

# Discovering Romanesque art in Catalonia



Hand of God, Sant Climent de Taüll (1123). MNAC



Apostles antependium (from the Urgell diocese). MNAC

## Romanesque art, Catalonia's most characteristic style

Catalonia is and always has been receptive to the various art styles that have succeeded one another in Europe. Two were perhaps more thoroughly assimilated than others: Romanesque art, which emerged while Catalonia's historical personality was taking shape, and Modernisme (Art Nouveau style) born in the heyday of the *Renaixença* when Catalonia was recovering the sense of her own identity.

The birth and expansion of Romanesque art took place at a time when the sovereignty of the Counts of Barcelona had been recognized by the other Catalan counts. The unification of the country coincided with two other important events. One was the *de facto* severing of feudal ties with the French kings who had succeeded the last Carolingians. The other was the expedition to Córdoba (1010) whereby the threat of an invasion was finally averted and the small realms of Muslim kingdoms, into which the caliphate had been split up, came under the protection of the Catalan counts (1031). It was an age of prosperity and euphoria: the great noble families were strengthening their position, the hierarchy of feudal society was being set up, gold coins were beginning to circulate and the population was growing fast.

All these events occurred in Old Catalonia, which lay to the north of the traditional route to Aragon through the Anoia, Segarra and Urgell "comarques" (natural regions). The frontier was slowly pushed further back until by 1148-49 the Christian conquest of New Catalonia was complete. The very gradual nature of the conquest explains why Romanesque buildings are very abundant in the Pyrenean mountains and foothills, more widely scattered in the central lowlands, and few and far between in southern Catalonia.

Catalonia has some 1,900 Romanesque churches, about 200 castles and fortified houses with Romanesque features, a few partially renovated manor houses and city mansions, some unusual buildings like the Jewish *mikwás*, as well as bridges, mills and other buildings which bring the total to well over 2,000.

To this architectural heritage must be added the mural paintings and illuminated manuscripts, sculptures, altar decorations, and other objects which have been preserved either in churches or in the big museums.

Not everything that has come down to us from the Romanesque period is of equal value and interest. Some of the small buildings are of importance primarily as tokens of a bygone age. It is a fact, nonetheless, that the Catalan Romanesque heritage as a whole ranks among the richest and most plentiful in Europe.



Taüll. Sant Climent

## Romanesque art, the first European art

Romanesque art was the first great style to be shared by the whole of western Europe. It appeared during the Middle Ages, at the end of the first millennium, as the Carolingian Empire was breaking up and the various European nationalities were taking shape. Propagated by conquests, religious orders and pilgrimages, it quickly swept from Dalmatia to the British Isles and from northern Germany to the border between Christendom and the Muslim-occupied part of the Iberian peninsula.

Romanesque art, though a blend of the building traditions of the Roman Empire and of experiments made during the Carolingian period and at the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire, was nonetheless an original and vigorous style that lasted until well into the 13th C. Its solid and sober lines characterize everything built at the time (churches and monasteries, castles, country houses and bridges) and it yielded magnificent results in the fields of painting, sculpture, gold and silverware, miniatures and furniture.

The "world of Romanesque art", moreover, was closely bound up with the first attempts at popular poetry, the birth of western philosophy and theology, speculative theory and legal studies, and the formation and consolidation of the romance languages, which were born of the breakdown of vulgar Latin.

The term Romanesque art was invented in 1818 by the French architect Adrien de Gerville, though no systematic research took place until the end of the 19th C. In Catalonia the first outline study of Catalan Romanesque art, which is still valid today, was conducted in 1909-1918 by a team headed by Josep Puig i Cadafalch.

## Evolution and main features

Following attempts throughout the 10th C. to build churches from stone, mortar and lime and to cover the main body of the building with vaulted roofs (*pre-Romanesque* style), teams of Lombard master builders spread rapidly throughout Europe. This brought about the appearance of the more ambitious but still severe and utilitarian buildings of *early Romanesque* art, with their massive masonry (needed to uphold the barrel vault), their semicircular apses and walls with arcatures and pilaster-strips (so-called Lombard bands), their aisles separated by pillars joined together by the characteristic semicircular arches that were also used for doorways and windows.

From the end of the 11th century, schools of stonemasons brought sculpture into buildings and cloisters (using motifs inspired by oriental fabrics, illuminated Bibles, bestiaries and scenes from everyday life) and at the same time architecture became more complex (*second Romanesque* art). Small country churches continued to be built with a single nave, eastward-facing apse, doorway on the south side and wall belfry, but religious buildings of monumental proportions also began to appear with three to five aisles, transepts, several apses, ambulatory, lantern and slender bell tower, archivolt around the doorway, tympanums and columns with lavishly decorated capitals.

Local schools of architecture sprang up, each with a well-defined style that was ornate or austere according to whether the influence of Cluny or Cîteaux was predominant. Other styles prefiguring early Gothic followed. The 13th C. saw a final revival of Catalan Romanesque art when decorations of Arab origin were introduced by the *School of Lleida*.

## The suggested routes

In view of the number of monuments and the size of this publication, we have been forced to make difficult choices. We suggest six main routes that will enable visitors to discover a small selection of samples of Catalan Romanesque art. These routes follow the main lines of communication leading from north to south. Alternative routes are proposed so that those with time and inclination may undertake side-trips, skip part of the main route, or combine one route with another.

Three of the routes begin at the French frontier with the Roussillon (a region that has historical links with Catalonia). From here visitors can also discover the rich Romanesque heritage of this region. Two other routes afford the opportunity to include the Romanesque art of Andorra, Gascony or the areas lying along the Aragonese border to the west that were also once linked to Catalonia. Route 3 through Penedès and New Catalonia is of interest in discovering the art styles of the Cistercian order and the Knights Templar and the area that came under the influence of the School of Lleida.

It is worth pointing out that only a few monuments have fixed visiting hours. Country churches are often closed for security reasons when no service is taking place and the key is kept at the town hall or some house in the village. Information on accommodation and restaurants, as well as help in making your journey more pleasant and satisfying, may be obtained from any Tourist Information Office.

It is our hope that these suggestions may be of assistance to you in discovering the great treasures of Catalan Romanesque art.

Hand of Goliath,  
Santa Maria de Taüll  
(1123). MNAC

## Route 1: From La Seu d'Urgell to La Tossa de Montbui via the Segre valley, the Segarra plateaus and Anoia

We take the N-145 from the frontier with Andorra down the Valira river valley and soon come to Sant Serni de Tavèrnoles, which stands on the opposite bank. Slightly further on is the ancient and dynamic capital of the comarca of Alt Urgell, La Seu d'Urgell, lying in the midst of a wide, green plain surrounded by mountains, where the Segre and Valira rivers meet. Besides visiting the cathedral of Santa Maria and the church of Sant Pere i Sant Miquel, with its magnificent museum, visitors should stroll beneath the archways of the Main Street (Carrer Major) or under the trees on the Promenade (Passeig) to savour the lively atmosphere that is somehow both rural and cosmopolitan.

Just as we leave La Seu by the Puigcerdà road, we come to a mountain track which leads up to Estamariu, with its church of Sant Vicenç currently being restored, and then go on to Bescaran, from where the solitary bell tower of the former church of Sant Martí can be seen on the opposite slope.

Returning to La Seu, we continue down the Segre valley along the C-14. We soon reach a turning to the right towards Castellbò, where the old collegiate church of Santa Maria stands. The gentle scenery, with bright, luxuriant greenery on the river banks, suddenly changes as the road enters the narrow gorge of Tresports. River and road wind painstakingly along between towering rock faces while down below one can still see the remains of the old mule track hewn out of the rocks and of the bridges that gave the gorge its name ("three bridges").

Beyond the ravine is Organyà, nestling at the foot of the Santa Fe hill. The church of Santa Maria is worth a visit and a small circular building contains a facsimile of the famous Organyà Sermons considered to be the most ancient document written in Catalan (late 12th C.). The original is kept in the Biblioteca de Catalunya. Further on, near the straight rows of houses on the hilltop at Coll de Nargó, we turn onto the spectacular mountain road to Tremp. We soon come to the church of Sant Climent (note the sloping base walls of the bell tower). Further on (km 26.4) a track leads down to the church of Sant Romà in the unusual and picturesque setting of Valldarques.

The C-14 continues down the Segre amid towering mountains and alongside the wide Oliana reservoir. As we emerge from a tunnel the church of Castell-llibre comes into view, perched on a rock. It can be reached by a mountain track that branches off the road to Peramola. On the opposite bank of the Segre, 3 km before the important town of Oliana, the ruined church of Oliana castle stands on rising ground.

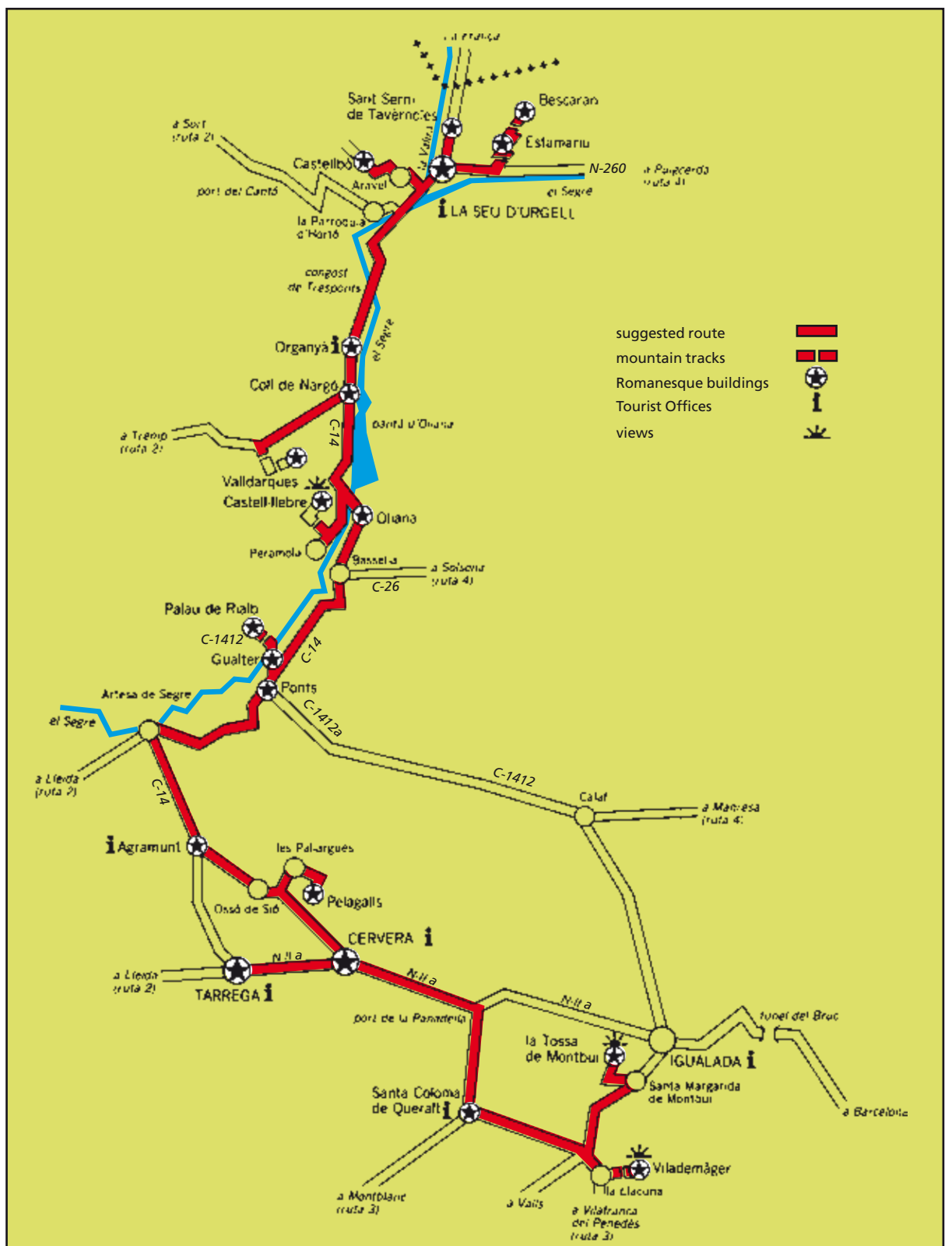
1 km before Ponts, the C-1412 to in Tremp turns off across the river towards the nearby monastery of Gualter and goes on towards La Serra de Rialb to reach Palau de Rialb, a fine example of Romanesque art situated in the borough of La Baronia de Rialb which possesses 24 tiny churches from the same period. On the outskirts of Ponts the restored church of Sant Pere stands on a hill in a clearly visible and easily accessible spot. Our route continues towards Artesa de Segre, where we take the C-14 across flat arable land to Agramunt.

In Agramunt one can admire the splendid Romanesque doorway of Santa Maria, and those with a sweet tooth can enjoy the famous "torrons" (nougat) and "xocolata a la pedra" (chocolate). After passing the handsome village cross at Ossó de Sió, we reach a side road to Les Pallargues which leads to the little church of Pelagalls. Beyond the great, fortified mansions of L'Aranyó and Montcortés, we come to Cervera, the capital of Segarra. Among the many points of interest are Sant Pere Gros, on the outskirts, the archpriest's church of Santa Maria, the Main Street (Carrer Major), the Town Hall (Casa de la Ciutat), the magnificent neoclassical building of the former University, the town walls and the museums of art and ethnology.

It is worth making a short detour to Tàrraga, the lively capital of the comarca of Urgell, which lies on the N-II towards Lleida. Among several historic buildings is the palace of Els Marquesos de la Floresta, an interesting example of Romanesque civil art.

We now follow the N-II towards Barcelona as far as the La Panadella pass, from whence a side road to the right brings us to Santa Coloma de Queralt. On the edge of this picturesque village of both historical and artistic interest stands the church of Santa Maria de Bell-lloc. Continuing along the road to Vilafranca del Penedès towards the south-east we climb through hilly country to La Llacuna where there is a handsome square with archways. From here a forest track leads to the castle and church of Vilademàger, perched on a long rock and commanding a good view.

Retracing our steps to the Miralles intersection, we proceed towards Igualada along the C-37 across a peaceful landscape of cornfields and thickets. Just before Santa Margarida de Montbui, an asphalted road goes up to La Tossa de Montbui. From here there is an excellent view over the busy town of Igualada, the capital of Anoia, and the surrounding countryside where the Romanesque church stands alongside the ruins of the old castle.



La Tossa de Montbui. Santa Maria



Sant Serni de Tavèrnoles



Cervera. Sant Pere Gros



Agramunt. Doorway, Santa Maria

## Main historic buildings

**Agramunt.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (11-13th C.): 3 aisles with 3 apses, very fine door, magnificent example of School of Lleida style with richly decorated archivolt (rows of saints and virgins), carved capitals and high relief on the lintel (Virgin, Annunciation and Epiphany), commissioned in 1283 by local weavers.

**Bescaran.** Isolated bell tower of the old parish church of *Sant Martí*: (11-12th C.), handsome 6-storey bell tower with Lombard decoration and two light windows. (Borough: Les Valls de la Valira.)

**Castellbò.** Former collegiate church of *Santa Maria* (13th C.): Romanesque-Gothic transition style, door with pointed arch and archivolt, plain leaves on the capitals and Romanesque ironwork. (Borough: Montferrer i Castellbò.)

