Religious architecture during the Romanesque period in Catalonia (11th-13th centuries): Assessment and critical notes

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Abstract

In Catalonia, the historiography of the Romanesque started a full half-century later than the earliest European movements, particularly in France. This historiography manifested itself with studies that helped to understand, classify and compare the movement to other architectures, with restoration and the protection of monuments, as well as with new architectures that harked back to the mediaeval past. Elies Rogent (1821-1897), Lluís Domènech i Montaner (1850-1923) and Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867-1956) were the pioneers in these studies.

This article considers the most pressing issues today and takes part in the current debates on Catalan religious Romanesque architecture. The complex containing the former church see in Egara, now Terrassa, which was recently excavated, is a prime example. The article shall also analyse the issue of the earliest Romanesque art in the 11th century, compare the monastic churches in Ripoll and Cuixà, present new studies on the cathedrals in La Seu d'Urgell, Girona and Vic, and consider interesting problems involving architecture and liturgy, the still undefined transition from the 11th to 13th century and the late Romanesque-style architecture from the 12th to 13th centuries, when Gothic architecture had already taken root in northern France.

Keywords: architecture, cathedrals, historiography, liturgy, Romanesque

During the second half of the 20th century, Catalan Romanesque architecture, just like Romanesque architecture in other Western European countries, had suffered from the often negative result of its own success, from mass tourism and from the nationalistic tone with which the nations of today have aimed to imbue Romanesque.[1] The literature is extensive, in Catalonia as well.[2] Today, however, new studies are reviving the discipline both monographically and thematically.[3]

The Romanesque is the art that dates from the feudal period between approximately the 10th and 13th centuries. The term is conventional and was coined during the 19th century when it was believed that Romanesque art derived purely and simply from Roman art. Pre-Romanesque or proto-Romanesque art, early Romanesque art, Second Romanesque art and late Romanesque art are all terms that conventionally define the evolution of the style.[4]

The history of architectural restoration is an essential part of the history of Romanesque architecture. We do not see Romanesque monuments the way they were in the Middle Ages; rather we see them as they have been shaped by the different restorers from the 19th century until today. What prevails is the wholly erroneous idea of a black and white Romanesque church, utterly empty and bare, as if the goal was to encourage visitors to only look at the stones on the wall one by one. The stripping of the decoration and later additions, the result of post-Vatican II liturgical dictates and the taste for monumental bareness, as well as photographic reproductions in black and white, photogravures, have contributed to giving us an erroneous idea of Romanesque art as bereft of colour. Back in the late 19th century, Elies Rogent had imagined the Romanesque basilica in Ripoll totally polychromed. Perhaps his insight will be recognised one day and the basilica that he restored will be painted once again. Taste evolves, and we must imagine that Catalan Romanesque church architecture will once again boast those coats of striking colours that totally blanketed them in the Middle Ages through the actions of restorers or the creativity of new artists.[5]

In Catalonia, the historiography of the Romanesque started a full half-century later than the earliest European movements, particularly in France. In the first third of the 19th century, the taste for the Gothic, which is synonymous with a return to the Middle Ages, triggered greater awareness of the mediaeval monuments from which the

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Figure 1. Romanesque church of Sant Climent de Taüll. It shows a basilica layout with three naves, an apse and two apsidioles, plus a tower on the southern facade facing east very close to the apse. The belfry is square and freestanding, although it is built very close to the bulk of the building on the corner of the southern wall next to the chevet. Photo: Jesús Cano Sánchez.

Romanesque drew. This re-encounter with the national origins associated with the Romantic movement and experienced in every European state led to greater knowledge of the past, the study of this past and systematic campaigns to conserve remnants of the Middle Ages.[6]

During the 19th century, the return to the Middle Ages and the rediscovery of a national past – different to the one that Rome had disseminated – signalled a reassessment of the very origins of Catalonia at a time when Romantic, literary and artistic movements were coming alive. This return to the Middle Ages was voluntarily conditioned by nationalistic positions which tended to provide every state with specific powerful and sovereign origins, consequently differentiating them from their neighbouring states. People were not content to simply underscore these differences; rather they also sought to demonstrate the greater importance of Romanesque art in their own state compared to their neighbour. What is more, the Middle Ages was also attractive because of its mysterious side that the Romantics so glorified. [7]

This mediaeval past was rediscovered along three main lines, primarily during the second half of the 19th century: studies that helped to understand, classify and compare the movement with other architectures; the restoration and protection of monuments; and the new

architectures that harked back to the mediaeval past with designs for religious buildings constructed in the neo-mediaeval style and blithe restorations of monuments in ruins.[8]

But the architects who have restored and reconstructed have sometimes also contributed to creating supposed regional Romanesque styles which have often served as the cornerstone for veritable theories.[9]

Elies Rogent (1821-1897), Lluís Domènech i Montaner (1850-1923) and Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867-1956) were the pioneers of the modern study of religious architecture from the Catalan Romanesque.[10] They were also the ones who restored and reconstructed Romanesque architecture and who studied, classified and theorised about the Catalan Romanesque. These three architects, each in his day, were also the authors of an important written oeuvre, often erudite, while at the same time as architects they participated in constructing new architectures at the service of the mediaeval past, reinventing the style.

In order to understand our vision of Catalan religious Romanesque architecture at the start of the early 21st century, we should examine Rogent's intervention in the basilica in Ripoll. This prominent architect had gotten his training in contact with the erudition of France and Germany, and he concurred with Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's

(1814-1879) ideas on reconstruction.[11] Rogent was the first person in Catalonia to publish historical-archaeological monographs on mediaeval religious monuments like the ones in Sant Cugat del Vallès and Sant Llorenç del Munt, thus historically justifying the restoration projects. This also holds true of Ripoll, as demonstrated in the report on the Santa Maria basilica, which justified the sources of his restoration, today considered more a reconstruction.[12]

Before the definitive restoration process of the basilica of Ripoll got underway, in 1860 Rogent had laid down a series of criteria and procedures regarding the intervention, which included drawing up floor plans and elevations that would provide proof of the appearance of the building from the 11th century, back in the days of Abbot Oliba, the cleansing of all the additions and proposed transformations aimed at reconstructing the building as it was assumed to be back in the Romanesque era. The new basilica was consecrated in 1893. Rogent decided that the church would have five naves instead of three, that the vault and windows would be the way they are today, that the capitals would be Corinthian with Caliphal inspiration, and that the chevet would be surmounted by the outer cimborio that it still has today. I personally believe that the building refurbished by Rogent must continue to appear in the manuals of mediaeval architecture as one of the greatest monuments from the Catalan Romanesque, but that it must be presented from a critical vantage point. I also particularly believe that this building must be included in the surveys of religious Catalan architecture from the 19th century as well.

When Rogent began the restoration, the basilica of Ripoll was Gothic, and its vaults had collapsed after the fire in 1835. It also had later additions. He took the decision to freeze it at a given point in its history, imagining how it was at the precise date that it was consecrated by Abbot Oliba (1032) and setting out to eliminate everything from before that date and subsequent additions.

Josep Puig i Cadafalch defended many of the actions undertaken by Rogent, with whom he had been trained and whom he regarded as "one of the first revolutionaries against the neoclassical tyranny". He also recalled that "Rogent mainly investigated Catalan Romanesque art with a keen sense of history, but also as a form fated to flourish once again, doing with it in Catalonia what the Italian cities had done with classical art, which by copying and reproducing it had engendered the Renaissance". However, times had changed, and during the first quarter of the 20th century, Puig undertook to demonstrate that Catalonia had had its own national Romanesque architecture with a personality of its own that had exerted an influence abroad.[13] Puig began by studying Catalan Romanesque architecture monographically, using modern criteria, and he decided to make it play a role in the history of the European Romanesque. Giovanni Teresio Rivoira and Adolfo Venturi were doing the same in Italy,[14] while in France the regionalist theory of Arcisse de

Caumont[15] was still in vogue, as other schools of thought were also being forged, such as the École des Chartes. In 1909, he wrote in *L'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya*: "The geographic scope of our study is not a country that is a state today; [it is] a land divided between two states, part in Spain and part in France, [which] has an organic art history [that is] a reflection of a national unity, of a natural grouping of people with collective thinking".[16]

Methodologically speaking, the historiography of the history of Romanesque architecture demonstrates that the different interpretations of the relations between modern politics, historical geography and Romanesque art have led to opposite conclusions about the same monuments. While the theories of Josep Puig i Cadafalch represent the scholarly application of a nationalistic bent, the studies by Marcel Durliat about Roussillon, well into the second half of the 20th century, illustrate a way of seeing the history and social realities of the Middle Ages as a projection of a certain political, centralist and even Jacobin notion of contemporary France. While historians of French or Spanish art during the entire first half of the 20th century disagreed on the chronological priorities of the churches laying along the Way of Saint James, the hostilities between Josep Puig i Cadafalch and the Andalusian archaeologist and historian Manuel Gómez Moreno (1879-1970) often turned into opposing points of view that later had major repercussions on the general vision of artistic priorities.[17]

The mixture of politics, geography and Romanesque architecture triggered impassioned debates during the first third of the 20th century in France as well from radical stances, particularly when referring to the peripheral zones or borderlands, where today's reality is no longer a faithful reflection of mediaeval geography. These areas included Roussillon, Alsace and Corsica, for example. These discussions were more or less impassioned according to the authors' stance, but they have had clear consequences on the historiography of the discipline.[18]

