

START OF THE JOURNEY: **INHERITORS OF A DESIRE AND A TRADITION**

It is hoped to make the Museum a meeting point, a square where the men and women of our city can meet to discover the heritage as we look towards the future. The hope is that it will be a lingering memory, a journey towards an archipelago of realities with which we should be familiar. The Museum of a land and its people. Our Museum, as well as yours.

We are the inheritors of human action which has made it possible to recover a part of our past and to preserve it, bold and daring initiatives arising at decisive moments. We come from a long museum tradition, backed up by the running and maintenance of the two hundred-year-old collections of Lleida: the **diocese collection**, created by Bishop Messeguer in 1893, with the intention of salvaging liturgical items from his parishes, which were not being used and to use them for training seminarists, and the **archaeological collection**, created in 1866 by the Provincial Commission for Historical and Artistic Monuments and, since the 1940s, conserved and added to by the Lleida Provincial Government *Institut d'Estudis Ilerdenc [Institute of Lleida Studies]*.

A large number of women and men have put a great deal of energy into preserving the heritage of all, which includes our identity and explains who we are to the rest of the world. They have frequently done so in difficult, precarious or risky situations. A thank you to all of them. Their work is what brought this Museum into being.

JOURNEY OF EXPERIENCE: **A MUSEUM WITH A BEATING HEART**

This is a living building. On the surface, it is an ordered set of stonework, cement, concrete, metal and glass. However, the reality is that it is a living being, with a heartbeat and which breathes, which sleeps when it is closed, but which awakens when visitors tread its halls.

The new building encases, embraces and protects this church, part of the former Discalced Carmelite convent. Building work commenced in 1595, then it became an Alms House following exclausturation and given over to welfare services until 1999. In 2003, when work began on the new site of the Museum, it was decided that the chapel would be the centrepiece of the new building design. In this way, avant-garde went hand in hand with tradition, and modern times made their own and respected the architectural heritage of bygone centuries.

Inside, the archaeological and diocese collections, of which the artistry of the Cathedral Chapter forms a part, constitute a unique piece of heritage to be enjoyed by the public. The Museum team conserves, interprets, studies, restores and disseminates this legacy with the certainty that we need to know who we are and where we come from, in order to know where we are going.

When you visit the Museum, when you tread its main corridors and engage with its exhibits, the Museum's heart beats. It is then that the Museum comes to life.

CONTINUATION OF THE JOURNEY: **A LOOK TO THE FUTURE**

The Museum suggests a journey, a look to the future. When we immerse ourselves, we discover that we, as heirs to the Iberians, Romans, Muslims and Christians, are the rightful owners of the legacy and heritage on display inside, a tangible and undeniable manifestation of the existence of an identity united with the geographical and historical reality of the plain of Lleida and our historical bishopric.

The Museum is the starting point on a journey traversing frontiers, tracts of land and walls, with foundations in history itself and which, it is hoped, will be supportive, respectful and democratic, in order to reach a future which appreciates difference and diversity from the demand for an identity.

A starting point is also a meeting point, where different and diverse people, from a wide range of backgrounds, perhaps with opposing interests, converge, all united in the journey about to be embarked upon. The Museum is a starting point to your journey into the future.

Bon voyage!



Palaeolithic
Neolithic
Bronze
Iron
Ilergete State
Roman Period
Visigoth Period

HUNTERS AND GATHERERS

Ref. : 1

OUR FIRST STEPS

The Laetoli footprints (Tanzania)

One day, three million six hundred thousand years ago, a pair of simians and their young left their footprints in the mud. They are called *Australopithecus afarensis* and they walked upright, like us. Their fossilized footprints have been preserved to this day.

We do not know where these Laetoli *Australopithecus* came from or where they were going, but their footprints demonstrate that they were indeed following a path: the path of their biological evolution. A mysterious and perhaps uncertain road that, in the end, led to the *Homo* species, and to us.

4 million years ago

Ref. : ■2
HOMINIDS

One of the oldest known hominid species, *Australopithecus anamensis*, lived four million years ago and already had a bipedal anatomical shape very much like ours.

In the steppe environment, bipedalism and having free hands with an opposing thumb to grasp things provided new capabilities and made it possible to have access to a wider range of resources and new food sources. But it also involved disadvantages, such as the transformation of the pelvis, which made giving birth more difficult for females.

In the evolutionary chain, *anamensis* led to two new lines: on the one hand, a graceful form which is believed to be at the base of the human evolutionary tree and, on the other, a more robust form, known as *Paranthropus*, which became extinct a million years ago.

Ref. : ■3
From australopithecus to the Beatles

Australopithecus afarensis
dates from between 4 and 2.9 million years ago
cranial capacity: between 380 and 480 cubic centimetres
average height: between 105 and 135 centimetres

This species lived between three and four million years ago. It is believed to have lived in both dry forest areas and mixed forest and grassland environments. It was a little taller than present day chimpanzees. It had longer arms than legs and a slight stagger to its bipedal walk. The size difference between males and females was considerable.

The most famous of all the *Australopithecus afarensis* fossils is the female found in 1974, which palaeontologists called Lucy. They decided this name suited her because, while they were celebrating the discovery, the Beatles song, *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, came on the radio.

Ref. : ■4
The tracks of a little foot

Australopithecus africanus
dates from between 3.5 and 2.5 million years ago

cranial capacity: between 430 and 520 cubic centimetres
average height: between 130 and 135 centimetres

Physically, *Australopithecus africanus* was quite similar to *afarensis*. Even the volume of its brain seems to have increased very little.

Recently, two more species of this genus have been identified: an *Australopithecus* skeleton from over three and a half million years ago called Little Foot and *Australopithecus garhi*, which lived about two and a half million years ago. The latter, with anatomical features that are relatively evolved, is a firm candidate in the evolutionary line of the *Homo* genus.

Ref. : ■5
Adapt or die

Paranthropus aethiopicus
dates from between 2.5 and 2.2 million years ago
cranial capacity: 410 cubic centimetres
average height: 150 centimetres

There are three known species in the *Paranthropus* genus. Two, *aethiopicus* and *boisei*, were found in eastern Africa and the third, *robustus*, was found in southern Africa.

Their most characteristic anatomical features are, above all, their highly developed chewing systems and a pronounced sexual dimorphism (anatomically differentiated appearance between males and females).

The cranial robustness of *Paranthropus* indicates an extreme level of specialisation based on an herbivorous diet, which means it had a very specific adaptive link to a certain habitat. But in the long run, this strict dependence led to its extinction.

Ref. : ■6
Dear boy

Paranthropus boisei
dates from between 2.3 and 1 million years ago
cranial capacity: between 500 and 545 cubic centimetres
average height: between 130 and 140 centimetres

In 1956, cranium OH5, initially called Dear Boy, was found at the Olduvai site and later classified as *Paranthropus boisei*.

This species evolved from *Paranthropus aethiopicus*. Its height, weight and proportions were almost identical to those of *Australopithecus*, but its cranial volume is considerably greater.

It lived in a dry, open grassland type of habitat, and it is believed that it probably made tools.

Dear Boy. Dear Boy. It sounds like the opening line of an impossible letter to prehistory.

Ref. : 7

THE GENUS 'HOMO'

Two and a half million years ago, coinciding with a series of large-scale climate changes, the evolutionary tree of the hominid group branched off into the genus *Homo*.

The oldest known exponents of this new genus are *Homo habilis* and *Homo rudolfensis*.

The first stone tools are documented from the time of the *Homo* genus. The use of instruments facilitated the consumption of foods with a high protein content – animal meat and fat – which in turn made the development of the brain possible. A more developed brain meant an increase in technological and cultural capacities. At the same time, the use of technology and culture involved development of the brain.

In this way, to sum up, the most transcendental spiral of biological progress in the history of the planet Earth began.

Ref. : 8

Meat and tools

Homo habilis

dates from between 2.5 and 1.3 million years ago

cranial capacity: between 510 and 750 cubic centimetres

average height: between 140 and 145 centimetres

This is the first hominid that was no longer primarily vegetarian, adding animal meat and fat to its diet in a significant measure. Its remains are found in association with stone tools: very simple flake tools and retouched blades, suitable for use as cleavers, picks or hammers (Mode 1).

It was very similar to *Australopithecus*, despite the fact that it had an increased cranial capacity and smaller facial surface and canine teeth format.

Other fossil remains that are very similar to *habilis* have been considered as a different species identified under the name of *Homo rudolfensis*, with a brain that is a little larger and a powerful jaw like that of *Paranthropus*.

Ref. : 9

Lost sounds

Mode 1 tools

These early sets of tools, known as Mode 1 tools, are characterised by blades cut on just one side (choppers) or on two sides (chopping tools) and by the resulting flakes, which were used as cleavers and scrapers.

Considerable skill and manual abilities, as well as a remarkably complex brain, were needed to carry out this operation.

If we can imagine the sound of the stones being struck, we will hear the true soundtrack of this decisive stage in our prehistory.

Ref. : 10

Tall, clever travellers

Homo ergaster

dates from between 1.8 and 1.4 million years ago

cranial capacity: between 800 and 900 cubic centimetres

average height: between 170 and 180 centimetres

Anatomically, this species was an authentic innovation: it had a substantial cranial capacity, a height of up to 1.8 metres and limbs with proportions similar to ours.

They lived in ecosystems like those of *Homo habilis*: grasslands with scattered trees where hunting made consumption of significant amounts of meat possible.

This was the first *Homo* to move beyond the African continent and settle in Europe and Asia.

It is also considered the species to have introduced a new stone-working technique, to create a new type of instruments: those known as Mode 2.

Ref. : 11

Atapuerca: the great window to the past

Homo antecessor

dates from between 990,000 and 780,000 years ago

cranial capacity: around 1,000 cubic centimetres

average height: between 160 and 165 centimetres

Atapuerca has provided the remains of at least eight individuals of this species, which existed about eight hundred thousand years ago.

Of medium height and a graceful constitution, its face was very “modern”, with cheekbones and sunken eye sockets. Its skull and dental system, however, were quite archaic. Its highly primitive stone tools still correspond to Tool Mode 1.

It was probably the first Homo species to settle in Europe, proceeding from Africa or Asia. It was called *antecessor* in honour of the explorers from the Roman legions.

Ref. : ■12

The evolution of tools

Mode 1 Tools at Atapuerca

At Atapuerca, Sima del Elefante and Gran Dolina, stone tools have been found that correspond to a Mode 1 tool typology.

Specifically, in Layer TD6 at Gran Dolina, which dates from eight hundred thousand years ago, 268 stone tools were found - choppers, blade flakes and denticulate flakes - along with fossilized remains of *Homo antecessor*.

Gran Dolina is the first European archaeological site capable of showing the entire evolutionary sequence of the first stone tools.

Ref. : ■13

The african branch

Homo rhodesiensis

dates from between 600,000 and 250,000 years ago

cranial capacity: between 1,000 and 1,400 cubic centimetres

average height: between 170 and 180 centimetres

This is an African species which is contemporary to the European species, *heidelbergensis*.

It had a strong build and considerable height. Its cranial capacity was not much smaller than our own, and it had a highly pronounced brow ridge, a prominent nose and a robust, chinless jaw. It was an effective hunter and gatherer.

Rhodesiensis was destined to evolve into the *sapiens* species, and its European contemporary, *heidelbergensis*, would go in the direction of the Neanderthals.

Ref. : ■14

In the future lands of Europe

Homo heidelbergensis

dates from between 780,000 and 200,000 years ago

cranial capacity: between 1,000 and 1,400 cubic centimetres

average height: between 170 and 180 centimetres

Homo heidelbergensis was very much like its African contemporary *rhodesiensis*: tall, robust and with a considerable cranial capacity, a prominent face and highly pronounced brow ridges.

The remains of twenty-eight individuals of this species have been found at Atapuerca, dating from about five hundred thousand years ago.

Their stone tool type, known as Mode 2, is by this time quite a bit more evolved and diverse and, for the first time, there is evidence of leather working and possible funeral ritual practices.

Ref. : ■15

The stone Excalibur

Mode 2 tools

They are also known as Acheulean tools. They feature large-format flakes with specific retouching for certain uses and cores worked on both sides to form a point or cleaver, called biface tools.

The first ones were documented in Africa with *Homo ergaster* remains from one million, six hundred thousand years ago. In Europe, they are found in *Homo heidelbergensis* populations from about five hundred thousand years ago.

In Atapuerca, at Sima de los Huesos, where stone implements are not found, a beautiful, elaborate biface tool in red quartzite appeared, called Excalibur by its discoverers and related to funeral rituals

Ref. : ■16

The long voyage

Homo ergaster left the continent of Africa and settled all over the old world one million, eight hundred thousand years ago.

However, this first human odyssey was not completed until over eight hundred thousand years later. In fact, the oldest Homo remains found on other continents, *erectus*, *georgicus* and *antecessor*, are already new species that evolved from the African one.

Much later, just one hundred thousand years ago, a new African species, *Homo sapiens*, would repeat the same epic journey, but this time it would reach all the continents

Ref. : ■17

The last europeans

Homo neanderthalensis

dates from between 200,000 and 25,000 years ago

cranial capacity: 1,500 cubic centimetres
average height: between 160 and 170 centimetres

This species was short in height and had a very robust build. Its limbs were short and its torso was quite wide. Its brain mass was larger than ours, but its skull was not as high and it developed toward the back.

It was the creator of a new hard stone-working technique and of a new type of tools, known as Mode 3.

This species cared for its elders, the wounded and the sick, and carefully buried its dead. Undoubtedly, its social organisation and culture were infinitely more complex than the archaeological records show.

For over one hundred thousand years, they were the only humans in Europe. Just twenty-five thousand years ago, when *Homo sapiens* was already moving around our continent, they became extinct. The causes of its disappearance are a great mystery.

Ref. : ■18

Effectiveness and economy in raw materials
Mode 3

The former biface tools and cleavers are now more elaborate and smaller in size.

But Mode 3 or Mousterian tools are distinguished, above all, by a new knapping procedure, the Levallois technique. This consists of preparing cores by striking them in a perimetrical and centripetal direction to extract material and then striking them length-wise to form a new type of flakes with a very distinctive shape.

These skilfully retouched Levallois flakes provide a varied repertoire of scrapers, points and denticulates.

Ref. : ■19

NEANDERTHAL TERRITORIES

The Neanderthals occupied territories within present-day Israel, Iraq, Italy, Hungary, Germany, France, Russia, Croatia and the Iberian Peninsula.

In Catalunya, the archaeological sites of Els Ermitons (Sadernes), Mollet 1 (Serinyà), L'Arbreda (Serinyà), El Cau del Duc (Torroella de Montgrí), Les Toixoneres (Moià), L'Abric Romaní (Capellades), La Cova del Gegant (Sitges) and El Forn d'en Sugranyes (Reus) are worth mentioning.

In Pla de Lleida, there are sites with Mode 3 objects on terraces along the Farfanya, No-

guera Ribagorçana, Femosa, Segre and Cinca rivers.

In the pre-Pyrenean zone, there are fossil remains in Gabassa, and excavations on sites at La Roca dels Bous (Sant Llorenç de Montgai) and La Cova Gran (Les Avellanes-Santa Linya) have provided radiocarbon dating enabling us to establish them at around thirty-nine thousand years old.

Ref. : ■20

The surviving species

Homo sapiens

dates from 150,000 years ago

cranial capacity: 1,400 cubic centimetres

average height: between 165 and 175 centimetres

The oldest fossils show the species with a graceful build and proportions like ours, but its face still has some "archaic" features, such as prominent brow ridges.

It introduced a new type of lithic industry, Mode 4, and a symbolic language that we have conceptualized as art: engravings and paintings in caves and on personal objects.

With the extinction of the Neanderthals, sapiens became the only human species on the planet, which is something that had never happened before.

Ref. : ■21

Out of Africa

The most widely accepted theory on the expansion of the *Homo sapiens* species, known as Out of Africa, holds that the species originated in Africa and was scattered around the world. Both fossil records and genetics support this theory.

The oldest fossils from Africa date from one hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred thousand years ago; those from South Africa, Ethiopia and the Middle East are ninety to one hundred and twenty thousand years old; those from the Maghreb are forty to seventy thousand years old; the ones from Asia, sixty thousand years old and those from Europe are from thirty-five to forty-five thousand years old.

Just thirty thousand years ago, perhaps taking advantage of the drop in sea level due to the last glaciation, *Homo sapiens* reached certain islands in the Pacific, Australia and America.

Ref. : ■22

The most fascinating site

La Balma de la Peixera d'Alfés (Segrià) was the first Upper Palaeolithic site found and later excavated anywhere in the Ebro river basin.

There, the remains of a dwelling were perfectly identified, a floor paving with large stone blocks and a recess made of small sheets of black flint, some of them retouched and all grouped together under some stones, as if placed there in hiding, quite probably in a leather bag.

The entire set of tools uncovered at La Peixera – burins, scrapers and blades – is coherent with the habitat, which, twelve to fifteen thousand years ago, was occupied by groups of hunter-gatherers at the end of the glacial period, when the climate was starting to change from the eighteen thousand-year cold.

Even today, La Peixera d'Alfés is a mandatory reference point when speaking of the Upper Palaeolithic in the northeastern area of the peninsula in general and the Magdalenian in Pla de Lleida in particular.

Ref. : ■23

The 'sapiens' technique

Mode 4

It is characterised by the creation of long cores from which small-sized straight blades are extracted. Subsequently, these blades are retouched until they have the right shape to enable a handle to be attached.

Scrapers are added to the repertoire to work leather and burins for bone and ivory. Later, when the use of wood and horn percussors had become generalised, more elaborate tools appeared, such as arrowheads with retouches all over the surface.

Personal decorative elements on horn, bone and ivory are also characteristic. Apparently, the first *sapiens* men and women were some show-offs.

COGUL

Ref. : ■24

Cave art in the Levante region (east coast of Spain) was created by hunter-gatherer groups in the late Palaeolithic (Epipalaeolithic) and developed during the transition to the Neolithic.

The figures include highly dynamic representations of women, men, goats, bulls and boars. They make reference to hunting, gathering, dancing, war and ritual ceremonies, and tell us about cus-

toms, weapons, clothing and spirituality.

One exceptional collection of Levante art is found at La Roca dels Moros del Cogul, famous for the incomparable scene known as the "fertility dance", in which a group of women with long hair and skirts reaching below the knee dance around a naked man.

In addition to the Levante style, La Balma del Cogul preserves samples of a schematic style and an Iberian and Roman religious epigraphy, which indicates the sacred cultural nature of the place for generations.

From 7000 to 2700 years before Christ

SHEPHERDS AND VILLAGERS

Ref. : ■25

THE GREAT CHANGE

One of the most significant changes in the history of humanity was the transition from the predatory economy of hunter-gatherer groups to a production economy based on farming and livestock.

This new economic system demonstrated its ability to reach great levels of development, as shown in highly structured societies with a state-like political organisation.

At the same time, the new system also introduced a factor that was unheard of until that time, the possibility of an influential social elite that could accumulate wealth and control the production means. In sum, the possibility for inequality and social injustice.

Ref. : ■26

THE FORMATION OF THE LANDSCAPE

Approximately 7,000 years ago, grain fields and herds of different types of animals began to change our landscape. Groups of hunter-gatherers, always on the move, gave way to sedentary communities with all their new tool kits related to production tasks: the old axes were now made of polished stone and the containers, of clay.

The oldest remains of these early communities are found both in pre-Pyrenees caves (Parco, Foric, Tabac, Joan d'Os and Gralles) and outdoor occupation areas near rivers, such as in the Femosa valley, at Roques del Monjo, Planeta and Pla de Gardelo, for example.

Ref. : ■27

DWELLINGS AND TOMBS

There is limited archaeological research on the early farming communities in our land. Most of the data comes from accidental discoveries rather than systematic excavations.

In the municipal area of Mequinenza, the Riols site was excavated, where circular stone foundations were found surrounded by abutment holes for wooden structures that bear witness to the existence of a settlement of dwellings. Among the remains, mills, polished axes, flint tools and pottery fragments were uncovered.

In the Vallfèrra ravine, also in the Mequinenza municipal area, two megalithic cists have been excavated, burial remains that contained magnificent grave goods.

Ref. : ■28

IDEAS AND SYMBOLS

The so-called schematic art, subsequent to the Levante style, is the work of the early farming communities. It represents schematic human and animal (deer, goats and bulls) figures, as well as abstract motifs such as dots, lines, circles and branch-shaped figures. The technique used is engraving and painting, in which red is the predominant colour, followed by ochre and black.

The subject matter seems to take us back to the world of symbols and ideas and leads us to

think of authentic centres of worship. In this area, Vall de la Coma, La Roca del Mas Olives and La Roca dels Moros del Cogul are places worth mentioning. In ceramics, the Cèrvol de Genó cup shows the survival of the motifs until well into the Bronze Age.

From 2700 to 2100 years before Christ

EARLY METALS

Ref. : ■29

An awl from La Balma de Cal Porta, dating from the year 2730 before Christ, and an axe proceeding from near Alfarràs, both made of copper, are two examples of early metal tools in the lands of Lleida.

This is a little known period in our region. The sites seem to be distributed peripherally around the plains and near flowing water or lakes, perhaps in search of the best spaces for grazing. In the excavation at Roques del Sarró, bell-shaped style pottery was found at a level dating from the year 2560 before Christ.