**Castell-llibre.** Former parish church, now shrine, of *La Mare de Déu*: nave and apse, fine 2-storey bell tower with two light windows. Remains of the old castle. (Borough: Peramola.)

**Cervera.** Interesting 11th C. church of *Sant Pere Gros* on the outskirts, an unusual circular building with a dome and small external apse, once a Benedictine priory. In the town, arch-priest's church of *Santa Maria*, Gothic but with earlier features including the south door of the ancient church of *Sant Martí* (tympantum showing the saint giving part of his cape to a poor man).

**Coll de Nargó.** Former parish church of *Sant Climent de Nargó* (11th C.), with nave and apse from the Lombard period, adjacent to an exceptionally fine pre-Romanesque bell tower with sloping walls at the base and windows with horseshoe arches (the top storey is later). Within the municipal boundaries, church of *Sant Romà de Valldarques* (12th C.), nave and apse, fine bell tower with Lombard decoration and round windows.

**Estamariu.** Former parish church of *Sant Vicenç* (11th C.): currently being restored. Two of the 3 aisles and the central apse with Lombard decoration still stand.

**Gualter.** Former Benedictine monastery of *Santa Maria* (12-13th C.). Of the 3-aisle church (blown up in 1939 at end of the Civil War) only reinforced ruins remain: part of the walls, part of the cloister and one apse. (Borough: La Baronia de Rialb.)

**Oliana.** Chapel of *Sant Andreu*, originally belonging to *Oliana castle*, subsequently parish church (11th C., en-



La Seu d'Urgell. Cathedral



Beatus of La Seu d'Urgell (MDU)

larged 12th C.): nave and apse with characteristic Lombard features.

**Organyà.** Former priory and collegiate church of *Santa Maria* (12th C.), modified: 3 aisles, square bell tower, remarkable door with archivolt and decorated with balls.

**Palau de Rialb.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (11-12th C.): 3 aisles, apse with characteristic Lombard decoration. (Borough: La Baronia de Rialb.)

**Pelagalls.** Parish church of *Sant Esteve* (consecrated 1180, modified): nave, remarkable door, recently restored, with archivolt and decorated capitals (plant and animal motifs) and earlier tympantum with Christ in Majesty and two angels. (Borough: Els Plans de Sió.)

**Ponts.** Handsome church of the former Augustinian canonry of *Sant Pere* (12th C.): nave with 3 cross-shaped apses decorated on the outside in Lombard style, octagonal lantern. Recently restored.

**Sant Serni de Tavèrnoles.** Former Benedictine abbey, subsequently Anserall parish church (church consecrated 1040). The three aisles are gone but the following have survived: large chevet (largely restored in 1971-1974) with main apse divided into 3 small apses (the middle one is tre-

foil plan inside), transept with an apse at either end. Antependium at the MNAC and some capitals in the USA. (Borough: Les Valls de la Valira.)

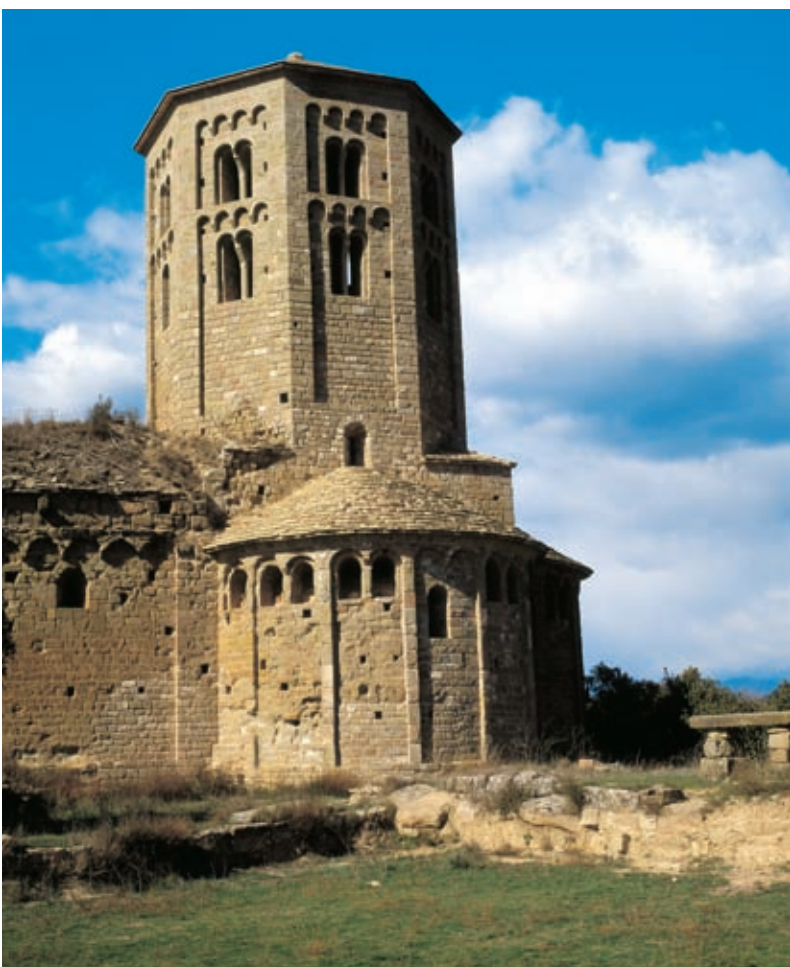
**Santa Coloma de Queralt.** Church of former Mercedarian convent of *Santa Maria de Bell-lloc* (13th C.) outside the town: Romanesque Gothic transition style, fine doorway by the School of Lleida with archivolt, columns and decorated capitals, tympantum with Marian scenes. Important Gothic tomb inside.

**La Seu d'Urgell.** City that grew up around the medieval diocese of Urgell. In the heart of the old quarter, magnificent cathedral of *Santa Maria* (12th C.), which replaced two earlier cathedrals and constitutes the most outstanding example of Italian-style Romanesque architecture in Catalonia (the master builder in 1175, Ramon Llombard, was of Italian origin): basilican plan with 3 aisles, very long transept with 5 apses (4 interior apses, the middle one outward with an elegant upper gallery); 3 doors on the west side, one each (13th C. and more ornate) on the north and south sides; 2 octagonal towers flanking the façade which is adorned with arcatures and bands of Lombard decoration and two lions over the main door. A pair of unfinished towers at either end of the transept; decorated windows, rose window, graceful square bell tower above the façade, cloister, well restored, with a Romanesque gallery on three sides and capitals showing influence of Rousillon sculptors; 13th C. polychrome wooden statue of the Virgin (*Mare de Déu d'Andorra*). Restored, in 1918, by Puig i Cadafalch and again in 1955-74. Backing onto the cloister, church of *Sant Pere i Sant Miquel* (11th C.), part of the buildings put up by Saint Ermengol in 1035: nave, transept and three apses with Lombard decoration. Important Diocesan museum in the annex, recently enlarged.

**Tàrraga.** Façade of the 13th C. *Palace of Els Marquesos de la Floresta*, fine example of Romanesque civil architecture in the style of the Paeria in Lleida.

**La Tossa de Montbui.** Interesting early medieval church of *Santa Maria*, built as a parish church alongside *Montbui Castle* (10th C.). Part of it still stands: 3 pre-Romanesque aisles (10th C.) with 6 bays of low cylindrical pillars, plain capitals and horseshoe arches holding up the barrel vault. 11th C. chancel and 3 Romanesque apses with characteristic Lombard features added by Bishop Oliba. Recently restored. (Borough: Santa Margarida de Montbui.)

**Vilademàger.** Former parish church of *Sant Pere de Màger* or *de Vilademàger*. In the precinct of the castle (12th C.). Raised nave, fine doorway with double archivolt. (Borough: La Llacuna.)



Ponts. Sant Pere



Coll de Nargó. Sant Climent



Hand of the Virgin, antependium,  
Avia (Berguedà, circa 1200).  
MNAC

## Route 2:

# From the Val d'Aran to Lleida via Pallars and Ribagorça

No visitor should miss the key Romanesque monuments of the Val d'Aran. On the way from the shrine of Cap d'Aran in Tredòs at the foot of the Pla de Beret and La Bonaigua, one can stop at the parish church of Salardú and the nearby hamlet of Unha, which overlooks the green valley as far as the distant glaciers of Mount Aneto. Proceeding down the Garonne, we come to Santa Maria d'Arties rising against the spectacular background of the Montardo d'Aran. Further on lies Escunhau, with its unusual doorway, the church of Vielha, which contains remarkable works of art and, still further downstream, the church of Bossòst, close to the French border.

One of the proposed routes leaves the Val d'Aran via the Vielha tunnel and follows the course of the Noguera Ribagorçana through Upper Ribagorça. Just before El Pont de Suert — an important town with an interesting modern church — is a road to the left which runs for 25 km or so through the Vall de Boí. In this valley, close to the National Park of Aigüestortes and lake Sant Maurici, are possibly the most important set of Pyrenean Romanesque buildings in the whole of Catalonia, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (2000): the churches of Còll, Barruera, Durro, Boí, Erill la Vall, Cardet and the two churches at Taüll, with their slender bell towers and their graceful architecture, all blending harmoniously into the magnificent high mountain scenery.

At El Pont de Suert we leave the N-230 and the river Ribagorçana to follow the N-260 towards La Pobla de Segur via the Perves pass. The road, with its constant bends, becomes difficult and even slightly hazardous as it winds amid wild scenery and plunging ravines, along ridges with panoramic views and through quaint villages. At Senterada, just before La Pobla de Segur, one can turn left into the beautiful valley of Vall Fosca, where the gentle, lush green of the river banks is a welcome relief from the rough mountain slopes. Here we visit the headwaters of the Flamicell, the lakes of Estany Gento, and the little churches of Cabdella, Espui and Sant Martí de la Torre.

The other possible route from Aran to La Pobla de Segur is the C-28, which goes over the Bonaigua pass (only open between April/May and October/November on account of snow). The road winds down in a spectacular series of bends to Esterrí d'Àneu in a part of the Noguera Pallaresa valley known as the Vall d'Àneu. From here we take a short road up the river to two outstanding buildings: Sant Joan d'Isil, standing right on the river bank and, slightly farther north, the parish church of Sant Llisser in the little village of Alòs d'Isil. From Esterrí, following the Escalarre road and doing a slight detour, we come to the shrine of Santa Maria d'Àneu before returning to the Noguera Pallaresa and the C-13. Then, beyond the La Torrassa or La Guingueta reservoir, we reach the monastery of Sant Pere del Burgal, an interesting building which can be reached across a small bridge.

From Llavorsí it is worthwhile visiting two neighbouring valleys. One, the Vall Ferrera, is rich in iron outcrops and numerous Romanesque and pre-Romanesque buildings are scattered throughout the borough of Alins, which stretches as far as Catalonia's highest peak, the Pica d'Estats. In the neighbouring Vall de Cardós, the majestic bell tower of Ribera de Cardós rises above greener and more open countryside which culminates amid mountain peaks and lakes in the silver birch clad Plans de Boavi.

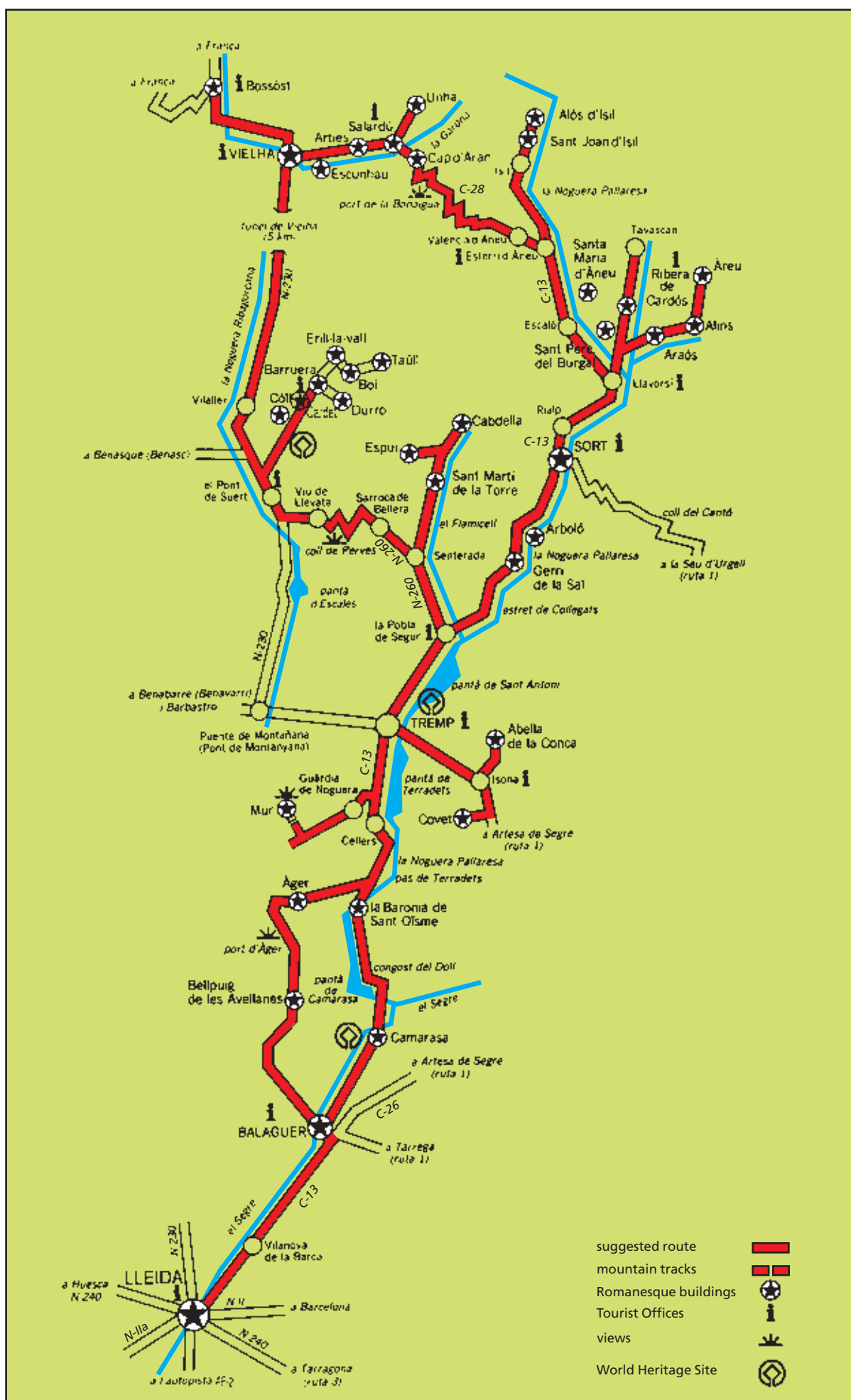
Returning to the Noguera Pallaresa, we travel downstream, through Sort, the tourist centre and capital of Pallars Sobirà, until we find ourselves below the shrine of Arboló, made from reddish stone and perched above the left bank of the river. A little further on, opposite the picturesque town of Gerri de la Sal, whose old salt works can still be seen, is the splendid building that once housed the monastery of Santa Maria. We travel on through the impressively rugged Collegats gorge, between vertical limestone walls past the attractive L'Argenteria rock, till we reach La Pobla de Segur, where we join the other route from Aran through Alta Ribagorça.