It is within this context that Puig i Cadafalch openly turned from compiling a catalogue of monuments in his volumes about Catalan Romanesque architecture to writing a theory, first on a style[19] and later on its dissemination throughout Europe.[20]

However, Puig's theories on Romanesque architecture would not have had the repercussions they did without the arrival of the personality of Henri Focillon into the art history scene in France. Focillon marked much of the 20th century, especially for the influence his viewpoints have attained in posterity. An heir to the wisdom of the formalist school of Vienna, Henri Focillon defended an autonomous life of forms in his book *La vie des formes* published in 1934. To his mind, the Romanesque work of art was a reality that in itself brings together different factors independent from the external conditions of creation. The form *is* the work of art and makes it evolve. Admired for the quality of his writing and the force of his words, the formalist theory of Focillon, a talented mediaevalist, found powerful resonance

when he applied his positions to Romanesque art. It was in this context that Focillon divulged Puig's views, especially in the vast survey of Western art published in Paris for the first time in 1938.[21]

Nonetheless, before reaching a survey of southern Europe which included Catalonia but not Spain, back in the days of his university education when he had experienced the Renaixença movement firsthand, Puig i Cadafalch had gradually been ripening the idea of contributing to creating a national individuality through mediaeval art.[22] In order to construct a national Romanesque, Puig understood that he had to systematically study the monuments of the country, describe them one by one and analyse them in order to define their originality within a series as the expression of a national whole. With this spirit in mind, he published the work *L'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya* [23] as a first step towards salvaging the country's heritage. He researched the book through expeditions to the Pyrenees to take photographs and draw up floor plans and elevations. He already had a vision of developing a catalogue of monuments to contribute to safeguarding the architectural heritage.

At the same time as Puig i Cadafalch in Vic, Josep Gudiol i Cunill pursued similar objectives taking a different pathway,[24] just as Josep Pijoan[25] had set out to do. Both Gudiol and Puig came from two different traditions within French scholarly circles, the one proposed by Arcisse de Caumont and the other set forth by Jules Quicherat. The latter, from Paris' École des Chartes, reached Catalonia mainly through a French archivist heading to Roussillon, Jean-Auguste Brutails,[26] who spread the notion of viewing monuments as historical documents.

Puig i Cadafalch was an architect, and both his studies and his political leanings and training exerted a heavy influence on his restorations of Romanesque churches, from Montserrat to Cuixà, from Sant Joan de les Abadesses to Sant Benet de Bages, and including less important monuments such as Sant Jaume de Vilanova in El Bages (between 1931 and 1933). He always endowed his interventions with theoretical and deeply ideological connotations.

Josep Puig i Cadafalch's oeuvre survives today through the accumulation of information it contains. *L'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya*, written in conjunction with A. de Falguera and J. Goday and published between 1909 and 1918, was first an endeavour at cataloguing, recognition and organisation. It enabled a coherent history to be written that became both the beacon for future studies and a monumental catalogue of Catalan Romanesque architecture from its origins to the Late Middle Ages. From this vantage point, the contribution of Puig and his helpers[27] is like a veritable archive on Romanesque architecture in Catalonia.[28] His theories, however, gradually came to be disputed.[29] He viewed the Romanesque as follows: "Romanesque art is the result of a long development and separate influences from the Byzantines, the East and Muslim civilisation. Some of the stages in this development can be found in Spain, such as in 9th century Asturian art and 10th century Mozarabic art."[30] Today these matters are regarded with greater complexity.

From late antiquity to the Romanesque

The survival of the religious architecture from late antiquity until the 7th and 8th centuries, and even until the mediaeval period in some cases, contributed to imposing local and traditional forms as well as a technical and stylistic continuity that Romanesque architecture harnessed later on. We are aware of several specific instances of this use of palaeo-Christian basilicas even in later periods in Barcelona, Tarragona, Terrassa, Bovalar (Seròs, Segrià), Empúries and Sant Cugat del Vallès.

The architecture that spans the period from late antiquity to the Romanesque period in the Middle Ages is called late mediaeval and then pre-Romanesque. The roots of this art lay in the creative expansion of the architectural forms from the palaeo-Christian days, which paved the way for and led to the monumental Romanesque forms. In order to define and name this art that developed in Catalonia between the 8th and 10th centuries, today the terms *Mozarabic*, *Carolingian* and *Resettlement* art have been abandoned, although they are suitable for the art of other regions on the Iberian Peninsula or in Europe whose artistic realities are different to those of late mediaeval Catalonia.

The monuments preserved in Catalonia do not permit us to situate the late mediaeval architectural reality within the general debates on Carolingian art.[31] Regarding the pre-Romanesque,[32] however, Catalonia is a regionally coherent architectural reality which can at times compete with important monuments elsewhere. In Catalonia, pre-Romanesque and Romanesque architecture must be viewed as having a strict continuity.[33]

The religious architecture from the late Middle Ages that is conserved in Catalonia is often the simplest kind found in rural settings that benefit from the survival of practical construction techniques that had become common, such as the *opus spicatum* or the vault atop a cane falsework.[34] It should be borne in mind that the humblest constructions are the ones that most often use local materials and reproduce functional floor plans or elevations, often for many centuries, and that this is not always an indication of the age of the architecture. It is not easy to date many of these small buildings because of a lack of documentary information external to the architecture itself. Given this, we mainly have information on the acts of consecration, such as the one at Santa Maria church in La Seu d'Urgell on the 1st of November 839 by Bishop Sisebut with the consent of the Emperor Louis the Pious and Count Sunifred of Cerdanya-Urgell. In this case, the document mentions the parishes that existed at that time within the bishopric of Urgell, Cerdanya, Berguedà, Pallars and Ribagorça, but it does not provide any insight

into the architecture itself. What is more, the date of consecration does not necessarily indicate when construction was completed.

Among the series of monuments from the transition between antiquity and the Middle Ages, the complex that has contributed and continues to contribute the most to the debate is the former church see in Egara, now the town of Terrassa. The churches of Egara, just like their see, are documented from the 5th century until the Arab invasion. It is known that in the mid-5th century the bishopric of Egara developed independently of the bishopric of Barcelona, and that it still existed in the 7th century. The latest information that we have from the period is from Bishop Joan, known in 683 and 693. In 1017, a group of personalities met in the presence of the Count of Barcelona Ramon Borrell and his bishop at Santa Maria church; Eduard Junyent assumed that this meeting was to once again consecrate the churches after the invasions. The next documents we have refer to the consecration of the new building of Santa Maria in 1112 and Sant Pere building one century later. The archaeological continuity of the churches in Terrassa was demonstrated by the excavations of first Josep Puig i Cadafalch and later Josep de Calassanç Serra i Ràfols. In front of and outside Santa Maria, vestiges of palaeo-Christian buildings used for worship have been found, and the two superimposed levels of mosaics from earlier churches in the 4th and 5th centuries are also important. I myself had suggested that this continuity from late antiquity until the Middle Ages might even extend as late as the 11th century, which I believed and still believe is the date of a pavement mosaic conserved in the presbytery of Sant Pere church.

The apse seen today in Santa Maria, which is square outside and horseshoe-shaped inside and has three simple openings, dates from a repair of a building with three naves and perhaps with a transept as well. In contrast, Sant Pere has a trilobe chevet with three wide windows and a transept with long wings, elevated and covered with a barrel vault.

Sant Miquel has a centralised layout and is square both inside and outside, with four niches on each corner. This structure led Puig to believe that it might have been used as a baptistery, although the presence of a crypt poses several problems of affiliation and liturgical use. During the excavations conducted there, Puig i Cadafalch reconstructed – the outcome of a quarrel with Gómez-Moreno – the baptismal font in the middle of the building under the cimborio, which is supported by eight columns with interesting capitals. On the easternmost part, jutting up because of the presence of the trilobe crypt, is the apse with its typical horseshoe shape inside and polygonal shape outside, which also has three windows.

It should be borne in mind that the timeline of all three religious buildings in Terrassa – architectural bodies added to older chevets – has always been the subject of scholarly controversy and heated debate. Puig i Cadafalch had initially defended the Visigothic origin of the current chevet in Santa Maria and the Sant Miquel building, which he dated from the 6th century, an opinion shared by Joan Ainaud. However, Eduard Junyent, Pere de Palol and I have always seen these constructions as late mediaeval vestiges that might date from around the 9th century. Yet everyone has agreed that these elements existed before the 10th century churches with

Figure 2. Layout of the church see of Egara.

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Figure 3. Layout of the church of Sant Miquel de Cuixà. Floor plan of the church and the other buildings and quarters of the monastery as they are today on a 1:400 scale, with indications of the historical stages of their construction. The layout of the crypt of the Nativity Scene is on the lower right corner. (Source: Fototeca.cat - R. Mallol)

their irregular shapes, small windows and trapezoidal apses. In Terrassa, we saw wide windows and Roman-style walls with rows of small ashlars alternating with rows of terra cotta. In the case of Santa Maria, the problem of interpretation has always lain with the correspondence between the apse and the shape of the three-nave chevet dating from the 5th century.