Undoubtedly, in the future, archaeology will provide us with pleasant surprises, as the recent discovery of the Seró megalith seems to forecast.

From 2100 to 1650 years before Christ

THE VILLAGE

Ref. : ■30

The laying of the high-speed train (AVE) line caused the emergency excavation of an archaeological site, Minferri, in the municipal area of Juneda, which turned out to be essential for our knowl-

edge of the Bronze Age in Catalunya and, in this area, of the formation process of the group known as the Segre-Cinca Group.

Minferri no longer exists, its place now substituted by the brutal scar of the new rail line, but the excavations done make it remarkable, both for the preservation conditions of the archaeological objects and for the highly unusual circumstance that it combines dwellings, burials, storage silos and waste dumps in the same place.

Minferri shows us a period of our history covering from approximately 2,100 to 1,650 years before Christ, with an abundance of data that is in complete contrast to the gaps in the research from previous phases.

Ref. : ■31

IMAGINE A LANDSCAPE

The village of Minferri was located on the high plateau of an ancient river terrace of the Femosa River. This type of settlement in high, flat areas, often sheltered by rocks or hills, was quite common.

We can imagine the world that received Minferri, a territory with a climate that was wetter than today's, with oak and white pine forests and open spaces with scrublands, mastic-trees, Italian Buckthorns and rosemary. We can hear the sounds of the herders and dogs driving the herds, we can see some fields left fallow and others planted with wheat or barley, set in the most fertile and wettest areas. We can smell the fresh grass at the foot of the village, the reeds and the grove that surrounded the wide Femosa River.

We can enter Minferri.

Ref. : ■32

THE DWELLING

The dwellings at Minferri were formed by a wood structure that attached and held up the walls and roof, all made of branches covered in mud.

The village lay on over ten hectares, comprising a loose, scattered grouping of several dwellings. Each of these homes could be over a hundred metres away from the others, surrounded by work-related constructions and the burial world.

The single-family home, extended to three generations at most, was the basic community structure. It was the element of social reproduction and also, in a self-sufficient system, of economic production.

Ref. : ■33

WHEAT AND BARLEY

The main production activity at Minferri was growing winter cereal crops, specifically naked wheat and, in lesser quantities, hulled barley. Starch wheat and compact naked wheat were much less relevant.

Weeds were also a nightmare for these grain farmers, especially Ryegrass, the worst of all, of which a good number of seeds have been uncovered.

The family harvest was stored in silos dug into the ground, not far from the home. In a well-built, watertight silo with the opening properly sealed, a tiny amount of the grain germinated, generating an atmosphere rich in CO₂, which guaranteed the preservation of the grain in good conditions for over a year.

Ref. : ■34

ANIMALS AT MINFERRI

At Minferri, a significant sampling of consumed animal remains have been found but, in addition, entire buried skeletons have also been found, some in grain silos in disuse and others among grave goods.

Research on these remains shows that goats and sheep were the most numerous groups, and their wool, milk and cheese were used. Oxen were used mainly as work animals and daily meat consumption was supplied by pigs, in addition to game.

The number of dog remains found shows us that this animal had by this time become an irreplaceable helper to herders, as well as acting as a protector and pet. However, its consumption cannot be ruled out.

Ref. : ■35

HONEY, BLACKBERRIES AND CHEESE

Grain, meat and milk must have been the basic elements in their diet. Grinding grain to make bread, cookies, soups or porridge and collecting milk to prepare cheese, curd or sour cream were probably daily activities for women. Game (rabbits and an occasional deer) was also a part of their diet, and wild products such as honey, acorns, blackberries and mastic were always available in their pantries too.

The extraordinary collection of dishes at Minferri shows us a wide variety of every imaginable object in any home: drinking cups, pots, casseroles for cooking (food, including meat, was always boiled), serving plates and large jars for storing water, flour or honey.

Ref. : ■36

TOOLS AND WORK

In the village, making bronze tools was a very common activity that had begun many generations earlier, and by this time the complex technological requirements regarding both raw materials and the smelting and casting process had been perfected.

It was an activity that required the participation of the entire community and was probably performed during seasons of the year when there was less farm work, a good time to supply the families with axes, needles, chisels, arrows and awls, to name a few.

The analysis of the bronze tools recovered demonstrates an ideal copper-tin alloy proportion. Many times, the raw material was the good bronze from used objects: in short, the scrap metal.

Ref. : ■37

EMOTIONS ABOUT DEATH

Grain silos that had fallen into disuse, or those expressly built, were the places used by the inhabitants of the village to bury their dead. They were always carefully placed on their sides and accompanied by offerings that could be anything, from the simple flint blade next to a baby's body to the offering of seven goats and an ox found in the tomb of an elderly man, undoubtedly a high-ranking figure.

The excavation of the burial silos at Minferri was one of those rare occasions in which archaeologists can sense feelings. Love, tenderness and pain could be felt when excavating the remains of a woman of around 25 years old, in whose arms, at chest level, a small dog had been placed, perhaps her pet, a companion during her lifetime and, later, in the great beyond.

From 1650 to 1250 years before Christ

SPRING CEREAL

Ref. : ■38

Around 1650 years before Christ, the plough and two varieties of spring cereal – corn and millet – were introduced in the villages in Pla de Lleida. These changes made it possible to diversify the crops grown and increase production.

New pottery forms, showing an influence from Roussillon, Provençal and Lombardy, such as certain original additions to handles, indicate the existence of relationships with these territories, which are at the root of this progress in the production system.

The incorporation of these new elements in the Minferri production system marks the beginning of a transformation process towards a new and highly unique socio-economic organisation: the so-called Segre-Cinca Group.

Ref. : ■39

WHEN STONE MAKES A HOUSE

Within this context of transformations that society in the ancient villages was undergoing, the first houses with stone masonry emerged, now randomly grouped to create settlements. In this new urban environment, in contrast to Minferri, there are no storage or burial silos found.

Masada de Ratón, Punta Farissa and Roques del Sarró, to name a few, are examples of typical habitats in this oldest stage of the Segre-Cinca Group.

Regarding burial matters, at this time, the only known necropolis is at Riols, in Mequinenza, dating from 1559 before Christ, and it pertains to a very ancient type of burial in tumulus cists.

Ref. : ■40

ALWAYS BY THE RIVER

Regarding livestock, goat and sheep farming continues to be predominant and in cereal farming, the most relevant variety no longer seems to be wheat but rather hulled barley. The introduction of new crops – millet, corn, flax, lentils and peas – made it possible to diversify production and reduce fallow lands. The introduction of the plough and the increase in metal tools give us a picture of a solvent agricultural system adapted to its environment.

Among the wild species, in Vilot de Montagut, horse hunting has been established, as has eel catching in Roques del Sarró.

From growing flax to catching eels, all the activities indicate that the network of rivers was an omnipresent supply of resources.

From 1250 to 1000 years before Christ

THE TOWN

Ref. : ■41

The feasibility of the Segre-Cinca Group's socio-economic model is clearly shown by the fact that, starting in 1250 before Christ, a considerable demographic increase was registered, resulting in a spectacular rise in the number of settlements and the use of new lands for production.

This is the period in which the Group consolidated its stone architecture and defined an urban organisation for its settlements. As to its social structure, the kinship community model started

to move towards an increasingly hierarchical organisation.

Ref. : ■42

MANAGING THE LAND

The settlements are now located at the top or on the slopes of prominent hills, on the banks of the Segre and Cinca rivers and their tributaries. Strategically located, they allowed the villagers to watch over their own crops and, especially, the greatest possible number of neighbouring towns.

The population density, which is clear from the number of sites preserved, probably led to the establishment of each community's production territory limits and at a regional level, to the definition of a system for managing cooperation and solving the inevitable conflicts.

Ref. : ■43

HOME, STREETS AND NEIGHBOURS

The houses had a square layout and some had a small porch at the entrance. The walls were made of stone and the roofs of timbers and branches covered in clay. The interiors were divided into compartments, with an area for resting at the back and the activity area in front. This was the area where the oven, mill and mixer were, the area to spin and weave, the shelves with tools and the pantry with the cups, pots and jars.

Urban development was planned. Houses were attached to each other side by side to create an enclosed area adapted to the overall property, but leaving a road or an open space in the middle for common use.

The town of Genó, in Aitona, had eighteen houses and an estimated population of 75 to 100 people.

Ref. : ■44

THE FIRST SIPOF BEER

The analyses done on the dishes at Genó have enabled us to identify the products they contained.

The medium and large sized jars held water, honey, flour, salt, cereal, animal fat – perhaps some sort of meat preserves – and beer.

The table dishes evidenced remains of animal fat, honey, blood, crushed and boiled grain, dairy products with cereal and broad bean paste.

The urns, cups and kitchen containers held honey with blackberries and honey with raspberries, coarse acorn flour, boiled cereal, salt and dairy products.

The beer from Genó is, at this time, the oldest beer made on the Iberian Peninsula.

Ref. : ■45
LOST WAX

It appears that in Genó, all the metallurgic activities were centred in one of the houses, which was larger and more complex than the rest. Could it have been an expert's workshop? Could the smelting and distribution of tools have been centralised in the home of one high-ranking figure? We do not know for sure.

At any rate, their technical capabilities seem to have progressed quite a bit, because remains of wax with traces of products related to molten bronze casting have been identified. These clues lead us to believe that the wax casting technique known as "lost-wax casting" was being used by this time.

From 1000 to 750 years before Christ

LINEAGE

Ref. : ■46

Around 1000 years before Christ, the increasing complexity of the Segre-Cinca Group became evident in a series of economic, demographic and social transformations.

The old tribal model, with its small kinship settlements, had for some time been undergoing a process of hierarchical organisation that led, first, to the territorial ranking of certain lineages and, two hundred years later, to the emergence of a new power form: tribal chiefs.

Demographic expansion will be chan-

nelled towards the colonisation of new lands on the plains of L'Urgell and La Segarra and west to Monegros, where new, much larger towns will be created, with islands of adobe houses with stone foundations, and where hulled barley farming will spread.

Ref. : ■47
ASHES OF THE PAST

In the Genó period, the Segre-Cinca towns came into contact with cultures from Central Europe. This is indicated by the traces these peoples left on dishes with their fluted decorations.

This influence ceased around the year 1000, without having a significant effect on the Group's social system. It did, however, affect its burial rituals, progressively substituting interment with cremation.

At the necropolis of Castellet, in Mequinzenza, both rituals coexisted: interments and incinerations. In the long run, however, cremation won over, and the extensive tumulus necropolises, with their urns and ashes, became a paradigmatic part of our archaeological landscape.

From 750 to 425 years before Christ

FORCE

Ref. : ■48
LEADERS

Around the year 750 before Christ, 150 years before Greeks from Phocaea founded Empúries and 100 years before the first Phoenician vessels ventured along the eastern coast of Iberia up to the Ebro River, a leader of a powerful aristocratic lineage founded the stronghold of Els Vilars.

The rank of his lineage and the collective worship of his ancestors were the characteristics of membership and so-

cial unity for the families that settled in the new territory with him.

They were descendents of the Segre-Cinca villagers who had gradually come to be the old order of tribal communities in a world of princes and warriors. They were, indeed, leaders, with weapons, horses and architecture as symbols of their lines, who controlled the land and monopolised access to the gods.

Ref. : ■49

SURPLUS PRODUCTION

Despite the fact that the crops grown do not vary much compared to previous centuries, the production strategy underwent a radical change: the traditional self-sufficient farming method was substituted by wide-spread production of grains aimed at obtaining a surplus.

The production of agricultural surpluses controlled by the aristocratic social elite was the basis of wealth because it expanded the possibilities for making exchanges, the creation of markets and access to Mediterranean trading routes.

Logically, extensive grain farming led to rethinking the concept of production territory and to adjustments in the population distribution.

Ref. : ■50

ABOUT DEATH

Some of the burial tumuli from this period are square or rectangular in shape and, along with funeral urns, there are small offering cups and plates and bracelets, belt buckles, brooches and bronze buttons more or less deteriorated during cremation. The first iron objects, usually knives, also appear.

The tumuli were marked with small steles, often a simple oblong stone, but they could also be made of sculpted sandstone, such as those found at Roques de Sant Formatge, Castelletes and La Pedrera, perhaps serving as heroic praise of the deceased.

Iron, introduced in Els Vilars during the period of its founding, was still a valuable material, appropriate for making objects of prestige, mainly jewellery and weapons.

Ref. : ■51

ORGANISED TERRITORY

The new agricultural strategy focusing on extensive grain farming in addition to more humid weather made colonisation of the vast steppes in L'Urgell, La Segarra and the lands of Huesca and Monegros possible.

The total number of settlements dropped but they were larger than before and were spread throughout the region. There were towns, villages and farms, with different degrees of influence on production, that were functionally linked to others in the territory, central areas, tribal chief seats such as Els Vilars, settlements controlling roads, such as Monderes and Monterò, to the north, in the Noguera and Segre River gorges, or Pedro/El Calvari, Cabra and Castelletes along the course of the Ebro River.

Ref. : ■52

PUBLIC SPACE AND DOMESTIC SPACE

Starting in the 8th century, the Segre-Cinca Group also set up the basic lines of urban planning and architecture that would, centuries later, become typical of the Il·lergetes.

Houses were attached to each other, sharing side walls and defining the urban network. In Els Vilars, it was common to have a front porch and probably two floors, and the walls, of adobe on stone foundations, were covered with plaster. In El Calvari, in the early 6th century, mud walls substituted adobe and the interiors were covered with mud and painted a variety of colours.

Stone streets, a water cistern, central square and security systems, going from a simple ditch to the spectacular example at Els Vilars, all illustrate the public facilities.

Ref. : ■53

NEW SCENARIO

Starting from 650 before Christ, the expansion of Phoenician trading caused the creation of distribution centres for their goods in the area of the mouth of the Ebro River.

In the Segre-Cinca area, the presence of boats travelling up the Ebro and Segre rivers or animal trains loaded with amphoras of wine,

oil, salted products, bronze and iron objects and exotic luxury items toward the inland markets must have been rather sporadic.

However, this trade was a stimulus to the production of surpluses and at the same time contributed to the political consolidation of the aristocracy, which, in the end, controlled both the surpluses and the new trading routes.

Ref. : ■54

Serra del Calvari

The dwellings in El Calvari had a surface area of 35 to 116 m², divided into different rooms, and probably had two floors. The walls were made of clay on stone foundations, covered with mud and painted red, ochre and white.

The urban layout was regular and complex, with paved streets, a wall around the boundaries and a moat in the most vulnerable area. Information from C14 dating situates the settlement in the early 6th century before Christ.

Its location, at the confluence of the Segre-Cinca, was strategic for controlling the water routes and the flow of trade that came up the Ebro River from the distribution centres on the coast towards the inland markets.

Ref. : ■55

UNFORTUNATE PEDRERA

The necropolis at La Pedrera, one of the most important archaeological sites in the region of Lleida and, indeed, in Catalunya, was active from the 11th to the 4th century before Christ.

Some tombs after the year 600 illustrate the power and magnificence of the aristocratic class, as they buried, along with the urns holding their ashes, luxury items, imported ceramics, weapons and armour and even their horses, complete with harnesses.

In 1958, while work was being done levelling the terrain between Vallfogona de Balaguer and Tèrmens, this heritage was completely destroyed, with only a few items being salvaged.

Ref. : ■56

HISTORICAL IDENTITY

For the people living in the southern and eastern areas of Iberia, contact with Mediterranean cultures meant evolving towards more complex cultural forms and entry into the league of historical nations under a specific identity: the Iberians.

But this perspective of a shared civilisation

that was, in effect, the Iberian culture, did not eliminate ethnic differences or historical processes. In the structured Segre-Cinca society, Greeks and Phoenicians only influenced the rhythm of inexorable internal processes. Therefore, the world of the Ilergetes, forged on the basis of their specific evolution, would forever maintain certain unique characteristics that are rooted in the depths of the centuries.

From 425 to 205 years before Christ

THE STATE

Ref. : ■57

***Populus, territorium, civitas* and *regulus* are the Latin concepts that the Classic writers used to refer to the Ilergetes during its most splendid years of development.**

After the year 425 before Christ, the Ilergetes set up a State with Iltirta as the political heart of the *civitas*, acting as the capital of the *territorium* of the Ilergete *populus*.

In the upper sphere of this political reality, the *regulus* appears - a personal power that sends ambassadors, mints money, leads troops and armies, declares war and makes peace agreements. This figure emerges in a complex, stratified society, and around him, relatives of royal descent and an aristocracy identified with the cavalry form the *concilium*.

Ref. : ■58

'ETHNOS': ILERGETES

The uniqueness of the Ilergete people, amply proven in the archaeological records, is also confirmed by the treatment they are given in the Greco-Latin sources.

When Tito Livio referred to the Ilergetes as *populus*, he was referring to specific characteristics that made them unique, to customs, a way

of living, dressing, going to battle, to a language and a collective consciousness, with myths, legends and beliefs about their past.

The Ilergete ethnic group is a historically established reality that is the result of a process whose roots go back to the Minferri village and the town of Genó, which came into being as of 550 before Christ.

Ref. : ■59

TERRITORIUM': ILERGECIA

The territory of the Ilergete ethnic group went from the pre-Pyrenees to the Ebro River, and to the west it reached the Gállego River and the Alcubierre and Luna mountains, which were Suessetani and Sedetani territories, and to the east it reached La Conca de Barberà and the borders of L'Urgell and La Segarra, where it bordered on the Cossetani, Layetani and Lacetani territories.

It was a territory of approximately 15,000 km² which had an estimated population of around 100,000 inhabitants.

At the end of the 5th century before Christ, the Ilergetes' ethnic space was transformed into a political territory of the State of the *civitas* Iltirta, of the *regulus* and the princes surrounding it.

Ref. : ■60

'CIVITAS': ILTIRTA

The *civitas* Iltirta is the historical form of the archaic Ilergete State, and it arose from the political development of the aristocratic society headed by the *regulus*. Iltirta was the political and economic capital of the territory and the other cities and towns.

In antiquity, the concept of the city – *civitas* – was more complex than it is now. The urban area strictly speaking was one thing - in this case, the *oppidum* Iltirta – and the city-state, the *civitas* Iltirta, was another, referring at the same time to the city and its territory, with its smaller *oppida* and villages, farms, country houses and small forts, all structured within the production system and dependent on the central nucleus.

Ref. : ■61

'CONCILIUM' AND 'REGULUS'

The Ilergete monarchy led to the specification of the State and arose when the aristocratic warrior minority took control of the production means. The military leadership of earlier periods evolved to give way to the archaic State.

The personal power of the *regulus* appeared at the head of the *civitas* and, around him, a family of royal descent and an aristocracy of knights, the *concilium*, to help and support him and, in case of occasional absence or disability, it could even substitute him.

Ref. : ■62

URBAN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

Despite the fact that the essential urban characteristics had already been set forth over 300 years earlier, the Ilergete *oppida* presented significant changes. Thus, a grid-like network of paved roads with a drainage system, the division between public and private spaces, public buildings and walls and the organisation of social, religious and production sectors constitute, in sum, a new urban landscape.

The exotic ceramics, valuable objects, prestigious handicrafts and written documents found during excavations indicate that cities, these *oppida*, had become places for the social elite and the artisans working for them to live and trade.

Ref. : ■63

WOMEN'S CONDITIONS

Ilergete women helped with work in the fields, but most of their work was done within the home. Besides maternity and caring for the elderly, they had to perform all the hard, never-ending domestic chores: grinding grain, making bread and cookies, cooking, spinning and weaving, taking care of the clothes, the home and the pantry, making earthenware for cooking by hand, preparing dairy products and preserves, looking after domestic animals and keeping track of water and firewood provisions, to name a few.

In sum, it was a world in which daily tasks and activities were assumed according to one's

gender and social position, in which being a woman meant having an extremely hard life.

Ref. : 64

Poetry on daily life

"...her left hand held a distaff wrapped in soft wool, and then her right hand, lightly bringing down the threads, would shape a mantle as her fingers faced upward; then, with her thumb facing the ground, she would turn her spindle, which is weighted with a round weight. Then her tooth would always even up the thread as she nibbled; to her dry lips there would cling woolly morsels, which had earlier been strands standing out from smooth thread. Also, before her feet, small wicker baskets contained the soft fleece of white wool."

Valerio Catulo, poet from the 1st century before Christ

Ref. : 65

Lost childhood

Childhood was likely rather short, and these years were spent learning and playing games, through which, girls and boys learned and socialised. In excavations, it is common to find small figurines of baked clay, balls of decorated clay, round pieces cut in bits of clay, anklebones for playing jacks or simple beads strung onto a cord.

From our specific experience, we know that these toys embody thousands of exciting experiences and they are the symbol of a universe that is as rich as it is intangible: a childhood lost.

Ref. : 66

A very special whorl

Aristocratic Ilergete women, like the Penelope that Homer imagined in Ithaca just a few centuries earlier, spun, wove and embroidered. These were considered high-ranking activities and were emblematic of the women belonging to the social elite.

Decorated loom weights originally from the *oppidum* of Els Vilans (Aitona) or the engraved whorl found in Gebut (Soses) tell us about this upper class, which was also the only class that knew how to write.

At the other end of the spectrum, women of humble origins had a much harder and tougher life. Being a woman in Iltirta was hard, but being a poor woman was much more so.