The high mountains are now far behind and before us is the vast sun-drenched Conca de Tremp valley. The Noguera Pallaresa runs into the Sant Antoni, or Talam reservoir. From Tremp, the capital of Pallars Jussà, we take the C-1412 to Ponts via Isona to visit the interesting churches of Abella de la Conca, nestling beneath a great rock, and Covet, with its very handsome doorway. South of Tremp the road runs alongside the Terradets reservoir. At the head of the lake, we can take an asphalted road through Guàrdia de Noguera to the castle and collegiate church of Mur.

Beyond the long and spectacular ravine carved out by the river through the Montsec range, the Pas de Terradets, we enter the Vall d'Àger. Almost immediately we come upon the church and castle of La Baronia de Sant Oisme, standing in a beautiful setting and reflected in the waters of the Camarasa reservoir. Here, one can go back up the C-12 doing a short detour and crossing the river towards the charming town of Àger, with its ancient collegiate church of Sant Pere. After admiring the magnificent view from the Àger pass we continue down to the ancient abbey of Bellpuig de les Avellanès and thence to Balaguer on the banks of the Segre.

On the outskirts of Balaguer, the capital of Noguera, is the Romanesque church of Santa Maria de les Franqueses. The town also boasts other interesting buildings and an exceptionally fine square with archways. From here one can also take the Doll road as far as Camarasa to see the church of Sant Miquel and the remains of the castle overlooking the town and the narrow valley.

The roads from Balaguer to Lleida run in almost straight lines on either side of the quiet waters of the Segre. The mountains have faded into the distance and the landscape is flat, with cornfields and orchards. 28 km further on we reach Lleida, the capital of Segrià and of western Catalonia. Lleida offers several fine examples of Romanesque art: the Seu Vella, the churches of Sant Martí, Sant Llorenç and Santa Maria de Gardeny.



Abella de la Conca



La Baronia de Sant Oïsmo

## Main historic buildings

**Abella de la Conca.** Former parish church of *Sant Esteve*, fine building, 3 aisles, 3 apses and 2-storey bell tower with two light windows, all with Lombard decoration.

**Àger.** Reinforced ruins of the former collegiate church of *Sant Pere*, crypt with 3 aisles (11th C.); 12th C. upper church with 3 aisles and 3 apses, central out ward apse with inner niches, half columns and carved capitals. Mural paintings at the MNAC. Also remains of *Àger castle* and of the fortifications that surrounded monastery and town.

**Alins.** Typical Pyrenean village, centre of Vall Ferrera, where many small recently restored Romanesque churches are located. Foremost among them: *Santa Maria de la Torre*, *La Força d'Àreu* and remains of the pre-Romanesque church of *Sant Francesc d'Araós*. Romanesque wooden statue of the Virgin in Àreu parish church.

**Alós d'Isil.** Parish church of *Sant Llísser*, modified: interesting doorway with 3 decorated archivolts, chess-band frieze, columns and capitals with heads of humans and animals, also two very ancient low reliefs on either side, believed to represent Adam and Eve before and after the Fall. (Borough: Alt Àneu.)

**Arboló.** Shrine of *La Mare de Déu* (mid 12th C.) in reddish-coloured stone: nave and apses with arcatures, small bell tower over the nave. (Borough: Soriguera.)

**Arties.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (12-13th C.), basilican plan: 3 aisles, 3 apses, north door with 6 decorated archivolts. *El Remei* (12th C) Romanesque wooden statue of the Virgin interesting later features. (Borough: Naut Aran.)

**Balaguer.** On the outskirts, *Santa Maria de les Franqueses*, church of the former monastery of Cistercian nuns, now abandoned; built in the shape of a Latin cross, apse, doorway in Romanesque-Gothic transition style (12-13th C.).

**La Baronia de Sant Oïsmo.** Church of *Sant Bartomeu* with a nave, 3 small cross-shaped apses, small bell tower, near the old *Castle of Sant Oïsmo*, restored, with magnificent round tower. (Borough: Camarasa.)

**Barruera.** Parish church of *Sant Feliu*: nave, apse with Lombard decoration; doorway with mouldings and porch; square bell tower. (Borough: Vall de Boí.)

**Bellpuig de les Avellanès.** Former abbey of Premonstratensian canons (*Santa Maria*), now seminary of the Marist brothers, who have restored it. The Romanesque cloister with double columns and very soberly ornamented capitals date back to the foundation (12-13th C.). (Borough: Os de Balaguer.)

**Boí.** Parish church of *Sant Joan* in the little village from which the Vall de Boí takes its name. Formerly with 3 aisles. One apse and the square Lombard-type bell tower remain. Inside, finely restored reproductions of mural paintings now at the MNAC (stoning of Saint Stephen and minstrels). (Borough: Vall de Boí.)

**Bossòst.** Parish church of *Era Assumpcion de Maria* (12th C.), the best example of religious architecture in the Val d'Aran: basilican plan; 3 aisles separated by wall arches resting on pillars; 3 apses with Lombard decoration; 2 remarkable doors, especially north door with 3 archivolts, columns, carved capitals with chess band design and fine, archaic tympanum (Christ in Majesty and Evan-



Barruera. Sant Feliu

gelists); very solid 4-storey bell tower with pyramid-shaped roof.

**Cabdella.** Historical centre of the Vall Fosca. Modified Romanesque parish church of *Sant Vicenç*, with square bell tower and Lombard apse. A wooden statue of Christ (12th C.) at the MNAC comes from here. In the same valley, church of *Sant Martí de la Torre* (nave and small apse) and church of *Sant Julià d'Espui*, modified, with bell tower similar to those found in the Vall de Boí. (Borough: La Torre de Cabdella.)

**Camarasa.** Remains of the old castle and of the ancient parish church of *Sant Miquel* on a hilltop overlooking the town: building in Romanesque-Gothic transition style (13th C.), only a few walls and the chevet with interesting capitals remain (others at the MNAC).

**Cap d'Aran.** Shrine of *Era Mare de Déu*, now Tredòs parish church, 12th C., altered: basilican plan with 3 aisles, 3 apses with Lombard ornamentation, small crypt, door with archivolts and columns with carved capitals and Christon over the key-stone. Many of the mural paintings are now at The Cloisters in New York. (Borough: Naut Aran.)

**Cóll.** Parish church of *Santa Maria*: nave, wall with arcatures, doorway with archivolts (12th C.) and chess-band frieze, low relief with Christon, ironwork on door and bell tower. (Borough: Vall de Boí.)

**Covet.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (12th C.) in the shape of a Latin cross: 3 apses; inner gallery behind the rose window on the façade; very fine sculpted doorway revealing Toulousain influence with figures in relief (showing the fall of the angels, scenes from the Old and New Testaments, acrobats, etc.), one of the most original in Catalan Romanesque art, tympanum depicting Christ and Evangelists. (Borough: Isona i Conca Dellà.)

**Durro.** Parish church of *La Nativitat de la Mare de Déu* (12th C.), restored: nave, side porch with arcades, doorway with archivolts on double columns, bolt on the door, square Lombard-type bell tower, more massive than others in the Vall de Boí. (Borough: Vall de Boí.)



Mur. Castle



Àger. Collegiate of Sant Pere



Ribera de Cardós. Santa Maria



Gerri de la Sal. Santa Maria



Sant Joan de Boí. The Stoning of Saint Stephen. MNAC



Covet. Doorway, Santa Maria

**Erill la Vall.** Parish church of *Santa Eulàlia* (12th C.): totally restored, nave, semicircular apse and small apses forming a transept, porch with arcades resting on columns, magnificent 6-storey Lombard-type bell tower with pairs of windows. The famous group of sculptures, *Descent from the Cross*, of which a copy has been made, now split between the MNAC and the MEV, comes from here. (Borough: Vall de Boí.)

**Escunhau.** Parish church of *Sant Pèir*, altered but retaining its very beautiful 12th C. door: 2 archivolts; 2 columns with carved bases and capitals (small heads and geometrical designs); tympanum with very rudimentary figure of Christ; frieze over arcade with Christon, other designs and chess bands. Inside, Romanesque fonts. (Borough: Vielha e Mijaran.)

**Gerri de la Sal.** Former Benedictine monastery of *Santa Maria*: the spacious church (consecrated 1149, modified) still stands: 3 aisles separated by massive pillars, 3 apses with Lombard decoration, door with archivolt and wrought capitals protected by a 3-part galilee, 3-storey wall belfry over the middle of the façade, which has been largely restored.

**Lleida.** Capital of Western Catalonia, already an important city under Arab domination (conquered 1149). Foremost among Romanesque monuments is *La Seu Vella* (the old cathedral), standing on the La Suda

promontory, magnificent example of Romanesque-Gothic transition style built by Pere Sacoma (1203-1278) with basilican plan: 3 aisles; wide transept with lantern over the crossing and 5 apses at east end. The two doors, *Porta del Fillols* and *Porta de l'Anunciata*, are fine examples of the work of the School of Lleida, which takes its name from here (note the archivolts and capitals in the Provençal tradition with Arabic-style motifs showing Biblical and profane scenes). The cloister is fully Gothic. Restoration is well underway. Restored 13th C. buildings in La Suda district (Canonja, Casa de l'Almoïna). Church of *Sant Llorenç* (13th C.), enlarged in Gothic times, with fine School of Lleida door. Church of *Sant Martí*, 13th C., with interesting sculptures and very elaborate doorway from El Tormillo (Huesca). Church of *Santa Maria de Gardeny*, built in very austere Cistercian style (13th C.), formerly part of an important and ancient community of the Knights Templar (later of the Knights Hospitallers). Present City Hall (La Paeria, 13th C.): interesting example of Romanesque civil architecture.

**Mur.** Former Augustinian canonry of *Santa Maria* (12th C.): church with basilican plan, 3 aisles, 3 Lombard-type apses. Many of the mural paintings are in Boston or the MNAC. Cloister with rudimentary capitals. On a nearby crag, ruins of *Mur castle* (11th C.) masterpiece of Catalan



Bossòst. Era Assumpcion de Maria

Romanesque civil architecture. Both the monastery (cloister and east sector buildings) and the castle have recently been restored. (Borough: Castell de Mur.)

**Ribera de Cardós.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (12th C., modified): ornamented doorway and rose window, slender 3-storey bell tower with Lombard decoration and pairs of windows similar to those found in the Vall de Boí. (Borough: La Vall de Cardós.)

**Salardú.** Parish church of *Sant Andreu* (12-13th C.), Romanesque-Gothic transition style, basilican plan: 3 aisles, 3 apses, door with 5 archivolts in School of Lleida style; inside, magnificent 13th C. Romanesque wooden statue, the *Christ of Salardú*, with beard, tunic and feet pierced with nails, reminiscent of the one at Mijaran. In 1994-1999, remarkable late Gothic mural paintings were uncovered (Borough: Naut Aran.)

**Sant Joan d'Isil.** Former monastery: church with 3 aisles and 3 apses. Lombard decoration on walls above heads of humans and animals, door with decorated archivolts and stylized capitals; in the upper frieze, low reliefs (damaged) of Adam and Eve before and after the Fall, similar to those at Alós d'Isil. (Borough: Alt Àneu.)

**Sant Pere del Burgal.** Former Benedictine monastery: large reinforced ruins of the 11th C. church: 3 apses on the east side (restored and forming a chapel) and 1 on west. Remarkable mural paintings attributed to the Pedret Master, now in the MNAC, come from here (reproductions). They depict saints and prophets and, for the first time, the



Alós d'Isil. Sant Lliser

figure of the donator (*Lucia comitessa*, countess of Pallars Sobirà at the end of the 11th C.). (Borough: La Guingueta i Jou.)

**Santa Maria d'Àneu.** Former Benedictine monastery: 11th C. church (modified), apse with Lombard decoration. Magnificent polychrome mural paintings, now at the MNAC, come from here. Probably later than those at Sant Pere del Burgal, they depict angels or seraphs with six wings studded with eyes—symbolizing vigilance—surrounded by the letters of the *Sanctus* and holding tongs with burning coals in their hands (the purification of Isaiah) and burning wheels. (Borough: La Guingueta i Jou.)

**Taüll.** In this village are two of the most beautiful of the famous Vall de Boí Romanesque churches: *Sant Climent* and *Santa Maria*, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (2000) together with the other Romanesque churches of the Vall de Boí, built by the powerful Erill dynasty and consecrated on successive days in 1123. *Sant Climent*, on the outskirts, is a magnificent church with 3 aisles



Lleida. "Els Fillols" door, la Seu Vella



Escunhau. Sant Pèir

separated by columns, 3 apses with arcatures and bands of Lombard decoration, a slender 6-storey square bell tower separate from the building, also with Lombard decoration, and two light windows. The mural paintings (1123) in the chevet (reproductions—the originals are at the MNAC—are among the finest examples of the genre on account of their power of expression, purity of line and rich polychromy (Christ in Majesty, saints and apostles, scenes from the Old and New Testaments and the Apocalypse). *Santa Maria* has the same structure and a fine bell tower attached to the church. The chief feature of the mural paintings (also at the MNAC) is the Virgin and Child. Also at Taüll, remains of the Romanesque church of *Sant Martí* and chapel of *Sant Quirze*. (Borough: Vall de Boí.)

**Unha.** Small 12th C. parish church of *Santa Eulàlia*, 3 aisles and 3 apses. (Borough: Naut Aran.)

**Vielha.** Parish church of *Sant Miquèu*, Gothic but with elements of the original Romanesque-Gothic transition building (12-13th C.): beautiful 12th C. baptismal font with low relief and famous *Christ of Mijaran*, a magnificent life-size wooden bust which must have been part of a Descent from the Cross like that at Erill la Vall. The old convent and church of *Santa Maria de Mijaran*, from which the bust comes, was once the political centre of the Val d'Aran (the governors of the Valley swore there to respect the privileges). The reinforced ruins, now part of a modern building, are to the north of the village. (Borough: Vielha e Mijaran.)

Hand of a seraph, Santa Eulàlia d'Estaon (Pallars Sobirà, circa 1150). MNAC



## Route 3:

# From Penedès to New Catalonia via the monasteries of the Cistercian and military orders

From Barcelona we take the N-340 to the Ordal pass and on to the winegrowing area of Alt Penedès. A side road to Lavern then brings us to Sant Sebastià dels Gorgs. The regional capital is Vilafranca del Penedès, a town with fine historic buildings and a wine museum (Museu del Vi). From here we can make interesting side trips to the church of *Sant Cugat* at Moja, to the castle and church of *Sant Martí Sarroca*, which has one of the most beautiful apses in Catalonia, to the ancient buildings and archeological remains at Olèrdola, where one can enjoy the magnificent view, and finally to the chapel of *El Sant Sepulcre*.

Following the N-340 southwards, we come to a side road from L'Arboç to the ancient priory of Banyeres del Penedès. Further on, a left turning from Bellvei goes to the town of Calafell, whose houses cluster around the hilltop castle and church of *La Santa Creu*, overlooking the coastline and the nearby seaside resort and harbour. From *El Vendrell*, the capital of Baix Penedès, the route runs along the *Costa Daurada* to Tarragona, formerly Tàrraco, the capital of *Hispania Citerior*, which has preserved magnificent monuments from its Roman past as well as examples of Romanesque art, foremost among them the cathedral. An excursion can be made to the ancient monastery of Escornalbou (some 25 km to the west) which affords fine views over the region of Tarragona.