After an international symposium on the churches of Terrassa held in 1991, a comprehensive archaeological excavation project was conducted in several campaigns between 1995 and 2004, resulting in a proposed reinterpretation of the church complex and its historical evolution. The continuity of its occupation since the Iberian period (4th century BC) has been confirmed. Roman

structures, namely funeral chambers, have been confirmed from prior to the church phase in the 5th century. The rectangular building with a square apse outside and semicircular apse inside, which is believed to date from the 5th century, has been attributed to area for Christian worship in the second half of the 4th century, therefore before the church phase. Two chapels on the side walls have also been more accurately identified. In a slightly later phase which the authors date at between 380 and 420-430, there must have been a series of overhauls and extensions which included the construction of a new baptistery behind the apse with a quadrangular-shaped font. The mosaic pavement still conserved in Santa Maria today must date from this phase. The authors identify a phase of pre-church construction in around the 5th century.

The designation of Egara as the church see for Bishop Nundinari of Barcelona between 450 and 460 fostered the creation of a large religious complex presided over by Santa Maria as the cathedral, Sant Miquel as the *martyrium*, and Sant Pere as a parish church. The new Bishop Ireneu was charged with carrying out the architectural appearance of the new church see. The three buildings were laid out on three terraces around a central area used for funerals.

The archaeological campaigns provide many new interpretations of the religious architecture, as well as new proposed timelines. The main basilica, Santa Maria, is a building with three naves separated by columns and capitals. The three initial apses have been replaced by a single apse that is square on the outside and circular inside. Remains of the central nave with a funeral crypt have been identified, and it is suggested that the baptistery was located at the foot of the building.

Regarding Sant Miquel, an external corridor with burials would confirm the use of this building for funerals. We knew that Puig i Cadafalch had hastily restored a baptistery. At the foot of Sant Pere basilica, a double corridor has been identified that connects the parish church with the cathedral avoiding through the funeral area.

Of all the results published, the timelines are still prompting debate. The parts of the complex under discussion – the chevets of Santa Maria and Sant Pere and the entire Sant Miquel building, with the archaeological vestiges uncovered that have been mentioned here – are once again attributed to the early Visigothic period in the 6th century. This also includes Sant Pere parish church (but not the late Romanesque nave) and the murals in Sant Miquel. Personally, I think that the debate on the historical-chronological interpretation of the late mediaeval buildings is still not resolved.[35]

Religious complexes from the late Middle Ages with two or three churches and a baptistery have always been recognised in Catalonia. However, recently a highly original connection has been found among the Catalan Benedictine monastic groups in three churches regarded as dating from the Carolingian period, yet with a tradition that lasted until the Romanesque period and with the church groups from late antiquity as their typological, structural and spiritual source. This concept of monastic complex would be applicable for Cuixà and Ripoll, but not for other monasteries like Sant Martí del Canigó.[36]

Little information and few buildings survive from the 9th century. However, we do know that many of them were in poor shape and that they were repaired during the 10th century, such as the cathedral of Elne, or that they were rebuilt in the early Romanesque period, such as the cathedrals in La Seu d'Urgell and Vic. Two documents prove the abandonment and ruin of Catalan churches in the late 9th century: the Carolingian precept from 898 granted to the Bishop of Elne, and King Charles' 899 authorisation to the Metropolitan of Narbonne, which stressed not only the ruinous state of the churches in the diocese but also the impossibility of restoring them. During the 9th and 10th centuries, the building campaign reached the monasteries as well. This holds true for Ripoll (935), Serrateix (940), Sant Pere de les Puelles of Barcelona (945), Santa Cecília of Montserrat (957), Sant Benet of El Bages (972) and Sant Miquel de Cuixà (953).

The church in Cuixà offers us a good sense of the possible appearance of the large abbatial churches or cathedrals of Catalonia in the second half of the 10th century. They were dominated by rectangular naves, triple naves in the most important churches, and were covered with
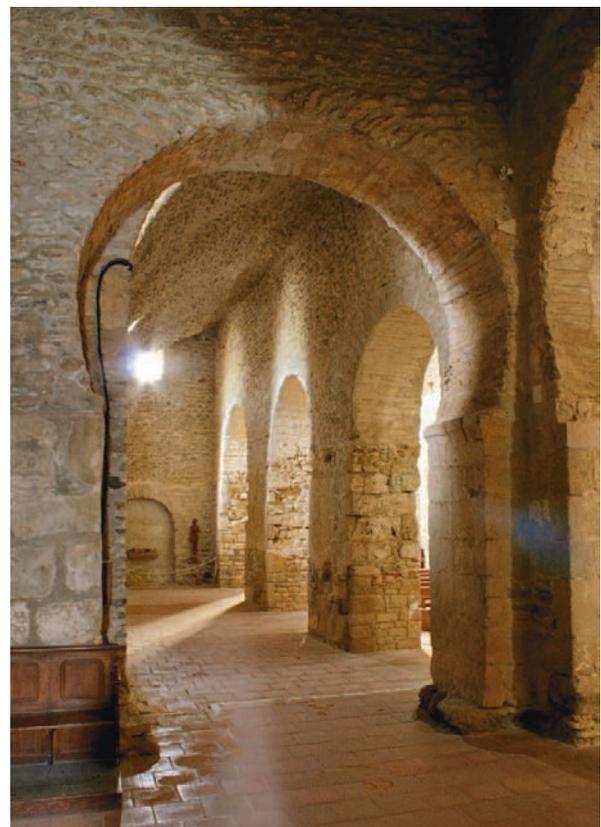

Figure 4. View of the southern side nave in Sant Miquel Cuixà from the southern wing of the transept. The ultra-semicircular arches can be seen.

Figure 5. *Belfry in Sant Miquel de Cuixà. Photo: Jesús Cano Sánchez.*

wood. The building in Cuixà has three short naves separated by rectangular pillars and arcades and surmounted by a noteworthy transept, from which the tip of the northern wing has disappeared. The arcades are ultrasemicircular in shape, with transoms that jut out, and they are built with the help of staggered stones on the lower part of the arcades which radiate out on the upper part. This kind of arcade might derive from a late ancient and local tradition. The main nave, which is covered with wood, is longer than the side naves and has an extra stretch on the western side. The presbytery is made up of five deep apses, the main one rectangular while the others are deep semicircles. It was traditionally believed that on either side of the main apse there must have been two doors which originally led outside. However, today doubt has been cast on this claim.[37]

The magnificence of the architecture in Cuixà demonstrates a clear desire to revamp the palaeo-Christian basilica.[38] The separation between the naves and the wooden roof comes from the palaeo-Christian tradition, as does the formula of the large jutting transept and several apses, five in this case, as only the most important buildings in the late ancient world had. It also inherited the rectangular shape of the main apse from this period. The pathway leading to the Romanesque can be glimpsed

with the elongated semicircular shape of the lateral apses, which in Cuixà were covered with vaults in the 10th century.

In the more modest churches, the apse, usually small and covered with a stone vault, had a ultrasemicircular shape inside and a rectangular shape outside in their most ancient period. However, over time ultrasemicircular layouts also began to appear on the outside (Sant Quirze de Pedret), until they became semicircular (Sant Andreu de Sureda). The transept could vary and be either higher than the nave (Canapost or Sant Pere of Terrassa) or lower than it (Sant Genís les Fonts or Sant Andreu of Sureda). Many small rural churches still survive from this period. They are built of stone and reinforced on the corners, with a single rectangular nave and a horseshoe-shaped, triangular or trapezoidal apse, generally covered with a stone vault. The naves, first covered with wood, gradually came to feature vaults supported by frames resting on main arches, or more frequently on lateral buttresses. There is a difference in height and width between the nave and the apse, the latter being lower, creating a very characteristic relationship between external and internal volumes. Likewise, the windows are small and simple to open, and they tend to appear in the apse walls or the southern wall. There are two kinds of arches: the first, from a clearly Roman tradition, is the semicircular arch over transoms that jut out over the peak of the arch. The second kind, which is also local, is a ultrasemicircular shaped arch which rests on two imposts, with the transoms jutting out over the peak of the arch. The doorway generally faces south so the nave can be lit naturally during the mass. The churches of Santa Maria del Marquet, Obiols, Canapost, Sant Quirze de Pedret and Sant Julià de Boada fall within this type.[39]

In Sant Miquel de Cuixà, we can note the continuity between the pre-Romanesque and the 9th century Romanesque, as the former still survives amidst the new constructions and Romanesque enlargements. In smaller structures, these reuses and enrichments are common, a phenomenon that characterises all the architecture built around the turn of the millennium.[40]

THE QUESTION OF THE EARLIEST ROMANESQUE ART IN THE 11TH CENTURY

Using a comparative method, and within the historical positivism of his day, Puig i Cadafalch defined the architecture of the early Romanesque as an itinerant style from southern European characteristic of the first third of the 11th century. The common feature was the reappearance of the vault, an element whose different modalities enabled him to develop a structural, chronological and geographical classification.[41] Puig used his theory to situate Catalan Romanesque art in the world, while also endowing his clear and open national struggle to architecturally define the origins of his country with content.

Based on very specific characteristics (the small arches misnamed "Lombard" arches, the stonework and the roofs with stone vaults), he established a sequence that sprang from the eastern zone of Moldavia and the Balkans and was consolidated in northern Italy and Catalonia before heading towards northern Europe, where the 10th century Ottonian architectural tradition[42] and the traditions of the previous Carolingian tradition[43] had taken root.