Ref. : 67

WORKSHOPS AND ARTISANS

Metalworking, pottery and textile production were activities that took place in workshops of specialised artisans and were oriented towards markets.

This trading world was reflected in metal and iron working and in the variety of specialised instruments that were created to perform different activities: compasses, precision scales, pliers, pruning-hooks, saws, mallets, wedges, needles, scissors, etc.

At the end of the 3rd century, Ilergete potters reached a climax of quality and beauty in their products, particularly in red glaze pottery, which was unique in the Iberian world and evidences the degree of specialisation they had reached.

Ref. : 68

MARKETS AND TRADE

In the 4th century, the Ilergete area became fully integrated into the Mediterranean trade routes, and imported products (dishes from Attica and products from Ebusus and southern Iberia) reached all the *oppida* in the territory. In the 3rd century, products from Apulia, Campania, the Gulf of Lion and Rhodes gradually took the lead.

In addition, agricultural surpluses and products supplied local regional markets within an economic framework that mirrored the ethnic and political space. Occasionally, some products went beyond the territory in long-distance inland trade, such as the little ointment cups at Gebut and Sidamon, which came from the area of Cástulo (Linares), or the falcata found at La Pedrera, also of Andalusian origin.

Ref. : 69

THE COINS OF WOLVES

Iltirta minted large amounts of silver and bronze coins from the late 3rd century before Christ to just before the turn of the era.

The first coins issued were drachmas, imitating coins from Empúries, and obols, of Massaliote inspiration. The drachmas have the head of Persephone and three dolphins on one side and Pegasus and the emblematic wolf on the other, along with the name or other derivative forms of the *civitas* Iltirta.

The first series in bronze showed the figure of the wolf and the name of the city on the reverse side. On the half value a lion appeared, and on the quarter there was a boar.

The coins from Iltirta, like those of many

other *civitas*, did not serve as a means of exchange and payment, except under very special circumstances. Regular active internal markets were moneyless, working exclusively through exchanges.

Ref. : ■70

LIFE ON THE FARM

The men who lived in El Pilaret, El Calvari, Gebut, Els Estinclells, El Molí d'Espígol and many other *oppida* were farmers who grew wheat and barley for bread, and oats for animals in their fields. Their lives were most likely spent much closer to tools than to weapons.

Traditional crops were expanded with the introduction of alfalfa and oats, at the same time as olive trees, grapevines and flax gained increasing relevance. Vegetable and fruit tree gardening slowly became consolidated.

Sheep and goats were the predominant livestock, and bovines, besides producing milk, were used as work animals, as were donkeys. Horse breeding, a mount and possession emblematic of the aristocracy, had very special connotations.

Ref. : ■71

ENIGMAS OF THE GREAT BEYOND

The religion and beliefs of the Ilergete people are still a mystery. We know almost nothing about their pantheon or their divinities. We can infer the emblematic meaning of the wolf on the Iltirta coins, as the symbol that speaks of the *civitas* and the *populus* and, perhaps, the representation of a divinity with institutionalised worship and officiants.

Regarding the world of the dead, we do not know of any Ilergete necropolises, except for the last period of La Pedrera and the solitary urn from La Femosa. The exceptional funeral monument of La Vispesa, with its representation of amputation rituals and leaving defeated enemies to the scavengers, is a unique document.

Beyond these few elements, all is mystery and silence.

Ref. : ■72

MESSAGES IN STONE

The stele from La Vispesa is the most important artistic object that remains from the Ilergete culture. It was found by coincidence in 1964 and is now part of the wonderful permanent collection on display at the Huesca Museum.

It shows a representation of an amputated right hand, a human body cut into pieces and devoured by a vulture, a horseman with a round shield and the following inscription surrounding the images: *tan.orkeikelaur.sker.ekisiran. neitin*, the last word of which may be the name of a person. Amputated right hands fill the sides.

Dating from the early 2nd century before Christ, the funeral monument is intended to intimidate the vanquished and is also an exaltation of the hero fallen in battle, who is awarded the privilege of travelling to the other world by being consumed by birds.

Ref. : ■73

Mysterious writing

The Iberian language used two different writing systems: the southern and the eastern types. The southern type is read from right to left and was used from Andalusia to the Júcar River. The eastern type reads from left to right and it was the system used between the Júcar River and the area of Narbona, which means it was the system used by the Ilergetes.

Parts of the symbols represent autonomous phonemes, five vowels and consonants, but fifteen syllables were represented using a single symbol which, with an added diacritic, became dual, making it possible to differentiate voiceless consonants from voiced ones.

We can currently read Iberian but we cannot translate it because we do not have the meaning of the words. Will we find our Rosetta stone?

From 205 to 44 years before Christ

THE FINAL REBELLION

Ref. : ■74

In 196 and 195 before Christ, the last major war of the Iberians against Roman occupation took place. Brutally suppressed by the consul, Marcus Porcius

Cato, this rebellion marked the definitive end of an era.

The Ilergetes did not participate in this uprising. They were still suffering the consequences of their defeat in 205. They had been defeated (*deditici*) and, therefore, forced to collectively pay a military tax (*stipendium*). They were not slaves, but neither were they citizens, and they continued to exist in this legal void (*peregrini*): they were nothing, they had been annihilated as a people, reduced to nothingness.

With Rome's victory, the legions had an open gateway to the peninsula inland. Tarraco became the stronghold on the coast and Ilerda was the first advance position inland.

A new era would now forever travel along Via Augusta

Ref. : ■75

Coins of the defeated

Iltirta joined the Roman monetary system in the second half of the 2nd century before Christ or very likely, after the year 195. On the back of silver and bronze coins, a horseman with a palm leaf and the legends *Iltirta* or *Iltirtasalirban* were represented.

The disappearance of the wolf from the back of the coins, and its substitution by the horseman with palm leaf, was imposed by the Romans upon all the Iberian peoples in general.

Ref. : ■76

'PAX ROMANA'

The first step towards *pax romana* was acceptance of the occupation, the obligation to pay taxes, submission to the new governors and abandoning any hope of armed rebellion.

Rome imposed its peace with an iron hand, and the Ilergete aristocracy gradually accepted the situation, slowly absorbing the mentality and cultural forms of Roman society.

This was a changing, hybrid period. A world headed towards extinction mingled with a new order that was expanding throughout the Mediterranean. The remains uncovered reveal this unique coexistence between two realities.

Rome was imposing, but it was also seductive, with its new way of understanding life and the world.

Ref. : ■77

THE NEW ORDER

Rome was structured under a solid republican political organisation in which only those recognised as having citizen status could participate.

The Senate was the governing body. It was in charge of solving all matters related to high finance, foreign policy or war, and the different magistrates and executive offices of the Republic arose out of this body.

The Romans who reached Hispania after the conquest brought with them a new political and administrative system, a language, customs and, indeed, a new way of understanding the world that inexorably came to prevail.

Ref. : ■78

Ilergetes, Ilerdenses

Iltirta, Ilerda

The so-called Ascoli Bronze was found in 1909 at the Roman forum. It dates from the year 89 before Christ and is unique because documents from this period are so rare.

This is a decree issued by the consul, Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo, granting Roman citizenship to a squadron of cavalry from Hispania which stood out at the battle of *Asculum*.

The list of soldiers is organised by city of origin and, at the top of the second column, the following is stated:

Ilerdenses

Q. Octacilius, hijo de Suisetarten

Cn. Cornelius, hijo de Nesille

P. Fabius, hijo de Enasagin

Among the Iberians, Celtiberians and Vascones named, the Ilergetes already have Latin names and surnames, despite the fact that their fathers' names are still Iberian.

The Ascoli Bronze, in sum, is an indication of the process through which the Ilergete elite adopted Roman customs and culture.

In addition, regarding the name of the city, this is the earliest known mention of the name in its Latin form: Ilerda.

Ref. : ■79

Coins of war

Within the context of the Roman civil war, and Iltirta having joined the side of Sertorius, or the *optimates*, coins were minted that brought back the old wolf icon on the back.

With these very lightweight coins, coin-making activities practically came to a halt.

Ref. : ■80

CIVIL WAR

During the first century before Christ, Rome was seriously shaken by clashes between the *optimates*, defenders of the traditional order, and the *populares*, supporters of reforms in favour of the lower classes.

Civil war spread throughout all the conquered territories. The Ilergetes supported the popular, Sertorius, and the Ilerdenses, a highly Romanised urban class, favoured Pompey the Great.

The struggle in Hispania was decided in Ilerda when, in 49 before Christ, Julius Caesar, on the popular side, arrived with approximately 50,000 men. Pompey's deputies, with 70,000 men, decided to confront him in our city. But the battle never took place, because Caesar's strategy managed to distance Pompey's troops from the river and defeat them without a fight.

The world remembers what Caesar said when he crossed the Rubicon, but what did he say when he crossed the Segre?

From 44 years before Christ to 260 years after Christ

Ref. : ■81

POWER AND WEAKNESS

The period spanning from the late 1st century before Christ to the middle of the 3rd century after Christ corresponds to the historical culmination of imperial Rome.

This is the time of the great monuments and spectacular public works.

The Latin language, way of life, religion and all the Roman ideological elements fully prevailed.

In Rome, the republican political structure was never abolished but the *Imperium* that the Senate had granted Caesar was maintained by Augustus and perpetuated in his successors.

The former Republic had become a de facto absolute monarchy, ruling over the empire

with no constitution that would ever support this change in the political system.

Ref. : ■82

The money of Augustus

Around the year 23 before Christ, Augustus reserved the right to mint money in gold and silver. The Senate only had control over bronze and orichalcum issues. For this reason, these pieces are marked with the letters "SC" (*senatus consulto*, by Senate decree).

Units in gold and silver, *aureus* and *denarius*, continued to be produced. In less noble metals, a new monetary system was set up with a series of pieces in bronze: the *sestertius*, equal to four asses, the *dupondius*, equal to two asses, the as, or unit value, and the quadrans, equal to a quarter of an as.

The new money system created by Augustus was a highly significant factor in the economic development of Rome and continued to be valid, with certain modifications, until the great crisis in the 3rd century.

Ref. : ■83

A RIGID SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Roman society was organised into specific social strata depending on the origin or birth of its members. Citizens were divided into *humiliores* and *honestiores*. The former were rural or urban workers who did not have a political career.

The *honestiores* belonged either to the *ordo senatorius*, in which case they acceded to the most important offices, or the *ordo equester*, a class of nobility linked to imperial offices.

The *ordo municipalis*, a class of dignitaries among the curia of the cities, nourished the annual municipal government offices.

Women, always dependent on men (fathers, brothers or husbands), could only act as priestesses of Rome and Augustus. This was the case of Aemilia Paterna, from Aeso, who was the *flaminica* of the Citerior province.

From 44 years before Christ to 260 years after Christ

'MVN ILERDA'

Ref. : ■84

Ilerda, which according to Pliny was a

civium Romanorum municipality, probably received municipal status from Augustus at around the turn of the era.

After being awarded new municipal status, Ilerda experienced a remarkable process of monument-building, though this did not significantly affect the old urban layout from the republican era.

At any rate, the Roman right was positively awarded, unlike the Latin one, more limited in some aspects, to free citizens of the municipality, who became part of the *galeria* tribe, as shown in the preserved epigraphy.

Ref. : ■85

ORGANISING THE EMPIRE

Ilerda was awarded legal status as a municipality in the time of Augustus, and Aeso (Isona) and Ileso (Guissona) probably received such status in the time of Vespasian.

A Roman municipality was composed of a *civitas*, which was the unit created by an urban centre (*urbs*), and its territory (*territorium* or *ager*).

A municipality's territory contained smaller population units such as villages (*vici*, *pagi*), farms, villas and others. Many times, the *ager* had been divided again (*centuriatio*) and redistributed into regular plots.

Part of the forests and pasturelands of the municipality were kept in reserve as municipal property, forming the *ager publicus*.

Rome reorganised the world it conquered.

Ref. : ■86

Money in the 'municipium' Ilerda

The coin-making workshop in Iltirta, which had been quite prolific in the republican period, ceased its activities after minting two bronze issues under the rule of Augustus.

The first issue, containing the legend *MVN ILERDA*, is considered foundational because of the reference to the new status given to the city: a Roman municipality.

On the back of these two issues, which appear to be from the years 29 and 13 before Christ, the Roman Capitoline wolf is shown substituting the Ilergete wolf. This is clear proof that Ilerda was by this time a fully Roman city and that the new social model had been completely imposed.

Ref. : ■87

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN ILERDA

Archaeological actions in the urban area show that, during the time of Augustus, Ilerda underwent a remarkable process of monument-building, with the construction of public buildings and laying of the main streets, the *cardus* and the *decumanus*.

Apparently, the 2nd century was the city's most stable and dynamic period, when a large bath complex was built and a noticeable urban growth occurred, leading to the reorganisation of some streets.

However, there would be a before and an after to this urban high point, arising from the crisis in the 3rd century. The abandonment of several buildings indicates a crisis of a considerable scope that was never overcome. On top of the ruins from this period, burial zones from the 4th century and new buildings from more recent periods are situated.

Ref. : ■88

THE NETWORK THAT CONNECTED A WORLD

Fast and safe travel for the legions and post was a basic necessity for the imperial State. The roadway network (*viae*) was, therefore, one of the most well taken care of infrastructures.

The main roads were usually about 5 metres wide. The pavement was convex in shape and made of paving stones, the *summum dorsum*, measuring about 20 centimetres, which sat on top of a 50-centimetre layer of gravel and sand, the *rudus*.

Every *milia pasum*, 1,481 metres, there was a milestone and at intervals of one day's travel, about 30 kilometres apart, there were way stations, known as *mansio*, which they usually tried to make coincide with a city or town.

The *viae* connected and united the empire.

Ref. : ■89

NEW MARKETS

The arrival of the Roman legions and the population of Italic origin on the Peninsula, starting in the republican period, led to the reorganisation of trade and import routes (bronze objects, four-year-old wines from Campania, oil from

Apulia or luxury ceramics from Etruria and the Gulf of Naples) in order to satisfy demand by the newly arrived inhabitants.

The trade volume of the new markets is evidenced by the fact that, starting in the 2nd century before Christ, Roman trading vessels had to significantly increase their tonnage.

However, starting during the rule of Augustus, the provinces of the Empire would gradually go from being mere receivers to producers competing with Italic exporters.

Ref. : ■90

Coins from Augustus to Aemilian

The monetary system of Augustus underwent two important reforms. In the first, carried out by Nero in 64 after Christ, the weights of the *aureus* and the *denarius* were decreased and orichalcum was generally used for all fraction coins. The purpose was to revalue them in response to the flow of gold towards the East and also to offset the cost of military campaigns and the reconstruction of Rome, burned down by fire.

The second important reform dates from the year 214, when, under Caracalla, a new copper and silver alloy coin called *argentus antoninianus*, or simply Antoninianus, was introduced, which, being slightly larger than the *denarius*, was equal to two *denarii*. Thus, the State could pay its debts with low quality currency and, on the other hand, it could collect taxes in genuine silver *denarii*.

Ref. : ■91

FARMING AND LIVESTOCK TERRITORY

The territory of Ilerda stretched to a radius of about fifty kilometres from the city. In fact, this was where most of the population lived, scattered among towns and small farms.

Farmland was devoted to growing grains, olives and vineyards. In garden areas, vegetables, legumes, fruit trees and flax were grown.

Sheep, goats and pigs provided the most relevant meat for consumption, whereas oxen were used as work animals.

Around the 2nd century, the rich owners of farms began building luxurious residences. This is the case of the villa at Els Vilans in Aitona, the property and residence of a member of the Ilerdense curia.

Ref. : ■92

Centuriation

Ilerda's award of the legal status of *municipium* marked the beginning of urban development in the city, as well as the

transformation of the territory, the *ager*, belonging to it.

The economic feasibility of the city depended on the controlled and rational use of the *ager*. A land registry and territorial regulations were created, in which a surveyor divided the space into plots, usually square in shape and of the same size, called *centuriatio*.

Some of these ancient farmland divisions are still in existence, such as one area in the municipality of Albesa and another in Guissona.

Ref. : ■93

RELIGION AND THE OTHER WORLD

Rome was quite tolerant on religious matters and, in a constant search for social cohesion, it fostered syncretism between its gods and those of the conquered peoples.

The official religion of the Empire, headed and practiced by the State, had a considerable number of divinities, at the top of which the Capitoline Triad was found: Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. One decisive aspect, for its influence on political legitimacy, was the worship of a deified Augustus and of Rome itself.

Besides the official religion, there was private religion, full of superstitions and rituals, officiated at home by the *pater familias*, who addressed the family's Lares and Penates gods.

Starting in the 2nd century, religions from the East started to take hold, offering the novelty of the belief in eternal life.

Ref. : ■94

The necropolis at L'Estació

Ilerda, like all Roman cities, had its burial areas on the outskirts of town and at the sides of the roads.

Of the different necropolises that the city must have had, the remains of just one have been preserved, located near where the train station presently lies. The L'Estació necropolis was discovered in 1926 while the present buildings were being built, levelled with the place where the former Corbins road lied.

The few remains that were salvaged date from the 4th and 5th centuries, despite the fact that the necropolis must have been in existence from early in Ilerda's history.

One of the most remarkable objects from this necropolis is, undoubtedly, the tombstone of Theodora, which gives us the first evidence of Christianity in the city.

Ref. : ■95

The Corbins mausoleum

The rise of eastern religions in Roman society, which included the belief in life after death where it was important

to preserve the bodies, meant changing funeral rituals to substitute cremation for interment.

This new religious belief in the Roman world has an emblematic building in Lleida: the remains of the mausoleum from El Tossal del Moro in Corbins, a rectangular-shaped shrine 7.50 metres long by 6 metres wide, to be used for holding religious and funeral ceremonies. Under the floor, part of four chambers (*conditoria*) are preserved, used to hold the mortal remains of the owners of the villa.

From 260 to 409 years after Christ

ILERDA IN DECLINE

Ref. : ■96

From the mid-3rd century to the year 284, the Empire was immersed in an unprecedented political, economic and social crisis. The significant reforms rendered by Diocletian (from 284 to 313) certainly managed to revitalize the situation but, in the end, the effect was only temporary.

Cities entered an obvious recession process. Correspondence between Paulinus, bishop of Nola, and his tutor, Decimus Magnus Ausonius, *comes* and *quaestor* in the prefecture of Gallia, tells us that Ilerda was in a situation of serious decline.

In significant numbers, large landowners moved out to the country, in luxurious villas, distancing themselves from municipal political offices highly valued years earlier.

Ref. : ■97

INVASION

Between the years of 260 and 266, Frank and Germanic groups overtook the northern border and their raids reached Tarracoensis. This previously unheard-of event would often be repeated in the future. The peoples from beyond the limes forced their entry into a richer world in which theft and plundering were easily within reach.

The apparently violent end at the Torre

Andreu villa in La Bordeta dates from this period, though it cannot definitively be related to these invasions. However, it is highly likely that instability and the economic crisis caused uprisings in Ilerda, whose citizens were impoverished and subjected to harsh tax burdens.

Ref. : ■98

Coins from Valerian to Carinus

By 260, the money system of Augustus was in ruins, despite reforms by Nero and Caracalla. Bronze had disappeared, gold was unorganised and silver coins were actually made of copper covered in a thin layer of the noble metal.

Numerous mints by the emperor Gallienus, especially the series known as "the bestiary", and those by Claudius II are noteworthy. The latter were issued posthumously with the legend *Divo Claudio*.

In 274, Aurelian began a monetary reform that managed to provide the *Antoninianus* with greater purity and weight. The reform also affected other values and metals and it reinstated the minting of bronze coins.

Ref. : ■99

PERIOD OF REFORMS

In 293, Diocletian divided the empire into two parts - the East and the West - and converted the figure of the emperor into a Tetrarchy: two Augustuses and two Caesars. Between Constantine and Constantius II, the provincial organisation was reformed and prefectures and dioceses were created.

Hispania became a diocese with seven provinces, each with its corresponding governor, the *praeses* or rector, included in the prefecture of Gallia. The highest political authority of the diocese, appointed by the emperor, was the *vicarius* and the military authority was the *dux* or *comes*.

In 303, Diocletian began the latest and bloodiest persecution of Christians, which would intermittently last until the edict of Milan in 313.

Ref. : ■100

'Beata tranquillitas'?

In 301, Diocletian was forced to fix prices on goods to stop inflation and he implemented a monetary reform consisting of regulating the weight of the *aureus*, introducing a new silver coin, the *denarius argenteus*, and substituting the *Antoninianus* with a new copper and silver alloy coin, the

nummus, which weighed 10 grams.

Constantine, in turn, substituted the *aureus* with one new gold coin, the *solidus*, and two in silver, the *siliquas* and the *miliarenses*.

Constantius II and Constans, in 348, carried out a new reform in order to revalue fiduciary currency.

In this period, money had become a significant element of propaganda. The emperors proclaimed the well-being of the political system and society by means of legends such as *FELICIVM TEMPORVM REPARATIO* or *BEATA TRANQUILITAS*, to name a few.

Ref. : ■101

THE NEW SOCIAL MODEL

The *humiliores*, the vast majority of the citizens, were the victims of the economic crisis, tax burdens and corruption, and considered themselves better protected and represented by the bishop than by the civil magistrates.

The *honestiores*, the rich landowning minority, had taken over smaller properties and also controlled the curia and the office of the *defensor civitatis*.