A side road (through Nulles and Bràfim) leads from Tarragona to the great Cistercian monastery of *Santes Creus*, which has several fine Romanesque features. We continue along the *Gaia* river towards *El Pont d'Armentera*, where we take a minor road to *El Pla de Santa Maria* with its remarkable church. Beyond the *Cabra* pass to the north, we cross into *Conca de Barberà*. *Montblanc*, the picturesque capital, is still encircled by its imposing walls and offers several noteworthy monuments. Our route takes us through nearby *L'Espluga de Francolí* on the way to the Cistercian monastery of *Poblet*, which no visitor should miss since it is one of the most important historic buildings in Catalonia and a leading religious and cultural centre. The last stop on the Cistercian part of the route is the monastery of *Vallbona de les Monges*, an interesting and particularly attractive example of Romanesque-Gothic transition style (located some 25 km north along the C-14).

Continuing on our way from *Poblet*, we leave the vineyards and dryland crops behind and climb up into the *Prades* mountains. The walled village of *Prades*, with its red-hued stone, is very picturesque. Further on, a left turning from *Cornudella* takes us to *Siurana*, a village of great character with a very beautiful church, perched on the edge of sheer cliffs with spectacular views over the reservoir and river of the same name. Our route now crosses into *Priorat*, where the vines grow over slate rock. Beyond *Poboleda* one can see the reinforced ruins of the former Carthusian monastery of *Escaladei*, at the foot of the *Montsant*.

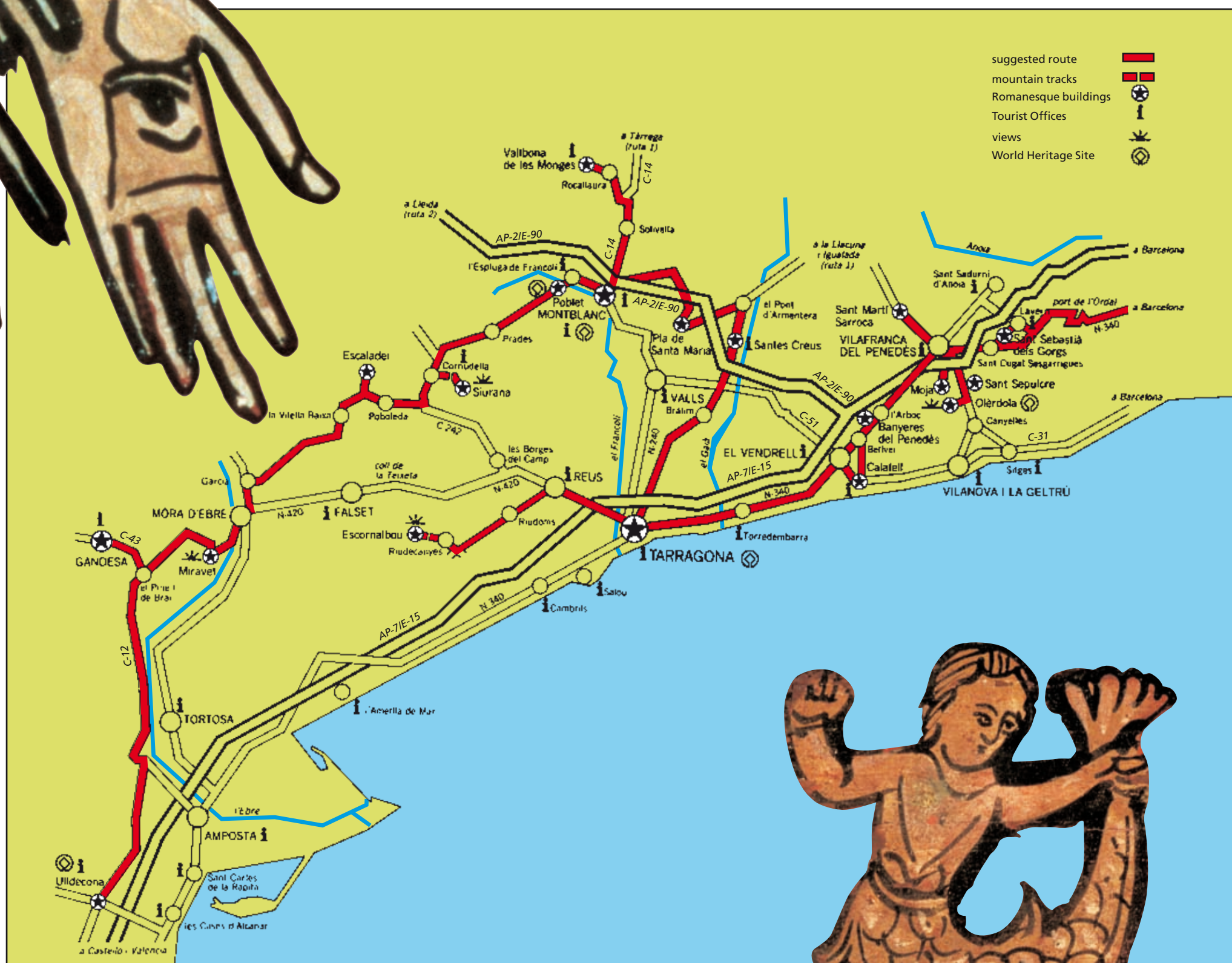
The beauty of the countryside is ample compensation for the long drive via *Falset* and *Móra d'Ebre* required to reach three more key Romanesque monuments: the castle of the *Knights Templar* at *Miravet*, overlooking the river *Ebro*; *Gandesa*, the capital of *Terra Alta*, with its splendid church doorway; and the ancient castle of the *Knights Hospitallers* and adjoining church of *Els Àngels* at *Ulldecona*, at the southern tip of Catalonia in *Montsià*.



Tarragona. Cathedral, cloister doorway



Vielha. Christ of Mijaran



## Main historic buildings

**Banyeres del Penedès.** Shrine and former Benedictine priory of *Santa Maria*, 2 aisles, 2 apses.

**Calafell.** Church of *Santa Creu* (11th C.) in precinct of old castle: nave and apse with Lombard decoration (a crypt and another aisle were added later); remains of 11th C. mural paintings under more recent works.

**Escaladei.** Former Carthusian monastery of *Santa Maria*: remains of old church (1228) but mainly of Renaissance and Baroque buildings. The buildings have been reinforced and a monastery cell and accommodation rebuilt. (Borough: La Morera de Montsant.)

**Escornalbou.** Former Augustinian canonry (Franciscan convent from 1580) of *Sant Miquel*, restored (1910) by E. Toda: church (1240) with beautiful doorway and large rose window, cloister commanding splendid views over the Tarragona region. (Borough: Riudecanyes.)

**Gadesa.** Parish church of *L'Assumpció* (renovated 17-18th C.), very fine School of Lleida doorway with archivolts and columns with capitals (plant motifs, geometrical patterns and human figures).

**Miravet.** Imposing fortress above the Ebro, centre of a powerful community of the military order of the Knights Templar, good example of the military architecture of the period; precinct with massive walls and towers; inside it, church of *Sant Martí* with large vaulted rooms underneath. The group of buildings has been reinforced and restored over the past few years.

**Moja.** Parish church of *Sant Cugat* (now *Sant Jaume*): nave, transept, Lombard decoration in apse, bell tower over nave. (Borough: Olèrdola.)

**Montblanc.** Church of *Sant Miquel*, Romanesque-Gothic transition style, very austere Romanesque façade, door with archivolts and capitals.

**Olèrdola.** Church of *Sant Miquel*, in early medieval fortress built over Iberian and Roman buildings (nave, apses and other pre-Romanesque elements; door and lantern, 12th C. or later). Adjoining north-east side, chevet of Mozarabic-type chapel (9th C.) with horseshoe arch. Anthropomorphic graves (so-called Olèrdola type) in the rock, near the Church and on Pla des Albats. Within municipal boundaries, at the *Mas del Sant Sepulcre*, important round chapel with mural paintings, private property.

**El Pla de Santa Maria.** Church of *Santa Maria* (now *Sant Ramon del Pla de Santa Maria* formerly *Pla de Cabra*), 13th C., one of the finest in the area, restored: nave, wide transept, octagonal lantern, fine stonework,

magnificent doorway with 8 archivolts and decorated lintel and tympanum.

**Poblet.** Cistercian monastery of *Santa Maria*, religious and cultural centre where monastic life has been resumed. Tombs of the kings of Catalonia-Aragon. Buildings mostly Gothic. One side of the main cloister (12th C.), some doors, small cloister, chapel of Sant Esteve and other elements on the east side are from the Romanesque period. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (Borough: Vimodí.)

**Sant Martí Sarroca.** Church of *Santa Maria*, restored 1906 by Puig i Cadafalch: nave and door with archivolts, later lantern and bell tower. Apse considered the most richly adorned in Catalonia: arcades inside and out, with archivolts and decorat-

ed abacuses on columns with capitals (plant and zoomorphic designs). Gothic and Baroque retables. Much restored castle.

**Sant Sebastià dels Gorgs.** Former Benedictine monastery: the church, though altered, retains its ancient door and fine sculpted tympanum (Christ in Majesty surrounded by angels), its bell tower and part of the cloister. (Borough: Avinyonet del Penedès.)

**Santes Creus.** Important and ancient Cistercian monastery, recently restored, Romanesque-Gothic transition style with some fine Romanesque features: various doorways

and windows, octagonal pavilion in the big Gothic cloister, old chapel of La Trinitat. (Borough: Aiguamúrcia.)

**Siurana.** Church of *Santa Maria* (12th C.): nave and unadorned apse, bell tower and doorway with 3 richly decorated archivolts (figure of Christ in centre of tympanum). (Borough: Cornudella.)

**Tarragona.** Important city in Roman times and current seat of the metropolitan archdiocese of Catalonia, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (2000). Cathedral in Romanesque-Gothic transition style but with elements of earlier Roman constructions and fine examples of 12-13th C. Romanesque art (apse, side door on façade, very fine cloister doorway in white marble with Christ in Majesty on top and magnificent carved capital in the middle, arches and capitals in the large cloister). Within the cathedral precinct, church of *Santa Tecla la Vella* and nearby chapel of *Sant Pau*. In the centre of the Roman amphitheatre by the sea, remains of a Visigothic basilica and of the Romanesque church of *Santa Maria del Miracle*.

**Ulldecona.** The ancient castle with imposing towers that rises above the town was the centre of an important community of the Knights Hospitallers. In the precinct, Cistercian-style church of *La Mare de Déu dels Àngels*, seat of a priory of Knights Hospitallers. The buildings have been reinforced, excavated and restored.

**Vallbona de les Monges.** Monastery of Cistercian nuns (religious life still continues), large group of buildings in Romanesque-Gothic transition style (12-13th C. and later). From the Romanesque period: apse, door on north transept (Marian subjects in fine relief) and south and east wings of the magnificent cloister. Currently being restored, especially the cloister.



Olèrdola. Façade of Sant Miquel



Gadesa. L'Assumpció



Siurana. Tympanum, Santa Maria



Sant Martí Sarroca. Santa Maria



Miravet



El Pla de Santa Maria. Sant Ramon



Ceiling panel, Barcelona (circa 1300). MNAC

# Alphabetical list of places with selected Romanesque buildings

Abella de la Conca	C-3		
Abrera	F-6		
Àger	B-4		
Agramunt	C-5		
Alins	D-2		
Alós d'Isil (Alt Àneu)	C-1		
Araós, see. Alins	D-2		
Arboló (Soriguera)	C-3		
Àreu	D-2		
Arties	C-1		
Balaguer	C-5		
Banyeres del Penedès	E-7		
Barberà del Vallès	F-6		
Barcelona	F-7		
Baronia de Sant Oïsmo, La (Camarasa)	C-4		
Barruera (la Vall de Boí)	C-2		
Beget (Camprodon)	G-3		
Bell-lloc, Santa Maria de see. Santa Coloma de Queralt	D-6		
Bell-lloc d'Aro (Santa Cristina d'Aro)	I-5		
Bellpuig de les Avellanes (Os de Balaguer)	B-4	Lleida	B-5
Besalú	H-3	Lluçà	F-4
Bescaran (Les Valls de Valira)	E-2	Manresa	E-5
Beuda	H-3	Marquet, el (Mura)	F-5
Boí (la Vall de Boí)	C-2	Mijaran, Santa Maria de, see. Vielha	C-1
Bossòst	B-1	Miravet	B-8
Breda	H-5	Moja (Olèrdola)	E-7
Cabdella (la Torre de Cabdella)	C-2	Molló	G-3
Calafell	E-7	Montblanc	D-6
Camarasa	C-4	Montserrat (Monistrol de Montserrat)	E-5
Camprodon	G-3	Mur (Castell de Mur)	C-4
Canapost (Forallac)	I-4	Mura	F-5
Canovelles	G-5	Navata	H-3
Cap d'Aran (Naut Aran)	C-1	Obiols (Avià)	E-4
Cardet (la Vall de Boí)	C-2	Olèrdola	E-7
Cardona	E-4	Oliana	D-4
Castellar de n'Hug	F-3	Olius	E-4
Castellbò (Montferrer i Castellbò)	D-2	Organyà	D-3
Castell-llebre (Peramola)	D-4	Palau de Rialb (la Baronia de Rialb)	D-4
Cervelló	F-6	Palau-saverdera	1-3
Cervera	D-5	Pedret (Cercs)	F-4
Coaner (Sant Mateu de Bages)	E-5	Pelagalls (els Plans de Sió)	D-5
Cóll (la Vall de Boí)	C-2	Peralada	1-3
Coll de Nargó	D-3	Pla de Santa Maria, el	D-7
Covet (Isona i Conca Dellà)	C-3	Pobla de Lillet, la	F-4
Cruïlles (Cruïlles, Monells i Sant Sadurní de l'Heura)	I-4	Poblet (Vimbodí)	C-7
Durro (la Vall de Boí)	C-2	Ponts	D-5
Erill la Vall (la Vall de Boí)	C-2	Porqueres	H-4
Escaladei (la Morera de Montsant)	C-7	Ribera de Cardós (La Vall de Cardós)	D-2
Escornalbou (Riudecanyes)	C-7	Ripoll	F-3
Escunhau (Vielha e Mijaran)	C-1	Rocabruna (Camprodon)	G-3
Espinelves	G-4	Roses	I-3
Espui, see. Cabdella	C-2	Salardú (Naut Aran)	C-1
Estamariu	E-3	Santa Cecília de Montserrat (Marganell), see. Montserrat	E-5
Estany, L'	F-4	Santa Coloma de Farners	H-5
Força d'Àreu, la, see. Alins	D-2	Santa Coloma de Queralt	D-6
Franqueses, Santa Maria de les, see. Balaguer	C-5	Santa Eugènia de Berga	G-4
Gandesa	A-7	Santa Eugènia de Nerellà (Bellver de Cerdanya)	E-3
Gardeny, see. Lleida	B-5	Santa Maria d'Àneu (la Guingueta i Jou)	D-2
Garriga, la	G-5	Santa Maria de la Torre, see. Alins	D-2
Gerrí de la Sal	C-3	Sant Andreu de Llanars (Prats de Lluçanès)	F-4
Girona	H-4	Santa Pau	H-3
Gualter (la Baronia de Rialb)	D-4	Sant Benet de Bages (Sant Fruitós de Bages)	F-5
GUILS de Cerdanya	F-2	Sant Cugat del Racó (Navàs)	F-4
Juvinyà, see. Sant Joan de les Fonts	G-3	Sant Cugat del Vallès	F-6
Llanars	G-3	Santes Creus (Aiguamúrcia)	D-6
Lladó	H-3	Sant Esteve d'en Bas (la Vall d'en Bas)	G-4
		Sant Feliu de Guíxols	I-5
		Sant Jaume de Frontanyà	F-3
		Sant Joan d'Isil (Alt Àneu)	C-1
		Sant Joan de les Abadesses	G-3
		Sant Joan les Fonts	G-3
		Sant Júlia de Boada (Palau-sator)	I-4
		Sant Llorenç del Munt (Matadepera)	F-5
		Sant Llorenç de Morunys	E-3
		Sant Llorenç prop Bagà (Guardiola de Berguedà)	F-3
		Sant Martí de la Torre, see. Cabdella	C-2
		Sant Martí Sarroca	E-6
		Sant Miquel de Fluvià	I-3
		Sant Miquel del Fai (Bigues i Riells)	G-5
		Sant Pau del Camp, see. Barcelona	F-6
		Sant Pere Cercada (Santa Coloma de Farners)	H-5
		Sant Pere de Casseres (les Masies de Roda)	G-4
		Sant Pere de Rodes (el Port de la Selva)	I-3
		Sant Pere del Burga (la Guingueta i Jou)	D-2
		Sant Ponç de Corbera (Cervelló)	F-6
		Sant Quirze de Colera (Rabós d'Empordà)	I-2
		Sant Sadurní d'Osormort	G-4
		Sant Sebastià de Gorgs (Avinyonet del Penedès)	E-5
		Sant Sepulcre, el see. Olèrdola	E-7
		Sant Sepulcre de Palera, El (Beuda)	H-3
		Sant Serni de Tavèrnoles (les Valls de Valira)	D-2
		Sant Tomàs de Fluvià (Torroella de Fluvià), see. Sant Miquel de Fluvià	I-3
		Sant Vicenç de Rus, see. Castellar de n'Hug	F-3
		Sant Vicenç de Torelló	G-4
		Savassona (Tavèrnoles)	G-4
		Seu d'Urgell, la	D-3
		Siurana (Cornudella)	C-7
		Solsona	E-4
		Talamanca	F-5
		Talló (Bellver de Cerdanya)	E-3
		Tarragona	D-7
		Tàrrega	C-5
		Tàüll (la Vall de Boí)	C-2
		Tavèrnoles	G-4
		Terrassa	F-6
		Tossa de Montbui, La (Santa Margarida de Montbui)	E-6
		Uldecona	A-9
		Unha (Naut Aran)	C-1
		Vallbona de les Monges	C-6
		Valldarques, see. Coll de Nargó	D-3
		Vic	G-5
		Vielha (Vielha e Mijaran)	C-1
		Vilabertran	I-3
		Vilademàger (la Llacuna)	E-6
		Viladordis (Manresa)	E-5
		Vilalleons (Sant Julià de Vilatorça)	G-4
		Vilanova del Pla (Santa Maria d'Oió)	F-4