Early 11th century religious architecture is particularly interesting in that once the large pre-Romanesque constructions from the second half of the 10th century were completed, while the mortar was still fresh and the paintings barely completed, the patrons of the Church and those who had the economic wherewithal were already considering improving a society that in less than 50 years set out to reconstruct cathedrals, monasteries and all kinds of churches. This was clear shortly after 1000, when the historian from Cluny, Raoul Glaber, noted that the West was being covered by "a white mantle of churches".

Within the theoretical realm of the earliest southern Romanesque art, a unique role has been attributed to the Lombard masters.[44] We should recall the historiographic use made of the existence, one century later, of a contract dated 1175 for a master builder named "Ramon, dit Lambard" to build a roof of the temple and other constructions in the cathedral of La Seu d'Urgell, and the recent proposition of considering the surname "Lambard" synonymous with builder.[45] For many years, the theory – erroneous, to my mind –[46] has been upheld of groups of itinerant yet highly celebrated stonecutters from Lombardy who travelled around the north of the Iberian Peninsula and southern France and finally reached northern Europe.[47]

Recently, Joan Duran-Porta has revisited the issue by arguing from several different standpoints that the term "lambard" in Catalonia was synonymous with builder and that it had nothing to do with the purported itinerant masters who must have come from Lombardy to build churches during the first half of the 11th century: one of the most uncertain, if not totally nonexistent, "historiographic certainties" around.[48]

Without leaving the 11th century, in this geographic region of southern Europe, established based on the architectural examples conserved through central and northern Italy, Provence, Catalonia and the Rhone and Saône valleys, we can find a kind of architecture with common features, more or less standard decoration characterised by the presence of elements like small arches incorporated into the frieze and vertical trim.[49] Certainly the earliest Romanesque art is not a phenomenon limited to the Lombard expansion of the Comacini masters;[50] rather we must also consider the survival of a prior Roman tradition[51] enriched by the presence of the Muslim culture on the Iberian Peninsula,[52] contacts with Byzantium in Italy and the legacy of the Carolingian and later Ottonian world in Burgundy.[53]

In this period, we can note the rising strength of the monastic cultural movement, which is primarily perceptible thanks to the figure of Oliba, the Abbot of Ripoll, Sant Miquel de Cuixà or Sant Pere de Fenollet and Santa Maria d'Arles in the Tec Valley, following the Clunian trend of a single abbot shepherding several abbeys in order to make the renovation more effective. In his mandate, he spearheaded an active architectural policy and commissions of sumptuary works. In contrast, few buildings were built in Catalonia through a direct link with Cluny, and we could say that the architectural influence exerted by the large Clunian constructions is paradoxically almost nonexistent in Catalonia in both the 11th and then throughout the 12th centuries.[54] This is surprising if we bear in mind the importance of Cluny and its cultural, political and religious clout.[55]

Abbot Oliba's religious architecture has recently undergone a new reflection as a whole, in addition to the surveys of many specific cases by Gerardo Boto.[56] Topographical considerations and occasional observations have led this author to temper Oliba's voluntary Roman influence, stressing the contacts with more northern regions while insisting on our scarce knowledge of monastery architecture, with the exception of church spaces. In the cloister in Sant Cugat, Boto suggests guessing at the architectural structures of a processional liturgy, while in Cuixà he suggests a new interpretation without the openings to the outdoors that the chevet of the 10th century basilica was always assumed to have. This observation leads to the assumption of a chevet with seven apses built under Abbot Garí in the 10th century. This would mean that Oliba had created a liturgical circulation that had totally enveloped the chevet closed in the 10th century. Oliba's chevet in Ripoll, according to the same author wielding discerning arguments, would reference northern models more than the tradition of Saint Peter's in Rome, given that it in fact did not have seven jutting apses as Ripoll did. In contrast, the system of naves would have been drawn from the Roman tradition, while the circular structures in Cuixà and Vic, located on the west, would evoke prestigious Mariological prototypes with funerary connotations.

Many buildings in Catalonia conserved from this period have benefitted from specific studies. Sant Vicenç de Cardona, which Eduard Junyent described as "one of the most finished and characteristic models of a period", is what has achieved the historiographic rank of emblem of the early Romanesque style thanks to a skilful distribution of spaces and a vault which has even been deemed bold.[57] The stonework on the wall, simultaneously constructive and decorative, is characteristic, as is the relationship of volumes both indoors and outdoors. Cardona is the best example of architectural quality that Puig i Cadafalch studied and that the Frenchman Henri Focillon disseminated.[58] To formally define the Romanesque art that was built, Henri Focillon believed that the most characteristic feature of the church in Cardona was the distribution of

Figure 6. Interior of the central nave of Sant Vicenç de Cardona. Photo: Jesús Cano Sánchez.

outside volumes. Certainly, if the indoor space is finely wrought in terms of the amount of light and the structure of the different architectural elements, outside the volumes are what truly draw the eye. An element like the transept, which is practically concealed at ground level, takes on a great deal of strength in the building's outer shape, clearly marking the Latin cross of the floor plan. The outside is not only a faithful transcription of the liturgical space inside; rather it very clearly conveys the Romanesque masters' concern with the building's structural balance by resting the vaults atop each other.

In this sense, the massive appearance of the building, especially inside, was sought or, even more accurately, needed. The higher elevation of the central nave and the overall height of the building required it to rest on sturdy supports (walls and pillars) and simultaneously required the side naves to be narrower so they could act as buttresses. To complete the balance of forces, each stretch in these side naves was subdivided into three smaller areas covered with groined vaults. This entire articulation visually led to a verticality that is rarely seen in Catalan Romanesque architecture.

The illumination of the church in Cardona is original and achieved through a combination of direct and indi-

rect light that helps to shape the building's internal volumes. The openings that enable light to directly enter the main nave are the upper windows in this same nave (perhaps one of the modifications to the initial design) and the windows in the apse and the facade. The indirect light filters in through the windows on the side naves, the dome in the crossing and the ends of the transept. This is not the usual way Romanesque churches were illuminated, as they rarely had openings on the central nave. In this case (just like in Santa Eulàlia de Fullà in El Conflent), the higher elevation of this nave, which is also unusual, enables direct light to reach the main area of the building.

The architectural role, the originality and the importance of the church of Sant Martí del Canigó have recently been promoted with a clear tendency to confer more importance on this building than what it has traditionally been given. The construction of the two levels of this monastery church on a difficult site in the first few decades of the 11th century meant that the current trends were adopted, but in an original way. This included the presence of seven chapels with altars which, instead of being arranged around the chevet, as in Ripoll, were distributed at different levels, while the lower nave served as a crypt with a highly original structure and a three-part chevet.[59]

Other important buildings within 11th century architecture also deserve our attention, including the canonical church in Àger, which has a single monumental complex along with the possibilities and limitations of early southern Romanesque art. These two churches contrast with the monastic basilica in Sant Pere de Rodes, where the superimposition of orders and a unique chevet provide evidence for an origin within a classically-rooted tradition which must have coexisted alongside the local Romanesque propositions and their innovations and fashions in the 11th century.[60]

After the death of Abbot Oliba, we can find churches like the one in Sant Jaume de Frontanyà with a facade organised in a monumental style, the one in Sant Martí Sescorts, which bears similarities to the former, and the monastery in Sant Llorenç del Munt, a good example of a basilica with a rectangular layout.

The comparative lessons of the monastery churches in Ripoll and Cuixà

As the year 1000 drew closer, these two monasteries had just opened two churches which were exceptional due to their size and the scope of the project, which stemmed from neither physical problems nor recent fires. Abbot Oliba was a building abbot comparable in many respects to other great European prelates at the time,[61] and he decided to reconstruct them out of prestige and taste, to integrate a new style that was quickly making pre-Romanesque art seem obsolete. None of these monasteries needed a larger church either to serve the monastic com-

munity or for public use. However, his approach as a builder was different in each case.

The pre-Romanesque buildings in Cuixà and Ripoll were the most spectacular examples of pre-Romanesque architecture in Catalonia, but Abbot Oliba neither could nor wanted to remain on the sidelines of the new developments in architecture and ordered them rebuilt. In Ripoll, he tore everything down to build a new church, whereas in Cuixà he might have thought that the size of the monument, the site where it was located and the evolution of the internal history of the complex in relation to the monumental setting did not justify wholesale demolition and reconstruction, unless driven solely by ideology. In Cuixà, I believe that he tried to perform an even more symbolic act: to conserve the church just as it was and to envelop the most sacred part, the apse, with a chevet rendered in the new style, like a kind of architectural crown to even further ennoble the faithfulness to the past by conserving the roots of the site in all their glory. At the same time, he supplied it with two belfries that were supposed to mark the holy monumental landscape which was to be imposed all over the region, and he added a building on the west centred over a crypt, which was very fashionable at the time, which he dedicated respectively to the Trinity and to the Virgin Mary.

The two best-known architectural phases in the churches in both Cuixà and Ripoll are very close chronologically. The pre-Romanesque basilicas were consecrated in 974 and 977, respectively, and it was impossible that the builders of two large buildings consecrated only three years apart were not keeping an eye on each other as they built. Both early Romanesque basilicas, consecrated in 1040 and 1032, respectively, were almost certainly also the subject of major debates, especially since they had the same patron. The decision to once again build two buildings that were only a little over 50 years old at the time was taken by the same man, Abbot Oliba, who likewise soon after becoming the Bishop of Vic took a similar decision to reconstruct and consecrate the cathedral of Sant Pere in this city in 1038, despite the existence of a previous church complex that was still being used in 1017.