Cities no longer had their ancient splendour, but they did maintain a minority of citizens with considerable buying power. In Ilerda's case, this is evidenced by the marble imports from Asia Minor and Greece or the fact that there was a *retor*, a professor of rhetoric, by the name of Dinamius who came from Bordeaux and settled in our city.

Ref. : ■102

The impressive mansion

The villa at El Romeral in Albesa shows us the kind of rural residence a member of the *honestiores* class would have had: a place of leisure and a stately residence adapted to the needs, tastes and way of life of this new aristocracy.

A place that had been a modest farm since the early 1st century, despite successive expansions and alterations, was totally rebuilt on a monumental scale in the mid-4th century around a colonnaded peristyle. The new building had large reception and ceremony rooms and a complex decorative theme including marbles, mosaics and murals that expressed the social prestige and economic power of its owner.

Ref. : ■103

Villa Fortunatus

Between the late 4th and early 5th century, this villa combined pagan sumptuousness and new Christian religiousness.

The magnificent mosaics in the corridors of the peri-

style and in several rooms show plants, fruits, animals and the mythological figures Eros, Psyche and Venus.

Later, in a room on the south central side of the peristyle, a new mosaic was constructed with the name *FORTVNATVS* and the *chrismon* (the anagram for Christ) in it, and the *triclinium*, the dining room at the villa, was rehabilitated to turn it into a Christian temple with a tripartite apse and a small crypt or reliquary with an entrance gate and three steps at the entrance.

Ref. : ■104

The mosaics at El Romeral

Archaeological excavations performed since 1965 in the villa at El Romeral have enabled us to verify that over 500 square metres of its flooring was decorated in mosaics. They date from the mid-4th century and are composed of geometric, figurative and naturalistic motifs relating to rural life: leaves, birds, fruit...

Mosaics were a show of ostentation of luxury and wealth with which the family residing there intended to demonstrate its power and prestige. In this case, they indicate that the owners pertained to the highest level of the aristocracy in Roman Catalunya.

Unfortunately, many parts have been lost, some in Roman times, but mostly due to more recent use of farm equipment.

Ref. : ■105

FROM THE PERSECUTED TO PERSECUTORS

In 313, under the edict of Milan, Constantine ordered persecutions of Christians to cease and at the same time, he granted them legal recognition and freedom to hold meetings and build temples. Shortly afterwards, in 388, Theodosius declared Christianity the official religion of the empire and also prohibited and started to persecute all the other existing religions.

From that time on, Christianity had to assume two basic duties of the previous official religion: providing the empire with social cohesion and legitimating the political actions of the government.

Ref. : ■106

A (chrismon)
THEODORE BENEMERENTI
ANNOS XLVIII (quadraginta quattuor) MENSIS III (tres)
{V}IDVAVIXITANNOS XXII (viginti duos)
MENSISVIII (novem) RECESSIT
LXVII (sexaginta septem)

To Theodora the most worthy, who lived with her husband for (or un-

til she was) 44 years and 3 months, was widowed for 22 years and 9 months. She rests in peace after living for 67 years.

The epitaph of Theodora, with the anagram of Christ, dates from the late 4th or perhaps early 5th century, and it is the oldest preserved testimony of the presence of Christianity in Ilerda.

The tombstone made of veined marble was probably imported from Luni-Carrara (Italy) and it would have been attached to a sarcophagus or would be part of a funeral monument. It indicates the remarkable purchasing power that Theodora had, and therefore, her membership to the cultured, urban upper social class among which Christianity was spreading in that period.

Ref. : ■107

LORDS, ESTATES AND FORTRESSES

The process of social polarization became accentuated over time. Rural properties, now run by foremen (*vilicus*), were increasingly large, combining several villas under a single owner, or *dominus*.

The workforce was made up of tenant farmers (*coloni*), former small landowners who had given or sold their lands to the *dominus* in exchange for being able to farm a plot on the estate (*fundus*) and hand over a portion of the production.

Lack of security, banditry and the lack of defence by the official authorities caused the lords to create their own armies and fortify their luxurious villas, which came to be known as *castelli*.

Ref. : ■108

5TH CENTURY INVASIONS

The Visigoths entered Hispania in 409, from 414 to 416 and in 418, always acting as allies to Rome against invaders from other barbarian ethnic groups. However, in 449, they were unable to prevent Suebi and Bagaudae raiders from sacking Ilerda.

Despite their condition as allies, the Visigoths also contributed to the lack of security and social decline. In correspondence from the year 418 between Consentius and Augustine of Hippo, the way they pillaged the lands of Ilerda is described, and specifically, how they assaulted and robbed a *castellum* located between Ilerda and Osca.

From 490 to 713 years after Christ

THE VISIGOTH STATE

Ref. : ■109

The capture of Caesaraugusta and Tarraco by Visigoth armies in 473 represents the end of imperial authority in Tarraconensis, which then fell under the rule of Tolosa, and after the latter fell to the Franks in 507, the Visigoths established the capital of their Spanish kingdom in Barcino in 531 and, later, in 573, in Toletum.

The structure for ruling the provinces remained, with the *iudex* and *dux* as the highest authorities, whereas rule of the cities was assumed by the bishops, whose power became consolidated under the Visigoth monarchy with the culmination of the process of the ecclesiastical administrative structure assimilating the prevailing civil one.

Ref. : ■110

THE ROAD TOWARDS FEUDALISM?

The majority of the population was Hispano-Roman, the *romani*, whereas the Visigoths, or *gothi*, were a small minority, but they held the government and a class of military nobility that was particularly privileged, due to the fact that they were granted estates.

The major Hispano-Roman families remained at the top of society and, along with the Gothic landowners, comprised a single social stratum, whereas the peasants, the immense majority of the population, lived in extreme poverty, close to mere subsistence.

It looks as if, on the estates of Visigothic Hispania, where the lives of the lowly were completely in the hands of the lords, the basic shape of the feudal system that would characterise the Middle Ages was being laid down.

Ref. : ■111

EL BOVALAR

The basilica of El Bovalar was built in the 5th century, following the Classic design of a floor plan with three naves and a tripartite apse and baptismal area. It was also a burial space, with rich stone monolithic sarcophagi.

Under the church's shelter, a settlement grew, in which farm tools, remains of grain, fruit and garden products, wool carders and cooking pottery, a community oil press and mill and a set of Akhila II coins have been found.

Both the baptistery and the liturgical containers uncovered date from a 6th century rehabilitation of the temple.

Around 713, a fire totally destroyed both the church and the settlement forever.

Ref. : ■112

THE END OF ANTIQUITY

With the death of Vitiza in 710, one sector of the nobility proclaimed Rodrigo, the dux of Baetica, king, whereas the other sector sided with Akhila II, son of Vitiza and dux of Tarraconensis.

Thus, a civil war struggling for royal power began that, in the end, would have quite unexpected results: involvement in the conflict of a Muslim mercenary army that, in effect, defeated Rodrigo, but then did not stop its military expansion throughout Hispania. In 713, they burned El Bovalar down and in later years reached Septimania.

Just as it had in centuries past with the arrival of the Roman legions, the expansion of an emerging empire began to forge a new world.

AL ÁNDALUS CALIPHATE TAIFA



Ref. : 1

A NEW COUNTRY CALLED AL ÁNDALUS

In the 7th century, Arabia was an important trading crossroads with prosperous urban centres such as Mecca and Medina, a region where several religious beliefs lived together. It was here that the young merchant Muhammad, considered the last of the prophets, began to preach a new religion, Islam, and recorded the message of God in a fixed book, the Koran, the divine word transmitted in Arabic, now a sacred language.

The religion and empire created by Muhammad quickly spread and, in less than one hundred years, its borders stretched from India to the Pyrenees. The Iberian Peninsula was conquered at a dizzying pace because of the crisis that the Visigoth kingdom of Toledo was suffering: in 711, Rodrigo's army was defeated, by 713 to 714, the Arab and Berber army had already reached Aragón, Lleida and Tarragona and, six years later, Septimania was conquered.

A new country, called Al Ándalus, subject to the caliphate of Damascus, took the place of the former Roman province of Hispania.

Andalusí coins: The first coins minted in Al-Ándalus followed the pattern of Byzantine solid coins: made of gold with Latin Muslim legends. After 715-716, they become bilingual, with the text in Latin on one side and Arabic on the other. From 720-721, the coins followed the pattern imposed throughout the caliphate. This currency was the main instrument for tax collection in the Andalusí State. Minting was done in gold (*dinar*), silver (*dirhem*) and bronze or copper (*felus*), and had a double legend on each side, stating the name of the sovereign and the date and place of issue, in addition to religious texts.

Miscellaneous Codex (ACL, RC_Ms.2): The Visigoth script was the most commonly used script in all the books from the Visigoth period to well into the 11th century. The terms of surrender between the Visigoth aristocracy and the recently arriving Arabs made it possible to continue with the liturgy and use of existing religious buildings – all in exchange for paying taxes.

Facsimile Koran (BC, ms.2336): The Koran is the sacred book of the Muslims, and it is a compilation of the word that God revealed to Mohammad in Arabic. Its name derives from the Arabic word *quran*, which means “recitation” and, by extension, “sacred text that is recited”. This book, along with the events of the life of the Prophet (*Sunna*) and the traditions attributed to him (*hadith*), dictates the rules of behaviour for Muslim believers, based on the principle of doing good and avoiding evil.

Ref. : ■2

THE UPPER MARCH

Al-Ándalus, which was a diverse country where a western Christian society lived with an eastern Muslim one, made Córdoba its capital and divided the country into provinces or *cores*, which were organised into three marches, besides the border. The defeat of the Arab armies in Poitiers in 732 was the start of the Carolingian offensive, which reached Barcelona in 801. The border drawn between the Carolingian Empire and Al-Ándalus lasted until the 11th century.

***Al-Tagr al-a'la*, the Upper March of Al-Ándalus, stretching from La Rioja to the Ebro delta, had its capital in Zaragoza and it was made up of the districts of Tortosa, Tarragona, Lleida, Barbitanya, Huesca, Zaragoza, Tudela, Calatayud and Barusa.**

Andalusí coins: Islamic currency was the main instrument for tax collection in the Andalusí State, which had always been controlled by the authorities residing in its capital, Cordoba. This type of coin (*felus*) was only minted in the early years of Al-Ándalus as a colony of the caliphates of Damascus and Baghdad, and it would disappear by the middle of the 8th century.

Alphabets carved on a bone scapula (M.2004, M.0025, M.0026, on deposit from the Lleida City Council): The protective or magical nature of the alphabet associated with animal bones, despite the fact that it did not pertain to Islamic orthodoxy, must be placed within a context of rural practices of expiatory magic aimed at ensuring the long-term preservation of grain reserves. For this reason, these objects are often found in silos.

Perfume bottle (MLDC 1865): Andalusí sources tell us of palaces with large halls and luxurious bedrooms, where a wide variety of exotic sumptuary objects abound, from pools of mercury to reflect the light from the sun to various pieces of furniture, floor and ceiling lamps, tapestries, glass bottles and jars imported from the East. This perfume bottle belonged to Arnau Mir de Tost (?-1072), lord of Àger, who kept it, along with several chess sets, at his residence in Àger. This is evidence of the high regard that noble Christians felt for Islamic luxury products.

Bottle, Pitcher, Plate, Pitcher (M.0050, M.0042, M.0679, M.0023, on deposit from the Lleida City Council): Andalusí dishware is rich in shape and decoration. Over twenty series for use at the table, pantry and other uses are known. In decorative terms, it is worth mentioning that glazing techniques were usually applied to this type of products, which rapidly spread throughout Al-Ándalus, following eastern tastes.

Fragment of a bottle and ataifor (M.0038, M.0019, on deposit from the Lleida City Council): The addition of geometric, epigraphic and zoomorphic decoration to luxury Andalusí dishware is evidence of the expansion of an eastern trend throughout Al-Ándalus that sought to transfer religious and ideological symbolism not only to architecture but also to all types of craft production. In this case, we can see a peacock, which may have ties to the birds that stroll around Paradise, according to the Koran, and the inscription “*al-mulk*”, one of Allah's names, symbolising power, authority and strength

Ref. : ■3

MADINA LARIDA

The caliphate of Córdoba reproduced the eastern scheme of an urban civilisation on the Peninsula, founding new cities – *madina*, in Arabic – and improving the existing ones.

Arab sources describe the district of Lleida as a very important enclave for the defensive forces on the border, though it was also a top-notch agricultural region, especially the Cinca valley and the Segre valley, of considerable gold-mining wealth.

Suddenly, after 883-885, the relatively insignificant *madina* of “Larida” became an authentic walled city of almost 30 hectares which, a few years later – from 900 to 901 – was provided with a mosque in the high part of the city.

Larida became large, powerful and decisive.

Ref. : ■4

THE TAIFA OF LLEIDA

In the early 11th century, a long civil war caused the breakdown of Al Ándalus into a series of smaller states, the taifa kingdoms. For a time, Lleida was the capital of the taifa created by Yusuf al-Muzaffar ibn Hud.

The Upper March of Al Ándalus experienced its period of greatest economic and cultural splendour at that time. Agricultural development fostered the growth of Andalusí cities on the border - Larida, Balagi, Ifraga, Wasqa - and the emergence of courts that attracted writers, scientists, architects and artists.

Despite this brilliant façade, the inability to deal with the feudalism arising on the other side of the border soon became clear.

Capitals (MLDC, 557, 575, 585, IEI L-5309): If borders are a place for war, they are also a place for exchanges and influences. Lord Àger, Arnau Mir de Tost (?-1072), and his wife Arsenda are an example of this. We know that they had a series of Islamic origin luxury items, including the perfume bottle and chess set on display at the Museum, which not only show their admiration for this culture, but also their ability to appreciate beautiful and prestigious objects. In addition, echoes of Islamic compositional patterns and repertoires were also noted in the architectural sculptures of the time. Hence, the capitals that decorated the collegiate church of Sant Pere, an emblematic building of Arnau Mir de Tost's power as a border lord, are not removed from this influence.

Andalusí coins: Yusuf al-Muzaffar, the Victorious, the eldest son of Sulayman al-Musta'in, founder of the Banu Hud dynasty of Arab origin, independently governed the taifa of Lleida from 1046 to 1080 and also controlled Zaragoza for about three years. He was the only governor of the Upper March to mint gold coins, perhaps from the Segre River, which, according to Arabic sources, was rich in particles of this precious metal.

Ref. : ■5

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE KNOWN WORLD

The geography by al-Idrisi, from the mid-12th century, describes the exploration of the world by an Arab sage who lived in the court of the Norman king Rogelio II of Sicily. This atlas includes the countries, most important cities, routes and borders, seas, rivers and mountains, and provides a modern vision of the world with all the flavour and tradition of the Greek, Indian and Persian geographies. This is an enormous amount of information, with over 5,000 place

names, in which the city of Lleida appears for the first time on a map.

A city which, unbeknownst to the Arab geographer, had become part of a new world five years earlier - the newly created feudal Christian Crown of Aragón, possessing a complex multicultural society made up of communities native to the region from over 400 years earlier and the colonisers who had recently arrived from all over a country that began to call itself Catalunya.

"From Huesca to Lleida, seventy miles; from Lleida to Mequinenza, fifty miles. Mequinenza is a small city that seems like a fortified town. It is one of the border zones of Al Ándalus. Lleida is a mid-sized city, but wealthy in resources. It is located next to the river of the olive trees (al-Zayûn), which takes water from the mountain of the Puertos, passes to the east of Jaca, bathes the eastern part of the wall of Lleida and continues toward Mequinenza, where it flows into the Ebro, such that Mequinenza is located between the two rivers.

From Lleida to Fraga, a fortified villa similar to a city, containing markets and artisans, with very brave fighting inhabitants, fifty miles (...)"

Abu Abd Allah Muhammad al-Idrisi

Libro de Rogelio

1154

Ref. : ■6

MORTGAGING THE KINGDOM

Muslim society, more highly developed culturally and technologically, but with a limited military structure, was finally defeated by Christian feudal states organised by a dominant warrior class.

In the 11th century, the Christian countships took advantage of the fratricidal conflicts between Andalusí governors to economically weaken them, imposing regular collection of taxes, known as pariahs, which were used to pay feudal warriors for their services as mercenaries, though it also paid for their neutrality in disputes.

In the late 11th century, when Muslim society was no longer able to continue paying for peace, the protectorate was substituted by territorial expansion.

"Larida (...) is a city that was built on a river that comes from the land of Gillikiya, known as Siqr, where nuggets of pure gold are found. (...) The fortress is powerful: it does not yield in combat and cannot be gained through a long siege. A mosque is located in the highest part, where the multitudinous Friday prayer takes place, a strong building dating from the year 288 H (901).

The fortress dominates a vast plain known as the plain of Mashkican (Mascansà). The city of Lleida has a fertile territory (...), there are many orchards and abundant fruit, and it stands out for the quantity and quality of its flax, which it exports to all the regions in the area of the Marches. On the plain of Mashkican, there are many small villages, croplands and pastures. All these villages have a tower or underground silo-shelter, where the villagers hide in the event of an enemy attack. In order to build these shelters, the people of the March collect money from testaments and donations."

Al-Himyari

The book of the perfumed garden on the news of the countries
First half of the 14th century

Ref. : ■7

Border people

In the 11th and 12th centuries, the feudal territories along the border were dotted with castles and watchtowers, whereas, in the taifa of Lleida, there were only peasant settlements, though they did almost always have defensive elements. Two ways of understanding the border, two visions of the world facing each other.

The Tossal de Solibernat is the only rural settlement from the Andalusí period excavated in Catalunya. Located on a hill and fortified, in addition to being a self-sufficient farming and livestock operation, it was also used as a lookout and control point.

Peace treaty between Ramon Berenguer III and Ibn-Hilal, caid of Lleida, reproduction (ACA, perg. Ramon Berenguer, III, 229): In the first half of the 12th century, the territory that would become present-day Catalunya was gradually composed as a result of the conquest of the most relevant Andalusí cities (Balaguer, Tortosa and Lleida), but there were also times in which military treaties were signed to deal with specific matters. In this case, the lord of the city of Lleida, the *quaid* Ibn Hilal gave a series of castles north of the city - Xalamera, Zaidín, Escarp, Seròs, Carratalà, Aitona, Gebut, Castell-dans, Albesa, Alfés, Alcoletge and Montagut- to count Ramon Berenguer III in payment for transfer by boat of his cavalry to Mallorca.

"This is the agreement made between the caid Ibn Hilal and lord Ramon, count of Barcelona and marquis. (...) Therefore, the aforementioned caid of Lleida agrees with the aforementioned count -and he lets him have his children and many of his men as hostages, so that the count is quite safe- that the caid will give the count Xalamera, Zaidín, Escarp, Seròs, Carratalà, Aitona, Gebut, Castell-dans, Alcoletge, and also Albesa, "Afesta" and Montagut, and that the caid will keep Soses as his allodium, his mills in Lleida and his allodia (...)"

Ref. : ■8

The game of princes

Entering Europe via Al Ándalus, chess was adopted by the courts as a game and an important educational tool. Fostering skills such as foresight and strategy while at the same time sublimating the violence of the clash, it became the perfect symbol of the prince adapted to new times: someone who gave up being a border warrior to become a governor.

This chess set belonged to Arnau Mir de Tost, founder of the viscounty of Àger. A great soldier and statesman, in the mid-11th century he conquered the Tremp basin, the valleys bordering the Montsec mountain range and the Àger valley, and moved the border to a few kilometres north of Balaguer. He was highly esteemed by the counts of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer I and Almodis.

Chess set (MLDC 1473): In 1886, in a visit to Àger by members of the Associació Catalanista d'Excursions Científiques, the chess set was rediscovered and the unfortunate story of its dispersion commenced. When it was published, numerous antique dealers and collectors took note and inquired about the pieces. Part of the batch went to the collection of the countess of Béhague in Paris, and these pieces would end up enlarging the collections of the National Museum of Kuwait. The pieces owned by the Museu de Lleida entered the diocese collection around 1895, shortly after the Diocese Museum was founded.

Ref. : ■9

A NEW METHOD OF CONQUEST

Catalunya and Aragón, dynastically united by marriage in 1137, took advantage of the fall of the Almoravid Empire to expand their territories beyond the Ebro River. To reach this goal, they combined military pressure with support for Muslim army groups that, desiring to withdraw from the border, founded a new state on the east coast of the peninsula.

Between 1148 and 1149, Tortosa, Lleida, Fraga and Mequinenza surrendered. Unlike what had occurred in previous conquests, the newly captured cities were not taken by storm, but rather as the result of negotiation. That ensured that there would be a certain respect for the defeated properties and people, as well as their laws and institutions.

Ref. : ■10

LIVING WITH OTHERS

In Lleida, the terms of surrender signed by the Andalús defenders and the feudal conquerors made it possible for the Jewish and Muslim communities to remain, though the latter had to leave the inside of the city and settle on the outskirts in a new neighbourhood called the *Moreria* (Moorish quarter), sheltered by the church of Sant Llorenç. Both communities were subjected to higher tax burdens than those applied to Christians, making them a significant source of funding for the Crown.

Although there were mutual influences between them, rather than an intermingling of Christians, Jews and Muslims, we must speak of coexistence, in which each group had its own physical and social spaces, with differentiated cultural references and laws.

