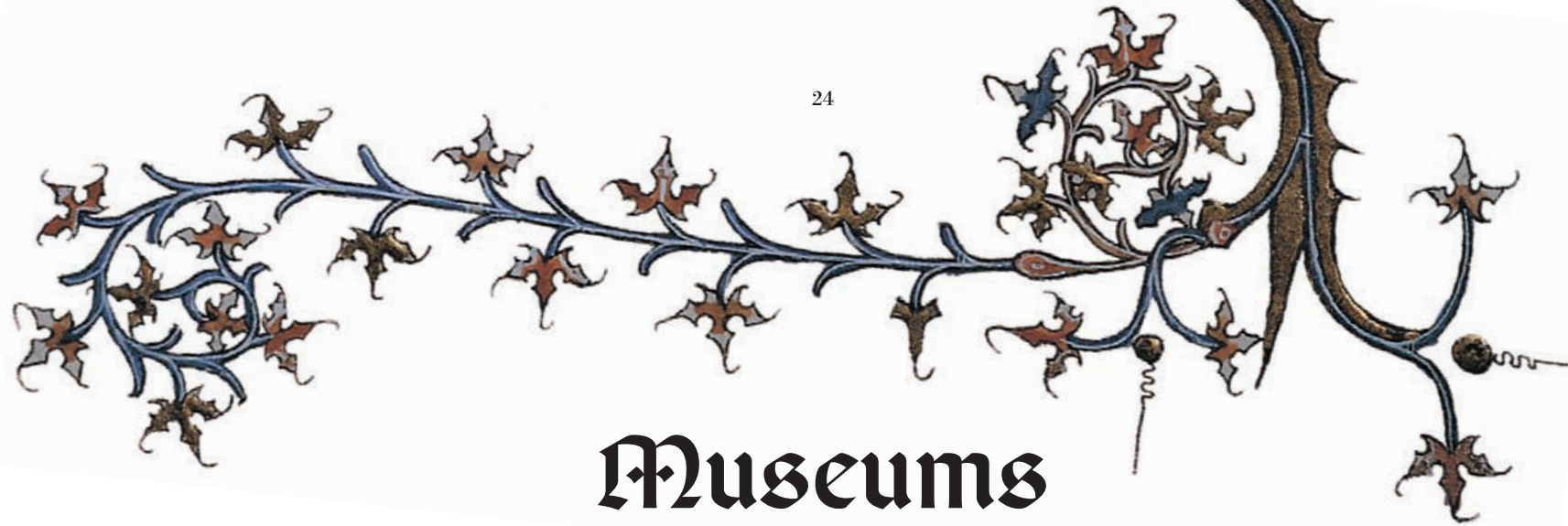
Verges. Village in Empordà where a famous Dance of Death has been performed from time immemorial during the Holy Week procession. Large parts of the medieval *walls*, towers and other reinforcements have been preserved.

Vilabertran. Former Augustinian monastery of canons of Santa Maria de Vilabertran, comprising various historic buildings, most of them Romanesque. The wedding of James II and Blanche of Anjou was held here in 1295. Among the guests were Charles II of Naples, the father of the bride, and his children (who included the future Saint Louis of Toulouse) as well as many other personalities. The chronicler Muntaner relates that "the jewels were great which they gave to each other" and it is probable that the exceptional *silver cross*—one of the best preserved in Catalonia—now in one of the chapels in the church, is related to this exchange of gifts. The unfinished *doorway* is Gothic, as is the *funeral chapel* of the Viscounts of Rocabertí. The magnificent *abbot's palace* and the *fortifications* were built by abbot Girgós (1410-31).

Vulpellac. Interesting small town on the Empordà plain near La Bisbal. The most remarkable building is the mostly 14th C. *castle* which was converted into a palace in the 16th C. Inside is a large room with a ceiling resting on diaphragm arches (it once had fine coffering) while outside there are mullioned windows. Next to the palace is the *parish church*, built during 16th C. renovation work, with late Gothic and Renaissance features.