In Ripoll, the current state of research does not allow us to say whether the 1032 basilica preserved any of the structure from the preceding one. The problem revolves around how the enlargement was undertaken, that is, to what extent the existing structures were reused. Junyent posited an enlargement of the chevet with a transept and seven apses, and of the facade with two towers. This structure of a chevet with three apses aligned on each wing of the transept and a larger one surmounting the central nave confirms the unity and balance of the design. Likewise, the breadth of the central nave allows us to consider the reuse of pre-Romanesque structures. Another element that has been debated is the kind of roof that the building had back in Oliba's day. While Junyent was in favour of the wooden roof remaining until the 12th century, what Puig i Cadafalch clearly viewed as the coexist-

ence of wood and stone roofs in the early Romanesque leads us to believe that the roof of the nave with a barrel vault must have been one of Abbot Oliba's interventions in the early 11th century.

Recently, the political and symbolic nature of the 11th century basilica in Ripoll has been spotlighted, which was reflected in the act of consecration. Imma Lorés and Carles Mancho have re-examined photographs of the building prior to Rogent's intervention and have reached the conclusion that part of the pre-Oliba building was conserved in the reconstruction of a building where the enlargements had not ceased.[62]

If we continue to think that he was the one who took the decisions on architectural symbolism, Abbot Oliba must have decided to go from five apses – although we do not know whether this was the number of apses in pre-Romanesque Ripoll – to seven, aligning them around the transept. This has been interpreted as the reflection of a clearly unifying and programmatic desire to somehow reproduce the layout of the chevet of the most prestigious monument in Western Christianity: Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome.

I have personally stressed the Roman bent of the architecture promoted by Oliba as a specific example of the sights on Rome that obsessed the builders in the Romanesque period.[63] Oliba had personally gone to Rome at least twice when he was still an abbot, in 1011 and 1016. Once he was the Bishop of Vic, he most likely returned there another time. In Ripoll, in around 1032 his abbey decided to inspire a construction that looked towards the chevet of the most symbolic temple in Roman Christianity: Saint Peter's Basilica. In Vic, six years later, he had a circular church built devoted to the Virgin Mary. With it, in around 1038 he aimed to directly echo the celebrated circular building which, after being the Roman Pantheon, became a church that Pope Boniface IV had dedicated to the Virgin Mary and all the saints on the 13th of May 609 as Santa Maria dei Martiri. Oliba probably did not have the economic wherewithal to transport all the ancient materials needed to build his prestigious basilicas from Rome to Ripoll and Vic. Instead, he wisely used local forms of construction, materials and master builders, for both economic and also probably ideological reasons, to carry out a Roman idea and policy that he managed to capture in architectural forms.

At that time, the prestige of Rome stemmed not only from the palaeo-Christian basilicas dating from the time of Constantine and the tombs of the saints and martyrs; rather it mainly came from the ancient works of art, the colossal architecture of the Pantheon and the Coliseum and even more from the monuments that associated the symbols of history with the prestige of architectural and artistic creation: the Arch of Constantine and the historical columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, for example. In Vic, in front of the cathedral, I have proposed that Oliba wanted to draw inspiration from the Roman Pantheon as part of an ideological and political architecture pro-

gramme[64] which reflected a widespread trend among the elites of the day.[65]

Studies on the cathedrals in La Seu d'Urgell, Girona and Vic

Cathedrals were the most important religious monuments in mediaeval Catalonia and in the Middle Ages in general because of both their presence in the city and the wealth of creativity they inspired.[66] The main religious architectural forms were devised in the cathedrals at each point in the Middle Ages.[67] Despite their importance in the study of mediaeval art, only recently have cathedrals benefitted from monographic studies,[68] and we now have more exhaustive excavations of cathedrals – chiefly in Vic and Girona – which shed further light on the formal and constructive aspects of the periods that predated the current building.

Until a few years ago, the cathedral of Santa Maria in La Seu d'Urgell was the only testimony shedding clear light on what church complexes were like in the Romanesque period in Catalonia. In the late Middle Ages, the main temple was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the other two churches to Saint Michael (Sant Miquel) and Saint Peter (Sant Pere), and Saint Andrew (Sant Andreu). The complex also had a church dedicated to Saint Eulalia. After the year 1000, the church of Sant Miquel was once

again consecrated in 1035, as were Sant Pere and Santa Maria in 1040, after having undergone wholesale overhauls which would last throughout the 11th century, as demonstrated by the testimonial legacy preserved. However, the building in La Seu d'Urgell that we see today is a much later one stemming from a number of religious and secular contributions. The contract that a man named "Ramon, dit Lambard" signed with the cathedral chapterhouse in 1175 is a document of particular importance which stated that this builder was to roof the entire church, finish it faithfully and without cheating, and build the belfries, all within seven years.[69] By the end of the century, the building had been fully covered and the belfries were underway, although they were not finished as construction was halted in 1195 because of the battle between the Bishop and the Count of Castellbò, who attacked the city and the cathedral.[70]

In terms of its floor plan, the cathedral in La Seu d'Urgell seems to be laid out based on prototypes of the monumental Romanesque church. It has a basilica layout with three naves crossed by a large transept, like the ones found in Sant Miquel de Cuixà and in Santa Maria of Ripoll, and a chevet made of five semicircular apses. The crosssing, which was supposed to be finished with towers on either side that were ultimately never built, has such thick walls that the side apses are embedded within them. As result, thanks to the importance of the presbytery, the central apse stands out and takes prominence. The central

Figure 7. Exterior of the chevet of the cathedral of La Seu d'Urgell. Photo: Jesús Cano Sánchez.

nave is covered with a barrel vault reinforced with main arches that start from a cornice running around the nave held up on corbels. The side naves have ribbed arches; the wings of the transept have a barrel vault without main arches; and the crossing has a dome made of a vault with large ribs. The most spectacular part of the outside of the cathedral is its chevet, especially the central apse. Attached half-columns, inspired by the pilasters of the early Romanesque, articulate the apse, which has three large windows with graduated arches and a fascinating upper gallery which is clearly indebted to Italian models. This gallery, which has semicircular arches, confers a great deal of transparency and monumentality on the apse while also illuminating the transept.

The cathedral in La Seu d'Urgell is proof of an overall trend in mediaeval religious architecture to gradually unify the area of worship, which in the late Middle Ages tended to multiply the spaces and churches in a single place. In La Seu d'Urgell, the main church, Santa Maria, was surrounded by four other churches which a recent study have indicated might have been major pilgrimage sites.[71]

The cathedral of Girona was very poorly known in the periods prior to the Gothic. First the excavations and then Marc Sureda's doctoral thesis and numerous articles have shed a great deal of light onto the Romanesque cathedral of Girona and its forerunners thanks to the physical remains detected in the area. Sureda has gradually combined this with abundant information from written sources and a comparative study. In his thesis, the historiographic section reveals the different opinions on the history of the cathedral and its buildings since the 17th century. The complex dating from Roman times consisted of the religious square of the city's forum. Because the centuries of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages left no identifiable physical traces, the next architectural complex revealed today is the 11th century cathedral (started in around 1010), each of whose parts Sureda outlines in detail along with their general features (placement, building techniques and decoration).[72] In Girona, the cathedral consecrated in 1038 had a massive body on the west that we now know about thanks to the excavations and liturgical texts. It had a symmetrical layout with a central body as wide as the nave, flanked by two side bodies that were almost perfect squares. It was a monumental complex that played the role of an entry tower, perhaps with two levels. The building had a single nave 11.5 metres wide inside and less than 20 metres tall. It had a transept whose wings barely jutted out, and a little-known chevet which is assumed to have been made up of a single, large apse that stood out considerably, like the one in Vic.

In Vic, after my monograph on the cathedral was published,[73] the discovery of a 17th century floor plan in the Municipal Archive of Mataró, along with the new proof yielded from the archaeological excavations in the transept, has enabled us to get a better grasp of the cathedral's layout. The transept is straight and the square-shaped side apses are shallow and embedded in the walls.[74] Another important recent contribution was the excavations

in front of the basilica of Sant Pere, which revealed the rotunda dedicated to the Virgin Mary that Oliba consecrated in 1038 on a site where no earlier building of Christian worship has been found, although a necropolis had been located there. It was a small building measuring 10.5 metres in diameter with an apse, which was rebuilt and enlarged in the 12th century in a project promoted by Guillem Bofill in 1140. Its internal diameter was 25 metres, and it had a small, central crypt located inside the apse of the previous basilica.[75]

TYPOLOGY OF THE STRUCTURES

In his treatise, Josep Puig i Cadafalch, as a good historian of architecture, often classified monuments according to the typology of their structures. Many certainties remain from his study, but there are also dubious areas awaiting clarification in future studies.