Ref. : ■11

TERRITORIAL ORGANISATION

The large size of the new territories, the speed of the conquest and the proximity of the Muslim border made it necessary to ensure that settlers arrived quickly and in large numbers. For this reason, charters were granted, providing the newly arrived population with certain freedoms and tax advantages over the rest of Catalunya. Hence, in 1150, Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona, and Ermengol VI, Count of Urgell, granted the city of Lleida with the *Carta Pobla*.

In the organisation of the conquered territory, privilege was given to the preservation and operation of Andalús orchards, which were soon expanded when the new Torres de Segre and El Segrià irrigation ditches (*sèquies*) were dug, and livestock farming on unirrigated land, to support textile workshops and adobe brick-making, the basis of the strong economic development in Lleida in the Late Middle Ages.

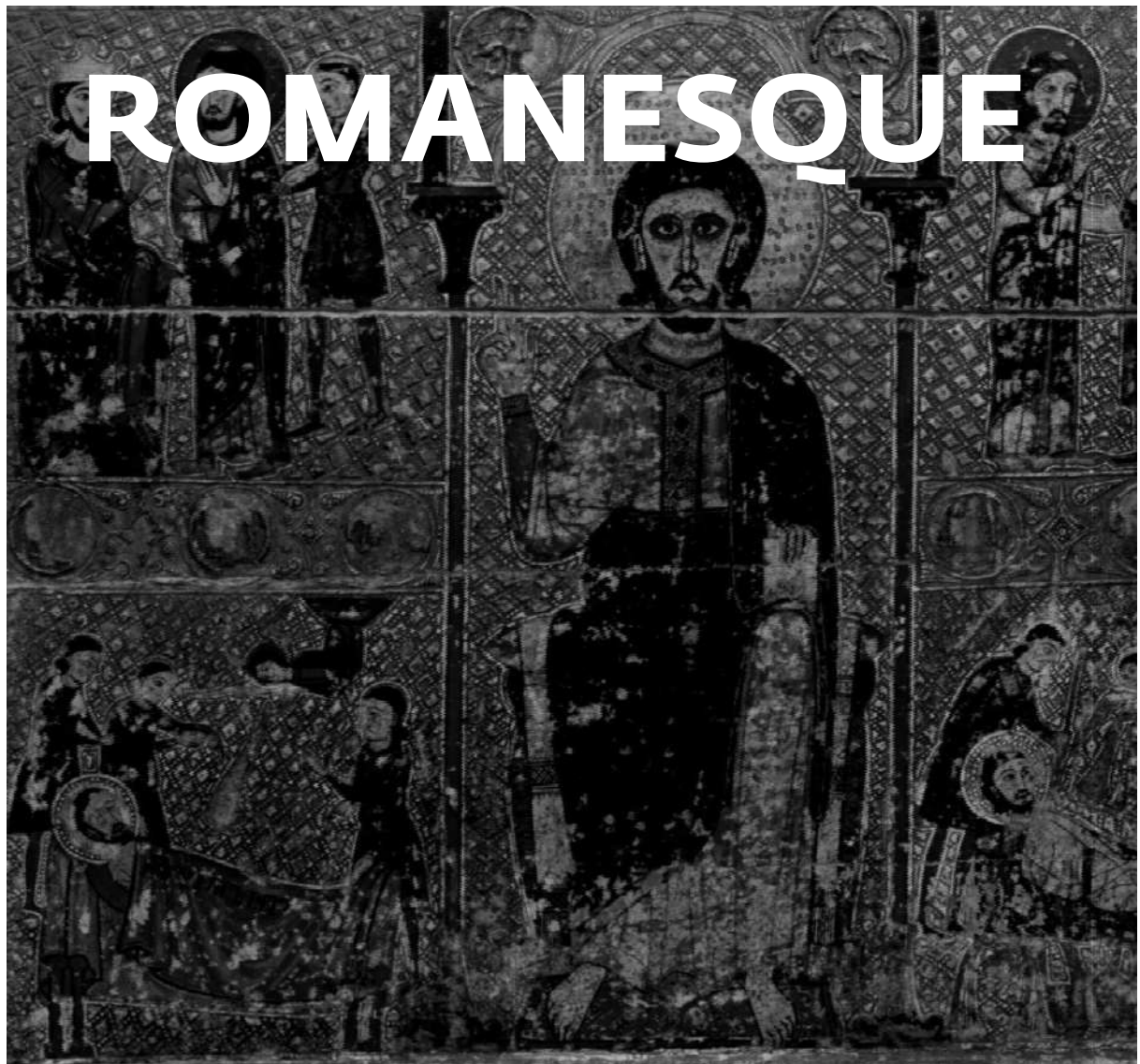
Agreement between Ramon Berenguer IV and Ermengol VIII for the distribution of Lleida, reproduction (ACA, perg. 202, first copy): In the feudal distribution resulting from the conquest of Lleida, the city of Lleida, its municipalities and the castles of Aitona and Albesa, with their municipalities, along with a third of the territory of Lleida, was given to the count of Urgell. The remaining two thirds would be for Ramon Berenguer IV,

a fifth of which the king gave to the Knights Templar in compensation for their assistance in conquering the territory.

“This is the agreement reached by the count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer, and count Ermengol de Urgell. Hence, the count of Barcelona gives the aforementioned count of Urgell the city of Lleida as a fief with all its municipalities, from the municipality of Gebut to that of Corbins (...). Of his two thirds, however, the count of Barcelona will give the army of the Order of the Temple of Jerusalem the fifth portion corresponding to said army of the city of Lleida and its municipalities (...).”

Carta Pobla of Lleida, reproduction (AML, Fons Municipal, pergamí 1): In 1150, counts Ramon Berenguer IV and Ermengol VI granted the city the “*Carta Pobla*”, a document that entitled its inhabitants to a favourable legal position, free of the burdens of nobility and arbitrary nature of authority.

“(...)I, Ramon, count of Barcelona, prince of Aragón and marquis of Lleida and Tortosa. And I, Ermengol, count of Urgell, owner of Lleida from the hands of the count of Barcelona, give all you settlers and inhabitants or residents of the city of Lleida (...). And, from this time forward, be honest, free and secure with all your possessions and properties, with no withholdings of any kind not made herein (...). First, the manner of establishing and abiding by the law is as follows: if anyone draws a knife, sword or spear against another, threatening or irritating him, he must give the Curia 60 coins or lose his hand (...). And if anyone is caught committing adultery with another man’s wife, both the man and the woman must walk through the squares of the city of Lleida naked and be whipped, though their goods and properties must not be damaged as a result of this event (...).”



Ref. : 1

THE RESTORATION OF THE BISHOPRIC OF LLEIDA

One of the most immediate consequences of the conquest was the restoration of the former episcopal seat of Lleida, entrusted to the Bishop of Roda de Isábena, Guillem Pere de Ravidats. The main mosque was converted into a cathedral and, years later, in 1168, the *Fundamental Constitution of the Church of Lleida* was passed, a document governing the episcopal seat and the diocese.

The diocese boundaries of the bishopric, however, have always been a focus for neighbouring bishoprics. In 1203, Pope Innocence III passed a sentence establishing the territorial limits of the Bishopric of Lleida, which spanned from the valleys of the Pyrenees to Les Garrigues and from the mountains separating the Noguera Pallaresa and the Ribagorçana basins to the Alcanadre River.

Sacramental, ritual and pontifical (ACL, RC,_ Ms.16):

After the episcopal seat was moved from Roda de Isábena to Lleida in 1149, part of the archival records where this codex was found was also moved to the new seat. It is an unusual and valuable document, particularly of interest because of the knowledge it provides on issues of liturgy and musicology.

Fundamental Constitution of the Church of Lleida, reproduction (ACL, Llibre Verd, f.17-20):

In the Fundamental Constitution of 1168, the creation of a community made up of twenty-five canons governed by the Order of Saint Augustine was established. The creation of the pabordies, which were charged with managing and distributing food among the canons, was also provided for. Therefore, at that time, the mensa episcopal (bishop's income) and the mensa capitular (income used to support the cathedral chapter, the canons and other ecclesiastical members) were created.

"(...)I, Guillem, bishop, though unworthy, have been appointed to simultaneously preside over this church and the church of Roda (...). Therefore, by common deliberation and agreement we desire and establish that there will be twenty-five canons in our church in the course of ten years (...) we give them the church of Sant Joan de Segrià and the churches of the villages of Ratera, Raïmat and Sant Salvador de Lleida (...) the possessions of the Jews and the Saracens currently held in the royal and count's dominions in Rufeà; the churches of Alcarràs and Montagut, of Soses and Torres, with the estate we have in Albarés, so that they may hold the main office (...)"

Sentence by Pope Innocence III, reproduction (ACL, Llibre Verd, f 9-12V):

"Innocence III, Pope. To Gombau, bishop of Lleida and his canonically eligible successors in the future. So that the disputes ending in friendly concord do not repeatedly disturb the parties in litigation (...) we establish that the church of Barbastro with its municipalities as established by King Pere shall remain forever for the bishop and the church of Huesca, confirming for the Ilerdense church all that its possessed between the Cinca and Alcanadre Rivers (...)"

Ref. : ■ 2**THE EXPRESSION OF A NEW SOCIETY**

The conquest of Lleida in 1149 opened the gateway to the final phase of development for the Romanesque era, a mature art form resulting from the inheritance of artistic formulas used in the rest of Catalunya in the second half of the 12th century and with strong ties to southern France.

In the explosion of 13th century Romanesque, the spotlight was on the Seu de Lleida. The cathedral, designed after 1193, became the backbone for this artistic vocabulary and it combined construction and sculptural efforts in the Romanesque tradition, while at the

same time adding innovations compared to the work done in the 12th century.

The old cathedral also included influences from Northern Italy, Roussillon, Provence and, above all, Languedoc, influences which settled in layers to form an extraordinarily fertile creative basin that would lay the foundations for the Escola de Lleida in the 13th century.

Ref. : ■ 3**A fusion of influences**

The two figures representing Mary and the archangel Gabriel, from the Porta de l'Anunciata of the Seu de Lleida, are particularly characteristic of the context of eclectic influences that is typical of art from the early 13th century. At the same time, they benefit from the new currents of Classical and Byzantine descent that define the late Romanesque period, also known as the 1200 style. The Bible of Lleida was a forebear of this current and the altar frontal of Berbegal is one of the best examples of it.

In sum, this artistic scene bears witness to the wealth and versatility of a style in which vernacular contributions and foreign influences converge at a time when Europe was opening its borders and becoming permeable to exchange and the free movement of artists.

Frontal of Berbegal (MLDC, 33): The altar frontal of Berbegal is noteworthy for its extraordinary size and the talent of the artist who created it. It has been linked to contemporary works in gold and silver and murals in the chapterhouse of the monastery of Sigena, both in the collection of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya.

Bible of Lleida (ACL, LC_0061): The Bible of Lleida is one of the largest biblical codices that remains, only surpassed in size by a few European copies. On one of its folios, the scribe recorded that 1,165 years had gone by since the birth of Christ, which helps to date it. The first news of its existence dates from 1889, when it was given to the library of the cathedral of Lleida. The codex is rich in illustrations, illuminated and profusely decorated monumental initials, seventy-six of which still remain. However, it must be noted that some were cut out at an unknown time. The different artists who worked on it have been put on par with the Germanic and English setting, and specifically, with works such as the Winchester Bible. One artist who worked on the Winchester Bible also did miniatures on our Bible, which is evidence of how much the artists and workshops of that period travelled about.

Ref. : ■4

THE SEU VELLA

In 1192, Bishop Gombau de Camporrells began acquiring plots of land in order to create a space large enough to build a great cathedral. The following year, in 1193, master builder Pere de Coma began to design a building with a Latin cross basilica floor plan, with three naves and a large transept onto which a terraced apse gave way.

Thus began the construction of “a highly exceptional work of art”, as Joan Bergós noted, and the most characteristic building in 13th century Catalan architecture, together with the cathedral of Tarragona. It is a building that is essentially defined by the symbiosis between traditional concepts and technical innovation and the plasticity of its sculptures. In sum, a highly original building and decorative form that constitutes the final creative expression of Catalan Romanesque architecture in the 13th century.

Ref. : ■5

The Escola de Lleida

The architectural sculptures on the old cathedral of Lleida comprise one of the richest groups of 13th century Catalan art. Works by the different workshops that collaborated on the cathedral reflect the eclectic influences that formed the basis of the school known as the Escola de Lleida, a brilliant and unique ornamental repertoire, the best example of which is the Porta dels Fillols. The school's decorative themes, with a strong Languedoc heritage, included geometric motifs and plant compositions often inhabited by human or animal figures.

The Seu Vella became the catalyst of this school, which spread throughout the territory of Lleida, Aragón (particularly the area of Huesca) and reached Valencia.

Ref. : ■6

Lost sculptures

The church of Sant Joan de Lleida was built in the early decades of the 13th century and, like other parish churches, probably substituted an old mosque. Unfortunately, in 1868, it was torn down to make the square larger. However, thanks to remaining pieces of sculpture, we

know that its architectural sculpture followed the Escola de Lleida stylistic themes. Of extremely high quality, its capitals and corbels bear witness to the talent of the sculptors who created them and are proof of their relationship with workshops active on the Seu.

Set of corbels (MLDC, 457, 564, 570, 571, 565): Architectural sculpture production by the Escola de Lleida in the 13th century is characterised by a wealth of decorative elements, which is also seen in corbels and barbicans on various buildings. Among the repertoires represented, which reached excellent work quality levels, human and zoomorphic heads are predominant, as are re-interpretations from the bestiary and representations with a burlesque and profane element to them.

Set of capitals (MLDC, 583, 584, 572): The sculptural repertoires of the so-called Escola de Lleida are the result of contact and exchanges between the first sculpture workshops that worked on the Seu Vella, all of them Toulouse, Roussillon and Italian ancestry. One of the most unique features of the school is the ornamental decoration, using animal and plant motifs. Other elements of their decorative repertoire have been related to the Norman world, Provençal tradition and Andalusí heritage.

Ref. : ■7

Devotional imagery

In the 12th century, representations of the divinity were based on the symbolic expression of an idea or an abstraction. This was the time when the Virgin was shown as the throne of God, or Christ, living and crowned as king.

Gradually, throughout the 13th century, influenced by Franciscan values, a closer vision of the divinity evolved, giving the representations a much more humane nature. Thus, Mary's role as Mother was emphasized, with delightful representations as the Virgin of the Milk, and the Romanesque Christ crowned as king gave way to the dead or agonising Christ with the crown of thorns.

In remote and rural areas, however, iconographic renewal was very slow and archaic models rooted in Romanesque tradition survived until the early decades of the 14th century.

Virgin (MLDC, 335): In this type of image the Child is an independent, mounted workable figure, reinforcing the idea of Mary as the throne of her child, a concept inherent to the Romanesque world. This peculiarity made it possible to display the Child for adoration by the faithful in certain liturgical celebrations, particularly those related to the Christmas cycle.

Christ on the Cross (MLDC 1486): This wonderful Romanesque image of the crucifixion by Perves has become one of the Museum's icons, thanks to both its quality and its stylistic and iconographic peculiarities. In its overall conception, it uses stylistic features characteristic of the Erill Workshop. Its physical features,

especially in the face and torso, faithfully reproduce those of its model: the Erill Christ Descending from the Cross. However, in iconographic terms, the Perves Christ includes original innovative formulas that are uncommon in Romanesque visual arts, such as the river of blood that emerges on the right side of the image, a solution also used in the Manyanet Christ, which shares many of its compositional solutions.

Ref. : ■8

Altar frontals: the language of images

Altar frontals were part of the liturgical furnishings of Romanesque churches. They had a dual purpose: on the one hand, they decorated the front of the altar and, on the other, they showed believers exemplary and edifying examples from the life of Jesus, Mary and the saints.

Altar frontals were usually made of precious metal work. Metal, silver, and sometimes gold, were used to create them. Modest parish churches, on the other hand, imitated the rich effects of the metal by applying a polychrome stucco technique, using silver leaf and applying a yellow varnish to imitate gold. The altar frontal at Sant Vicenç de Tresserra is an excellent example of this.

Frontal of Sant Vicenç de Tresserra (MLDC, 34): The Tresserra altar frontal entered the Museu Diocesà at its foundation in 1893. The central space is occupied by an enthroned image of Saint Vincent, which follows the Christ Pantocrator models, even as regards its physical appearance. The scenes located to the sides are read from right to left and top to bottom, starting with the saint's sermon to the people. Right next to this, the moment when Vincent is led before the Roman prefect Dacian, who ordered his death, is shown. The martyr appears in the lower register, where the image of the saint can be seen placed on a grate. Finally, the narration ends with his burial.

Ref. : ■9

The Romanesque altar

The Romanesque altar was composed of an altar stone placed on a pillar or on four or five columns. A hollow space was carved into it, which was sealed and blocked off during the consecration ceremony, used to store relics, basically of martyred saints, within a small box called "*lipsanoteca*".

In front of the table, a *tabula*, or frontal, was placed. A cross, which often coincided with the processional, was placed on top of the altar or hanging above it. Candelabra for candles and the book for officiating mass were placed on the altar. The sacred cups

–chalice and paten– and the cruets were only set out on the altar stone during the Eucharist, accompanied by the use of censers and the spoon.

It was common to have an image of the Virgin near the altar.

Fragments of mural painting (on deposit from MNAC/MAC 65450, 65452, 65455): We know of the placement of some of the fragments of mural paintings that decorated the apse of the collegiate church of Àger through photographs and a watercolour painting by Joan Vallhonrat. These fragments have been in the collection of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya since 1955. Thanks to a loan from that institution, the Museu de Lleida has on display fragments of the figure of an unidentified apostle, geometric decorations from one of the attached columns that flanks the niches of the apse and an eagle. Stylistically, the Àger group has been related to the Pedret Master's circle, the main artist in Romanesque Catalan painting. The clearest parallel to it is found in the paintings at the church of Saint-Lizier (Roussillon), a building consecrated in 1117, which marks an interesting timeline for the two groups.

"Lipsanoteca" (Arxiu Diocesà de Lleida): This "*lipsanoteca*" (container for holding relics) was discovered in 1972 in the parish church of Santa Maria de Viu de Llevata while making some improvements. Inside, it contains the relics of the martyr Saint Albin, wrapped in red fabric from the period. The accompanying parchment is the testimony and act of consecration of the altar on 26 November 1108.

"The lord God is your God, he is one. II. Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain. III. Abide by holy days. IV. Honour your father and mother. V. Thou shalt not kill. VI. Thou shalt not commit impure acts. VII. Thou shalt not steal. VIII. Thou shalt not bear false witness. IX. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife. X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's property (...). The year of the incarnation of our lord, 1108, Ramón, bishop of Barbastro, dedicated this church in honour of the Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and placed the relics of Saint Albin, martyr for God, on this altar, during the reign of Adefonso, king of Pamplona in Aragón, in El Pallars, in La Ribagorça; our lord Pope Paschal, residing in the city of Rome; Mr. Pedro, bishop of Pamplona, Esteban, bishop of Huesca.

Day four of the calends of December [26 November]"

Ref. : ■10

THE EXPERIENCE OF DEATH

In the Romanesque period, when a church was consecrated, according to regulations, a covered space measuring thirty paces had to be reserved as a cemetery or sacred ground. Burials within these cemeteries were quite simple and generally took place in graves dug into the

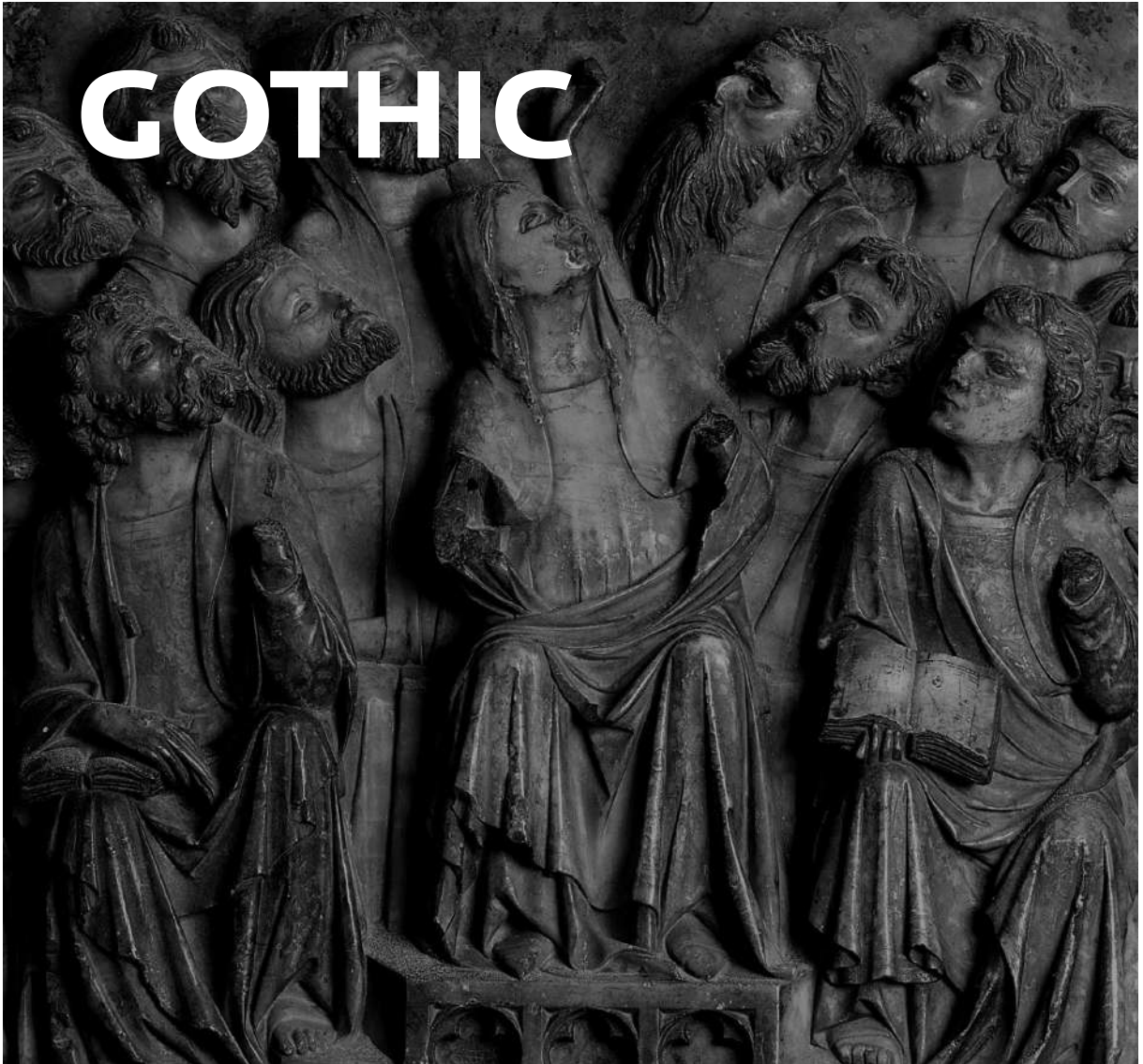
ground or carved into the rock, often with anthropomorphic shapes.