Hand of God, antependium, Sant Pere de Boi (circa 1260). MNAC



Sant Pere del Burgal. Mural painting attributed to the Pedret Master. MNAC







Hand of King Balthasar,  
Santa Maria de Taüll  
(1123). MNAC

## Route 4:

# From Cerdanya to the Barcelona area via the Llobregat and Cardener valleys

Puigcerdà, the capital of Cerdanya, stands on a hilltop overlooking beautiful countryside. From here the first recommended visit is to the little village of Guils, with its church of Sant Esteve. Then we take the N-260 which runs alongside the slow-flowing Segre amid the villages and green fields of the Cerdanya plain to Bellver de Cerdanya. Among the many parish churches within the municipal boundaries of this attractive tourist centre are the Romanesque church of Talló, known as the "cathedral of Cerdanya", and Santa Eugènia de Nerellà, with its graceful leaning bell tower.

We now drive through the new 5 km-long Cadí tunnel that links Cerdanya to Berguedà and follow the C-16 to the monastery of Sant Llorenç prop Bagà on the banks of the Bastareny, very close to Guardiola de Berguedà. A scenic route from Guardiola leads eastward towards the nearby town of La Pobla de Lillet, with its ruined Monastery of Santa Maria and round church of Sant Miquel. It is worth detouring along a road that climbs amid spectacular views past the little church of Sant Vicenç de Rus to the picturesque town of Castellar de n'Hug, which offers the dual attraction of an interesting parish church — Santa Maria — and the natural beauty of the sources of the Llobregat.

From Guardiola the C-16 continues southwards through the Llobregat gorges towards Berga, the capital of Berguedà. Before reaching the town we take the C-26 eastwards across the La Baells reservoir to the exceptionally beautiful church of Sant Jaume de Frontanyà, unquestionably the best example of Romanesque art in Berguedà. Near the town of Berga, which lies at the foot of the mountains below the shrine of Queralt, are two more buildings of special interest which are reached by crossing the picturesque medieval bridge over the Llobregat: the pre-Romanesque church of Sant Quirze de Pedret on the left bank and, further south, close to the C-16, the church of Obiols.

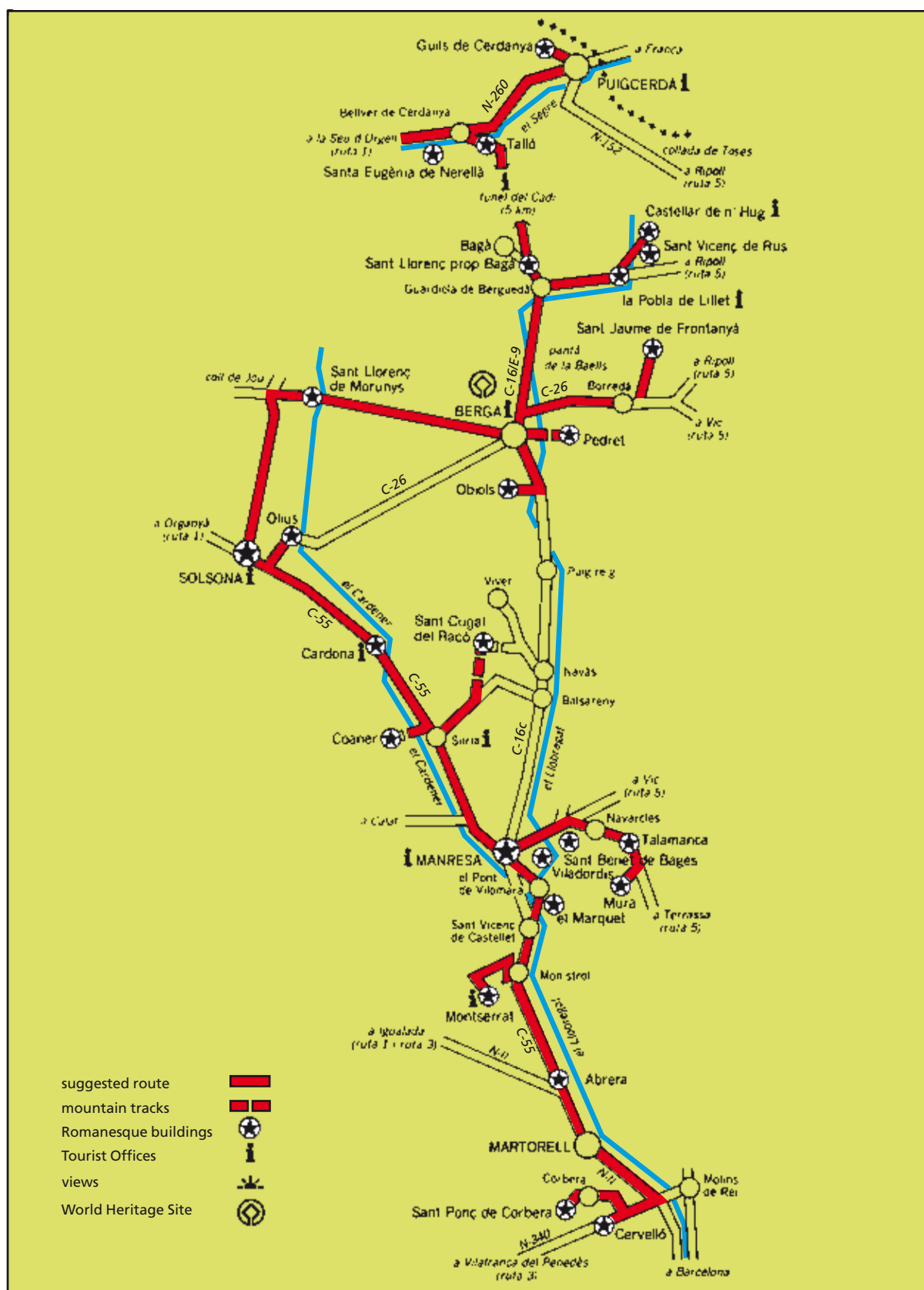
The suggested route from Berga westwards runs through pleasant countryside with lofty mountains and thick pinewoods, especially after the La Mina tunnel, where we cross into Solsonès. The route continues amid the cliffs and rocks of the Busa and Bastets ranges until it reaches the reputed summer holiday resort of Sant Llorenç de Morunys, lying below the ski slopes of Port del Comte, where an ancient Benedictine monastery is located. Just before Sant Llorenç, a road on the left that runs through open spaces along the river Cardener, between the cliffs of Lord and Busa and round the waters of the Llosa del Cavall reservoir, finally reaches Solsona, the capital of Solsonès. The old quarter has great character, the cathedral of Santa Maria and the magnificent diocesan Museum being of special interest.

Proceeding towards Manresa along the C-55 via a side road to Berga, we soon reach a turning to the left which brings us to the church of Sant Esteve d'Olius, close to the Cardener river. Adjoining it is an interesting cemetery in Art Nouveau style. We return to the main road and come shortly to the old town of Cardona, which grew up alongside rock salt deposits known as "La Muntanya de Sal" (the salt mountain). Rising above the town is the imposing duke's castle (now partly converted into a hotel) and the collegiate church of Sant Vicenç, a key masterpiece in the development of Catalan Romanesque architecture. Further on, two side trips may be made from Súria: one westwards along a track to Coaner church and castle, standing on a rocky pinnacle; the other along a track that leads north-east from the Balsareny road to Sant Cugat del Racó.

Manresa, the capital of Bages, is an important industrial and commercial centre with several interesting buildings including the basilica of Santa Maria, which comprises several Romanesque features. A well worthwhile side trip takes us to the beautiful monastery of Sant Benet de Bages, which is somehow reminiscent of a Romantic print (a short way along the C-141 towards Vic). From Navarrels, not far from Manresa, the road to Terrassa via the Estenalles pass brings us to Talamanca church and castle and, further on, to the picturesque village of Mura, with its church of Sant Martí, nestling in a deep valley.

From Manresa our route continues along a minor road to the shrine of La Salut at Viladordis. After crossing the Llobregat at El Pont de Vilomara, we reach the nearby small church of El Marquet, which reveals Mozarabic influence. At Sant Vicenç de Castellet we rejoin the main C-55 and drive through the Llobregat valley as far as Monistrol. From here one should visit the monastery of Montserrat, the spiritual centre of Catalonia and one of the great shrines of Roman Catholicism, perched halfway up the imposing mountain of the same name, with its distinctive rock formations. Inside is the Romanesque wooden statue of the Virgin of Montserrat. Close by, at the foot of the spectacularly sheer rock face below the lookout point at Sant Jeroni, the highest point on the mountain, is the Romanesque church of Santa Cecília, which belonged to another ancient monastery.

Continuing down the Llobregat valley along the C-55 we reach Abrera, with its parish church of Sant Pere and chapel of Sant Hilari. We then join the N-II via Martorell and Sant Andreu de la Barca as far as the Quatre Camins intersection where we take the N-340 to the right and, 12 km further on, come to two interesting monuments: Santa Maria de Cervelló, on the left-hand side of the road, and Sant Ponç de Corbera, along a side road to Corbera de Llobregat on the outskirts of the town.



## Main historic buildings

**Abrera.** Parish church of *Sant Pere* (12th C.); nave and 3 cross-shaped Lombard-type apses, fine carved door and bell tower. Nearby pre-Romanesque chapel of *Sant Hilari*, nave and rectangular apse (the sculpted impostes are probably earlier).

**Cardona.** Former canonry of *Sant Vicenç*, large basilica in the shape of a Latin cross consecrated 1040 (one of the great Catalan Romanesque monuments): 3 aisles (nave 19.6 m high, 6 windows), separated by cruciform columns; 3 Lombard-type apses;

small transept; octagonal lantern; austere façade with rose window and galilee with archways (the mural paintings are now on loan in the MNAC). Crypt below the chancel: 3 aisles with groined vaulting resting on columns with pyramid-frustum capitals. *Cardona castle*, seat of an important dynasty, located in a key strategic position (much altered). The famous *Torre de la Minyona* (11th C. cylindrical tower with sloping base) still stands alongside the large palace and later monastery buildings.

**Castellar de n'Hug.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (11th C., modified): nave, door with interesting ironwork, bell tower. Nearby church of *Sant Vicenç*

de *Rus* (1105): nave, apse with arcatures, mural paintings.

**Cervelló.** Church of *Santa Maria de Cervelló* or *del Socors* (11th C.), formerly parish church of *Sant Esteve*: nave and Lombard-type apse, lantern above crossing, base of ancient bell tower. Anthropomorphic graves.

**Coaner.** Church of *Sant Julià*, consecrated 1204: 3 aisles, 3 apses and walls all decorated in Lombard style, square bell tower. Alongside, handsome cylindrical tower of old castle. (Borough: *Sant Mateu de Bages*.)

**Guils de Cerdanya.** Parish church of *Sant Esteve de Guils* (11-12th C.):



Olius. Crypt, Sant Esteve



Solsona. Cathedral



Talló. Santa Maria

nave, decorated apse, fine doorway with 3 archivolts and columns with carved capitals. An antependium with scenes from the life of Saint Stephen, now at the MNAC, came from here.

**Manresa.** Collegiate church of *Santa Maria* (known as *La Seu*), Gothic with some elements from earlier Romanesque church (door with fine capitals and tympanum depicting Marian scenes, arches near the Renaissance cloister).

**El Marquet.** 11th C. church of *Santa Maria de Madaçars* or *del Marquet*: nave (the chevet is earlier Mozarabic or early Christian), rectangular apse, two side chapels joined to main apse by horseshoe arches. (Borough: Mura.)

**Montserrat.** Benedictine monastery of *Santa Maria*, spiritual heart of Catalonia with a long and distinguished cultural tradition. Of the Romanesque basilica nothing remains except the former main door (now in the atrium) and famous late 12th C. gilded polychrome wooden statue of the Virgin, *La Mare de Déu de Montserrat* (note the characteristic black colour of the face and hands of Mary and Jesus). On the same mountain, where monks and hermits have lived for countless centuries, beautiful 11th C. church of the former Benedictine monastery of *Santa Cecília*: 3 aisles and 3 apses with Lombard ornamentation. (Boroughs: Monistrol de Montserrat and Marganell.)

**Mura.** Parish church of *Sant Martí* (11-12th C., modified): apse with arcatures over capitals and half columns, fine doorway with archivolts, richly decorated with sculptures (tympanum depicting the Epiphany).