Perhaps an even more serious lack in Catalonia today is a documentary and archaeological study of the construction, the organisation of work and the technical aspects oriented at the social history of architecture.[76]

When evoking the studies on the cathedral of Girona, I have already mentioned the new developments in the western part of the building[77] which Francesca Español had guessed at when studying this reality in Catalonia.[78] The field of architecture is now paying more attention to these new developments than it has in many years.[79]

Another conceptual realm in which 11th century architecture in Catalonia fully expressed itself was monumental crypts. There are remarkable examples in Cuixà and Vic, and the crypt hall pattern started to be disseminated in the first few decades of the 11th century.[80] In this realm, one of the greatest gaps in our knowledge of crypts is the one in the basilica of Ripoll, according to Elies Rogent's observations. In this vein, it has been claimed that the typology of the building must include a crypt, a statement which is based on the interpretation of some 19th century historical notes that mentioned the presence of abbots' tombs under the pavement. In reality, the excavations conducted in the presbytery have yielded no results to confirm this, although we can assume that the hypothetical crypt might be located further along, inside the nave of the church. In fact, there is an underground vaulted cavity under the main nave, although it is quite difficult to enter.[81] Elies Rogent had noted this crypt in his elevations. New surveys must be conducted in the three naves beyond the excavations performed under the crossing and the chevet.

One of the most characteristic and popular features of the Catalan Romanesque is belfries, which also served to keep watch over and defend the church and towns and were veritable hallmarks of identity. As the Romanesque period progressed, these structures are increasingly less massive and more slender. The square-shaped belfry four or more storeys tall with windows crowned with semicir-

cular arches gained in popularity in the first half of the 11th century.[82] In Santa Maria of Ripoll, for example, the belfries are located on either side of the building's facade. In Sant Miquel de Cuixà, two belfries are located on the ends of the crossing, while in the cathedral of Vic there is only one belfry, although according to certain ancient descriptions, there might have been plans for two of them flanking the transept.

The Romanesque belfry in the cathedral of Girona is one of the prime examples of this model, with a square floor plan and cubic elevation divided into different levels decorated with pilasters and blind arches and changing windows on the upper and lower parts of the main body. It has seven levels separated by friezes of arches which are virtually blind on the two lower levels. The belfry of Sant Pere of Vic is documented as far back as 1059. It is made of small, regular stones and is situated on the northern side of the cathedral near the Sant Joan doorway of the transept. A floor plan preserved from the 16th century shows that the belfry was freestanding from the main building and was only connected to it via a narrow walkway. This is not a unique solution but can also be found in Sant Miquel de Fluvià.

Religious architecture and liturgy

Another fundamental issue that has helped to break the stalemate in studies on religious architecture is the relationship between the form, the architectural typology and the function.[83] This follows a tendency from abroad that had gotten underway with reflections on Carolingian processional liturgy[84] and was enriched more recently with the studies by Eric Palazzo, often in contact with realities from mediaeval Catalonia.[85] Several contributions have been promoted by the Catalan Society of Liturgical Studies,[86] and new reflections have focused on the importance of the monastic reflections on the Trinity in the development of the pre-Romanesque and Romanesque architectural programme of the basilica of Sant Miquel in Cuixà.[87]

As part of these reflections, the relations between privileged burials and architecture,[88] between altars and architecture[89] and between cloisters and church space[90] are stimulating as subjects of study in order to better understand how architecture operated during the Romanesque period. The study that Marc Sureda has just devoted to a 1388 pastoral visit to the cathedral of Vic illustrates everything that can be extracted from these late documents in order to understand Romanesque buildings and their liturgical functions back when they conserved the majority of their original features that date back to the 11th century, as Vic does.[91]

It should become more and more difficult to study mediaeval religious architecture without first reflecting on the liturgy.[92] A recent study on the cathedral in La Seu d'Urgell has related the urban topography and cathedral with its churches with holy sites of pilgrimage and seasonal liturgy, demonstrating that it is impossible to understand the relations among the different buildings of worship in an architectural complex without knowing how they were used.[93] However, sometimes historians err methodologically when they forget that religious architecture has economic and technical imperatives that go beyond the liturgy.[94]

The transition from the 11th to 12th centuries

The major construction projects that had gotten underway before 1050 were completed during the second half of the 11th century, and the process of renovation and reconstruction of church and monastic buildings that characterised what is called the early Romanesque continued unabated.

Throughout the last few decades of the 20th century, a historiographic trend developed in studies on mediaeval art which exaggerated the effects of the Church reform known as the Gregorian Reform after Pope Gregory VII, who died in 1085. In some cases, it has been extended to the entire religious artistic output of the period and even to geographic regions quite far from the Rome of the reforming pope from the late 11th century.[95] In many cases, historians even depart from the conceptual framework of images and figuration to enter religious architecture understood as a discourse.[96]

In Catalonia, the absence of major figurative monumental works from this period that are directly related to Rome means that the subject must be approached in more general and less chronologically limited terms out of the desire to re-appropriate the ancient in the architectural and artistic creation from a period which is in no way limited to the late 11th and early 12th centuries.[97]

This issue is related to another important aspect of the Romanesque Middle Ages: pilgrimages and religious architecture.[98] In Catalonia, the issue of the Ways of Saint James[99] poses no architectural problems of affiliation or dependence as it does in other areas, and in any event it cannot compete with the pilgrimage to Rome.[100]

Starting in the second half of the 11th century, the monastic orders in Catalonia embarked on a process of expansion, especially the canonical orders, beyond the apogee of Benedictine monasticism. This phenomenon, which started particularly in the monastery of Santa Maria de Vilabertran, was unquestionably grounded on the canonical reform of Saint Rufus of Avignon. Saint Ollegarius himself, who had served as the prior in this canonical church, was a driving force behind the reform in Catalonia when he became the Bishop of Barcelona and reinstated the Metropolitan of Tarragona. The fact that many parishes were reconverted into canonical churches or priories unquestionably fostered the revamping of the architecture.

This profusion continued during the 12th century, when new religious orders were established in Catalonia that would supply their own constructions. In 1110, the Order of the Hospital arrived, followed by the Order of the Temple in 1130 and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in 1150.

The master builders who had worked in Catalonia on the renovation and reconstruction of the large cathedrals in the first few decades of the 11th century had formed a school and continued working either on the continuation of these projects or on the reform of other churches that had not undergone this process earlier. This reconstruction movement extended from the countships in the easternmost part of Catalonia towards the Pyrenees, and then headed towards the western part of the country towards the lands that had just been conquered back from the Muslims. In some cases, this renovation meant building from scratch and tearing down the previous structures, while in others the existing building was only partly modified.

Therefore, the country opened itself up to new lands which had to be Christianised and economically and socially reactivated. The lands conquered from the Muslims became virgin territory for the construction of cathedrals and monasteries, churches and chapels, or for the reconversion former mosques, such as the Seu Vella (old cathedral) of Lleida.

All of this bustling architectural activity came hand in hand with the vast wave of church renovation and reform in the second half of the century, mainly spurred from France and Italy, which meant that more or less close ties were forged with monasteries abroad.

Logically, the construction reform was propagated in the countships closest to Roussillon, including Besalú, Empúries and Girona. There, the basilica structure, mainly with a single nave either with or without a transept, received a new impetus. In the bishopric of Urgell, the old churches had practically not been reformed since the 10th century, so the renovation movement gained special momentum there. The most emblematic project was the construction of the new cathedral, which adopted the well-known forms of the basilica layout with a single nave, transept and rather simple chevet. This typology also reached the Vall de Boí region, even though some structures still retained their wooden sloped roof held up by columns, most likely due to a simple lack of resources to finance the high cost of a stone vault. The tradition of the early Romanesque continued in the inland regions of Catalonia with the addition of new elements like the early attempts at a pointed vault, a more prominent presence of sculptural decorations and the use of columns either attached to pillars and apses or flanking the doorways. The monumentality of the early Romanesque was enhanced by the decorative component and the profusion of sculpture, works by artists with close ties to Roussillon which could also be seen in the sculpture of Toulouse.

Figure 8. Interior of Sant Pere of Besalú, showing the deambulatory of the chevet. Photo: Jesús Cano Sánchez.

In this sense, there has been talk of eclecticism at the turn of the century, in which Catalan architecture opened up to a wide range of influences that foreshadowed the Catalan religious architecture scene of the 12th century. A good example of the diversity of solutions that this eclecticism fostered are the three churches in Besalú, all from around the same date but with totally different appearances: Santa Maria, with its outstanding quality of architecture and sculpture which has aroused so many debates about their original dates; Sant Vicenç parish church, with an archaic three-nave layout;[101] and Sant Pere, with a deambulatory with columns and capitals as if it aimed to reflect what was being done in certain regions in France.[102] Excavations in Santa Maria have helped shed light on the layout of the church prior to 1000, with three naves and three apses, as well as how the archaeological sequence is organised.[103] Regarding major construction projects, generally speaking the architecture from that period provides evidence of an opening to the outside world; perhaps towards Italy in La Seu d'Urgell, towards Provençal forms in Sant Cugat del Vallès and towards Toulouse in the cathedral of Solsona.

Based on evidence from the first half of the 11th century, a typology of building had been developed with a basilica layout with one or three naves covered with a barrel vault in the central nave and with half-barrel vault on the side naves. The model of a chevet with three apses with a transept open to a single nave was increasingly rare, although some examples of it were built at a later date, including the church at the monastery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses. The pillars, which tended to be rectangular in shape, gradually took on a more cruciform shape and supported the decorative arcades in the apses and vaults with their attached columns. The crossing could be more or less obvious. Regarding the external appearance of the building, blind arches were the main decorative element, especially in the apse, but they gradually gave way to attached columns and corbels under serrated friezes. The belfries retained their previous structure, but they were increasingly slender.