Obviously, social status was perfectly defined by both the type of grave and the place chosen for it. Thus, in the village of Àger, for example, there was a parish cemetery for the villagers, whereas the wealthy and powerful were reserved space in the cloister of the collegiate church of Sant Pere.

Before the burial, the corpse was purified and shrouded, and there was a religious ceremony that included prayers for the soul of the deceased, called *responsos*. These religious practices, in the case of the wealthiest members of society, were commemorated on anniversaries or at masses for the dead and absolutions officiated before the burial place.

Sarcophagus (MLDC 458): During medieval times, the deceased of humble origins were shrouded and buried in simple tombs with tombstones or carved into rock. Only the rich and powerful could afford stone sarcophagi. These were generally located in the cloisters of monastery complexes or outside them, attached to the walls, or around churches.

GOTHIC



Ref. : 1

“THE MOST FAMOUS CITY IN CATALUNYA”

Rich and strategically located, in the 14th and 15th centuries, the city of Lleida alternated between periods of splendour and, as was the case throughout Catalunya, times of crisis. However, intense economic activity would make the capital on the Segre River one of the main urban centres of the Crown of Aragón, a fact that is not unrelated to the deeply rooted presence of Jewish and Muslim communities there.

The power of Lleida, “the most famous city in Catalunya”, according to the Italian humanist, Lorenzo Valla, enabled it to obtain the Privilege of the Paeria in 1264, the legal instrument that guaranteed good government of the city, and in 1300 the Estudi General, the first university of the Crown, was founded. This dynamism would cause an unprecedented cultural flowering that would expand throughout the territory.

The Gothic style became the prevailing artistic vocabulary, the Seu Vella was enriched by the work of prestigious architects, while at the same time the monasteries in the area, such as Avinganya, captured the artistic effervescence of this historic moment.

Corbels (MLDC, 295, 296): This type of profane representation comes from the Romanesque heritage. Nature plays a role in manuscript margin decorations, known as “marginalia”, which in many cases served as inspiration for monument painting and sculpture, as these corbels demonstrate.

Ref. : ■2

“DEATH OR CONVERSION”

The Jews lived in a specific area of the city, the Cuirassa, and they were required to wear badges identifying them on their clothing. However, they had their own institutions, the synagogue – a place for worship and a school – the baker, the butcher’s, the cemetery, etc. They were governed by their own laws, though these were subordinate to the general laws of the kingdom.

Initial tolerance gradually led to a progressive persecution of this community, a persecution which culminated in the tragic events of 1391, with a widespread assault on the Jewish quarters. The announcement of *Death or conversion* sums up the violence unleashed on a group which was expelled in 1492, coinciding with the order decreed by the Catholic Monarchs.

Jewish Ring (IEI L-2718): This ring was discovered during the course of archaeological excavations on Boters street in Lleida, and it was probably part of a burial. Its inscription corresponds to a woman’s name, Gojó, a variant of Goig.

Jewish Tombstone (IEI L-280):

(...)

The hour of the death of Salomó

Cresques, who rests in Paradise. He died

the year and the house that

Salomó built (= 57)

(...)

The date was frequently indicated by using the numeric value of some Hebrew letters from a Biblical quotation which, in this case, refers to the deceased person (1 Kings 6:2). In this text, the sum of the letters indicated is 57 and it corresponds to the Hebrew year 5057, meaning the year 1297 on the Christian calendar.

Ref. : ■3

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

The Muslim community in Lleida was organised by the mosque, which had a series of public offices – the Qadi, Faqih and Alamin – who organised daily life. Although the Sunnah and the

Sharia were the laws applied for internal matters, they were also subordinate to the general laws of the kingdom.

There was quite a large number of Muslims in the city of Lleida. But the area they settled most of all was in the Baix Segre – Aitona, Seròs and Mequinensa – where they would come to comprise over seventy percent of the population.

This community gradually came to be a controlled and persecuted group. The expulsion of the Moriscos in 1610 was the culmination of a long process that appeared to be trying to erase all trace of the Andalusí splendour in the land of Lleida

Ref. : ■4

THE GOTHIC STYLE, THE VOCABULARY OF A NEW SOCIETY

The 13th century brought new airs to all of Europe, and Lleida was not isolated from these transformations that are linked to the arrival of the Gothic period. The interest in narrative and anecdotal discourse fostered the means of communication with a broad-based society that reorganised its production and guild system and created universities. The success of the city and the work of the new religious orders, particularly the mendicants, multiplied the artistic resources in this society.

Art in the 13th to 15th centuries fostered a powerful religious culture, increasingly influenced by laymen, who encouraged expressions that reflected reality. At the same time, the Gothic style is idealistic and imaginative and renounces neither material sophistication nor speculative creation. The Gothic period opened up dialogues between lay culture and that of the clergy, art for everyone and art for a minority.

Triptych with the Virgin and the Saints (MLDC 657):

Baldassarre Embriachi was the master of a workshop set up first in Florence and later in Venice from the late 14th century to the early 15th century. The workshop was devoted to the production of sumptuary objects, particularly mobile triptychs and chests. Baldassarre had significant contacts all over Europe, and his work spread throughout the region.

Ref. : ■5

GOTHIC EXPRESSIONS

Gothic architecture sought new roads. The use of

pointed arches and rib vaults made it possible to separate walls and let light in through windows. Santa Maria de Almenar, Sant Llorenç de Lleida and the Seu were enriched with the new artistic vocabulary. Naturalistic and humanised Gothic sculpture was introduced by the Master of Anglesola, the creator of the altarpiece in the town of the same name and linked to the monastery of Bellpuig de les Avellanes. Guillem Seguer, Bartomeu de Robió and Jordi Safont are the preeminent sculptors in this period.

Painting evolved from the linear Gothic in the murals of Pia Almoina to the Italian Gothic style of the altarpiece at Sant Francesc de Castelló de Farfanya and the international Gothic splendour represented by the Ferrer family to the Late Gothic, when Pere Garcia de Benabarre, Miquel Ximénez and Martí Bernat excelled.

Ref. : 6

New devotion, new painting

The extraordinary development of Gothic painting can be tied to a revision of the old Christian art forms and a high regard for the figurative representation of the sacred. The most common subjects continue to be present, though the repertoires are updated and new forms are created as a result of the consecration of new saints.

The Virgin holds a privileged position as the link between God and man. She is the enthroned figure who presents the Son, the Madonna of the angels and queen of Heaven. Mary's life and maternity humanize the divine being, reflected in an art in which the image of Jesus Christ is predominant.

The new Italianizing pictorial style reached Lleida in the 14th century, bringing with it the image of Saint Francis, to enrich painting with new motifs and reflecting a visual culture interested in volume and the representation of space, which pervades in altarpieces.

Saint Francis Altarpiece (MLDC 23): This altarpiece stands out for its exclusively Franciscan dedication, due to the fact that the figures of five saints of the order are represented: Saint Francis occupies the main panel, on either side are Saint Claire and Saint Louis of Toulouse, and on the far sides are Saint Anthony of Padua and the blessed Gil of Assisi, respectively. The shelf narrates the life of Saint Francis.

Ref. : 7

CARING FOR THE ABANDONED

The restoration of the Bishopric of Lleida in 1149 involved the creation of the community of clergymen who would take care of the cathedral: the Cathedral Chapter. Governed by the rule of Saint Augustine, it consisted of twenty-five canons who lived in the buildings next to the cloisters of the Seu Vella.

In 1254, the clergymen ceased to practice communal life and the former canonical space was given over to new services. One of the most relevant ones was the Pia Almoina, the cathedral institution devoted to practising the virtue of charity, which, at least after 1277, permanently gave refuge to a certain number of poor people, feeding, clothing or protecting them, thanks to income from pious donations. Everyday, both common paupers and an unknown number of passers-by went to the dining hall. This was a heterogeneous group of human beings which evidenced the darker side of an emerging, active society.

Pitchers (IEI L-2688, L-5344): These ceramics dating from 1454-1460, originally used to store food, were reused to fill in the vaults of the Hospital of Santa Maria. They were discovered during the course of the restoration work done on this building in the 1940's, when the flooring was removed from one of the storeys right above the vault. It had a very specific architectural purpose: to ease the load on the vaults.

Ref. : 8

A mirror on the wall

In 1330, over a hundred common paupers from the city climbed up to the Seu everyday. There could also be an even greater number of temporary or incidental poor people, pilgrims to Compostela, passers-by, members of mendicant orders, students, the ill, widows, orphans and the mentally ill. They were offered a frugal, simple meal, based on an abundance of bread, wine and meat, particularly goat, 253 days a year and conger eel on days of abstinence. Simple dishware, consisting of bowls, knives, jugs and plates, comprised the basic table items.

The paintings at Pia Almoina are a surprising reflection, providing us with a privileged view of the underside of society in the late Middle Ages, the marginalized people who struggled in a changing world, united in their miserable conditions.

Ref. : ■9

The pilgrims

A pilgrimage is a symbol of the journey that man makes towards God and shows the will to take the road of internal conversion, to practice the virtues of sharing, making efforts and sheltering. Early Christian pilgrimages headed to Jerusalem and, later, to Rome, which is where the word "romero" (pilgrim) comes from. However, after the 11th century, new destinations arose, such as Compostela, Montserrat, Sainte Foi de Conques and Mont-Saint-Michel, where images and relics were venerated. Since then, the figure of the pilgrim was common on roads, in cathedrals, hospitals and monasteries.

Ref. : ■10

Lleida and the road to Compostela

Catalunya was on the road for pilgrims going to Compostela. One of the most frequented routes was the one going from Barcelona towards Zaragoza, passing through Montserrat, Cervera and Lleida.

Lleida has always had close ties to the Compostela pilgrimage and the legend of Els Fanalets del Peu del Romeu is proof of this. The relics of the Holy Cloth and the Holy Thorn, kept at the Seu, were likely a great attraction for pilgrims, making the city a point of reference on their way to the tomb of St. James. This is recorded in one of the privileges of the Paeria from 1442, which states that the present-day Major street and Sant Joan square were a "lloc de gent passants i anants de Roma a Sant Jaume". The Hospital of Santa Maria was the most important shelter for these pilgrims between Barcelona and Zaragoza.

Ref. : ■11

... AND SPLENDOUR WAS MADE INTO A TEMPLE

The cathedral of Lleida became the most visible expression of the city's splendour and sparked economic activity and artistic creation.

Work began in the 13th century and culminated with the completion of the cloister and construction of the west façade, the Porta dels Apòstols and the bell tower. At the same time, powerful families from Lleida – the Montcada, Cescomes, Requesens and Gralla, to name a few – built private chapels to perpetuate the memory of their origins.

For this great project, the participation of the most highly valued artists in the Crown of Aragón was necessary, and both the chapter and individual sponsors sought the best creative scenario of the times.

Ref. : ■12

Lost treasures

As a result of the Spanish War of Succession to the Crown of Spain, in 1707, Philip V overtook the city and gave the hill where la Suda and the cathedral were over to military use, turning them into barracks. The temple nave was divided into dwellings for soldiers and numerous sculptural elements were used to fill in walls and interior partitions. The destruction did not stop there: many works of art were sold on the antiquities market, and therefore scattered throughout several museums around the world. A significant number of altarpieces and altars were moved to parish churches all over the bishopric.

Some objects were stored in chapter buildings and centuries later were given to museums in the city of Lleida, hence becoming the ruins of a shipwreck that we can contemplate today.

Santa Maria l'Antiga (MLDC 382): This image has been identified as the one venerated on the high altar of the cathedral before the altarpiece by Bartomeu de Robió was created around the years 1360-1363. Some years later, it was moved to the Canonja building, located in the north wing of the cloister, and gave its name to the space it presided over: the chapel of Santa Maria l'Antiga.

Vault key and the Virgin (MLDC 446, 456): Guillem Seguer, master builder of the Seu Vella, is almost archetypical of the versatile medieval artist-craftsman, having been listed as a painter, sculptor and architect. His remains lie in the Seu Vella, as evidenced by a tombstone located in the cloister next to the Porta de les Fonts.

Ref. : ■13

The cathedral of symbols

Medieval culture was deeply symbolic, presenting itself by means of a series of objects that revealed and expressed God visually. Liturgical objects and furnishing were the expression of devotion and were charged with spiritual values.

On the other hand, these objects also had a utilitarian meaning that gave them a sense of the routine, turning something symbolic into something tangible. The brazier, which was for keeping the fire for the censers, also made the winters more bearable. The choir, the privileged place of liturgical ceremony, was also appreciated for its use as seating.

Time enriches and multiplies the value of symbols: the cross of Lleida, La Preciosa, was the visual sign of the mystery of salvation. Today it is the symbol of a community, but also of lost splendour.

Fragment of the Old Choir (MLDC 374): This fragment is considered the only evidence of the choir stalls made by Benet Martorell for the Seu de Lleida between 1364 and 1367, which must have occupied the centre of the main nave.

The "Preciosa" Cross (MLDC 680): This magnificent work in precious metals, known as the cross of Lleida or La Preciosa, dating from the late 16th, early 17th centuries, is the most highly representative and emblematic piece of the cathedral of Lleida's treasury. In addition, the presence of the patron saints of Lleida and Roda in its decorative elements, as well as the coats of arms of both cities, gave the cross a strong symbolic nature alluding to the historical bishopric of Lleida.

Ref. : ■14

The high altarpiece of the Seu Vella

Stone altarpieces were one of the most characteristic types of Catalan Gothic sculpture from the thirteen hundreds, especially from Lleida. The high altarpiece from the Seu Vella, despite the fact that we only preserve fragments of it, is one of the most famous and influential pieces from that time. Since the 16th century, it had presided over the presbytery of the cathedral and also, in a certain sense, over the diocese, becoming an unavoidable reference point for the art of its time. With additions and modifications, such as the curtained columns added in the late 14th century and the shelf from the 15th century, it remained in place until the late 18th century when, the Seu having been turned into barracks, the piece was dismantled and broken up, becoming a symbol of that annihilation.

Pentecost and Group of Four Apostles (MLDC 1495, 466): From 1360 to 1363, the sculptor, Bartomeu de Robió, built the alabaster altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin that would preside over the high altar of the Seu of Lleida for four hundred years. Taken down and broken up in the 18th century, several reliefs have been identified by historians based on their style. Besides the reliefs preserved in the Museu de Lleida and others that might still be on the market or in private collections, we must also mention the wonderful relief with the representation of The Lord Reprimanding Adam and Eve in the collection of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco (United States) or the fragment of an Epiphany in the Musée Goya de Castres (France).

Pair of Columns (MLDC 505): These columns flanked the high altar of the Seu Vella and held up the curtains that hid the altarpiece during certain liturgical services. They are made of nummulite stone from Girona, a highly valued type of stone at that time which, once polished, acquired an appearance similar to marble. The capitals have the heraldry of its patrons, the Cescomes family.

Crucifixion, Descent and Canopy Cover (MLDC 541, 542, 467): In 1439, Master Rotllí Gautier received the commission to add a corbel to the high altarpiece by Bartomeu de Robió, on which Jordi Safont also worked. The reliefs of the Crucifixion and the Descent from the Cross, as well as the baldachin, are from this piece. The scenes of the Entombment of Christ and the Last Supper have been identified thanks to old photographs, though their current location is unknown.

Ref. : ■15

Gautier and safont, masters of the Seu

Rotllí Gautier and Jordi Safont worked on several projects at the Seu. Their compositions, included in the international Gothic style, present naturalistic figures of a physical monumentality while expressing a taste for detail, which is seen in a wide variety of figures, containers and items decorating the pulpit built by Master Safont.

Their most significant project was the Porta dels Apòstols, the main entrance to the cathedral. There, these two masters left their mark with images such as St. James the Elder, by Rotllí Gautier, and the Virgin of Blau, by Master Safont, the protagonist of a charming popular legend of an imaginary citizen of Lleida, thanks to which some girls are named Maria del Blau.

Pulpit Reliefs: Saint Mark and Saint Luke (MLDC 539, 540): A unique manuscript from 1788 written by Josep Pocerull, a notary from Lleida, is preserved at the Episcopal Library of Vic. In this notebook, the author took note of the tombstones with inscriptions that still remained inside the old cathedral converted into barracks and everything else that caught his attention during his visits there. The manuscript has helped us learn about items that have disappeared and to identify and document essential works at the Seu, such as the pulpit reliefs, for example.

"En la trona de la iglesia catedral antigua que està en la part del evangeli: esto es en la part de ponent, comensant per la part del cor se troba en la barana de pedra a la part de fora lo que mira al publich las imatges treballades de escultura primorosament. (...). Sota comensant dita barana se troba primerament lo evangelista St. Joan ab lo ausell (...). Segonament St. March en la esquerra un faristol sobre una gran peña i en la dreta un bou amb un retol sense escritura i sobre la Mare de Deu i a modo de un quadro de

sa habitacio sentat en un banch. Tercerament Sant Mateu ab un faristol molt primoros en tal manera que se veuen lo peu de ell treballat à modo de un armari ab pany i clau, llibres i una garrafeta espartada (...) Quartament St. Lluch ab lo lleó alat a la dreta ab un retol, i en la esquerra un gran faristol ab un llibre, i al peu del faristol altres llibres i diferents potets i bugerias (...)"

Ref. : ■16

The Ferrers, family of painters

Starting in the late 14th century, painters became essential artists for the Seu: on the one hand, they decorated chapels in the temple with their altarpieces and, on the other, they performed lesser tasks aimed at improving the premises. The most relevant painters were the Ferrer family, starting with Jaume Ferrer, the artist of a signed panel, and continuing with the primary master of the splendid Paeria altarpiece of Lleida, known as Jaume Ferrer II, perhaps a son of the former.

The Ferrers were faithful representatives of the international Gothic style, a luxurious style that used bright, lively colours and elegant curving lines, and loading with details and anecdotes that show scenes of courtly life.

Birth and Epiphany (MLDC 7): As a result of the Seu Vella's conversion into a military headquarters, a significant portion of the objects that decorated its interior was distributed among parish churches all over the diocese of Lleida, hence beginning a long journey. This is the case of the panels signed by the painter, Jaume Ferrer, which probably decorated the Epiphany chapel of the Seu and, after 1707, were moved to Binaced (Huesca).

Sant Antoni Abat i Sant Pau Eremita Altarpiece (MLDC 14): On the basis of solid technical grounds, historians have suggested that the altarpiece of Sant Antoni Abat i Sant Pau Eremita may have proceeded from the bell tower chapel of the Seu Vella, dedicated to the same figures. As in the case of the panels by Jaume Ferrer, the altar left the old cathedral after 1707, destined for the parish church of Villanueva de Sigena. Its inclusion in the Museu Diocesà collection in 1895 saved it from entering the antiques dealers' market, which had already offered five hundred pesetas for it.

Saint James (MLDC 10): This panel devoted to St. James probably also came from the Seu Vella, specifically, from the chapel dedicated to the apostle. The saint, who is wearing all the attributes of a pilgrim, presents an uncommon iconographic peculiarity: on his hat, flanked by scallop shells, there is a Veronica or true image of Christ, a souvenir that pilgrims to Rome often purchased. The pilgrimage world is evoked in the land-

scape on the right, where two pilgrims on pilgrimage can be seen.

Ref. : ■17

The international gothic: courtiers and knights

The international Gothic style was an artistic current that began in 1400 around several European courts that included educated, refined aristocrats. It entered Catalunya thanks to its trading and cultural contacts with France and northern Europe, and some of its greatest representatives were painters, Lluís Borrassà, Rafael Destorrents and Bernat Martorell. The latter two worked on different commissions for the cathedral of Lleida.