**Obiols.** Parish church of *Sant Vicenç*: Romanesque nave and small transept; pre-Romanesque trapeziform apse and horseshoe arches inside resting on columns with very primitive capitals. Anthropomorphic graves in front of the doorway. (Borough: Avia.)

**Olius.** Parish church of *Sant Esteve* (11th C.), remarkable example of Lombard Romanesque style: nave, semi-circular apse with characteristic decoration, beautiful crypt (same size as chancel) with 3 small aisles and 6 columns (the stairs, ironwork and bell tower are 16th C.). Interesting Art Nouveau cemetery nearby.

**Pedret.** Church of *Sant Quirze* (9th C., enlarged 10th C.), one of the best examples of Catalan pre-Romanesque art: rectangular nave with trapeziform apse; later side aisles joined to nave by horseshoe arches; at the top of each, side apses, also with horseshoe arches, on either side of the central apse (altered 12th C.). In the course of a complete restoration, some of the original mural paintings have been reproduced. Some originals are in the MDS (the 10th C. Primitives including the famous *Orant* figure and the 12th C. fully Romanesque works with scenes from the Apocalypse). Others (the works from the apse at-



Cardona

tributed to the so-called Pedret Master) are in the MNAC. (Borough: Cercs.)

**La Pobla de Lillet.** Former Augustinian canonry of *Santa Maria* with a modified and recently reinforced church (12th C.) and remains of a very early cloister. Nearby, church of *Sant Miquel* (12th C.), possibly once the chapel of *Lillet Castle*, circular in shape with embedded apse, semi-spherical dome and door with voussoirs. A large 12th C. polychrome wooden figure of *Christ in Majesty on the Cross* from Santa Maria is venerated in the present parish church.

**Sant Benet de Bages.** Former Benedictine monastery, group of Romanesque buildings with later additions: 12th C. church in the shape of a Latin cross, central outward apse and the other apses like niches in the wall, 2-storey lantern, doorway with archivolts and capitals, crypt, bell tower, magnificent 12-13th C. cloister with elaborate capitals, other monastery buildings. Acquired by a savings bank, complete restoration is planned. (Borough: Sant Fruitós de Bages.)

**Sant Cugat del Racó.** Parish church of *Sant Cugat del Racó* or *Salou* (11th C.), remarkable example of Lombard style, in the shape of a Greek cross, lofty cylindrical lantern, main apse and one small apse, Gothic doorway. (Borough: Navàs.)

**Sant Jaume de Frontanyà.** Parish church, once Augustinian canonry, exceptionally fine example of 11th C. Lombard Romanesque architecture



Sant Jaume de Frontanyà

in the shape of a Latin cross: majestic 12-sided lantern resting on squinches (unique in Catalonia and imitated in the restoration of Ripoll), 3 apses and austere façade.

**Sant Llorenç de Morunys.** Former Benedictine monastery: much modified 11th C. church (now parish church) with 3 aisles, Lombard decoration and interesting Gothic and Baroque features; remains of monastery buildings.

**Sant Llorenç prop Bagà.** Former Benedictine monastery: 11-12th C. church (severely modified) with 3 aisles, large crypt, truncated bell tower, pre-Romanesque relief on east side windows. Restored and excavated, two apses have appeared as well as part of the former monastery. (Borough: Guardiola de Berguedà.)

**Sant Ponç de Corbera.** Former Benedictine priory: interesting 11th C. church, nave, transept with 3 semicircular apses at end, lantern over the transept surmounted by bell tower, Lombard ornamentation all over the outside, remains of mural paintings in apse. The polychrome wooden statue of the Virgin (*Mare de Déu de la Llet*, 12-13th C.) in the parish church at nearby Corbera comes from here. (Borough: Cervelló.)

**Santa Eugènia de Nerellà.** Parish church: nave, peculiar leaning square bell tower with Lombard decoration that has been reinforced. (Borough: Bellver de Cerdanya.)

**Solsona.** Cathedral of *Santa Maria*, seat of bishopric since 1593, formerly important Augustinian canonry. Of the original Romanesque church, consecrated 1163 but much altered in Gothic and Baroque times, the following remain: 3 apses decorated inside with columns and capitals, cloister door (School of Lleida, 13th C.), magnificent Lombard-type bell tower and famous black stone statue of the Virgin (*La Mare de Déu del Claustre*). Capitals and columns now at the adjoining Diocesan museum.

**Talamanca.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (12th C.): nave, transept and apse; door with archivolts and columns with carved capitals; frieze on outside walls with corbels, all in well cut stone.

**Talló.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (12th C.): nave and decorated apse; door with ironwork protected by porch; bell tower. A 13th C. Romanesque wooden statue of the Virgin, *La Mare de Déu de Talló*, is venerated here. Once seat of an Augustinian canonry. (Borough: Bellver de Cerdanya.)

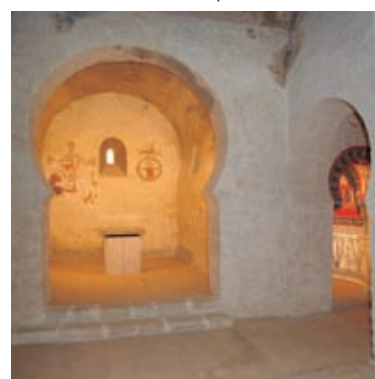
**Viladordis.** Shrine and parish church of *La Mare de Déu de la Salut*, small building with nave and apse, modified. (Borough: Manresa.)



Sant Benet de Bages



La Pobla de Lillet. Sant Miquel



Pedret. Sant Quirze

Hand of the Virgin,  
Sant Climent de  
Taüll (1123). MNAC



## Route 5:

# From the Pyrenees to Barcelona via Ripollès, Osona and Vallès

Just as we cross the Coll d'Ares pass via the C-38 to enter Ripollès, the slender bell tower of Molló church comes into view surrounded by meadows. A little way on, a road to the left, which affords magnificent views over the upper Garrotxa mountains, brings us to Rocabruna. We drive on down to the picturesque village of Beget, nestling in a deep valley. Inside the lovely church is an impressive figure of Christ in Majesty on the Cross.

After rejoining the C-38 we are soon in Camprodon, a popular tourist resort set in peaceful, green Pyrenean countryside, with some outstanding monuments like the church of Sant Pere and the large medieval bridge. A side road leads from here to Setcases, where visitors should admire the attractive parish church of Llanars.

Following the C-38 along the Ter, we come to Sant Pau de Segúries and the fine town of Sant Joan de les Abadesses. Here in the monastery are the magnificent group of sculptures, the "Santíssim Misteri", and the restored remains of the old parish church. At the exit from the town centre is the medieval bridge, also restored. The almost straight road to Ripoll continues down the Ter amid fields and green meadows.

Ripoll, the capital of Ripollès, stands where the Ter joins the Freser. It is known as the "cradle of Catalonia" on account of its role during the resettlement of Catalonia (after the Muslim occupation) and the cultural influence it exerted. The old monastery of Santa Maria, with its splendid doorway, is of prime importance. Ripoll stands at the intersection of roads leading to Cerdanya, Berguedà and Garrotxa. Our route continues down the Ter along the C-17, amid oak and pine woods and riverside thickets. Beyond Montesquiu and Sant Quirze de Besora, we turn left towards Torelló across the wide bridge that spans the river and then on to the fine parish church at nearby Sant Vicenç de Torelló (restored).

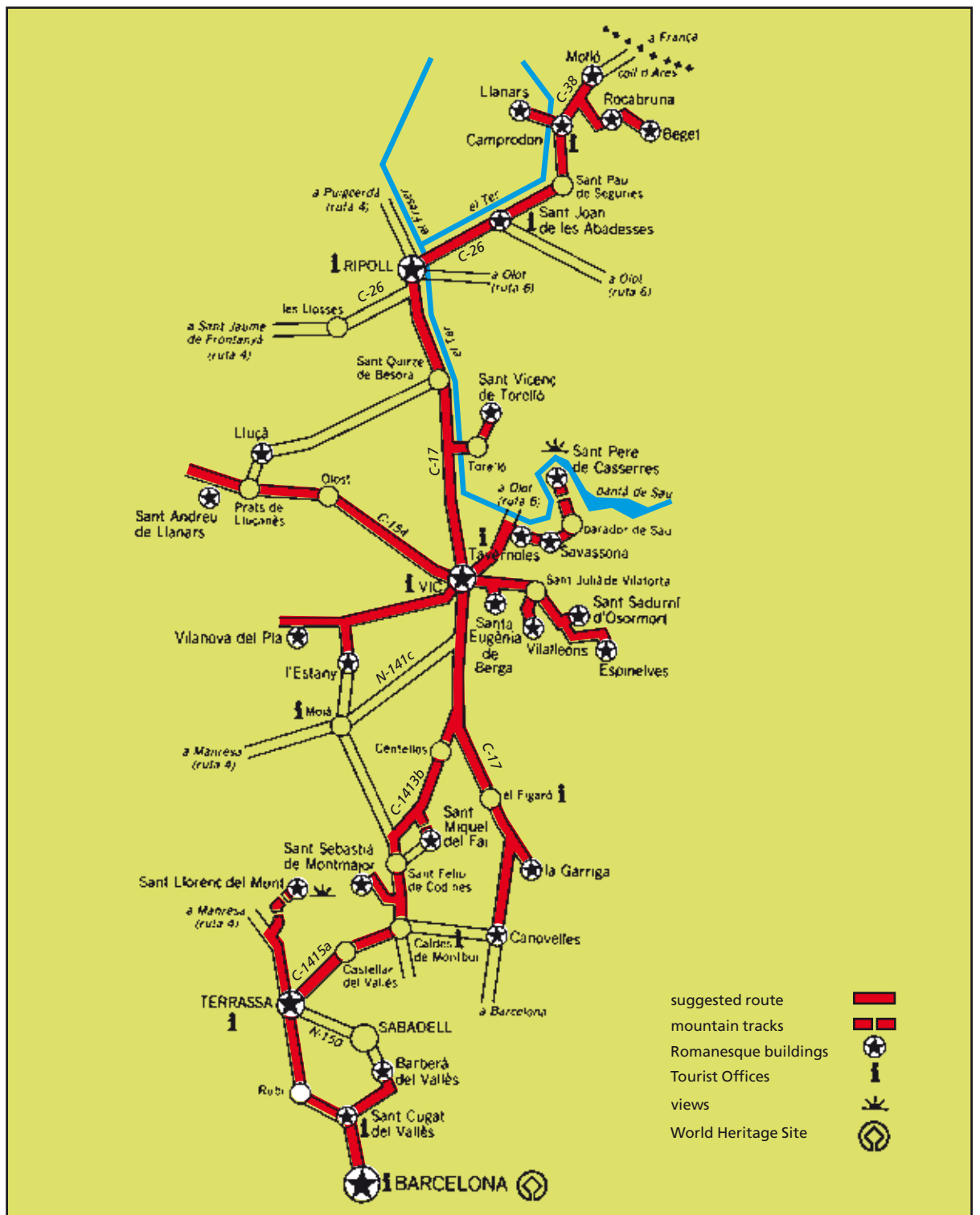
The C-17 finally leaves the Ter and runs through the neat and fertile fields of the Plana of Vic, a plain dotted with handsome farmhouses and ringed by mountains. In the centre lies the important city of Vic, the capital of Osona. In addition to the Romanesque cathedral bell tower and the contents of the Museu Episcopal, Vic offers many other attractions including a large and lively Main Square with archways (Plaça Major), where a busy market is held on Saturdays, and tasty local sausages.

Many excursions can be made from Vic to the various monuments that make up the rich Romanesque heritage of the Plana. To the north-east lie Tavèrnoles and Savassona and, above all, the monastery of Sant Pere de Casserres, standing at the tip of a rocky promontory over the Sau reservoir on the Ter. On the eastern side are Santa Eugènia de Berga, Vilalleons, Espinelves and Sant Sadurn d'Osormort, all in picturesque surroundings and easy to reach. West of Vic, the C-25d to Prats de Lluçanès takes us to the little church of Sant Andreu de Llanars standing on the plateau that separates the waters of the Ter from the Llobregat and, even more important, to the monastery of Lluçà, which alone is worth the trip. The road south-west from Vic to Santa Eulàlia de Riuprimer leads to Vilanova del Pla and to the exceptionally fine monastery of L'Estany over the border in Bages.

The C-17 from Vic towards Barcelona brings us to the churches of Santa Maria del Camí and La Doma at La Garriga, a traditional summer holiday resort in the comarca of Vallès. Further south is Canovelles, with its parish church of Sant Feliu. However, well before this one can branch off at Centelles along the C-1413 that winds up along the Cingles de Bertí cliffs. Then, just before Sant Feliu de Codines, there is a turning to the left towards the picturesque spot of Sant Miquel del Fai, where a church built into a cave stands alongside a beautiful waterfall.

From Sant Feliu de Codines we drive down towards Caldes de Montbui a spa town with hot springs and interesting Roman remains. Before Caldes an attractive mountain road climbs up El Farell and down to Sant Sebastià de Montmajor in its secluded valley. From Caldes, we go on through Castellar del Vallès to Terrassa, where no visitor should fail to visit the three Visigothic-Romanesque churches built when Terrassa was the seat of the ancient diocese of Egara. Those who enjoy a mountain hike can take the road to Navarcles and then the track up to Can Poble, from where a 3/4 hour climb brings them to the summit of La Mola to visit the church of the ancient monastery of Sant Llorenç del Munt and admire the breathtaking panorama.

The road from Terrassa to Rubí takes us on to the town of Sant Cugat del Vallès. Here, at the foot of the Collserola mountains that separate Vallès from the Barcelona plain, we can admire the imposing buildings of the ancient Benedictine monastery with its magnificent Romanesque cloister. By taking the Sabadell road (N-150) towards Cerdanyola we reach the nearby church of Santa Maria de Barberà del Vallès, which contains interesting wall paintings. Rejoining the N-150 we go on to Barcelona, the cosmopolitan capital of Catalonia and one of the foremost cities on the Mediterranean, which is an important stopping place on any Romanesque route. In addition to buildings of great interest, like Sant Pau del Camp, Barcelona is the home of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, which houses the world's finest collection of Romanesque mural paintings.



Barcelona. Sant Pau del Camp



Sant Cugat del Vallès



Beget



Sant Llorenç del Munt



Sant Joan de les Abadesses. "Santíssim Misteri".

## Main historic buildings

**Barberà del Vallès.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (end 11th C.): nave, large transept with 3 apses (Lombard decoration on apses and wall); bell tower with pyramid-shaped roof. Interesting mural paintings (discovered 1919): Christ in Majesty, scenes from Old and New Testaments, Exaltation of the Cross, etc.

**Barcelona.** In the days when Barcelona was the capital of the kingdom of Catalonia-Aragon, its political and economic vitality was such that most of the Romanesque city was altered or renovated. Some interesting Romanesque features remain: in the *Cathedral*, 13th C. chapel of Santa Llúcia, part of the Sant Iu and cloister doors; the Portal Nou in the Roman wall, which were rebuilt in Romanesque times; *Sant Pere de les Puelles*, former monastery of Benedictine nuns (12th C., considerably altered); and, above all, the 12th C. former Benedictine monastery of *Sant Pau del Camp* (church in the shape of a Greek cross with 3 apses remarkable doorway and cloister with multifoil arches and fine capitals). Also the 12th C. chapels of *Sant Llätzer* (at the former Lepers' Hospital) and of *En Marcús*, and courtyard gallery at the *Palau Episcopal* (13th C.). Various museums, foremost among them the MNAC, with exceptionally rich collections.