The continuing validity of the structural models created almost one century earlier is clear in cases like the church of Santa Maria in Besalú, where the chevet seems to have been reformed in the 12th century, although the three naves of the church consecrated in 1055 were left standing. If this hypothesis is accurate, it would not be the only example in Catalonia since we can find similar interventions in Santa Maria of Serrabona and in Santa Maria of Cornellà de Conflent, for example.

Among the new developments contributed by French architecture we can mention not only the more decorative appearance of the sculptures but also the apsidioles embedded inside the thick walls. Churches like the new cathedral in La Seu d'Urgell and Sant Pere of Besalú are good examples of this influence.

Figure 9. Interior of the Seu Vella (old cathedral) of Lleida. Photo: Jesús Cano Sánchez.

Likewise, starting in the late 11th century, we gradually see much more meticulous stonecutting wrought by master stonecutters who were highly skilled in their trade. The ashlars were larger and better squared, and the blocks were arranged in a much more orderly fashion. The neatness of the cutting technique made it possible to craft decorative architectural elements (cornices, attached columns, imposts) which gradually came to enrich the monumentality of the basilicas from the 11th century. These ornamental elements, which started out quite simple, gradually evolved towards more complex forms until becoming large capitals and tympana rendered in the second half of the 12th and the 13th centuries. Monastery cloisters would play a key role in this, with their galleries and double columns holding up the arcades, which offered vast possibilities for developing ornamental sculpture.

Another element imported from abroad is the chevet with a deambulatory, which was used in buildings like Sant Joan de les Abadesses, Sant Pere of Besalú and the monastery of Poblet and was directly inspired by the 11th and 12th century French models, although ultimately they did not prosper in Catalonia.

Late Romanesque architecture (12th – 13th centuries)

The late Romanesque got underway in Catalonia – and it is worth stressing again – right in the midst of the Gothic period. Romanesque architecture from the middle and second half of the 12th century, both in Catalonia and elsewhere, is characterised by the use of large sculpted facades which follow a strict architectural composition. In Catalonia, the triumphal feel of the large doorway in Ripoll is highlighted by the shape and composition of the architecture of the sculpted façade. It is no longer a carbon copy of a classical triumphal arch; rather it reveals such profound knowledge among the builders of this kind of monument that they were empowered to organise the whole into two superimposed levels set off by two staggered columns on either corner crowned by a continuous frieze. The comparison with the decoration of Carolingian reliquaries in the shape of triumphal arches offered by Eginard in the Abbey of Saint Servatius of Maastricht reveals the triumphal symbolism: in both cases the upper register appears occupied by an image of Christ triumphant which dominates the figures of the historical personages who have announced, prepared or contributed to the fact that the Kingdom of Christ has been realised on Earth. This is a Christian version of the Roman programmes aimed at glorifying the emperor.[104]

In Provence, for example, an exceptional monument dominates the architectural structure of the 12th century facades: the facade of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. Three doorways decorated with statues and reliefs brimming with iconography invade the facade, which is in turn enriched with pillars, porticoes and columns. They form a coherent whole linked to a meticulously planned architectural and iconographic programme whose style influenced many aspects of late Romanesque art in the Mediterranean. In the neighbouring town of Arles, another large-scale construction project was undertaken during the same period: the western doorway of Saint Trophime, embedded in the facade, has a structure similar to that of Saint-Gilles but reduced to a single doorway. There we find a composition based on architraves and friezes which are completed with a colonnade interspersed with statues, like a kind of monumental Romanesque religious tribute to the great triumphal monuments of the ancient world.[105]

In the 13th century, the main developments in Catalonia included not only the expansion of the Cistercians but also the construction of the Seu Vella (old cathedral) of Lleida and the cathedral of Tarragona.[106] The functional architecture of the Cistercian order had arrived before that, however, and had begun to gain ground since the first half of the 12th century with the founding of large monasteries like Poblet (1149), Santes Creus (1160) and Vallbona de les Monges (1157). The functionality that was supposed to dominate Cistercian buildings meant that they were developed using new technical solutions, such as the pointed arch and new concepts of how to lay out the architectural spaces and support the roofs. The Cistercian order, which played an essential role in defining a highly characteristic early Gothic style,[107] contributed to Catalan architecture not only new technological solutions for constructing and supporting buildings, such as the use of pointed arches and ribbed vaults, but also and more importantly new ways of conceiving and structuring the architectural space. In this sense, the specific architectural elements were nothing other than the logical outcome of giving the building a certain shape according to needs which were also quite precise. If a monastery needed to create a single meeting area (a chapterhouse room, the naves of the church or the cellar), new architectural resources had to be found that would make it feasible. Cistercian architecture was above all functional, and this is how it came to develop a series of technical solutions, some which would clearly survive into the Gothic period.

In Catalonia, Romanesque architecture survived for many years, until well into the 13th century. The kind of architecture grounded on a synthesis between the Romanesque structural tradition and new architectural elements from the Gothic which had taken root in northern France since 1145 was disseminated mainly through the construction of parish churches in rural settings which show a wide variety of structural solutions.

Generally speaking, Catalan religious architecture in the 13th century was characterised by the traditional substrate dating from the second half of the 12th century, in terms of both the spatial and structural conception of the building and the visual appearance of the architecture itself. The floor plan did not vary, while in the elevation of churches the pointed shape became widespread in both

arches and barrel vaults. Oftentimes, the only change in an architectural style that kept to the pathway laid down in the previous century was the introduction of different decorative elements. In fact, the shift from semicircular barrel vaults to pointed vaults did not entail substantial changes in the structure of these buildings. Likewise, the pointed vault was not an innovative feature in the 13th century if we bear in mind that it can be found in churches like Santa Maria of Colera, which had been built in the first few decades of the 12th century. The most common floor plan was rectangular with a semicircular or flat apse, although apses in the Latin cross or more rarely basilica shape could also be found.

The cathedrals in Lleida and Tarragona are the two major works of architecture from the 13th century and simultaneously mark the shift from fully Romanesque architecture, whose typological schemas had been developed in the 11th century, to a kind of architecture that began to draw from the Gothic vernacular. They span two different worlds not only because their construction lasted until the 14th century but also because at the late date when the new technical solutions spread by the Cistercians were already widely known, the builders of these cathedrals chose an old typology yet one that was deeply rooted and had yielded proven results. At the same time, these two complexes have similar features, such as (primarily) their constructive unity, despite possible variations in their construction and the combination of a Romanesque architectural substrate with elements that can be regarded as Gothic. Likewise, we cannot lose sight of the fact that they became two centres that not only spurred new constructions but also became major sculpture workshops.

Construction on the new cathedral of Tarragona began in the late 12th century, as gleaned from the testimony left by the construction process preserved since 1167. The apse was finished by around 1184. The new structure was consecrated in the first third of the 13th century, which at least indicates that construction was at an advanced stage. Since it was located at the highest point within the ancient urban nucleus, the shape of the building had to be adapted to space constraints, and this conditioned its shape, especially the cloister.

The church follows the usual model of a Latin cross basilica layout with three naves and a well-defined transept, similar to Lleida, which juts out from the naves. The chevet is made of three staggered semicircular apses with deep presbyteries, in which the central one stands out for being deeper and wider than the ones on the side naves. However, the crossing does not have symmetrical wings, given the fact that the cloister is attached to the northern side. Nor does the apsidiole on this side have the same proportions as its counterpart. The naves are covered with vaults with moulded ribs, and the cruciform pillars holding them up show the usual attached columns, here in pairs, which are actually an extension of the arches of the vaults.

The main nave in Tarragona is the tallest of all the previous examples of Catalan architecture. However, while the proportions can be considered Gothic, the concept of the spatial layout of the volumes still falls within the Romanesque, despite the size. For example, at first there were apparently plans for a graded chevet with five apses, but the presence of the cloister prevented it from being built, so the layout of the entire area of the transept and presbytery was changed. In contrast, the cruciform pillars indicate that the naves were probably originally supposed to be covered with ribbed arches.

Another exceptional element in Catalan late Romanesque religious architecture is the presence of a high number of windows in the central apse, three on the lower level and seven on the upper. Despite their pointed shape, however, the windows still show an archaic form. The octagonal cimborio, on the other hand, which was built in around the mid-13th century, is also covered with ribbed vaults and held up by angular squinches, following a pattern quite similar to that of Sant Cugat.

For the cloister in Tarragona, the builders resorted to a typology that we can also find in the Cistercian abbeys from the late 12th century, including Santa Maria of Poblet or Vallbona de les Monges. This typology is made up of four covered galleries with ribbed vaults. The arcades that run around the entire perimeter are structured on two levels: on the upper one there is a frieze bearing polylobulated elements, as well as six large pointed blind arches with two rose or round windows at the peak.