This world, in which hunting, reading and leisure was combined with the use of weapons, was reflected in paintings and illuminated books that represented images of saints showing this knightly universe. The Sant Julià panel, attributed to Jaume Ferrer II, evokes this playful, friendly spirit that encourages one to enjoy the pleasures of life.

Ref. : ■18

Dressing the walls: the Seu Vella tapestries

Tapestries were a part of the decoration and liturgical items of the cathedral. They were used to cover the walls during important religious celebrations, particularly during Holy Week, and they also acted as a public display of the economic strength of their owners.

The *Prodigal Son* tapestry is one of the most emblematic examples in the collection of fifteen pieces preserved by the cathedral of Lleida. They were manufactured in prestigious workshops in the area of Brabant between 1500 and 1570. The *Prodigal Son* was a donation from Dean Soler, and by 1514 it was part of the cathedral's furnishings.

Prodigal Son Tapestry (MLDC 2037): This tapestry illustrates the second part of the evangelical parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). It is part of the *Vices and Virtues* series, one of the most popular themes during the Middle Ages, due to the parable's close relationship to the misfortunes caused by vices and sins in man's life. It was restored at the Institut Royal de Patrimoine Artistique in Brussels, an operation consisting of the cleaning, consolidation and reunification of the two halves it had split into.

Ref. : ■19

BEYOND THE SEU VELLA

Artists, lured by the creative undertakings generated in the Seu Vella, set up workshops nearby

not only to carry out cathedral commission but also to cover a growing demand that reached other places in the city as well as the surrounding areas.

One of the artistic phenomena most representative of this dynamic as the remarkable activity in sculpture workshops which, in the second half of the 14th century, specialised in creating stone altarpieces, an item that would become characteristic of the region, making it worth talking about the Gothic sculpture Escola de Lleida. The origin of this school is undoubtedly the scupltor, Bartomeu de Robió.

Ref. : ■20

The spread of master Robió's workshop

From the high altarpiece reliefs in the Seu, we know about Bartomeu de Robió's work, which combines local stone altarpiece tradition with innovations directly related to Italian art from Tuscany.

This style has made it possible to group a considerable number of works, entire altarpieces or fragments around his name, evidence of the activities of a workshop that must have been active from 1350 to 1380. Despite the differences in quality, which proves that several hands worked in the workshop that the master headed, they constitute the set of works of highest quality and complexity in the Escola de Lleida. The altarpieces kept in the parish church of Sant Llorenç de Lleida provide a remarkable repertoire by this workshop, whereas the altarpieces from Mare de Déu and Sant Pere Màrtir de Alòs de Balaguer are a sign of its spread to other parts of the region.

St. John the Baptist Altarpiece (On deposit from MNAC/ MAC 4379. On deposit from Nativity of Maria de Sunyer parish church. MLDC 1893, 544, 471): The parish church of Sunyer, a Romanesque building with Gothic additions, underwent serious modifications in Modern Times: the orientation of the apse was changed, a new choir was built and the stone altarpiece dedicated to St. John the Baptist was dismantled. The dismantling of the old altarpiece led to its dispersion: two reliefs and one corbel fragment became part of the Museu Diocesà de Lleida collection in 1904. The image lending its name to the piece was purchased by the collector Lluís Plandiura in 1921, and later entered the collection of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya; the rest of the pieces were reused as building materials on the same church.

Ref. : ■21

The other masters

During the second half of the 14th century, construction on the cathedral is headed by a series of masters such as Jaume Cascalls, Bartomeu de Robió and Guillem Solivella. Their activities and those of their collaborators, followers and imitators generated the majority of a varied Escola de Lleida, with a significant number of works, though little is known about them. The works associated with Robió were identified long ago and, in relation to them we find pieces by the anonymous Albesa Master, who was responsible for a long list of works, with the altarpiece of the town by the same name at the top. There are other pieces that are more isolated as regards style, such as the altarpiece of Sant Nicolau and Santa Úrsula de Castelló de Farfanya, or that of Sant Joan de Torrebesses.

Santa Úrsula i Sant Nicolau Altarpiece (MLDC 636):

This altarpiece is a unique work that not only differs from other Escola de Lleida altarpieces in form and style, but also chronologically, because it is from the 15th century. The artist delights in the details, as shown by the numerous items describing daily life in the late Middle Ages, such as chests with ironwork which were used in bedrooms as wardrobes, placed near or under the bed, or the figures' clothing, particularly that of the butcher, who is wearing a hat typical of the Jews.

Ref. : ■22

New roads to God

The artistic transition from the Romanesque to the Gothic is a sign of the slow, profound changes in religiousness in the men and women from the region of Lleida in the Late Middle Ages.

The Romanesque representation of the Virgin, the throne of God and wisdom would gradually be substituted by the representation of the mother, usually standing, like the one we can see in the magnificent carving of the Virgin of Sigena. The process, however, was slow, and the persistence of tradition, stronger in the more remote rural areas, kept the Romanesque form of representation intact for a long time.

On the subject of worship, at that time, relics were no longer the only objects of devotion; instead, the worship of saints, miracle-makers, healers and intercessors to God began to take hold.

Ref. : ■23

THE ENDURANCE OF MEMORY

For the people of the Late Middle Ages, death meant access to eternal life. Being buried near sacred ground could be of assistance to the deceased person's salvation. Therefore, burial grounds and tombs reflected the rigid social hierarchy of the times.

Most of the population was buried in church cemeteries and, sometimes, the graves were marked with circular steles. Members of the upper social classes had the interiors of temples reserved for them, and such was the case of Domènec de Montsuar. Some feudal families, such as the Montcadas, even built lavish chapels for their tombs, which became a reflection of their social prestige.

Tombs like those of the nuns at the Santa María de Sigena monastery, a magnificent refuge for women of the nobility of the Crown, became luxurious works of art through which to perpetuate their memories.

Commemorative Tombstone (MLDC 1694): This tombstone commemorates the founding of the Nativitat de Maria chapel, currently known as El Peu del Romeu and, hence, closely linked to the Road to Santiago, though worship of the apostle was not added until the 17th century.

*“Per loar e servir Deu e la
Nativitat de nostra dona
Santa Maria en Berenguer
Marques feu edificar aquesta
capella l'any de nostre Senyor
1400”*

Ref. : ■24

Avinganya: monastery and pantheon

The monastery of Avinganya, located two kilometres from Seròs, was the first Trinitarian house on the Iberian Peninsula founded by St. Juan de Mata himself in 1201. In 1250, Constança, James the Conqueror's step-sister and widow of Guillem Ramon de Montcada, refounded it as a monastery for the feminine branch of the Trinitarian Order. Since that time, the Montcada family fostered the monastery and turned it into a family pantheon.

Hence, in 1336, Berenguera de Montcada, Constança's granddaughter, ordered two chapels to be built there, in one of which she was buried

with her husband, Bernat Jordà d'Illa. At about the same time, Ot de Montcada turned the chapel of Sant Pere in the Seu of Lleida into a burial pantheon and a magnificent showcase in exaltation of his lineage.

Ref. : ■25

Sigena

Sigena, a strategic enclave the same distance from Zaragoza, Huesca, Barbastro and Lleida, was the place chosen by queen Sancha of Aragón to found a monastery of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem and turn it into a royal pantheon. There, she was buried, along with her son, Peter the Catholic.

Ever since that time, the monastery was closely tied to the royal family and gradually became wealthy from the numerous works of art that constitute a valuable artistic heritage, which was, unfortunately, split up after the confiscation in 1835.

The tombs of the prioresses Francisquina d'Erill and Beatriu Cornel, in addition to that of Isabel of Aragón, sister of the Count of Urgell Jaume el Dissortat, remind us of splendour that death has been unable to erase.

Isabel of Aragón's Tomb (MLDC 126): On the moulding that runs along the front of the tomb, the following inscription can be read: *“Ací jau la molt alta senyora Dona Ysabel d'Aragó de gloriosa memoria, religiosa del monestir de Sixena del orde de sent Iohan de Jerusalem, filia del molt alt senyor en Pere, comte d'Urgell e vescomte d'Àger, la qual trespasa d'aquesta present vida lo primer dia del mes de juny del any de la Nativitat de Nostre Senyor MCCCC trenta et quatre.”*

Francisquina d'Erill i Castro's Tomb (MLDC 127): Along the edge of the front of the tomb, the following can be read: *“Sepultura de la Reverenda e muy noble senyora dona Francisquina derill y de Castro prioressa de Xixena la qual fino quatro dias del mes de yenero del anio de mil CCCCXXX quatro.”*

Ref. : ■26

A symbol of power

The throne is the representation of power, and in Sigena the prior's seat was the highest expression of the prestige of the person who held it. The receiver of this honour was Blanca of Aragón y Anjou, the daughter of King Jaume el Just and prioress of this monastery from 1321 to 1347.

The throne was designed to preside over the choir of the monastery's church. Among the paintings that decorate it, which belong to the second linear Gothic, there are representations of saints related to the prayer book of the

house of Anjou, in addition to the mendicant saints par excellence, Saint Francis and Saint Dominic. In the central section, there are three full-length representations of nuns in procession which have been associated with the prioress and two officers or dignitaries of the monastery. On the back of the seat, the Virgin of the Milk is shown, flanked by two angels.

Ref. : ■27

ART AND TERRITORY

The large terraces of the plains of Lleida comprise a homogenous territory with regard to tradition, population and culture, which historically has experienced frequent fluctuations because of its status as a hinge and a key to the Principality.

Throughout the 15th century, this territory felt the full effects of its border status, but the bishopric continued to be a unifying element.

Art, the expression of the feelings of this community, had a leading representative in painters such as Pere Garcia de Benabarre, whom we now fully identify with the concept of territory which surpasses limits and borders.

Ref. : ■28

Pere Garcia de Benabarre de Benabarre. The influence of the master

The painter, Pere Garcia de Benabarre, documented between 1445 and 1485, was one of the most relevant masters in the late Gothic period. After his training in Zaragoza and a subsequent period in Barcelona, he settled permanently in Benabarre, where he set up his base to carry out commissions for parish churches in Lleida, La Franja and Barbastro.

Among his works, the panel of Bellcaire d'Urgell stands out, which the master stamped his signature. His professional success led to the creation of an important workshop with its headquarters in Benabarre which included collaborators such as Pere d'Espallargues and the Vielha Master. It has been suggested that Bartomeu Garcia was the individual behind the persona of this master, documented in Benabarre between 1484 and 1496, and considered a descendent of Pere Garcia.

Ref. : ■29

La Franja, artistic confluence

In the second half of the 15th century, besides the

work by Pere Garcia de Benabarre and his workshop, in La Franja there is evidence of the activities of painters from around Zaragoza who added new touches to the region's painting: Miquel Ximénez and Martí Bernat. With a fruitful career, these two masters collaborated with Bartolomé Bermejo, one of the greatest Spanish painters of the time.

Works such as the tomb of the prioress of Sigena, Francisquina d'Erill, or the panel from San Juan de Zaidín are a testimony of their art, not to mention the altarpiece of Santa Liestra, executed by an anonymous painter from the same artistic scene.

Saint John the Baptist (MLDC 169): The Zaidín altarpiece was in the process of being made in 1493, as evidenced by the marriage contract between the painter and María de Soria: "*Item, tiene la primicia de Çaydín, por tiempo de ocho anyos (...) y tiene ultimada y asentada mas de la mitad de la obra y fecha toda la maçoneria (...)*". In 1502, the painter acknowledged having received what he was owed "*por la obra del retaulo de Sant Johan del lugar de Zaydín.*"

Ref. : ■30

THE SACRED STAGE

The Fourth Council of the Lateran, in 1215, gave a strong impulse to the worship of the Eucharist. After this time, the processional liturgy and mass would be steeped in a new, more visual spirit, which made all the liturgical furnishings take on greater splendour.

The high altar and the whole space of the presbytery of the Seu of Lleida stood out especially in important festivities. The doors of the high altar were opened, candles and lamps lit, the organ was played and the singing of the canons and school children spread from the choir to the entire church. A fascinating liturgy was complemented by processions and holy representations with spectacular sets.

Ref. : ■31

The precious metalworker's shop

There were not too many metalworkers established in Lleida. The seven who appear in the census in Lleida in 1429 lived in Sant Joan square and Major street, where they also had their workshop and sales displays. The first reference to the metalworkers' guild in Lleida dates from 1449, with the

creation of the so-called *Argenteria*. The creation of this organisation brought about a series of controls of the quality of the materials, which was guaranteed with the seal of control granted by the king, called the “stamp” or mark of the city.

The metalworker’s shop never lacked the tools needed to work silver, gold and brass. There was also a furnace, hammers and other tools needed for embossing, chiselling and engraving the pieces

Saint Gregory Mass (MLDC 80): The scene presented on this panel tells us of the placement of an altar when mass was held in the Late Middle Ages. We can see the tablecloths and candelabra with candles, honorary signs according to ancient tradition, the missal, chalice and paten and other accessories such as cruets, the bottles that held the wine and water, and, at the foot of the altar, on the dais, a pot and sprinkler for sprinkling holy water.

the main artistic production centres were significant impediments in the absorption of the new vocabulary.

Ref. : ■ 32

ROAD TO THE RENAISSANCE

In Catalunya in general, and specifically in Lleida, the road from the Gothic period to the Renaissance was always narrow, little known and uncrowded. The weight and inertia of medieval tradition prevailed for quite a long time in our land in architectural and visual expressions which, though few, span to the 17th century.

In the early decades of the 16th century, the turn towards humanism and the aesthetic that came from Italy began. In this sense, the Sant Vicenç d’Àger panel is a good example of how the introduction of these innovations was often filtered by Gothic tradition.

Ref. : ■ 33

Rooted forms

The primary centres for artistic creation in the early 16th century proved to be gradually permeable to the new aesthetic trends of the Renaissance. On the other hand, areas that were further removed from these centres had a conservative nature. The altarpiece of Santa Elena de Folquer, from the mid-16th century and full of Gothic forms, is an example of this.

The adaptation to new times was not easy. Painters and artists who did not evolve were forced to accept commissions from humble, remote parish churches. Hence, being rooted in Gothic customs and tradition, and isolation from

RENAISSANCE



Ref. : 1

MODERN TIMES: A PERIOD FOR CHANGES AND CONTINUITY

The Modern Era is an exciting period in history, spanning from the late 15th to the early 16th century. During this period, European society underwent highly relevant changes such as the consolidation of absolute monarchies, conquering and exploiting lands never explored before, the scientific revolution and the different breaks attempting to reform Christian churches. These changes take place along with a more gradual transformation in social patterns, organisation of farm workers and artisans and government frameworks.

These years in Lleida were intense. The sieges that the city suffers during the Guerra dels Segadors and the War of Spanish Succession make it necessary to deconsecrate the Seu Vella, leading to the construction of the new cathedral.

Art, still immersed in Gothic means of expression, begins to introduce Renaissance forms, followed by the splendour of the Baroque, and continuing with the renewed projects of the Illustrated in the Neo-classical period. In the late seven hundred, a renewed, more highly populated, and incessantly active city confronts the beginning of a new age.

Ref. : ■2

THE GUTENBERG EFFECT

The invention of the printing press led to one of the most important revolutions in the history of humanity. Starting with Gutenberg's early work in the mid-15th century, the spread of political, religious, scientific, economic and cultural news was closely linked to the use of this new invention.

It spread rapidly throughout Europe and soon Lleida was added to the list of cities with a printer's workshop. In 1479, the Saxon printer, Enric Botel, summoned by the Cathedral Chapter, set up his workshop there. The first printed work in the city was the *Breviarium Ilerdense*, which is considered the first printed liturgical book on the Iberian Peninsula.

Decree and Indulgence Title (ACL, LC_0062): A printed bull in which Bishop Lluís del Milà granted indulgences in 1498 to anyone who collaborated economically on the restoration of the cathedral sacristy, which had burnt down shortly before that time. In addition, the piece is interesting because it was printed in the Lleida workshop of Enric Botel, one of the individuals who introduced the movable type press on the Peninsula.

***Liber Chronicarum* (ACL, LC_0023. Ms. 53):** The appearance of the printing press in the West transformed society and contributed to the democratization of its culture. The *Liber Chronicarum* by Hartmann Schedel is a kind of history of the world that was highly popular at that time and spread throughout Europe. The text is complemented with illustrations by the painter and engraver from Nuremberg, Michel Wolgemuth.

Ref. : ■3

MODERN SCIENCE

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the discovery of new worlds caused some fundamental changes that led to the end of old traditions and the search for a new understanding of nature.

The rise of modern science transformed the questions, research methods, knowledge content and social value of science. Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Vesalio, Servet, Descartes and Newton provided crucial contributions to the study of the natural world from innovative perspectives in astronomy, mathematics, physics, biology, medicine, chemistry and geology.

This explosion led to a far-reaching philosophical revolution: the triumph of Rationalism, which was to become one of the most rel-

evant intellectual conquests of Western civilization in Modern Times.

***Margarita Philosophica Nova* (MLDC 1648):** The *Margarita Philosophica* is a course book of encyclopaedic universal knowledge containing, among other things, chapters on astronomy, astrology, grammar, music and rhetoric. The first edition is from 1503.

Ref. : ■4

METAMORPHOSIS OF A CITY

For centuries, Lleida was a walled city with a medieval layout structured by the presence of the river and the hill. The most relevant urban space, the Suda neighbourhood, was located at the top, sheltered by the cathedral, and it held the most emblematic buildings.

With the onslaught of the Guerra dels Segadors and the War of Spanish Succession, the city had to be fortified, which made it necessary to demolish entire neighbourhoods, such as Cappont, and fit out the Seu Vella as a military citadel.

In the 18th century, the local authorities, led by the Marquis of Blondel, looked for solutions to the most urgent urban planning problems: they built the river retaining wall, a new cathedral, a water tank and squares and streets with drainage in proper living conditions

Ref. : ■5

THE SPIRIT OF A NEW AGE

At the end of the 15th century, a new intellectual spirit pervaded Europe. The emphasis is placed on the value of the individual, who is freed from the principles of authority and dogma that arose from the Scriptures, and a new critical spirit based on revising prior scientific philosophical traditions is consolidated.

This new attitude, related to Renaissance times and Humanism, began to defend freedom of thought and opened the doors to reforms that would alter the map of Christianity in Europe.

At the same time, the court scenes became centres for scientific, philosophical and artistic discussion. Monarchs promoted a new art serving their own splendour and controlled the pace of scientific advances depending on their uses for the complex enterprises of the State.

Ref. : ■6

Lleida and the Borgia Pope

Pope Calixtus III gave the parish church of Sant Joan Baptista in Lleida a set of vestments for the bishop, priest and deacon. The first Borgia pope had studied in the classrooms of the Estudi General de Lleida and, starting in this city, would begin a long, fruitful career that would make him one of the most prestigious canonists in Europe in his time.

The gift is an evident sign of the close relationship that always existed between the Pope, who was born in Xàtiva, and Lleida. The vestments, made in an Italian workshop, is a faithful representation of the Renaissance currents in that land, at a time when Gothic was still the most common creative vocabulary for artisans in Catalunya and the Hispanic kingdoms.

Dalmatic and clerical collar from the vestment set of Calixtus III (MLDC 186, 1554): The vestment set of Calixtus III is one of the most well-made sets of religious garments in Catalunya. It is almost complete, containing a chasuble, two dalmatics, a magnificent chape, two clerical collars, a stole, a chalice cover, a maniple and a corporal. The embroidered gold and silver threads using the Italian *alluciolato* technique, an eloquent sign of the decorative wealth and ostentation of this beautiful set, are particularly noteworthy.

Ref. : ■7

The humanist bishops

In the 16th century, there were fifteen bishops in Lleida. They had all been educated at the best universities and were well-versed in jurisprudence, theology and humanities. They were highly concerned about four main issues: education, christianisation, improving hospitals and sponsoring the arts.

Jaume Conchillos (1512-1542), Ferran de Loaces (1534-1533) and Antoni Agustí (1561-1576), all ambitious intellectuals, practiced artistic patronage and had contact with new Renaissance style artists, which contributed to the beautification of the cathedral, particularly with the donation of a set of extremely high quality tapestries.

The atmosphere of artistic promotion that Lleida experienced in the fifteen hundreds did not occur again in later centuries due to the negative effects of wars, inevitable poverty and the enormous difficulties that lurked in every corner of the city.

Missal of Bishop Jaime Conchillos (ACL, LC_0029.

Ms. 14): This ritual book is a commission from Bishop Conchillos, created in 1532. Besides this copy, there are only two others, one at the Library of Catalunya and the other in South America. The Lleida copy is partially preserved, but thanks to the other copies, we know about the engravings it contained, with representations of Saint Vincent, the Calvary and the Trinity.

Ref. : ■8

PORTRAIT OF A SOCIETY

The majority of Lleida society in Modern Times was made up of a well-off portion of society on one hand, including knights, citizens, lawyers and members of the religious hierarchy, and on the other, a vast majority of working folks.

The latter group mainly included peasantry and artisans who practiced several trades: textiles, leather making, woodcarving, pottery, printing, building or the arts. A varied trading and service sector also existed. Both residents and new arrivals found work in these jobs.

The difficulties of survival made poverty and marginalisation the inevitable destiny of many.