**Beget.** Church of *Sant Cristòfol* (12th C.): nave, apse with fine window, decorated door and square 3-storey bell tower; inside is the famous 12th C. wooden statue, the *Majestat de Beget* (Christ in Majesty on the Cross wearing tunic and crown); baptismal font, several Gothic and Baroque statues and retabes. (Borough: Camprodon.)

**Camprodon.** Former monastery of *Sant Pere*: church (consecrated 1169) in the shape of a Latin cross, 5 square apses, dome above crossing with octagonal lantern surmounted by 2-storey bell tower, door with columns.



Lluçà. Ironwork, Santa Maria



L'Estany. Capital in the cloister

**Canovelles.** Parish church of *Sant Feliu* (11th C.): nave, Lombard-type apse, remarkable doorway (13th C.) with archivolts and geometrical and animal designs.

**Espinelves.** Parish church of *Sant Vicenç d'Espinelves*: 2 aisles, 2 apses (11th and 12th C.) with Lombard-style decoration, 3-storey bell tower with arcatures resting on brackets with small heads, 12th C. S door.

**L'Estany.** Former Augustinian canonry of *Santa Maria*: church consecrated 1133, nave, transept and 3 apses, restored; magnificent 12-13th C. cloister with 10 arches on each side resting on twin columns and numerous capitals (highly varied motifs —Biblical and profane scenes including betrothals, minstrels etc.); monastery buildings and small museum.

**La Garriga.** Church of *Santa Maria del Camí* (one aisle), once part of a hospice, rebuilt in 12th C. over an earlier building. Also contains elements from the primitive Romanesque church of *Sant Esteve de la Doma*, on the outskirts.

**Llanars.** Parish church of *Sant Esteve*, consecrated 1168: nave and apse, handsome doorway with 3 archivolts, columns and capitals (School of Roussillon) and original ironwork; remarkable 12th C. antependium in polychrome wood (Christ in Majesty and scenes from the life of Saint Stephen).

**Lluçà.** *Santa Maria de Lluçà*, former priory of canons: church (end 12th C.) with nave and 3 apses, many later alterations, recently restored (note original ironwork on door); small but handsome cloister with very fine columns and capitals (plant and animal motifs) in the style of the School of Ripoll. A magnificent antependium and altar sides (13th C.), partly reproduced, are now in the MEV. Beneath the choir, 14th C. Gothic paintings have been found.

**Molló.** Parish church of *Santa Cecília* (12th C.): well-squared stone-work, nave and transept, doorway with archivolts and wrought frieze above; slender 4-storey bell tower, friezes of arcatures and fine windows.

**Ripoll.** Former Benedictine monastery of *Santa Maria* (founded 879 by Count Guifre the Hairy) which played a leading role in the resettlement of Old Catalonia and in the diffusion of culture (important *scriptorium*); restoration begun in 1886 according to the criteria of the time; basilican plan church with 5 aisles, transept and 7 11th C. Lombard-style apses, 7-storey bell tower, tombs of the Counts of Barcelona and Besalú inside; mid-12th C. doorway, the finest work of Catalan Romanesque sculpture, with 7 horizontal bands of complex decoration (Biblical and allegorical scenes —Church Triumphant, Church Militant, deadly sins, etc.) and, on the intrados of the doorway arch, the 12 months of the year and scenes of rural life; cloister begun at



Ripoll. Doorway, Santa Maria

the end of the 12th C. with one entirely Romanesque side comprising very beautifully decorated capitals (confronting animals, monsters, foliage). The School of Ripoll took its name from these sculptures.

**Rocabruna.** Parish church of *Sant Feliu* (12th C.): nave and apse door with fine ironwork, square bell tower. (Borough: Camprodon.)

**Sant Andreu de Llanars.** Former Benedictine monastery (12th C.): nave and apse with fine square bell tower over the vault, very well restored. (Borough: Prats de Lluçanès.)

**Sant Cugat del Vallès.** Former Benedictine monastery, fully restored: remains of Visigothic constructions in cloister, large church with 3 aisles and 3 apses, begun in 12th C. but mostly incorporated into the subsequent Gothic building (the Lombard bell tower is Romanesque). Magnificent Romanesque cloister (end of the 12th century, fully restored) with fine capitals (plant and figurative motifs) by Arnau Cadell (one, identified by an inscription, shows him at work.)

**Sant Joan de les Abadesses.** Former monastery of Benedictine nuns, later Augustinian canonry: 12th C. church, nave with 3 richly decorated apses, modified; remains of Romanesque cloister or gallery alongside the Gothic one; famous group of 7 polychrome wooden sculpted figures (*El Santíssim Misteri* or *Descent from the Cross*, 1251), one of the best of the period. Former parish

church of *Sant Joanipol*: reinforced ruins (chevet with three apses and finely decorated doorway).

**Sant Llorenç del Munt.** Former Benedictine monastery, previously a hermitage, at the summit of La Mola (alt. 1104 m.): church (consecrated 1064), key work of Lombard Romanesque art, in the shape of a Greek cross: octagonal lantern, 3 aisles, 3 apses. Remains of monastery buildings. (Borough: Matadepera.)

**Sant Miquel del Fai.** Former Benedictine monastery in a picturesque setting with cliffs and waterfalls. Church built into a cave in the tradition of troglodyte churches (Romanesque façade). Towards the south in the small chapel of *Sant Martí del Fai*, recently restored, mural paintings now in the MNAC, have been reproduced. (Borough: Bigues i Riells.)

**Sant Pere de Casserres.** Former Benedictine monastery, above the San reservoir where extensive restoration and renovation work has been carried out. Very large and elegant church: 3 aisles, 3 apses, Lombard ornamentation but no sculptures, solid square bell tower. Cloister and other buildings restored with former furniture reflecting monastic life. (Borough: Les Masies de Roda.)

**Sant Sadurní d'Osonort.** Parish church (11th C.): nave and Lombard-type apse, large modified bell tower; the 12th C. mural paintings are now at the MEV.

**Sant Sebastià de Montmajor.** Parish church (12th C.): nave forming a Greek cross with the transept, 3 apses, bell tower over the crossing. (Borough: Caldes de Montbui.)

**Sant Vicenç de Torelló.** Remarkable parish church (11-12th C.): nave with transept and large apse, fine 3-storey Lombard-type bell tower, fully restored.

**Santa Eugènia de Berga.** Remarkable parish church (11-12th C.): nave, transept and large apse, lantern surmounted by 3-storey bell tower, door with archivolts, columns and capitals by the School of Ripoll.

**Savassona.** Church of *Sant Pere* (11th C. nave and apse, Lombard-type decoration) at the foot of *Savassona Castle*. Nearby small church of *Sant Feliu de Savassona*, with pre-Romanesque chevet (horseshoe arch and rectangular apse), 10th C. anthropomorphic graves outside and remains of Iberian village. (Borough: Tavèrnoles.)

**Tavèrnoles.** Parish church of *Sant Esteve* (c. 1070), modified: nave, Lombard decoration and bell tower in the same style.

**Terrassa.** Site of the ancient bishopric of Egara (mid 5th C.), with 3 highly interesting Visigothic-Romanesque churches built close together and dating back to the 6-7th C. (later modified): *Santa Maria* (in the shape of a Latin cross, with octagonal lantern and dome surmounted by 2-storey bell tower, all 12th C. but with Visigothic chevet, square on the out



Ripoll. Detail of the doorway



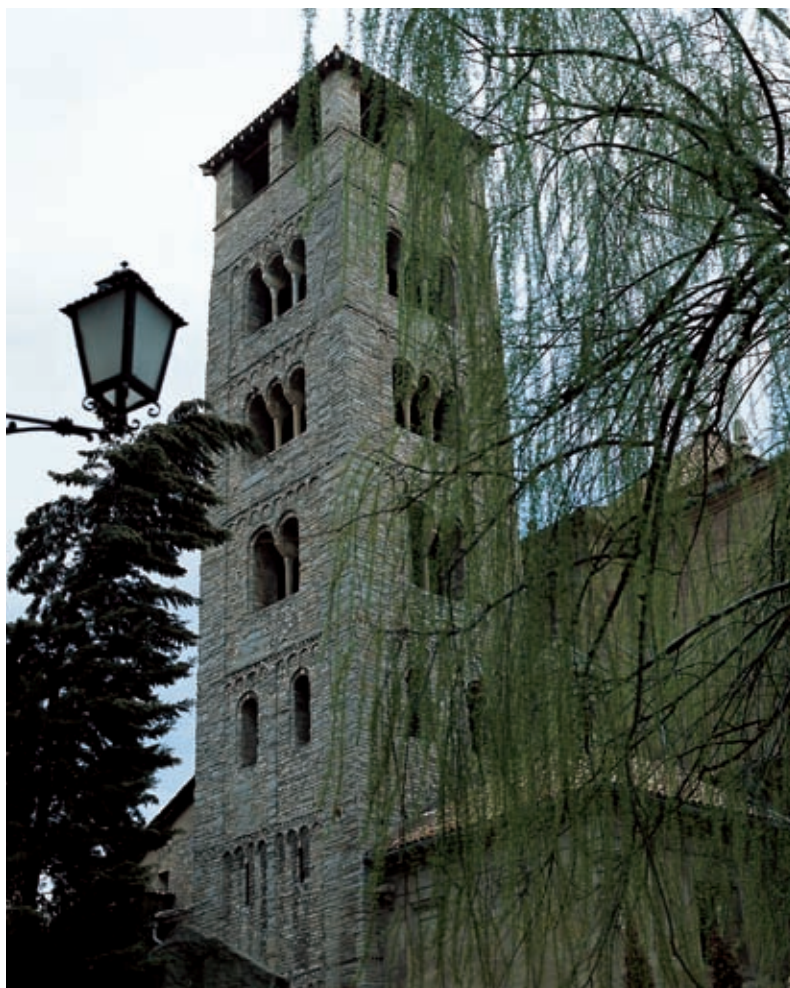
Ripoll. Capital in the cloister

side but with horseshoe arch inside); *Sant Miquel* (square plan and heptagonal apse with eight columns featuring Roman and Visigothic capitals supporting the dome, crypt with trefoil apsidal chapel) and *Sant Pere* (Visigothic 3-lobed apse with trapeziform plan, Romanesque church with transept). The 12th C. alterations are in Lombard style. Exceptional mural paintings, some 9th C. (Sant Miquel and Santa Maria) or 10th C. (Sant Pere). In a small apse in Santa Maria, scenes of the martyrdom of Saint Thomas à Becket, painted soon after his death in 1170. Interesting Gothic retables by Huguet.

**Vic.** Important cathedral city with many historic buildings: the *Cathedral*, renovated from 1781 onwards, retains its magnificent Lombard-style, 7-storey bell tower and its crypt with columns with ancient capitals in so-called Caliphate style (Islamic tradition) and 3 aisles. Other buildings and churches with Romanesque features. Well endowed Museu Episcopal, recently rebuilt.

**Vilalleons.** Church of *Santa Maria* (11-12th C.): nave, wall and apse with Lombard decorations, galleie and doorway with bell tower above. Baroque retables. (Borough: Sant Julià de Vilatorça.)

**Vilanova del Pla.** Church of *Sant Jaume* (11-12th C.) adjoining old farmhouse, circular in shape, Lombard-type apse, fine ironwork on door. (Borough: Santa Maria d'Olió.)



Vic. Cathedral



Terrassa. The church of Santa Maria



Hand of Christ in Majesty, Sant Climent de Taüll (1123). MNAC



## Route 6:

### From Empordà and Garrotxa to Selva, via Girona

Eight kilometres south of La Jonquera is the minor road to Capmany which marks the beginning of a picturesque and varied route offering many fine monuments and scenery ranging from highly spectacular stretches of coast to the ever-changing countryside of the mountainous areas inland.

A small side road from Garriguella runs along the frequently vine-clad coastline to Vilamaniscle. From here a mountain track, which requires careful driving, takes us to Sant Quirze de Colera, in the centre of a closed valley that is one of the most isolated and unusual spots in the Alberes mountains. Sant Pere de Rodes, that can be reached via a road from Vilajuïga, is a complete contrast, standing virtually on the crest of the mountain range of the same name. From here one can enjoy breathtaking views over the northern Costa Brava, the peninsula of Cap de Creus, now a Natural Park, and the white houses of El Port de la Selva nestling in the most sheltered corner of the bay.

Heading towards Palau-saverdera, we arrive at Roses to visit the old Romanesque church in the Ciutadella. An additional attraction is the view over the broad sweep of Roses Bay, one of the most open and sunlit seascapes on the Empordà coast. Turning inland, we take a minor road from Castelló d'Empúries towards Sant Pere Pescador, alongside the Empordà Marshes Natural Park. From here we proceed to Sant Miquel and Sant Tomàs de Fluvià, which rise above the flat Empordà countryside with its many shades of green and numerous rows of cypresses that recall the need for protection from the refreshing but powerful north wind, the tramuntana.

The pleasures of a visit to Peralada and Vilabertran amply justify a slight detour on the way to Figueres, the capital of Empordà, with its original Teatre-Museu Dalí. It is here we embark on the second part of our route, leaving flat landscapes for rugged mountain scenery.

Beyond Navata and Lladó we cross into another comarca, Garrotxa, where the Romanesque churches are so numerous that we can select only a few. Besalú, the seat of a former earldom, and the nearby villages of Beuda and Palera, are our first stops. Our route takes us through much beautiful scenery: the basaltic rock cliffs of Castellfollit de la Roca, just beside the road, and then the lush vegetation and the series of extinct volcanic craters around the capital, Olot, which are reminders of a distant age of seismic activity.

Sant Joan les Fonts, the garden-like beauty of the Vall de Bianya with its many tiny churches, and the road to Sant Esteve d'en Bas, close to the picturesque hamlet of Hostalet, are further attractions. On our way to Banyoles we enjoy the natural beauty of the magnificent beech woods of the Fageda d'en Jordà and the crater of Santa Margarida, as well as the tremendous charm of the medieval village of Santa Pau.

Our visit to Porqueres, opposite the town of Banyoles, affords an excuse to drive nearly all the way round the Banyoles lake. The sight of this large lake (almost 100 hectares in area) comes as a surprise. Its deep, silent waters and banks overhung with pensive weeping willows seem to have been put there on purpose to enhance the beauty of the church.

Time is needed to explore Girona, an important stopping place along our route. Besides visiting the main monuments, visitors should stroll through the narrow streets of the old town, with its Jewish quarter, and admire the newly repainted backs of the houses of Ballesteries, reflected in the waters of the Onyar.

The road to Cruïlles, Sant Julià de Boada and Canapost takes us through La Bisbal d'Empordà, where good-quality hand-made pottery can be purchased. Between Palamós and Sant Feliu de Guixols we then travel along one of the prettiest stretches of the Costa Brava, the quiet and elegant residential zone of S'Agaró contrasting with the cosmopolitan bustle of the big Platja d'Aro tourist resort.

We continue along good roads, amid crops, pine groves and above all the cork oak woods and farmhouses that are characteristic of the Selva countryside, until we come to Bell-lloc, in the borough of Santa Cristina d'Aro near Sant Feliu, Santa Coloma de Farners and finally to the idyllic spot of Sant Pere Cercada (up a pleasant woodland track).