Castelló d'Empúries: basilica of Santa Maria



Museums



Wall painting of the Pia Almoïna. MLDC

Barcelona

Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC). Palau Nacional de Montjuïc. Representative collection of Catalan Gothic paintings as well as fine examples from elsewhere in Spain. The most outstanding paintings in linear Gothic style include those from Barcelona depicting the conquest of Majorca and those by the Soriquerola master. Significant paintings from the period of Italian influence are by the master from Baltimore and members of the Serra family (altarpieces of Sixena, Gualter and Tortosa). The selection of international Gothic paintings begins with Lluís Borrassà (altarpiece of Santes Creus), continues with Joan Mates (Sant Sebastià), Bernat Martorell (altarpiece of Sant Vicenç), Jaume Ferrer II and others, and culminates with a good selection of works by Jaume Huguet (Sant Jordi, altarpieces of Vallmoll, Sarrià, Sant Agustí and Revenedors). There are also works by Lluís Dalmau (altarpiece of Consellers), Bartolomé Bermejo, the master from La Seu d'Urgell and others. Of particular interest in the collection of sculptures are: Sant Esteve from Tredòs, altarpiece of Gerb, Mare de Déu of Sallent de Sanauja, a magnificent 15th C. bust of a woman, and Sant Antoni de la Figuera (attributed to J. Cascalls).

Vic

Museu Episcopal (MEV). The most representative exhibits in the Gothic sculpture section are the altarpiece of Sant Joan de les Abadesses by Bernat Saulet (1341) and Mare de Déu dels Boixadors (14th C.). The collections of paintings contain works by the great Catalan Gothic masters: Arnau and Ferrer Bassa (altarpiece of Sant Bernat), Pere Serra, the Rubió master, Lluís Borrassà (altarpiece of Santa Clara), Ramon de Mur (altarpiece of Guimerà), Jaume Cabrera (Virgin with angel musicians), Bernat Martorell (altarpiece of Santa Eulàlia i Sant Joan), Jaume Ferrer II (altarpiece of Verdú), Jaume Huguet (small altarpiece of the Epiphany) and many others. The decorative arts section is also well worth visiting.



Ramon de Mur: altarpiece of Guimerà. MEV

Girona

Museu d'Art (MAG). Well fitted out, in the Palau Episcopal. Noteworthy exhibits include: Calvary by master Bartomeu (13th C.); *Martyr of Poblet*, with beautiful miniatures; the 14th C. tomb of Jofre Gilabert de Cruïlles; the extremely rare 14th C. glass maker's table, and major works by Bernat Martorell (altarpiece of Púbol, with the drawings he made on the reverse side) and Lluís Borrassà (altarpiece of Cruïlles), as well as the altarpieces of Castelló d'Empúries and Canapost.

Tresor de la Catedral (TCG). Contains a magnificent selection of works including the Bishop's Chair, by master Aloi (1355), the said statue of Sant Carlemany (attributed to Jaume Cascalls), 15th C. figures from the tomb of Bernat de Pau, enamel cross by the silversmith Pere Bernés, embroideries, and paintings by Ramon Solà.



Bernat Martorell: altarpiece of Púbol. MAG



Lluís Borrassà: altarpiece of Cruïlles. MAG



Jaume Ferrer I: Last Supper. MDCS

Solsona

Museu Diocesà i Comarcal (MDCS). In the Palau Episcopal. The Gothic art section includes among the most significant exhibits the murals from Cardona, Lluís Borrassà's Crucifixion, panels by Pere Vall, the important Last Supper by Jaume Ferrer I, and the tomb of Hug de Copons. Also fine works in iron and other metals.

Lleida

Museu de Lleida Diocesà i Comarcal (MLDC). The most outstanding Gothic pieces here include the Lleida School altarpieces, such as those from Castelló de Farfanya and Corbins, the paintings from the refectory at the Seu Vella and the Albatàrec altarpiece and other works by Jaume Ferrer I.



Lluís Dalmau: altarpiece of Consellers. MNAC

Other museums

In Barcelona other important works of Gothic art, especially sculptures, are in the *Museu Marès* near the Palau Reial Major, while the important collection belonging to the *Museu de Ceràmica* is at the Palau de Pedralbes. The *Museu Diocesà de Barcelona* is housed in the Pia Almoïna building near the Cath-

edral. At the *Museu Diocesà de Tarragona* a significant part of the large collection is on show. The *Museu Diocesà d'Urgell* contains, among other works, the fine altarpiece of Abella de la Conca, while in the two museums at *Martorell* there are important collections of ceramics, including some good medieval works.



Jaume Huguet: triptych of Sant Jordi (detail). MNAC