Compartment of an altarpiece dedicated to Saint Julian (MLDC 69):

In the 17th century, Catalunya was basically devoted to agriculture, and in the towns and cities, different craft trades developed, grouped into guilds. Artisan family life essentially took place at home, with a combined workshop and dwelling. The bedroom was still the most important room, and families tried to make it comfortable with certain touches of luxury, through the use of curtains and bed linens.

Plate (MLDC 1089): The local nature of the pottery from Lleida in the 17th century makes its production quite limited and, therefore, very highly valued at the present time. These objects are easily identifiable because of their polychromatic nature, predominantly in greens, blues and yellows, and their finishes and decoration. Archaeological excavations on the Portal de Magdalena or the Pati del Miqueló in Lleida have made it possible to find some workshops with their corresponding kilns.

"Pellofes" (MLDC 1529): "Pellofes", or "ploms" are pieces of brass or copper minted at parishes, episcopal seats and monasteries of the Països Catalans for internal use from the 15th to the 18th centuries, as a result of the lack of civil coinage. In Lleida, the first *pellofes* were minted on 20th April 1538 in the Seu Vella.

Ref. : ■9

THE DA VINCI STELE

The main innovation in the visual arts in the Renaissance was the deliberate search for precisely capturing reality. In the words of Leonardo da Vinci: "The painting that is most worthy of praise is the one which looks most like the imitated object." Renaissance imitation, unlike the previous medieval naturalism, was based on studying reality, using geometric principles of perspective and a detailed study of human anatomy and physiognomy.

These aesthetic principles successfully spread all over Europe and reached Hispanic and Catalan lands and, of course, Lleida and the surrounding region.

Ref. : ■10

Renaissance harmonies

In music, the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance took place more gradually than other arts, but broad-scale changes were introduced in the means of creation, diffusion and consumption. The art of music reached sound horizons that were completely unknown until that time.

Changes in attitudes of composers, performers and listeners, technical advances and the significant social role that music began to play created the basis for the triumph of a new sensibility. Instrumental music was developed, the secular repertoire was consolidated and religious production offered exceptional works such as those by Cristóbal de Morales. The printing press enabled the large choir books to be substituted by printed books for individual use, more economical and manageable.

Masses and Magnificat (MLDC 1516) : Cristóbal de Morales was a composer from Seville who lived in the first half of the 16th century. A singer in the papal choir of Rome, he came to be choir master at the cathedral of Málaga. His liturgical music, charged with a strong pious sentiment, can be fully placed within a particularly innovative current, prior to the spirit of the Counter-Reformation of Trent (1545-1563).

Ref. : ■11

The road towards a new art

Renaissance painting and sculpture in Lleida adapted to the guidelines that prevailed in the 16th century throughout Catalunya. The oil on

panel technique remained and a type of stone, alabaster and polychrome wood sculpture was developed, inspired by the Classical style.

Changes took place gradually. For decades, both painting and sculpture held onto reminders of the Gothic world, while the Renaissance decorative formulas slowly prevailed. This transition can be seen in the pictorial work by the Sigena Master and the Portuguese artist, Pere Nunyes, as well as in sculptures by Damià Forment and Gabriel Joly.

Ref. : ■12

The renaissance of artists

The Renaissance artist was, in the words of Leonardo da Vinci, a "*homo modernus* and *universalis*". A new profile began to emerge, bringing us closer to the concept of the modern, liberal and emancipated artist, while at the same time guild, craft and manual working methods still survived.

Despite the fact that this new personality and social standing for artists did not fully take hold until the emergence of Romanticism, some exceptional figures, like Damià Forment, paved a road of no return in achieving individual status like never before.

Holy Family (MLDC 179): Until 1936, the panel showed a splendid representation of the Holy Family, with the Virgin, St. Joseph and the Child. Unfortunately, during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) the piece was seriously damaged while it was at the Acadèmia Mariana.

Epiphany (MLDC 486): This relief has been attributed to Damià Forment, one of the Renaissance sculptors par excellence on the Peninsula. The creator of such famous altarpieces as the one at Santo Domingo de la Calzada or the high altarpiece in the church of the Poblet monastery, his presence in Lleida is recorded in 1530.

Dormition of the Virgin (MLDC 300): The subject of death, or the Death of the Virgin and her subsequent Assumption in body and soul into Heaven was one of the most popular and commonly used themes in the Late Middle Ages, leading to numerous theatrical representations, including the famous Mystery of Elche.

Ref. : ■13

Liturgy and religious art

Christian – and particularly Catholic – liturgy has always promoted artistic creation, especially precious metalworking. Sacred liturgical objects such as chalices, patens, ciboria, processional crosses, true crosses, relics, etc. reached an extremely high degree of magnificence, visual and aesthetic quality in Modern Times.

During the Gothic period, processional crosses

with fleurs-de-lis and virtuous engravings were forged, whereas, with the emergence of the Renaissance, exuberant, magnificent works were abundant, meticulously executed in technique, inherent to the Plateresque style, seen in numerous bases, stands and lunettes, chalices and monstrances from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Chrismarium (MLDC 888): The word “chrismarium” (*crismera*, in Spanish) comes from the Latin word *chrisma*, which in turn, comes from the Greek *chrísma*, meaning “unction”, and it refers to the object used to hold the Holy Oils. Chrism is oil mixed with balsam consecrated by the bishop at mass on Holy Thursday, and it is used in some sacraments, such as baptism and altar consecration ceremonies.

Ref. : ■14

New tapestry making perspectives

Commissioned by Pope Leo X, the tapestry maker from Brussels, Pieter van Aelst, using designs by Raphael, created a series of tapestries on the *Acts of the Apostles*, which introduced perspective and radically transformed the tapestry-making world.

The two *Abraham and David* series of tapestries, which belong to the Cathedral of Lleida's collection, demonstrate this change. Crowded scenes have been eliminated, now being shown in stages, the horizon line has been lowered and, in the centre there is a main scene that is complemented by other secondary scenes that continue telling the story and fill in details.

“Rebecca Offering Water to Eliezer” (MLDC 1871): The *History of Abraham* series is composed of five tapestries that illustrate several Biblical episodes from the life of this patriarch, narrated in the book of Genesis. The series and narrative cycle ends with the episode in which Rebecca offers water to Eliezer.

Ref. : ■15

Tapestry art and technique

In order to weave a tapestry, a loom, textile materials and a preliminary design are needed. A loom can be *basse lisse* or *haute lisse*. The latter, a medieval invention placed vertically with two rolls, one at the top and the other at the bottom, was most common.

The fabric is made up of the warp and the weft. The warp is the framework, made of cotton or wool threads stretched perpendicular to the two loom rolls. The weft is threaded through the warp, and may be made of plant fibres such as linen or cotton, metal, like gold or silver, or synthetic fibres, such as is the case nowadays.

Ref. : ■16

ART AND PROPAGANDA

Some citizens had an extraordinary role in artistic promotion in Lleida in the 16th and 17th centuries. The printing presses of the humanist bishops, religious orders such as the St. John monks of Sigena, or certain outstanding figures like the head professor of the Estudi General, Onofre Cerveró, were essential. In this area, illustrious figures and families ostentatiously displayed their power through sumptuous funeral monuments, such as the Requesens in the Seu Vella of Lleida or Ramon Folch de Cardona in the church of Bellpuig d'Urgell.

However, the majority of the working population in Lleida and the surrounding area, in times of shortage and war, contributed, either voluntarily or not, to the construction and beautification of palaces and the cathedral, churches and chapels in the city and region by paying tithes and fixed taxes on sales and harvests

Ref. : ■17

Sigena, the beginning of the decline

Starting in the 16th century, the splendour begins to die down and the monastery of Sigena slowly falls into decline. Even so, ladies of the nobility and royalty, as well as some of the most distinguished lineages from Aragón and Catalunya (Erill, Luna, Entença, Lizana and Cornel) continued to make them rich with valuable works of art.

María Jiménez de Urrea, prioress from 1510 to 1521, sponsored the construction of the high altarpiece. The enigmatic artist who created it is known by the name of the Sigena Master.

Gabriel Joly made several works, like the altarpiece of Santa Anna and that of Christ's childhood, which remains, but is burnt.

Santa Anna Altarpiece (MLDC 478, 479, 480, 481): One of the most emblematic works by Gabriel Joly, a sculptor originally from the region of Picardy (France), is the high altarpiece of the cathedral of Teruel, executed from 1532 to 1536. Shortly before that time, around 1529-1530, he appeared in Sigena, where he made several altarpieces, the most relevant of which is the Santa Ana altarpiece, commissioned by the prioress Beatriu d'Olzinella.

Saint Augustine, Saint Ambrosius, Saint Peter and Saint Paul (MLDC 38, 39, 91, 90): The high altarpiece at the monastery of Sigena, composed of over thirty pan-

els, is one of the most ambitious Renaissance works in the Crown of Aragón. Devoted to the Virgin, prioress María Ximénez de Urrea commissioned the work of an anonymous painter that history has christened as the Sigena Master, considering him to be almost an *unicum* on the Spanish painting scene in the first half of the 16th century. Having been taken down and broken up, these panels can be found in museums and collections all over the world.

Ref. : ■18

A NEW ORDER

The restless and uneasy spirit of the Christian population made it necessary to redefine religious beliefs. The decay and failure to act of a papacy in crisis caused individual and collective breaks to occur.

Figures such as Luther or Calvin emerged, heading a desire for reform which led to the rethinking of beliefs within each country. This was the case of the Lutherans in the Germanic empire, the Calvinists in Switzerland, the Anglicans in England or the Huguenots in France, to name a few.

Roman Catholicism, conscious of the need to provide immediate responses, called a council in the city of Trent (Italy), which took place from 1545 to 1563. A precise written doctrine (the Catechism of 1566), renewed instruments for pastoral actions and a reinforcement of the bishops' territorial powers are at the base of the lasting foundations of the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

Altarpiece of the Immaculate Conception (MLDC 53, 168): The restoration process on this altarpiece has revealed its excellent original polychromy, hidden beneath crudely done retouching that probably dates from the 17th and 18th centuries. Trends, and changes in taste and mentality, mostly resulting from the Council of Trent, marked a turning point in the representation of sacred images. In this altarpiece's case, the superb nude figures of Adam and Eve were hidden beneath a background of plant decorations, and the angels on the Virgen de Montserrat Mountain in the corbel were substituted by a curtain.

Saint Roch Altarpiece (MLDC 44): Ever since the Middle Ages, Saint Roch has been one of the saints most often called upon to combat the plague, along with Saint Sebastian. People fully believed in his power to intercede, which led to the proliferation of chapels, altarpieces and images dedicated to this saint all over Europe.

Virgin of the Rosary Altarpiece (MLDC 94): Devotion for the Virgin of the Rosary is closely tied to the Dominican

Order. There is evidence of brotherhoods of this type dating from the late 15th century in Catalunya. Praying the Rosary guaranteed that the salvation of souls in purgatory was near and also granted the living indulgences that could reach up to 120,000 years. The purpose of the Rosary was, above all, to reinforce orthodoxy and to fight against heresy.

Ref. : ■19

The expulsion of the last converts

The European monarchies in the 16th century saw religious unity as a guarantee of social and political unity in their kingdoms. The Spanish monarchy was no exception. After the expulsion of the Jews in 1492, one last ferment of dissent remained among the Moriscos, the Muslims who had been forced to be baptised. Between 1606 and 1610, their expulsion was ordered.

In Lleida, Moriscos worked in the fields and as artisans and, after being baptised as a group between 1508 and 1526, they were driven from towns like Aitona, Seròs and Mequinenza, where books that had been conscientiously hidden by their owners under attack by the Inquisition have been found. One example is the *Alcoranic Breviary* from Aitona, or the collection of *Religious Narrations* from Seròs, written in *Aljamía* (Romance language written in Arabic characters).

Concealment in Seròs (IEI N-20): This unique collection was discovered in 1985 during the demolition of a house in Seròs. It had been hidden behind one of the walls of the dwelling. It is composed of a Mudejar prayer book, a talisman, or *hirz*, a prayer, an alphabet, several bits of correspondence and documents, two small bags made of canvas, a ball of linen and a glazed ceramic jug. The prayer book is written in Arabic, in Andalusí style script with illuminations.

Bowl (MLDC 1184): Despite the expulsion, relations between Catalunya and Islam were not broken, though they did become superficial and based on self-interest. Even so, the charm and fascination for 'things made in the East' became fashionable among all the social strata, including ecclesiastical offices. This object is a good example of this. According to tradition, it was used at the parish church of Benavent to hold baptismal water, unaware of the meaning of the Koranic invocation 'Allah is Lord'. The symbolic meaning is clear.

BAROQUE



Ref. : ■1

THE BAROQUE, AN EXPRESSION OF POWER

At the end of the 16th century, two main authorities emphatically showed their irrefutable strength throughout Europe: the absolute monarchies and the Catholic Church, reformed and renewed after the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

The means of expression they used was a new style: the Baroque. It is characterised by an extraordinary scenographic and decorative opulence designed to fascinate subjects and believers by means of a constant sense of movement, the search for sharp contrasts between light and shadow and a naturalism that seeks the representation of inner feelings in painting and sculpture.

The decorative themes in Catalan Baroque accurately follow these basic principles.

Ref. : ■2

Architectural effervescence

16th and 17th century Catalan architecture reveals the consolidation of numerous derivations of Classical vocabulary from the Renaissance. Baroque forms appear in Lleida in the mid-18th century, coinciding with the end of the military conflicts and the spectacular demographic and economic growth that Catalunya underwent at that time.

Many of the present parish churches and rectorships in the Bishopric of Lleida were built in this period, which has left us a substantial legacy, including the Catedral Nova de Lleida (1761-1781) and the churches of Zaidín (1742), Aitona (1758), la Granadella (c. 1769) and Torrefarrera (1799), to name a few.

Ref. : ■3

Decoration in baroque spaces

The renewed means of communicating the Catholic doctrine seek to provide a full pedagogy of devotion using imagery, and therefore Baroque sculpture stands out for its expressive force, monumentality and movement. The 17th century in Lleida has left us excellent Baroque works, such as the Assumpta and the tabernacle of the high altarpiece in the old church of Torres de Segre.

From the 18th century, records show considerable sculpting activities. Unfortunately, the Spanish Civil War in 1936 devastated much of this heritage and currently, the only Baroque altarpiece that remains in situ in the city of Lleida is the one sculpted by Francesc Escarpenter for the chapel of the old Santa Maria Hospital, currently the offices of the Institut d'Estudis Ilerdencs.

Virgin of the Assumption and Tabernacle (MLDC 379, 375): Francesc Santacruz II is one of the most relevant sculptors from the final third of the 17th century. He created altarpieces for the cathedral of Barcelona, several convents in that city and the monastery of Sant Cugat del Vallès. As regards his work in Torres de Segre, a couple of payments are documented from the years 1679 and 1680, on account of his work on the high altarpiece of the parish church.

Ref. : ■4

Baroque painting

In painting, the Baroque style showed a particular intensity and creativity. Genre painting devel-

oped, with still lifes, landscapes or genre scenes, and portraiture and religious iconography also gained relevance again.

Works by Velázquez, Alonso Cano, Murillo or Ribera express a moment of splendour in Baroque painting which, in Catalunya, reached a rather restrained degree of quality.

No high-quality painters came from the area of Lleida either. In this sense, most of the works on display at the Museum come from Catedral Nova and originate elsewhere

Martyrdom of Saint Andrew (MLDC 215): Claude Vignon was an artist born in Tours (France) and trained in Paris. A tireless traveller, around the year 1625 his presence on the Peninsula was recorded when he finished a commission for María de Medici, who sent him to purchase works of art. His ties to the canvas of the martyrdom of Saint Andrew were established thanks to an engraving in the collection of the Prado Museum, also made by Vignon.

Crucifixion (MLDC 2030): This superb Crucifixion has been attributed to Alonso Cano. However, its style contains a hint of the brushwork of another great artist from that time, Velázquez. This proximity can be explained by the fact that both artists were trained in the workshop of Francisco Pacheco.

Madonna della Tenda (MLDC 2028): This painting was acquired by the Cathedral Chapter in 1791 in Madrid during the public auction of the possessions of the Infante Gabriel, son of Charles III. It accurately follows the model of the famous *Madonna della Tenda* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich) created by Raphael, which, during the reign of Philip II, was among the works decorating the walls of the Palace of El Escorial.

Prayer in the Orchard (MLDC 2029): The scene reproduces an event narrated in the Gospel of Saint Luke (22:41-44). This panel is the work of German artist Anton Rafael Mengs (1728-1729), a painter who spent the prime of his career at the Spanish Court, where he was appointed court painter by King Charles III. *Prayer in the Orchard* directly follows the example of a canvas that the painter himself painted for the monarch's bedroom in the Royal Palace of Madrid.

"Head of Christ on the Cross" Tapestry (MLDC 1874): The tapestry closely follows a highly successful iconographic model that Italian painter Guido Reni made for the convent of the Capuchin Order in Bologna (1616), presently at the Pinacoteca Nazionale of that city. The artist himself painted several versions, some of which are preserved at the Detroit Institute of Arts and the convent of San Lorenzo in Lucina in Rome, to name a few.

Ref. : ■5

The meanings of precious metal working

Reform Catholicism proclaimed the sacrifice of mass as the heart of the liturgy. Hence, the sacred form is placed right in the middle of the high altar and is displayed within a monstrance created according to the most elevated guidelines of the Baroque aesthetic, put to use for liturgical objects.

Precious metalworking, in addition to giving artistic objects great beauty, has a sharply defined utilitarian purpose as well, because it contributed to the emphasis on expressive and symbolic values of the liturgy and worship.

Ref. : ■6

The new cathedral of Lleida

As a result of the War of Spanish Succession, the city of Lleida was taken over by the Bourbon troops. On 13 November 1707, Philip V's army marched in and took possession of the cathedral and the castle of La Suda, which was converted into a fort and privileged strategic and defence position. The cathedral institution was forced to move to the church of Sant Llorenç.

The clergy and the city wished to recover the Seu for worship but always received negative replies from the monarchy. In 1759, Charles III promised to subsidize the project for building a new cathedral on the condition that the old premises be permanently abandoned. Accepting the deal under the risk of losing the Episcopal seat, a new era began.

Ref. : ■7

Construction of the new cathedral

On 15 April 1764, the first stone was laid on the new cathedral, designed by the military engineer Pedro Martín Zermeño, a project that reflects the predominant lines in the wide-ranging Baroque repertoire of Europe at that time.

During construction, managed by Francesco Sabatini and Josep Prat, significant changes were introduced and the primitive idea of the original project was distorted. Its initial harmonious clarity was shadowed, its discrete monumentality reduced and the sober elegance that connected the work to European artistic trends was lost.

The temple was consecrated and opened for worship on 31 May 1781.

Model of the Seu Nova de Lleida (MLDC 2000): This model of the Cathedral Nova in Lleida is based on the initial project designed by the military engineer, Pedro Zermeño in 1760. The commission was given to Pau Borràs, the building master hired by Zermeño, in 1762. Due to the fact that, in the course of construction, significant modifications were made, this model is a valuable document for seeing what the original project looked like.

Ref. : ■8

The cathedral treasury, a spiritual memory

The treasury of a cathedral or church is composed of all the liturgical decorations, books and relics and, in short, the most important and valuable objects that, with time, become the temple's spiritual memory. Cathedral Nova incorporated the old cathedral's treasury, with valuable pieces such as the Renaissance tapestries or the relic of the Holy Cloth, which disappeared during the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

In turn, a significant group of works, proceeding from the former collegiate church of San Vicente de Roda de Isábena and subsequently included in the Bishopric of Lleida, entered the treasury of the Ilerdense cathedral after a royal order from 1864.

Ref. : ■9

The artistic splendour of the new cathedral

The Seu Nova of Lleida had to be built in a short time. It was decorated with objects from the Seu Vella and purchases and commissions made by the Chapter. The style of these artistic endeavours varied from tradition to new academic formulas.

Artists such as Salvador Gurri, Felip Saurí, Joan Adán and Lluís Bonifàs contributed to the beautification of the temple. The latter artist was the author of the choir stalls, a brilliant example of native Baroque style which, unfortunately, was burned in a fire early in the Spanish Civil War in 1936. The devastating fire brought an era to an end and took with it much of the splendour of the new cathedral.

Fragment of an angel's face (MLDC 2026): This is quite probably the only remaining piece of the altar-pieces that the sculptor Joan Adán created for the Seu Nova in Lleida, works that were destroyed during the Spanish Civil War.

Saint Anastasius and Saint Jerome (MLDC 305, 87):

Born in Tarazona, Joan Adán was one of the most relevant Spanish sculptors in the second half of the 18th century. He was court sculptor for Charles IV and Fernando VII, as well as director of sculpture at the San Fernando Academy in Madrid. Shortly after arriving in Italy, where he was trained, he moved to Lleida where, from 1776 to 1782, he executed several altarpieces for the Cathedral Nova and different works for other religious buildings in the city.

Apollo and Pan (MLDC 2700): This work corresponds to Joan Adán's late period, when he was fully established in Madrid, as head of the sculpture department of the San Fernando Academy. The mythological subject matter of his work shows us the artist's knowledge of these iconographic repertoires due to his stay in Rome, where he must have come into contact with the Vatican collections. This sculpture is signed and dated in Madrid in 1812.