The case of Lleida is no less interesting. The city of Lleida was conquered from the Saracens in 1149. As a result of this deed, Bishop Guillem Pere de Ravidats consecrated the main mosque, built in 832, dedicating it to the Virgin Mary. There have been many hypotheses about the location of this first cathedral: it has been identified as the chapel of the king's castle or La Suda, and it has also been situated near the northern wing of the cloister of today's cathedral in the same place, but with a smaller size. It likely occupied part of the land where the new basilica was built after 1203. During the 12th century, there were plans to build a new cathedral beginning with the left wing of the transept in 1203 and continuing towards the apsidioles on the right wing of the transept until the Anunciata doorway, which was finished in around 1215. Bishop Guillem de Montcada consecrated the new cathedral of Lleida on the 31st of October 1278.

The short time span in which the Seu Vella of Lleida was built (1203-1278) leads us to posit a highly unitary construction programme with very few modifications. We can see two clearly differentiated stages in construction: the first, which falls within the Romanesque period, until before the roof, and the second, which entailed a readaptation of the Romanesque structure so it could support the Gothic vaults. The whole is balanced, proportional, harmonious and homogenous. The hypothesis of a change in approach to the structure of the roof can be justified by the archaeological interventions, which have re-

vealed that the columns on the ends of the transept, the first part to be built, were designed from the foundations up, which leads us to believe that a ribbed roof might have been planned from the start, instead of a barrel vault as previously thought.

The Seu Vella of Lleida falls within the typology of the Romanesque building with a basilica floor plan, with three naves and a transept that is clearly marked both horizontally and vertically. It originally had five apses, only the second of which is preserved on the northern side, and a central apse, which has a large presbytery. It was a perfectly symmetrical structure that included a staggered chevet with five semicircular apses decreasing in size. The structure of the chevet is similar to the one in Tarragona, but in this case it is much more unitary and skilfully resolved.

The naves, which are quite short, are arranged into three stretches clearly marked by arcades covered with ribbed vaults held up by complicated cruciform pillars with attached columns, which start from one podium and receive the ribs of the vault and the reinforcement arch. In the middle of the transept is an octagonal cimborio covered by an eight-part ribbed vault raised over four squinches and four arches. In the wings of the transept, on the southern and western facade, the doors of the building follow the traditional schemes of Romanesque art, while the cloister with its quarters and the belfry are located in front of the temple's main facade, which has three doors, one per nave. However, the main entrance, and therefore the main doorway into the church, is known as Els Fillols doorway and is located on the central part of the "Epistle" nave.

Despite the late date, the use of ribbed vaults and the introduction of elements from Gothic architecture such as the pointed arch, we cannot consider the Seu Vella of Lleida a Gothic building in that the layout of the architectural elements and space and the treatment of light are clearly Romanesque. Another element that reinforces the presence of a Romanesque idea is the fact that it retained the semicircular windows in the nave with archivolts and columns, even though the cimborio features a Gothic arch and simple tracery.

The Seu Vella of Lleida thus represents the maturity of Catalan Romanesque architecture at a late date, when the previous formulations were very coherently compiled and combined with the new contributions, without this synthesis breaking the unity of the design.

The late 12th and early 13th centuries was a time in which the West witnessed a unique artistic paradox in the history of art. The regions in northern France had been undergoing the revolution of a new style, Gothic architecture, for almost half a century, while further south along the Mediterranean, yet also in other regions of Europe, a traditional style, the Romanesque, was experiencing another renaissance, another life, not because of a lack of knowledge of the Gothic being built near, Paris but out of the sheer will of the designers of these buildings.

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[48] Joan Duran-Porta. "The Lombard Masters as a *deus ex machina* in Catalan First Romanesque". *Arte Lombarda*, n. s. 156 (2009), pp. 99-119. Previously, Idem. "¿Lombardos en Cataluña? Construcción y pervivencia de una hipótesis controvertida". *Anales de Historia del Arte*, 2009, pp. 247-261; Idem. "Una reconsideració sobre els orígens de l'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya: el mite dels mestres llombards". *Catalan Review*, no. xxii (2008), pp. 227-238. Also Manuel Castiñeiras, "La cuestión lombarda en el primer románico catalán". In: Arturo C. Quintavalle (dir.). *Il medioevo delle cattedrali. Chiesa e Impero: la lotta delle immagini (secoli xi e xii)*. Milan 2006, pp. 345-355.

[49] Jacques Henriet. "Saint-Philibert de Tournus. L'œuvre du second maître". *Bulletin monumental*, 1992, pp. 101-164; Idem. *Saint-Philibert de Tournus. L'abbatiale du xie siècle*. SFA, Paris 2008; *Saint-Philibert de Tournus. Histoire, archéologie, art. Actes du colloque (Tournus, 15-19 June 1994)*. Ed. Jacques Thirion, Le Centre, Tournus 1995.

[50] Pere Freixas, Jordi Camps (dirs.). *Els Comacini i l'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya. Simposi internacional (25 i 26 de novembre de 2005)*. Ajuntament de Girona-Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Girona-Barcelona 2010. This volume was published after the writing of this text and contains a number of papers in which authors develop issues that often have been treated in their other works. However, this volume completes information on topics that I treat in this paper such as Cardona, Àger, Sant Pere de Rodes, Girona, Vic, Ramon Lambard of la Seu d'Urgell, and other issues such as relationships in art, technology and relationships between Italy and Catalonia.

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[64] Xavier Barral i Altet. "Du Panthéon de Rome à la Rotonde de Vic: la transmission d'un modèle d'architecture mariale au début du xi siècle et la politique 'romaine' de l'abbé-évêque Oliba". *Les cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa*, no. 37 (2006), pp. 63-75.

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[66] Alain Erlande-Brandenburg. *La Cathédrale*. Fayard, Paris 1990.

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[80] Joan Duran-Porta. "Les cryptes monumentales dans la Catalogne d'Oliba. De Sant Pere de Rodes à la diffusion du modèle de crypte à salle". *Les cahiers*

de Saint-Michel de Cuxa, no. 40 (2009), pp. 325-339. Luca Fabbri. *Cripte. Diffusione e tipologia nell'Italia nordorientale tra IX e XII secolo*. Cierre edizioni, Sommacampagna 2009.

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[83]   See the highly stimulating study from that time by Friedrich Möbius. *Buticum in Centula. Mit einer Einführung in die Bedeutung der Mittelalterlichen Architektur*. Abhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Berlin 1985.

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[85]   Eric Palazzo. *Liturgie et société au Moyen Âge*. Aubier, Paris 2000; Idem. "La liturgie de l'Occident médiévale autour de l'an Mil. État de la question". *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, no. 43 (2000), pp. 371-394.

[86]   Often published in the journal *Miscel·lània Litúrgica Catalana* put out by the Institut d'Estudis Catalans.

[87]   Carol Heitz. "Beata Maria Rotunda. À propos de la rotonde occidentale de Saint-Michel de Cuixà". In: *Études roussillonaises offertes à Pierre Ponsich*. Ed. Michel Grau and Olivier Poisson. *Mélanges d'archéologie, d'histoire et d'histoire de l'art du Roussillon et de la Cerdagne*. Le Publicateur, Perpignan 1987, pp. 273-277; Daniel Codina. "La chapelle de la Trinité de Saint-Michel de Cuixà. Conception théologique et symbolique d'une architecture singulière". *Les cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa*, no. 36 (2005), pp. 81-88; Miquel S. Gros Pujol. "Le culte des trois Archanges et de la Trinité à l'abbaye de Saint-Michel de Cuxa". *Études roussillonnaises*, no. 21 (2005), pp. 93-98.

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[92]   Anne Baud. "Liturgie, circulation et espace monastique à Cluny". In: *Architecture et pratiques religieuses. VI Colloque biennal de Pommiers*. Saint-Germain Laval 2008, pp. 85-94. On the question of relics, a specific case can be found on Francesc Fité, "Arnau Mir de Tost i el culte a les relíquies. Un exponent pirinenc en la promoció dels santuaris". *Urgellia*, vol. 16, 2006-2007. pp. 511-549.

[93]   Study cited above in note 70.

[94]   This is the case of Dominique Iogna-Prat. *La maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge (v. 800-v. 1200)*. Seuil, Paris 2006.

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[100] *Romei e Giubilei. Il pellegrinaggio medievale a San Pietro 350-1350 (Roma, Palazzo Venezia, 29 ottobre-26 febbraio 2000)*. Ed. Mario D'Onofrio. Electa, Milan 1999; *Pellegrini alla tomba di Pietro*. Ed. Giovanni Morello. Electa, Milan 1999.

[101] Laura Bartolomé Roviras. "La seqüència arquitectònica i ornamental de Sant Vicenç de Besalú (s. x-xiii)". In: *La parròquia de Sant Vicenç, un eix religiós, social i artístic en la història de Besalú*. Ed. Miquel Àngel Fumanal Pagès. Besalú Town Hall, Besalú 2008, pp. 44-81.

[102] Laura Bartolomé Roviras. *Fundació, consagració i renovació del temple benedictí de Sant Pere de Besalú. Ressenya històrica*. Idem. "El context d'una re-

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[103] Jordi Sagrera and Marc Sureda. "El poblament antic i medieval al voltant de Santa Maria de Besalú: les dades arqueològiques". In: *Relíquies i arquitectura monàstica a Besalú.* Ed. Gerardo Boto Varela, Diputació de Girona, Besalú 2006, pp. 105-150; Nazaret Gallego Aguilera. *Santa Maria de Besalú. Arquitectura, poder i reforma (segles x-xii).* Amics de Besalú i el seu Comtat, Besalú 2007.

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