A rather narrow and winding but very scenic road brings us to the villages of Maçanet de la Selva and Hostalric, the latter surrounded by the imposing remains of its walls. Our last stop is Breda, another pottery-manufacturing town, at the foot of the Montseny, where a solidly built Romanesque bell tower rises majestuously above the housetops.



Sant Tomàs de Fluvià. The Last Supper



Sant Feliu de Guixols. "Porta Ferrada"

### Main historic buildings

**Bell-lloc d'Aro.** Church of *Santa Maria* (10th C.), modified: nave, chevet with horseshoe arch shaped plan. (Borough: Santa Cristina d'Aro.)

**Besalú.** Capital of an earldom with its own dynasty in the 11-12th C. which has preserved many historic buildings. Church of the former Benedictine monastery of *Sant Pere* (12th C.): 3 aisles, apse with ambulatory inside (5 arches resting on columns with sculpted capitals), window over door with small lions in relief at the sides. Church of *Sant Vicenç* (12-13th C.): 3 aisles, transept, elegant apse with two small adjoining apses, door with archivolt and capitals. Doorway of the church of *Sant Julià* (12th C.), once part of a hospital. Beside the castle overlooking the town, ruins of the Augustinian canonry of *Santa Maria* (12th C.) with three-apse chevet. Interesting 11-12th C. *mikwà* (where ritual Jewish ablutions were performed). At *Can Llaudes* or *Cornellà*, courtyard with archways, good example of Romanesque civil architecture. Medieval bridge over the Fluvià.

nesque civil architecture. Medieval bridge over the Fluvià.

**Beuda.** Parish church of *Sant Feliu* (12th C.): 3 aisles, 3 corresponding apses, doorway with archivolt, sculpted baptismal font.

**Breda.** Former Benedictine monastery of *Sant Salvador* (11-12th C.). Church renovated in Gothic times but the magnificent bell tower (32 m high, 5 storeys with Lombard decoration) and parts of the old cloister remain. Part of the ancient parish church of *Santa Maria* (now a municipal building) from which a Romanesque wooden statue of the Virgin, venerated at Sant Salvador, originally came, is also Romanesque.

**Canapost.** Church of *Sant Esteve* (11-12th C.), made up of 2 adjoining buildings, one pre-Romanesque (trapezoid apse), the other Romanesque (semicircular apse); remains of mural paintings. (Borough: Forallac.)

**Cruïlles.** Former Benedictine monastery of *Sant Miquel de Cruïlles* (11th C.): basilican plan shaped church, 3 aisles, Lombard-type decoration, remains of mural paintings.



Girona. Sant Pere de Galligants

A fine figure of Christ in Majesty on the Cross and an interesting painted baldachin beam now at the MAG came from here. (Borough: Cruilles, Monells i Sant Sadurn de l'Heura.)

**Girona.** Important capital in Carolingian times, seat of an earldom and of a large and powerful diocese, many historic buildings. *Cathedral:* Baroque façade and Gothic nave. Romanesque features include: magnificent Torre de Carlemany (11th C. 5-storey Lombard-type bell tower), 12th C. cloister (one of the most beautiful in Catalonia, with sculpted capitals and friezes showing Biblical scenes and ornamental motifs), the main altar stone and so-called "Charlemagne's chair" made from marble (11th C.). Remarkable exhibits in nearby museums: TCG (Tapestry of the Creation) and MAG. Former 12th C. monastery of *Sant Pere de Galligants:* church (now Archeological Museum) with 3 aisles, 4-apse chevet, octagonal bell tower, magnificent cloister with capitals (Biblical scenes and figurative motifs). Small church of *Sant Nicolau* (nave, large lantern, small transept and 3 apses), once attached to Sant Pere. The *Arab Baths*, built in Muslim and Jewish tradition, are from late Romanesque times (13th C.); note the remarkable octagonal building and external lantern. *La Fontana d'Or:* good example of Romanesque civil art.

**Lladó.** Former Augustinian canonry of *Santa Maria:* remarkable 12th C. church with basilican plan, 3 aisles, 3 apses, doorway with richly decorated archivolt, tympanum and lintel, Corinthian capitals on columns, fine window, remains of recently restored monastery buildings.

**Navata.** Former parish church of *Sant Pere* (12th C.): nave and apse, remarkable doorway with archivolt, tympanum (Lamb of God), Corinthian capitals (one with mythical animals), Romanesque ironwork and remains of mural paintings.

**Palau-saverdera.** Parish church of *Sant Joan* (11th C.): 3 aisles, 3 apses, with Lombard-type decorations.

**Peralada.** Town with an interesting past and many historic buildings. Cloister of the old convent of *Sant Domènec* (12-13th C.), standing alone in the town centre (the convent was demolished): columns and highly expressive capitals showing Biblical scenes, animals, etc.

**Porqueres.** Parish church of *Santa Maria* (consecrated 1132), near Banyoles lake: interesting building with nave, 3-lobed apse inside, door with 3 horseshoe arches and carved capitals (plant and animal designs), wall belfry; very interesting capitals on triumphal arch.

**Roses.** In the Ciutadella (within the area of the ancient Greek colony of *Rhode*, archeological remains) ruins of the church of the former Benedictine monastery of *Santa Maria*



Sant Pere de Rodas

(11th C.), with Lombard-type central apse.

**Sant Esteve d'en Bas.** Church (12th C. modified): nave, fine sculptures (capitals, tympanum) by the School of Ripoll. (Borough: La Vall d'en Bas.)

**Sant Feliu de Guíxols.** Former Benedictine monastery: opposite the mainly Gothic church stands the famous *Porta Ferrada* (probably the entrance to the 10th C. pre-Romanesque building) with 3 horseshoe arches on cylindrical columns and, on top, a gallery with three light windows, smaller arches and later Lombard-type frieze. Two Romanesque towers on either side of the church (*Torre del Fum* and *Torre del Corn*).

**Sant Joan les Fonts.** Former Benedictine monastery (12th C.): church with 3 aisles and well decorated apses, some carved capitals, baptismal font with relief sculptures. *Casa Juvinyà*, 11-12th C. fortified mansion, one of the oldest and best-preserved Romanesque civil monuments in Catalonia.

**Sant Julià de Boada.** Pre-Romanesque church, well preserved and restored; nave divided by a thick horseshoe arch, trapeziform apse, triumphal arch also horseshoe shaped. Remains of later mural paintings. (Borough: Palau-sator.)

**Sant Miquel de Fluvià.** Former Benedictine monastery (11th C.): church with 3 aisles, large transept, 3 Lombard-type apses, pillars and half columns inside with fine capitals (plants, figures and birds) in the tradition of Sant Pere de Rodas; 12th C. bell tower standing apart, with 3 storeys and Lombard decoration. Not far away, former priory of *Sant Tomàs de Fluvià* (Borough: Torroella de Fluvià), with 11th C. church, nave, transept and 3 apses. Interesting mural paintings have recently been discovered here and restored.

**Sant Pere Cercada.** Former Augustinian canonry: 13th C. church (a good example of late Romanesque) in the shape of a Latin cross, with lantern and 3 apses opening onto the transept, door and windows with archivolt, columns and capitals. (Borough: Santa Coloma de Farners.)

**Sant Pere de Rodas.** Former Benedictine monastery, one of the most deservedly famous in Catalonia on account of its architectural importance and magnificent location overlooking the Cap de Creus peninsula and Gulf of Lion. Church probably 10-11th C. but still in pre-Romanesque tradition: 3 very uneven aisles separated by pillars and

columns standing on high bases, transept with central apse and 2 smaller apses, ambulatory with alternating pillars, crypt; interesting capitals, some Corinthian (zoomorphic heads), some polygonal (geometrical designs). Square 3-storey Lombard-type 12th C. bell tower (27 m high). Upper doister partially restored and rebuilt; and part of lower cloister recently discovered (with remains of mural paintings); remains of monastery buildings and fortifications (large keep). Extensive restoration has been completed: church floor repaved, features of the former door reproduced on the galilee, wall paintings in ambulatory, access to crypt, signposted tour of buildings. On the nearby car park, remarkable pre-Romanesque church of *Santa Helena*, enlarged in Romanesque times and recently restored, among remains of former village (Borough: El Port de la Selva.)

**Sant Quirze de Colera.** Former Benedictine monastery: 11th C. basilican plan church with three aisles, transept and three Lombard-type apses; remains of earlier church, cloister and other fortifications. The building has been cleaned up and reinforced and the access road from Rabós improved. Small former parish church of *Santa Maria de Colera* with

nave and apse (12th C.). (Borough: Rabós d'Empordà.)

**El Sant Sepulcre de Palera.** Former Benedictine priory: large austere 11th C. church with 3 aisles and vault resting on pillars. (Borough: Beuda.)

**Santa Coloma de Farners.** *Farners* castle (12th C), solid walls and magnificent cylindrical tower rising above precinct. Small church of *La Mare de Déu de Farners* (Romanesque chevet) at the foot of the castle.

**Santa Pau.** In the volcanic region of Olot. Interesting medieval quarter (square with archways —Plaça del Firal dels Bous— and castle). Nearby small Romanesque churches of *Sant Martí Vell* and the shrine of *Els Arcs*.

**Vilabertran.** Former Augustinian canonry of *Santa Maria:* remarkable group of historic buildings including basilican plan church (11-12th C.) with 3 aisles, 3 apses opening onto transept, embedded pillars and columns inside, slender Lombard-type 3-storey square bell tower; 12th C. cloister with columns, pillars and capitals (plant motifs); 12-13th C. monastery buildings (chapter house, sacristy, wine-cellar) beside other later Gothic buildings. The buildings have been restored.



Breda. Sant Salvador



Girona. Tower of Carlemany



Vilabertran. Santa Maria



Besalú. Façade, Sant Pere



The Cruilles beam (MAG)



# Romanesque Art in the museums

Hands of Saint John and the Virgin, antependium, Baltarga (Cerdanya, circa 1195). MNAC



MAG. Portable altar from Sant Pere de Rodes



MDS. Thurible from Pampe (Solsonès)



TCG. The Creation Tapestry

## Barcelona

**Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC).** In the Palau Nacional de Montjuïc (built in 1929, museum since 1934). Totally redesigned as of 1986 under the direction of the architect Gae Aulenti, still to be completed. The Romanesque art section is considered one of the best in the world, especially on account of the various 11-13th C. *mural paintings* from the Catalan Pyrenees (Taüll-Sant Climent and Santa Maria, Boí, Pedret, Sorpe, Santa Maria d'Àneu, Sant Pere del Burgal, Esteri de Cardós, Estaon, Andorra, La Seu d'Urgell, etc.) and from the Palau Aguilar in Barcelona. Remarkable collections of *antependia* (from Tavèrnoles, Avià, Mosoll, Ix, Soriguerola, Baltarga, Betesa, Gia, etc.), *sculptures in wood* (*Majestat Batlló*, antependium from Taüll, *Descent from the Cross* from Erill la Vall, statues of the Virgin such as that from Durro, etc.), *sculptures in stone* (capitals from Camarasa); *enamel* and *liturgical objects*. Important Gothic section.

## Girona

**Tresor de la Catedral de Girona (TCG).** Adjoining the cathedral itself. Exhibits include the *Beatus of Girona* (10th C. commentaries on the Apocalypse with exquisite illuminations), the famous *Creation Tapestry* (11-12th C. —the finest surviving piece of Catalan Romanesque textile art), and a 12th C. wooden statue of the Virgin, *La Mare de Déu de la Catedral*, etc.

**Museu d'Art de Girona (MAG).** Formerly Museu Episcopal, in the Palau del Bisbe. Important *mural paintings* (from Pedrinyà, Bellcaire d'Empordà, Sant Julià de Boada, etc.), *antependia*, the famous Cruïlles Beam (on which an interesting procession of monks and acolytes is painted), good collections of *sculptures in wood* (*Christ in Majesty on the Cross* from Sant Joan les Fonts and from Cruïlles, statues of the Virgin, etc.), *sculptures in stone* (relief and capitals) and *gold and silverware* (11-12th C. portable silver altar and small reliquary, both from Sant Pere de Rodes, etc.).

## La Seu d'Urgell

**Museu Diocesà d'Urgell (MDU).** In the Pietat church in the Cathedral cloister and, since 1988, in the Casa del Deganat. Exhibits include the famous *Beatus of La Seu d'Urgell* (10th C. beautifully illuminated manuscript of Mozarabic origin containing commentaries on the Apocalypse), *mural paintings* such as those from València d'Àneu or Estaon, *antependia* including those from Durro, *wooden statues* like the lovely Virgin from Ginestarre, *stone relief* and *capitals*, *gold and silverware*, etc. Also religious works of art from the Gothic period and later.

## Solsona

**Museu Diocesà i Comarcal (MDS).** Located in the Bishop's Palace, near the Cathedral, and finely renovated. Houses most of the *mural paintings* from Sant Quirze de Pedret (10th C. works, like the famous *Orant* figure, and 12th C. works —scenes from the Apocalypse, martyrdom of Saints Quiricus and Julita, fantastic figures, etc.); also the *mural paintings* from Sant Pau de Casserres (with splendid angels playing musical instruments), various *antependia* (side panels from Sagàs) and *retables* (Sant Jaume de Frontanyà), important *sculptures in stone* (capitals, carved columns, reliefs, some from the original Cathedral buildings) and *sculptures in wood* (statues of the Virgin, etc.). Interesting archeological section.

## Vic

**Museu Episcopal de Vic (MEV).** In a building near the Cathedral. Rebuilding began in 1997 on plans by F. Correa and A. Milà. The second largest collection of Catalan Romanesque art including several 11th-12th C. *mural paintings* from Sant Sadurní d'Osormort, El Brull, Sant Martí Sescorts, La Seu d'Urgell, etc., an outstanding collection of *antependia* (from Lluçà, Espinelves, Vidrà, Sant Sadurní de Rotgers, monastery of El Coll, Sant Llorenç Dosmunts, Sagàs, etc.). Works of *sculpture* include the famous *Descent from the Cross* from Erill la Vall (part of which is in Barcelona), interesting figures of Christ in Majesty on the Cross and Christ Seated, wooden statues of the Virgin, altar stones, stone relief and capitals, and remarkable cloths (*Hispanic-Arab Witches Tapestry*), *gold and silverware*, *enamel*, *ironwork* from doors, *reliquaries*, etc.



MNAC. Sant Climent de Taüll



MNAC. Majestat Batlló (Olot region)



MEV. Virgin of Veciana (Anoia)

**Other Museums.** In Barcelona, other important works of Romanesque art are in the *Museu Diocesà* in the Pia Almoïna building near the Cathedral, and in the *Museu Marès* (in the old Casa de la Canonja). Other important museums are *Museu Diocesà de Lleida*, *Museu Diocesà de Tarragona* (with interesting works, around Cathedral cloister), *Museu de la Catedral de Tortosa*, *Museu de la Catedral de Peralada* (reliefs and capitals from Sant Pere de Rodes), *Museu de Vilafranca del Penedès*, *Museu de l'Empordà* in Figueres, *Museu Maricel de Mar* in Sitges and others. Important works of Catalan Romanesque art are also to be found in certain foreign museums such as The Cloisters in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the British Museum in London, the Museum of Fine Arts in Maryland, etc. Some Romanesque works of art are in private collections.

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